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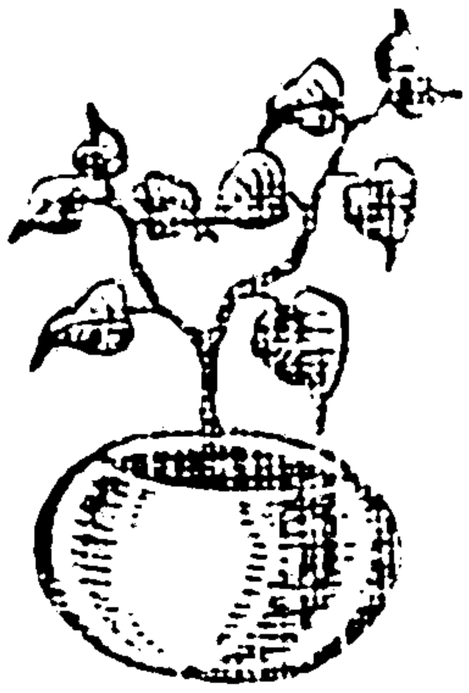

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Protection Through Satipaṭṭhāna

Nyanaponika Thera

Protection Through Satipaṭṭhāna

Nyanaponika Thera

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY
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"Bodhi Leaves", No. B. 34.

PROTECTION THROUGH SATIPATTHĀNA

Once the Blessed One told his monks the following story :

There was once a pair of jugglers who did their acrobatic feats on a bamboo pole. One day the master said to his apprentice : 'Now get on my shoulders and climb up the bamboo pole.' When the apprentice had done so, the master said: 'Now protect me well and I shall protect you ! By protecting and watching each other in that way, we shall be able to show our skill, shall make a good profit and safely get down from the bamboo pole.' But the apprentice said: 'Not so, master ! You, O master, should protect yourself, and I too shall protect myself. Thus self-protected and self-guarded we shall safely do our feats.'

"This is the right way," said the Blessed One and spoke further as follows :

"It is just as the apprentice said: 'I shall protect myself,' in that way the Foundations of Mindfulness (Satipaṭṭhāna) should be practised. 'I shall protect others,' in that way the Foundations of Mindfulness should be practised. Protecting oneself one protects others; protecting others one protects oneself.

"And how does one, in protecting oneself, protect others? By the repeated and frequent practice of meditation (*āsevanāya bhāvanāya bahulikammena*).

"And how does one, by protecting others, protect oneself? By patience and forbearance, by a non-violent and harmless life, by loving-kindness and compassion." (Satipaṭṭhana Samyutta, No. 19).

This Sutta belongs to the considerable number of important and eminently practical teachings of the Buddha which still are hidden like buried treasure, unknown and unused. Yet this text has an important message for us, and the fact that it is stamped with the royal seal of Satipaṭṭhana is an additional claim on our attention.

Individual and Society

The Sutta deals with the relations between ourselves and our fellow beings, between individual and society. It sums up in a succinct way the Buddhist attitude to the problems of individual and social ethics, of egoism and altruism. The gist of it is contained in those two concise sentences :

"Protecting oneself one protects others" (*Attānaṁ rakkhanto paraṁ rakkhati*).

"Protecting others one protects oneself" (*Paraṁ rakkhanto attānaṁ rakkhati*).

These two sentences supplement each other and should not be taken (or quoted) separately.

Nowadays, when social service is so greatly stressed, people may, for instance, be tempted to quote, in support of their ideas, only the second sentence. But any such one-sided quotation would misrepresent the Buddha's standpoint. It has to be remembered that, in our story, the Buddha expressly approved the words of the apprentice, that is that one has first carefully to watch one's own steps if one

wishes to protect others from harm. He who himself is sunk in the mire cannot help others out of it. In that sense, self-protection forms the indispensable basis for the protection and help given to others. But self-protection is not selfish protection. It is self-control, ethical and spiritual self-development.

There are some great truths which are so comprehensive and profound that they seem to have an ever-expanding range of significance that grows with one's own range of understanding and practising these truths. Such truths are applicable on various levels of understanding, and are valid in various contexts of our life. After having reached the first or the second level, one will be surprised that again and again new vistas open themselves to our understanding and are illumined by that truth. This also holds true of the great twin truths of our text which we shall consider now in some detail.

'Protecting oneself one protects others'—the truth of this statement begins at a very simple and practical level. This first material

level of the truth is so self-evident that we need not say more than a few words about it. It is obvious that the protection of our own health will go far in protecting the health of our closer or wider environment, especially where contagious diseases are concerned. Caution and circumspection in all our doings and movements will protect others from harm that may come to them through our carelessness and negligence. By careful driving; abstention from alcohol; by self-restraint in situations that might lead to violence—in all these and many other ways we shall protect others by protecting ourselves.

The ethical level

We come now to the ethical level of that truth. Moral self-protection will safeguard others, individuals and society, against our own unrestrained passions and selfish impulses. If we permit that the Three Roots of everything evil, Greed, Hate and Delusion, take a firm hold in our hearts, then that which grows from those evil roots will spread far and wide like a

jungle creeper and suffocate much healthy and noble growth all around. But if we protect ourselves against these Three Roots of Evil, fellow beings too will be safe from our reckless greed for possessions and power, from our unrestrained lust and sensuality, from our envy and jealousy. They will be safe from the disruptive, or even destructive and murderous, consequences of our hate and enmity, from the outbursts of our anger, from our spreading an atmosphere of antagonism and quarrelsomeness which may make life unbearable for those around us. But the harmful effects of our greed and hate on others are not limited to cases when those others are passive objects, or victims, of our hate, or their possessions the object of our greed. Greed and hate have infectious power, and thereby their evil effects are multiplied. If we ourselves think of nothing else than to crave and to grasp, to acquire and possess, to hold and to cling, then we may rouse or strengthen these possessive instincts also in others. Our bad example may become the standard of behaviour for our environment;

for instance our own children, our office colleagues, and so on. Our own conduct may induce others to join us in the common satisfaction of rapacious desires; or we may arouse feelings of resentment and competitiveness in others, the desire to beat us in the race. If we are full of sensuality we may kindle the fire of lust also in others. Our own Hate may cause the hate and vengeance of others. It may also happen that we ally ourselves with others or instigate them to common acts of hate and enmity. Greed and hate are, indeed, like contagious diseases. We shall protect others, at least to some extent, if we protect ourselves and make ourselves as immune as possible against these evil infections.

Protection through Wisdom

As to the third Root of Evil, delusion or ignorance, we know very well how much harm may be done to others through the stupidity, thoughtlessness, prejudices, illusions and delusions of a single person.

Without wisdom and knowledge, attempts to protect oneself and others will mostly fail One will see the danger only when it is too late, one will not make provision for the future, one will not know the right and effective means of proteetion and help. Therefore *self-protection through wisdom and knowledge* is of the greatest importance. Through acquisition of true wisdom and knowledge, we shall protect others against the harmful consequences of our own ignorance, of our prejudices, infectious fanaticism and delusions. History has shown us that great and destructive mass delusions have often been started or kindled by a single individual or a small number of people. Self-protection through wisdom and knowledge will make ourselves and our environment immune against the pernicious effect of such influences.

We have briefly indicated the strength and extent of impact which our own private life may have on the life of others. If we leave untouched the actual or potential sources of social evil within ourselves, any external social

activity of ours will be either futile or glaringly incomplete. Therefore, if we are moved by a spirit of social responsibility, we must not shirk the hard task of self protection, i. e., of moral and spiritual self-development. Preoccupation with social activities must not be made an excuse or escape from the first duty, to tidy up one's own house first. On the other hand, he who earnestly devotes himself to moral self-improvement and spiritual self-development will be a strong and active force for good in the world, even without his engaging in any external social activity. His silent example alone will give help and encouragement to many, by showing that the ideals of a selfless and harmless life can be actually lived and are not only topics of sermons.

The Meditative level

We proceed now to the next higher level in the interpretation of our text. It is expressed in the following words of the Sutta: 'And how does one, by protecting oneself, protect others?

By the repeated and frequent practice of meditation. Moral self-protection will lack stability as long as it remains a rigid discipline enforced after a struggle of motives and against conflicting habits of thought and behaviour. Passionate desires and egotistic tendencies may grow in intensity if one tries to silence them by sheer force of will. Even if one temporarily succeeds in suppressing passionate or egotistic impulses, the unsolved inner conflict will impede one's moral and spiritual progress and will warp one's character. Furthermore, inner disharmony caused by an enforced suppression of impulses, will seek an outlet in external behaviour and will make the individual irritable, resentful, domineering and aggressive towards others. Thus harm may come to oneself as well as to others by a wrong method of self-protection. Only when moral self-protection has become a *spontaneous* function, when it comes as naturally as the protective closing of the eyelid on the slightest contact with an alien body, then only our moral stature will provide real protection and safety for ourselves and

others. This naturalness of moral conduct is not a gift from heaven, but it has been acquired, either in this life or in previous existences, by repeated practice and cultivation. Therefore our Sutta says that it is repeated practice by which self-protection will become strong enough to protect others too.

But if that repeated practice of the good takes place only on the practical, emotional and intellectual level, its roots will not be firm and deep enough. Such repeated practice must extend also to the level of meditative culti-vation. By meditation, the practical, emotional and intellectual motives of moral and spiritual self-protection will become our mental property which cannot easily be lost again. Therefore our Sutta speaks here of *bhāvanā* *. This is the highest form of protection which our world can bestow (apart from the perfected Stages of Holiness). A meditative mind lives in peace with himself and the world. No harm or violence will issue from him. The peace and

---

* i. e., meditative development of the mind in its widest sense.

purity which he radiates, will have conquering power and will be a blessing to the world. He will be a positive factor in society, even if he lives in seclusion and silence. When understanding for, and recognition of, the social value of a meditative life ceases in a nation, it will be the first symptom of spiritual deterioration.

Protection of others

We have now to consider the second part of the Buddha's utterance which is a necessary supplement of the first: "*Protecting others one protects oneself. And how? By patience and forbearance, by a non-violent and harmless life, by lovingkindness and compassion*" (in Pāli: *khantiyā avihimsāya mettatāya anuddatāya*). He whose relation to his fellow-beings is governed by these principles will protect himself better than any mighty weapon or physical strength can do. He who is patient and forbearing will avoid many conflicts and quarrels, and will make friends of those for whom he has shown a patient understanding. He who does not use

force or coercion will, under normal conditions, rarely become an object of violence himself as he does not provoke it. And if he should encounter violence he will bring it to an earlier end as he will not perpetuate the situation through vengeance. He who has love and compassion for all beings and is free of enmity, will conquer the ill-will of others and disarm the violent and brutal. A compassionate heart will be the refuge of the whole world.

We shall now better understand how those two complementary sentences of our text harmonize. Moral self-protection is the indispensable basis. But true self-protection is possible only if it does not conflict with the protection of others; otherwise it will defile as well as endanger him who seeks self-protection at the expense of others. On the other hand, protection of others must not conflict with the four principles of patience, non-violence, loving-kindness and compassion, and must not interfere with the free spiritual development of the individual, as it does in the case of various "totalitarian" doctrines. Thus in the Buddhist

conception of self-protection, all selfishness is excluded, and in protection of others violence and interference have no place.

Self-protection and protection of others correspond to the two great twin virtues of Wisdom and Compassion. Right self-protection is the expression of wisdom, and right protection of others is the result of Compassion. Wisdom and Compassion, being the characteristic elements of Bodhi or Enlightenment, have found their highest perfection in the Fully Enlightened One, the Buddha. The insistence on their harmonious development is a characteristic feature of the entire Dhamma. We meet them, e. g., in the Four Sublime States (Brahma-vihāra) where Equanimity corresponds to Wisdom and self-protection, while Lovingkindness, Compassion and Sympathetic Joy correspond to compassion and protection of others.

These two great principles of Self-protection and Protection of Others are of equal importance to both individual and social ethics and make for harmony between both. Their

beneficial impact, however, does not stop at the ethical level, but leads the individual upwards to the highest realisation of the Dhamma, while at the same time they provide a firm foundation for the welfare of society.

It is the writer's belief that the understanding of those two great principles of Self-protection and Protection of Others, as manifesting the twin virtues of Wisdom and Compassion, are of vital importance to Buddhist education, for young and old alike. They are, indeed, the corner stones of character building and deserve a central place in the present world-wide endeavour for a Buddhist revival.

'I shall protect myself,' thus should we establish our mindfulness, and guided by it devote ourselves to the practice of Satipatthāna.

'I shall protect others,' thus should we establish our mindfulness and devote ourselves to the practice of Satipatthāna,—for the sake of our own liberation as well as for the happiness and welfare of many.

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THE THREEFOLD DIVISION OF THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

While lying on his death - bed, addressing the disciples the Buddha said: "The Doctrine and the Discipline (*dhamma-vinaya*) which I have set forth and laid down for you, let them, after I am gone, be your teacher." [1]

From this it is quite clear that the Buddha's way of life, his religious system, comprises the doctrine and the discipline. Discipline implies moral excellence, the taming of the tongue and the bodily actions, the code of conduct taught in Buddhism: This is generally known as *sīla*, virtue or moral training. The doctrine deals with man's mental training, taming of the mind. It is meditation or the development of Mental Concentration, *samādhi*, and Wisdom, *paññā*. These three Virtue, Concentration and Wisdom, are the cardinal teachings which when carefully

1. *Mahā Parinibbāna-sutta, Dīgha* N. 16.

and fully cultivated raise man from lower to higher levels of mental life; lead him from darkness to light, from passion to dispassion, from turmoil to tranquillity.

These three are not isolated reactions, but integral parts of the Path. This idea is crystallized in the clear admonition of the Enlightened Ones of all ages—"Cease from all evil; cultivate the good; cleanse your own mind." [1]

These oft-quoted but ever fresh words convey briefly the Message of the Master indicating the path to purification and deliverance. The path, however, is generally referred to as the Noble Eightfold Path (*ariyo aṭṭhangiko maggo*). Though some prefer to call this the Ariyan Eightfold Path, it may be noted that the term '*Ariyan*' does not stand here for any race, caste, class or clan. It simply means noble or excellent.

The Eightfold Path is arranged in three groups: Virtue, Concentration and Wisdom

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1. "*Sabba pāpassa akaranam—kusalassa upasampadā,*
Sacittapariyodapanam—etam buddhānasāsanam."
Dhammapada 183.

'sīla, samādhi and paññā). [1] This Path is unique to Buddhism and distinguishes it from every other religion and philosophy.

The eight factors of the Path are : [2]

1. Right Understanding (*sammā-diṭṭhi*)	Wisdom Group (*paññā*)
2. Right Thought (*sammā-samkappa*)	
3. Right Speech (*sammā-vācā*)	Virtue Group (*sīla*)
4. Right Action (*sammā-kammanta*)	
5. Right Livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*)	
6. Right Effort (*sammā-vāyāma*)	Concentration Group (*samādhi*)
7. Right Mindfulness (*sammā-sati*)	
8. Right Concentration (*sammā-samādhi*)	

Referring to this Path, in his First Discourse, [3] the Buddha called it the Middle Path

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1. *Majjhima* No. 44.
2. Ibid.
3. Known as 'Setting in Motion the Wheel of Truth (*Dhamma-cakkappavattana*), *Samyutta* N. v. 420; *Vin.* I, 10.

(*majjhima paṭipadā*), because it avoids two extremes: Indulgence in sensual pleasures which is low, worldly and leads to harm is one extreme; self - torture in the form of severe asceticism which is painful, low and leads to harm is the other.

Living in the palace amidst song and dance, luxury and pleasure, the Bodhisatta [1] knew by experience that sense pleasures do not lead mankind to true happiness and deliverance. Six years of rigorous mortification, which he, as an ascetic, so zealously practised in search of purification and final deliverance, brought him no reward. It was a vain and useless effort. Avoiding these two extremes he followed a path of moral and mental training and through self-experience discovered the Middle Path consisting of the three groups.

In this essay a brief account of the three groups and how they aim at promoting and

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1. Skt. *Bodhisattva*, one who adheres to or is bent on (*satta*) the ideal of enlightenment or knowledge of the four noble truths (*bodhi*). It is specially applied to an aspirant for full enlightenment (*sammā-sam-bodhi*).

perfecting a path that consists of eight factors will be discussed.

It must always be borne in mind that the term 'path' is oniy a figurative expression. Though conventionally we talk of treading a path, in the ultimate sense the eight steps signify eight mental factors. They are Interdependent and interrelated, and at the highest level they function simultaneously; they are not followed and practised one after the other in numerical order. Even on the lower level each and every factor should be tinged with some degree of right understanding; for it is the key-note of Buddhism.

Let us first hear these words of the Buddha:

"O' monks, it is through not understanding, not penetrating four things (dhamma) that we have run so long, wandered on so long in this round of existence both you and I, And what four? Virtue, Concentration, Wisdom and Deliverance. But when these four things, O monks are understood and penetrated, rooted out is the craving for existence, destroyed is that which

leads to renewed becoming, and there is no more coming to be." [1]

Further says the Master :

"Concentration (meditation), O monks, supported by virtue brings much fruit, brings much advantage. The mind supported by wisdom is wholly and entirely freed from the intoxication of sense desires, from becoming, and ignorance. [2]"

These sayings of the Buddha explain the function and the purpose of cultivating Virtue, Meditation and Wisdom. Deliverance means living experience of the cessation of the three root causes of evil, Greed, Hatred and Delusion or Ignorance (*lobha, dosa, moha*), that assail the human mind. These root causes are elliminated through training in Virtue, Meditation and Wisdom.

Thus it is clear that the Budda's teaching aims at the highest purification, perfect mental health, free from all tainted impulses.

Now this deliverance from mental taints, this freedom from ill, lies absolutely and entirely in

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1. Digha N. 16 2. Ibid.

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a man's own hands, in those of no one else, human or divine. Not even a Supreme Buddha can redeem a man from the fetters of existence except by showing him the path.

The path is: Virtue, Concentration and Wisdom, which are referred to in the discourses as the threefold training (*tividhā sikkhā*) and none of them is an end in itself; each is a means to an end. One cannot function independently of the others. As in the case of a tripod which falls to the ground if a single leg gives way, so here one cannot function without the support of the others. These three go together supporting each other. Virtue or regulated behaviour strengthens meditation and meditation in turn promotes Wisdom. Wisdom helps one to get rid of the clouded view of things— to see life as it really is— that is to see life and all things pertaining to life as arising and passing away.

It is now quite clear that in the interplay of doctrine and discipline (*dhamma-vinaya*) or knowledge and conduct (*vijjā-carana*) the two constitute a single process of growth. "As hand washes

hand, and foot washes foot, so does conduct purify wisdom and wisdom conduct." [1] This fact may be borne in mind by students of Buddhism, as there is a tendency, especially in academic circles, to regard the teachings of the Buddha as mere speculation, as a mere doctrine of metaphysics without practical value or importance.

The Buddhist way of life, however, is an intense process of cleansing one's speech, action and thought. It is self-development and self-purification. The emphasis is on practical results and not mere philosophical spe.ulation, logical abstraction or even mere cogitation.

In strong language did the Buddha warn his followers against mere book learning thus:

"Though he recites the sacred texts a lot but acts not accordingly, that headless man is like a cowherd counting others' cattle (not obtaining the products of the cow). He shares not the fruits of the tranquil man.

"Though he recites only a little of the sacred texts but acts in accordance with the teaching,

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1 Digha N. 4.

abandoning lust, hate and delusion, possessed of right understanding, his mind entirely released and clinging to nothing here or hereafter. he shares the fruits of the tranquil man." [1]

These are clear indications that the Buddhist way of life, the Buddhist method of grasping the highest truth, awakening from ignorance to full knowledge, does not depend on mere academic intellectual development, but on a practical teaching that leads the follower to enlightenment and final deliverance.

The Buddha was more concerned with beings than with inanimate nature. His sole object was to unravel the mystery of existence, to solve the problems of becoming. This he did by comprehending in all their fullness the Four Noble Truths, the eternal verities of life.

This knowledge of the truths he tried to impart to those who sought it, and never forced it upon others. He never compelled or persuaded people to follow him, for compulsion and coercion were foreign to his method of teaching. He did

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1. *Dhammapada* 19, 20.

not encourage his disciples to believe him blindly, but wished them to investigate his teaching which invited the seeker to 'come and see' (*ehipassika*). It is seeing and understanding, and not blind believing, that the Master approved.

To understand the world within, one must develop the Inner faculties, one's mind. The Buddha says: "Mind your mind". [1] "The wise tame themselves." [2]

Today there is ceaseless work going on in all directions to improve the world. Scientists are pursuing their methods and experiments with undiminished vigour and determination. Modern discoveries and methods of communication and contact have produced startling results. All these improvements, though they have their advantages and rewards, are entirely material and external.

Within this conflux of mind and body of man, however, there are unexplored marvels to occupy men of science for many many years.

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1. Digha N. 16. 2. *Dhammapada* 80.

Really, the world, which the scientists are trying to improve, is, according to the ideas of Buddhism, subject to so much change at all points on its circumference and radii, that it is not capable of being made sorrowfree.

Our life is so dark with ageing, so smothered with death, so bound with change, and these qualities are so inherent in it—even as greenness is to grass, and bitterness to quinine—that not all the magic and witchery of science can ever transform it. The immortal splendour of an eternal sunlight awaits only those who can use the light of understanping and the culture of conduct to illuminate and guard their path through life's tunnel of darkness and dismay.

The people of the world today mark the changing nature of life. Although they see it, they do not keep it in mind and act with dispassionate discernment. Though change again and again speaks to them and makes them unhappy, they pursue their mad career of whirling round the wheel of existence and are twisted and torn between the spokes of agony.

After all, a scientist or a plain man, if he has not understocd the importance of conduct, the urgency for wholesome endeavour, the necessity to apply knowledge to life, is, so far as the doctrine of the Buddha is concerned, an immature person, who has yet to negotiate many more hurdles before he wins the race of life and the immortal prize of *Nibbana*.

For an understanding of the world within, science may not be of much help to us. Ultimate truth cannot be found in science. To the scientist, knowledge is something that ties him more and more to this sentient existence. That knowledge, therefore, is not saving knowledge. To one who views the world and all it holds in its proper perspective, the primary concern of life is not mere speculation or vain voyaging into the imaginary regions of high fantasy, but the gaining of true happiness and freedom from ill or unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*). To him true knowledge depends on the central question: Is this learning according to actuality? Can it be of use to us in the conquest of mental peace and tranquillity, of real happiness?

To understand the world within we need the guidance, the instruction of a competent and genuine seer whose clarity of vision and depth of insight penetrate into the deepest recesses of life and cognize the true nature that underlies all appearance. He, indeed, is the true philosopher, the true scientist who has grasped the meaning of change in the fullest sense and has transmuted this understanding into a realization of the deepest truths fathomable by man—the truths of the three signs or characteristics *(ti-lakkhaṇa)*: Impermanence, Unsatisfactoriness, Non-self (*anicca, dukkha, anattā*). [1] No more can he be confused by the terrible or swept off his feet by the glamour of things ephemeral. No more is it possible for him to have a clouded view of phenomena; for he has transcended all capacity for error through the perfect immunity which insight alone can give.

The Buddha is such a seer, and his path to deliverance is open to all who have eyes to see

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1. The true nature of the five aggregates, or mind and body, is grasped and seen in the light of these characteristics. Such seeing is known as Insight (*Vipassanā ñāṇa*).

and minds to understand. It is different from other paths to 'salvation'; for the Buddha teaches that each individual, whether layman or monk, is solely responsible for his own liberation.

Mankind is caught in a tangle, inner as well as outer, and the Buddha's infallible remedy, in brief, is this: "The prudent man full of effort, established well in Virtue, develops Concentration and Wisdom and succeeds in solving the tangle." [1]

The Buddha's foremost admonition to his sixty immediate Arahat disciples was that the Dhamma should be promulgated for the welfare and happiness of many; out of compassion for the world. [2] The whole dispensation of the Master is permeated with that salient quality of universal loving compassion.

Sīla or Virtue, the initial stage of the Path, is based on this loving compassion. Why should one refrain from harming and robbing other people? Is it not because of love for self and others? Why should one succour the poor, the

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1. *Samyutta N.* 1, 13. 2. *Vianya Mahāvagga.*

needy and those in distress ? Is it not out of compassion for those others ?

To abstain from evil and do good is the function of *sīla*, [1] the code of conduct taught in Buddhism. This function is never void of loving compassion. *Sīla* embraces within it qualities of the heart, such as love, modesty, tolerance, pity, charity and happiness at the success of others, and so forth. *Samādhi* and *paññā*, or Concentration and Wisdom, are concerned with the discipline of the mind.

As stated above, three factors of the Eightfold Path (Nos: 3, 4 and 5) form the Buddhist code of conduct (*sīla*). They are: Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood.

Right Speech is to abstain (a) from falsehood and always speak the truth; (b) from tale-bearing which brings about discord and disharmony, and to speak words that are conducive to concord and harmony; (c) from harsh and abusive speech, and instead to speak kind and refined words; and (d) from idle chatter, vain talk or gossip and

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1. *Vism: sīlaniddesa.*

instead to speak words which are meaningful and blameless.

Right Action is abstention from (a) killing, (b) stealing, and (c) illicit sexual indulgence, and cultivating compassion, taking only things that are given, and living pure and chaste.

Right Livelihood is abandoning wrong ways of living which bring harm and suffering to others: Trafficking (a) in arms and lethal weapons, (b) in animals for slaughter, (c) in human beings (i. e. dealing in slaves which was prevalent during the time of the Buddha), (d) in intoxicating drinks and (e) poisons; and living by a profession which is blameless and free from harm to oneself and others.

From this outline of Buddhist ethics, it is clear that the code of conduct set forth by the Buddha is no mere negative prohibition but an affirmatiou of doing good—a career paved with good intentions for the welfare and happiness of all mankind. These moral principles aim at making society secure by promoting unity, harmony and right relations among people.

This code of conduct (*sīla*) is the first stepping stone of the Buddhist Way of Life. It is the basis for mental development. One who is intent on meditation or concentration of mind must develop a love of virtue; for it is Virtue that nourishes mental life and makes it steady and calm.

The next stage in the Path to Deliverance is Mental Culture, Concentration (*samādhi*), which includes three other factors of the Eightfold Path: they are, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration (Nos. 6, 7 and 8).

Right Effort is the persevering endeavour (a) to prevent the arising of evil and unwholesome thoughts that have not yet arisen in a man's mind, (b) to discard such evil thoughts already arisen, (c) to produce and develop wholesome thoughts not yet arisen and (d) to promote and maintain the good thoughts already present.

The function of this sixth factor, therefore, is to be vigilant and check all unhealthy thoughts, and to cultivate, promote and maintain wholesome and pure thoughts arising in a man's mind.

The prudent man who masters his speech and his physical actions through *sīla* (virtue) now makes every endeavour to scrutinize his thoughts, his mental factors, and to avoid distracting thoughts.

Right Mindfulness is the application or arousing of attention in regard to the (a) activities of the body (*kāyānupassanā*), (b) feelings or sensations (*vedanānupassanā*), (c) the activities of the mind (*cittānupassanā*) and (d) mental objects (*dhammānupassanā*).

As these factors of the Path are interdependent and co-operating, Right Mindfulness aids Right Effort and together they can check the arising of unwholesome thoughts already entertained. The man vigilant in regard to his actions, verbal, physical and mental, avoids all that is detrimental to his (spiritual) progress. Such a one cannot be mentally indolent and supine. The well-known discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness (*Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta*) [1] deals comprehensively with this fourfold Mindfulness.

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1. See The Wheel No. 19.

Right Concentration is the intensified steadiness of the mind comparable to the unflickering flame of a lamp in a windless place. It is concentration that fixes the mind right and causes it to be unmoved and undisturbed. The correct practice of *Samādhi* (concentration or mental discipline) maintains the mind and the mental properties in a state of balance. Many are the mental impediments that confront a yogi, a meditator, but with the support of Right Effort and Right Mindfulness the fully concentrated mind is capable of dispelling the impediments, the passions that disturb man. The perfectly concentrated mind is not distracted by sense objects, for it sees things as they really are, in their proper perspective.

Thus mastering the mind, and not allowing the mind to master him, the yogi cultivates true Wisdom (*paññā*) which consists of the first two factors and the final stage of the Path, namely, Right Understanding and Right Thought.

Right Thought includes thoughts of renunciation (*nekkhamma - sankappa*), good will

(*avyāpāda-sankappa*) and of compassion or non-harm (*avihimsā-sankappa*). These thoughts are to be cultivated and extended towards all living beings irrespective of race, caste, clan or creed. As they embrace all that breathes there are no compromising limitations. The radiation of such ennobling thoughts is not possible for one who is egocentric and selfish.

A man may be intelligent, erudite and learned, but if he lacks right thoughts, he is, according to the teaching of the Buddha, a fool (*bāla*) not a man of understanding and insight. If we view things with dispassionate discernment, we will understand that selfish desire, hatred and violence cannot go together with true Wisdom. Right Understanding or true Wisdom is always permeated with right thoughts and never bereft of them.

Right Understanding, in the ultimate sense, is to understand life as it really is. For this, one needs a clear comprehension of the four Noble Truths, namely: The Truth of (a) *Dukkha*, Suffering or Unsatisfactoriness, (b) the Arising

of *Dukkha*, (c) the Cessation of *Dukkha* and (d) the Path leading to the Cessation of *Dukkha*.

Right Understanding or penetrative Wisdom is the result of continued and steady practice of meditation or careful cultivation of the mind. To one endowed with Right Understanding it is impossible to have a clouded view of phenomena, for he is immune from all impurities and has attained the unshakable deliverance of the mind (*akuppā cetovimutti*).

The careful reader will now be able to understand how the three groups, Virtue, Concentration and Wisdom, function together for one common end: Deliverance of the Mind (*ceto-vimutti*), and how through genuine cultivation of man's mind, and through control of actions, both physical and verbal, purity is attained. It is through self-exertion and self-development that the aspirant secures freedom, and not through praying to and petitioning an external agency. This indeed is the *Dhamma* discovered by the Buddha, made use of by him for full enlightenment and revealed to the others:

"Virtue, and concentration, wisdom, supreme
freedom,
These things the Illustrious Gotama realized.
Thus fully understanding them the Buddha,
Ender of Ill, the Teacher, the Seeing One
Utterly calmed, taught the *Dhamma* to
the monks." [1]

In spite of the scientific knowledge that is steadily growing the people of the world are restless and racked with fear and discontent. They are intoxicated with the desire to gain fame, wealth, power and to satisfy the senses. To this troubled world still seething with hate, distrust, selfish desire and violence, most timely is the Buddha's Message of love and understanding, the Noble Eightfold Path, referring to which the Buddha says:

"This is the path itself,
For none other leads
To purity of vision:
If you follow it and so confuse
King Māra, all suffering will end.

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1. *Anguttara N.* ii. 2; A. iv. 106; Digha N. ii. 123.

Since I have learned how to remove
The thorns, [1] I have revealed the path.
You yourselves should (always) strive,
Tathāgatas only teach.
Those who walk in meditation [2]
Free themselves from Mara's bondage." [3]

1. Thorns of passionate desire and so forth.
2. Both concentrative calm (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassana*).
3. *Dhammapada* 274, 275.

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Buddhism and Mysticism

P. M. Rao

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and

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ESCAPISM AND ESCAPE

How does one really distinguish between these two words? The dictionary meanings are pretty clear — "Escape" is the emerging from bondage into freedom, "Escapism" is flight from reality. If all of us were agreed on what is reality and what is bondage the millennium would be here now; but in the world as it is, the materialists sneer at the religious people because they (the materialists) *know* that everything in this world is conditioned and it is escapist nonsense to talk of "The Unconditioned". The religious people on the other hand look at the materialists with pity as these poor fellows escape into their earthly paradise of "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die", and they do not have the courage or even the desire to think of the possibility of a hereafter. But the fruitfulness of the

materialist doctrine seen in the triumphs of science has made the religious people less sure of themselves — this is seen in their attempts to show how very scientific their own religion is, thus unconsciously accepting the canons of science as the criteria for all reasonable thinking. Every religious philosophy must stand or fall on its own merits as a complete system. It is irrelevent to show, for instance, that both science and Buddhism take their stand on causality and that both find no use for words like "soul" and "substance": for, when it comes to Kamma or moral causation the Buddhist has to part company with the scientist, because the latter finds no use for this word either. The danger of eclecticism is that, ultimately, we may pretend to see in the teachings of the Blessed One fundamental ideas never taught by Him.

I am here laying emphasis on the eclectic tendencies shown by the followers of the Dhamma in recent times because the inroads made by philosophies alien to the spirit of the Dhamma can be seen even in the pages of Buddhist magazines. To take an instance, a certain author

writes: — "All sublimations, substitutions and repressions are temporary escapes which bring in their train more aches and dis-ease. To control the mind according to a certain pattern or mould is simply to imprison it; there is no freedom in such devices. It is by passive and alert observation of the ways of the mind without condemnation or justification that the mind could experience a stillness and freedom not bound to time." These views are re-inforced by another writer in a book review where the writer thinks that the practice of mindfulness of in-breathing and out-breathing is good to start with, but one must rise above it to excercise choiceless awareness in regard to the working of one's own mind. Compare the state-ments of these two writers with the following extracts from the scriptures:

"What now is the effort to Avoid? There, the disciple incites his will to avoid the arising of evil, unwholesome things that have not yet arisen, and he strives, puts forth his energy, strains his mind and struggles . . . he watches over his senses, restrains his senses" (A. IV 13).

"If those monks, O monks, who are learners, who have not yet attained to that unsurpassed security from bondage, were to dwell developing and making much of the samādhi of Inbreathing and Outbreathing, it will be conducive to the attainment of the destruction of the Āsavas" (S. 54-12-12).

It would be worthwhile to enquire into the philosophy whence these new ideas, so diametrically opposed to those of the Buddha, have been adopted: I am referring to the philosophy of Mr. J. Krishnamurti. This is a highly original philosophy, compact and independent, with but a superficial resemblance to the Dhamma. The point I wish to make is that the exercise of choiceless awareness of the workings of one's own mind is an integral part of this new philosophy and it cannot be adopted as a method of meditation practice without admitting by implication that the Dhamma as taught by the Blessed One is either incomplete and therefore capable of improvement, or that it is, like other religions, escapist. If, in anyone's view, it is indeed escapist, the right thing to do is to give it up rather than pay lip sympathy to it.

In the interests of clarity of thought I shall try to state in brief the substance of Mr. Krishnamurti's philosophy and then attempt an analysis. If by any chance I have made any mis-statements I am always open to correction. As I understand it, it is as follows:

The world is a chaos because of our greed, ambition, ill-will and fear. To make this a better world we either join organisations if we are inclined towards social work or politics, or turn towards Gurus if religiously inclined, hoping that by these means we can accomplish our ends. We do not realize that the individual *is* the world, and if the individual were without greed or ambition there could be no chaos in the world. In our attempts to solve the problem we create two kinds of hierarchies—the outer, consisting of individuals who are social, political or religious leaders to whom we turn for guidance, and an inner hierarchy of values by which everything is judged and arranged according to values. Neither the outer nor the inner hierarchies are of any use since they merely help to distort our minds' perception of reality. The mind

depends upon two kinds of memories—one, the factual, which is essential for the purpose of making a living and carrying on our daily routines, and the other, the psychological memory which thinks of things in terms of values and hence of arranging everything according to some pattern. This pattern, which is built on the memories of past experiences, blurs and distorts our vision of reality. But reality is ever new and we interpret the new in terms of the old, and hence we never see reality as it is. By comparing other peoples' possessions or intelligence or status with one's own one develops envy, ambition, greed etc., and therefore one lives either regretting the past or hoping or fearing for the future, but never living in the living present. Even the future we conjure up is but a projection of the past—thus we either find life dull because we ever see the old, or we are frustrated because we are unable to free ourselves from the bondage of the old. Therefore we set out to attain the real and think we can do it by means of self-discipline and a gradual process of modification of the self. But, in reality, there is no such thing as a self. It is a creation of the

thoughts in search of security in a world that can never give security. Psychological memories strengthen this imaginary self, because everything is thought of in terms of "me" and "mine". Self-discipline which is meant to transform the self merely ends up by strengthening it still further. Why is reality not attainable through a course of self-discipline? Because reality has no abode, no beginning, no end, it is not related to time and hence cannot be "attained" by a process which is based on the thought "I shall gradually discipline myself and next year or in my next birth I shall attain reality". Reality is to be discovered from moment to moment and there can be no set pattern or way or method of attaining it in time. Meditation can help in this, but meditation is not concentration since concentration is but inverted distraction, an attempt to fit the mind into a pattern. True meditation is where the mind watches with attention its own workings without condemnation or justification because in this way one breaks away from the bonds of psychological memory. One does not even analyse the thoughts, because to analyse is to divide the mind into two compartments—the

analyser and the analysed. In the absence of psychological memory the mind becomes truly integrated because now there is no conflict between unconscious longings and conscious taboos. Such a mind becomes alert, simple, innocent, and in a position to experience the real without the haze of memory to obscure the vision. With such a mind one sees the greed and violence in the world and immediately drops the greed and violence in oneself, not in time but instantaneously. Such a mind does not look for results but thinks rightly because it is the right thing to do. It does not even "practise choice-less awareness" because to practise is to post-pone for the morrow something that can be discovered here and now.

In the above philosophy we instantly perceive striking resemblances to the Dhamma. There is recognition of the chaos of the world (Dukkha), its cause is traced to greed, ill-will etc. (Dukkha samudaya), that it is possible to make an end of it (Dukkha nirodha) though there is no set way to its ending. But reality is timeless (akāliko), to be discovered from moment to

moment (sandiṭṭhiko), to be realised by oneself (paccattam veditabbo). But the differences are no less striking—any kind of effort or discipline whatsoever leads to strengthening of the self, and that anything other than choiceless awareness is not true meditation.

With so much in common, where exactly do they disagree? Both start by accepting the fact of Dukkha and both trace its origin to men's greed, ill-will and stupidity, but they part company when tracing the origin of greed and ill-will. The Dhamma teaches that it is due to not realizing the impermanence of all conditioned things with thoughts of "me" and "mine". Mr. Krishnamurti thinks it is due to our habit of comparing, contrasting, judging, condemning and justifying things, in other words, of assigning values to things, this valuation being based on the emotional residue clinging to our memories of events. He says we compare ourselves with others and thus allow envy to be born; we constantly judge things—"this is good, this is bad", "this is better, and this is worse". In the world of facts as in the world of science the division is

between the true and the false only and not between the better and the worse. He traces the conflicts in the mind due to the conscious mind judging all longings arising from the unconscious as good or bad, justifying the good and condemning the bad, thus creating "a house divided". But if Mr. Krishnamurti's analysis be taken seriously then the very values with which he starts and on which he founds his philosophy vanish disconcertingly as a result of this analysis. If we never contrasted chaos with order, greed with benevolence and ill-will with loving-kindness we could never come to the conclusion that the world is in chaos due to greed and ill-will. What I mean will become clearer if I point out that his error is a semantic one. He appears to think that words like "chaos", "greed", "ill-will" etc. have two kinds of content—a factual content and an emotional content. He appears to think that if we ignore the purely emotional content of these words we shall be able to arrive at the purely factual content—thus making it possible for us to see things as they are. But this is a fallacy. The science of semantics shows us that words like "chaos" in Mr. Krishnamurti's sense

or words like "greed", "ill-will" etc. have absolutely no factual content. They are all what are known as "coloured" words, the colouring being given by our emotions. Let me illustrate this by analysing our attitude towards the act of killing. When we disapprove of it we call it "murder", and when we approve of it we call it "war". But if we remove the emotional content from these words it is impossible to say whether killing should be permitted or not. That the chaos in this world should be removed, that humanity must be saved, are all decisions that can be arrived at only with reference to what we as human beings feel about humanity. Nature, because she has no emotions, saves as well as kills all impartially. Only human beings can be compassionate and loving because of their emotions. "'Chaos" in a scientific sense is a term to denote thc state to which all organized systems tend in time. It has nothing to do with the "chaos" of Mr. Krishnamurti. If we remove the emotional contents of the words "greed" and "ill-will", they would turn into empty shells. People behave towards each other in certain ways—when we approve of them we use words

ilke "benevolence" and "kindness", and if we disapprove of them we use the words "greed" and "ill-will"—but this approval as well as disapproval are themselves based on emotional valuation. If all our so-called psychological memories were wiped out we would certainly see things as they are but not as wise human beings would do but as cameras and tape-recorders would do. It is impossible to have fellow-feelings with other living beings without having recourse to our emotional nature. In one of his talks he says that the beauty of the present sunset is spoiled by the memory of past sunsets. If we had no memory of past sunsets, if we had never classified things as beautiful and ugly, if we never had preferred one combination of colours to another, then our talk of the "beauty" of the present sunset would lose all meaning.

Besides, Mr. Krishnamurti's attitude towards judgment and comparison cannot be consistently maintained. In every talk purporting to show the ills arising out of analyses and comparisons one finds detailed analyses and comparisons of the motives of gurus and politicians. If he were

not carried away by his theories he would have perceived that not all psychological memories with their judgments and comparisons distort reality—for, if that were so, he must admit that when he speaks of "Hindus, Buddhists, Catholics or some such other silly sect" he is resorting to distortion of reality.

To come to the "piece de resistence" of his philosophy which appeals to so many of our present-day intellectuals—his "choiceless awareness of the working of one's own mind", "the watching of the workings of one's own mind without condemnation, justification or analysis". This is supposed to "integrate the mind" by removing the conflict between the conscious and unconscious states of the mind. Let us try to understand this with the help of a parable. Suppose an evil faction has taken over reins of government in a state. There is a natural conflict between the rulers and the ruled, and there are sporadic revolts ruthlessly suppressed by the rulers. Then a wise man arises among the people and proposes a solution that is astounding in its simplicity. The conflict, he tells the people, is

simply because we sit in judgement over the acts of the rulers; we approve of some of their acts and disapprove of others. But if the people refused to condemn or justify or even to analyse the acts of the rulers it would create a marvellous integration of the state. There would be no conflict and the people would be in direct touch with reality. I do not know whether this method of integration appealed to the foolish people of the state, but there are many clever people to whom the parallel method for the integration of the mind appeals very strongly. In short it is the art of resolving a problem by ignoring its existence. We can judge the worth of this philosophy by applying it to the animal world: there is no conflict here between the conscious and the unconscious, there is no invention here of a self to be the secure centre of an insecure world, nor is there a classification here of "better" and "worse"—has that made the animal world less chaotic? The palpitating heart of a deer as it leaps at the crackle of a twig and the terrible fangs of the tiger sunk in the bloody entrails of its victim give an emphatic no to this view. It is not because we judge and compare that we have

a distorted view of reality but because we judge and compare wrongly. It is not because we think of things as good and bad that there is misery in this world, but because we have not worked out the right criteria by which to judge what is good and what is bad.

How does one truly integrate the mind? It is a psychological fact that repression drives the evil down into the unconscicus—but repression takes place only when the mind is not alert and allows the wrong sorts of emotion to overwhelm one. But when the mind is alert and steadfast all the repressed thoughts come up into the conscious, and if these thoughts are one by one calmly analysed, an inner transformation takes place and one finds one's evil tendencies gradually attenuated. Compare the historical parallel of the conflict between Asoka and the Kalingas having been resolved by the spiritual conversion of Asoka. Mr. Krishnamurti's criticism of one who undertakes discipline so as to postpone having to give up the violence in his heart now, is valid if the man is capable of understanding in himself the process of the arising of violence and

yet refuses to drop the violence instantly. But what of those who are sincerely groping after such an understanding? One of Mr. Krishnamurti's listeners once confessed at a meeting in Madras that after years of listening to him, he had seen no change in himself—thus showing that a man may listen sincerely for years without developing the understanding; perhaps a course of disciplined thinking would have helped him.

To say that any kind of effort or discipline leads to the strengthening of the self is distortion of facts. The Blessed One realised that clinging to the five constituents as "this is mine, this am I, this is my self" gave rise to greed, ill-will and stupidity and hence advised the discipline of regarding everything as "this is not mine, this am I not, this is not my self". No amount of analysis can reveal in this discipline any element conducive to the strengthening of the self.

Another catchy little phrase that beguiles is that reality is timeless and "the timeless cannot be attained in time" but instantaneously. But

even an instant is an instant in time, and if reality cannot be attained in time it cannot be attained at all. But if reality can be "discovered" as he himself puts it, then it can certainly be discovered in time, for, conditioning is a process that has arisen in time and therefore can be put an end to in time.

In the end I wish to say that with all the moral and religious fervour that pervades his talks, the spirit of Mr. Krishnamurti's philosophy is essentially alien to the spirit of the Dhamma. All said and done, I must concede that each man accepts what appears to him to be reasonable, but that should not lead to turning the Dhamma into an eclectic religion—or should it? "Whatever was said by the Buddha" they used to say, "is well said". But to alter this statement to "Whatever is well said must have been said by the Buddha" is either a sign of degeneration or a sign of "growth and development"—one of these is certainly a path of escape and the other of escapism. Which one is which I leave to the predilection of the reader.

BUDDHISM AND MYSTICISM

The word Mysticism is used here not in the general sense of ineffable religious experience but in the narrower sense of a special interpretation of it according to which "The phenomenal world of matter and of individualized consciousness—the world of things and animals and men and even gods—is the manifestation of a Divine Ground within which all partial realities have their being and apart from which they would be non-existent."[1] The mystic asserts in other words that there is a highest reality called variously the Absolute, the Godhead, Brahman etc., and the world around us is a manifestation of this Absolute and what the mystic feels during

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1 Aldous Huxley at p. 13 of Bhagavad-Gita by Swami Prabhanand a and Christopher Isherwood, Mentor Religious Classic.

his ecstasy is an awareness of the identity of the individual self with the Absolute or Great Self. Many great scholars, wise in the ways of mystics all the world over, have tried to show that the Buddha also was a mystic in this sense; that though he was silent about Brahman the idea peeps out, they say, in such words as brahmacariya, brahmavihāra, brahmacakka, and brahmabhūta (translated by them as God-faring, God-abiding, the Wheel of God, and become-Brahma). One occidental scholar has even gone so far as to accuse the wicked Theravadin monks of deliberately suppressing all references to Atman and Brahman from their scriptures. Some other scholars have conveniently translated the Pali word Attā by the words "SELF" or "Self" to suit their theories. Such "higher criticism" by which one can see anywhere what one fondly wishes to see must be a pleasant task. Here I intend to attempt a lower and more humdrum type of criticism, and in the process I may possibly tread on some pet corns.

To begin with let us read a description of mystic experience, shorn ot all interpretations,

from the pen of a sceptic: ". . . . it brings an unusually precise and poignant awareness both of my present surroundings and of things remote in space and in time. It seems to be simply a very comprehensive act of attention, an attending to everything at once. And in response to all that this act of attention reveals I feel a very special emotion, which I can describe only as a tension of fervour and peace."[2] Such a vision is described in the Pali scriptures as "the pure and stainless Eye of Truth" and invariably the only comment accompanying this vision is:

"Whatsoever is of an originating nature is subject to cessation."

Compared with this restrained and truly Buddhist statement of facts we have picturesque and glowing accounts by the mystics:

"For he was then one with God, and retained no difference, either in relation to himself or to others."[3]

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2 From Olaf Stapledon's 'Saints and Revolutionaries' quoted in 'The Physical Basis of Personality" by V. H. Mottram. Pelican Book A 139, p. 153.

3 Plotinos, quoted in 'Eastern Religions and Western Thought' by S. Radhakrishnan, p. 50.

"All at once . . . an astonishing radiance welled up on all the familiar things and in the child herself. They were no longer just themselves, separate objects with edges of their own; they were that radiance."[4] But the most illuminating of all such statements is by the sceptic Stapledon himself:

"In spite of all the frustration and horror of the human world, I am at these times perfectly sure that all our suffering and all our baseness is somehow needed, not for our personal salvation, for of this I know nothing, but for the rightness of the universe as a whole."[5]

Here we see clearly the difference between the Buddhist and mystical interpretations of the religious experience. The Buddhist is aware, in the clarity of his vision, only of the impermanence of all component things, while the mys ic identifies himself with the life-affirming forces of the universe thought of as concentrated in an

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4 Lady Acland at p. 154 of "Physical Basis of Personality" op. cit.

5 Ibid, p. 157.

Absolute which is the fountainhead of all life. When the Bodhisattva sat under the Bodhi tree Māra attacked him with all forms of horrors and temptations; and perhaps the mystic interpretation was the subtlest and most potent temptation of all and the hardest to reject.

Certain conclusions are inevitable if we accept this mystical interpretation. If the Absolute is the fountainhead of the whole world as well as of all the living things in it, then all the evil in the world also has risen from the same source; and Stapledon's conclusion that all the frustration and horror of the world are somehow necessary for "the rightness of the universe as a whole" is the only proper conclusion. We must love all living beings because all life is one and the same Universal Principle pervades them all, the mystics tell us. If this is so there are other conclusions that can equally well be drawn: for, Krishna tells Arjuna in the Bhagavadgītā—"He who regardeth this (Atman) as a slayer and he who thinks he is slain, both of them are ignorant. He slayeth not, nor is he slain."[6]

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6 II, 19.

The logic is unanswerable. If the Atman is neither the slayer nor the slain then it does not matter in the least whether you love or slay other beings. As a matter of fact the main purpose of the Gītā was to induce Arjuna to kill his cousins and teachers in warfare. The mystic cannot be consistent—he has no valid answer for the ills of the world since ultimately everything arose out of the Absolute. Aldous Huxley with all his enthusiasm for the Perennial Philosophy is forced to supplement it by adding — "Some actions are intrinsically evil or inexpedient, and no good intentions, no conscious offering of them to God, no renunciation of the fruits can alter their essential character."[7] The appeal to Avidya as the cause of the feeling of separateness from each other and from the Absolute is vain since Avidya (Ignorance) in the form of Māya is an essential power of the Godhead, or as the Gītā says it: "The lord dwelleth in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, by his illusive Power(Māya) causing all beings to revolve as though mounted

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7 P. 20, Bhagavad Gita by Swami Prabhavananda, op. cit.

on a potter's wheel"[8] or as Stapledon put it, all the suffering and baseness are *needed* for the "rightness" of the world as a whole.

If the mystical philosophy were to be made the basis of a philosophy of life, then we shall have to accept the world as it is with all its lust, hatred and delusion, and throw overboard all ethical considerations. If we look at all ethical and humanist ideals we see that they are essentially attempts by man to curb his normal life-affirming instincts to kill, to acquire property, to have promiscuous sexual satisfaction, to lie and chatter and to fuddle his brains to escape having to face the hard facts of life, ideas that form the basis of the Pañcasīla. And all ethical systems are failures to the extent they come to terms with the life-affirming forces.

It may be objected that some of the greatest saints of the world have been mystics and they have been the personifications of loving-kindness. But this is the greatest of tragedies—that even those who overcame their life-affirming instincts

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8 VIII, 61.

and were imbued with love for all living beings finally fell victim to Māra's greatest and subtlest of temptations. They are a warning to us of the tragic consequences of renunciation unaccompanied by Prajña (Wisdom). The Buddhist Arahat in renouncing everything finds nothing at all with which he can identify himself saying "I am this" and without attempting to reconcile the good with the bad sees things as they are; the mystical saint begins by renouncing everything but ends up by identifying himself with the very source of everything saying "I am Brahman" because this alone reconciles him to life and gives him peace of mind. The Pāli scriptures contain several examples of warnings against Māra's subtlest trap; the most telling to my mind is at Majjhima XLIX wherein the Buddha pays a visit to Brahmā who says of the world of which he is ruler:

"Here is the eternal, here is the persistent, here is the everlasting, here is indissolubility and immutability, here there is no birth nor old age, nor death, nor passing away and reappearance; and another, higher liberation there is not."

And Māra entering into one of the devas says to the Buddha:

"O monk, beware of him. He is Brahmā, the omnipotent, the invincible, the all-seeing, the sovereign, the lord, the creator, the preserver, the father of all that has been and of all that will be . . . . ." The Buddha's reply contains the warning to all would-be mystics:

"Well I know you, Malign One, abandon your hope: 'He knows me not'; you are Māra the Malign. And this Brahmā here, O Malign One, these gods of Brahmā, these celestial companies of Brahmā, they are all in your hand, they are all in your power. You, O Malign One, certainly think: 'He also must be in my power!' I, however, O Malign One, am not in your hand, I am not in your power". The conclusion to be drawn from this is clear. Even the Isvara, "the Creator and Preserver", is in the hands of Māra for the simple reason that Avidya, the basis of lust for life, is the real creator and preserver of the world. But Avidya in Buddhism is not the Causeless Cause of Saṁsāra; it is a simple ignorance of the Four Noble Truths of Suffering.

Nowhere in the whole of the Pali scriptures do you find Nirvāna, the Buddhist Absolute, described as the ground of all existence—on the contrary it is described as the very negation of all life-affirmation; either simply as "the destruction of lust, of hatred, of delusion," or more elaborately :

"There is, monks, a condition wherein there is neither earth, nor water, nor fire, nor air, nor the sphere of the void, nor the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception : where there is no "this world" and no "world beyond;" where there is no moon and no sun. That condition, monks, do I call neither a coming nor a going nor a standing still nor a falling away nor a rising up: but it is without fixity, without mobility, without basis. That is the end of woe."

If all life is one, this oneness must be most in evidence when many people congregate. It would be interesting to know what it is that is common to all living beings. Jung's analytical psychology tell us it is the collective unconscious with its archetypes ; and when people in whom

the same archetype is active collect together it drives them to act in an irrational way. This accounts for the brutal behaviour of large mobs, and even normally quiet and well-behaved people have been known to perpetrate unheard of atrocities while participating in the activities of mobs. " . . . even a collection of highly intelligent people will act at a much lower level of intelligence than its individual members, and Jung once said bitingly that a hundred intelligent heads added up to a hydrocephalus."[9] Thus that which is common to all living beings is not so much the Atman as the lust for life. It is for this reason that the Buddha showed His greatness as a psychologist when, in the quintessence of the Dhamma given to the nun Gotami, He said "Of whatsoever teaching thou art sure that it leads to . . . the love of society and not to the love of solitude . . . that is not the Dhamma, that is not the Vinaya, that is not the teaching of the Master."

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9 An Introduction to Jung's Psychology by Freda Fordham. Pelican Book, A 273, p. 118.

The Arahat pervades all beings with thoughts of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity not because "all life is one", not because "the Atman dwells in all beings", but because in him the negativs virtues of Pañca-sīla have fully flowered into the positive virtues of brahmavihāra; and to think such thoughts is as much his nature as it is for the sun to shine—or as the Itivuttaka puts it:

"Just as, monks, in the last month of the rains, in autumn time, when the sky is opened up and cleared of clouds, the sun, leaping up into the firmament, drives away all darkness from the heavens and shines and burns and flashes forth—even so, monks, whatsoever grounds there be for good works undertaken with a view to rebirth, all of them are not one-sixteenth part of that loving-kindness which is the heart's release; loving-kindness alone, which is the heart's release shines and burns and flashes forth in surpassing them".

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OUR REACTIONS TO DUKKHA

"Now this, monks, is the Noble Truth about Ill. Birth is Ill, Ageing is Ill, Sickness is Ill, Death is Ill, likewise Sorrow and Grief, Woe, Lamentation and Despair. To be conjoined with things we dislike, to be separated from things which we like—that also is Ill. Not to get what one wants, that also is Ill, In a word, this Body, this fivefold mass which is based on grasping, that is Ill,"

Samy. Nik. V,

Here, bleak and uncompromising, is the First Noble Truth. To understand it "according to reality" is the hard-won privilege of the Stream Winner, the result of earnest contemplation. But it seems possible that we can condition our minds intellectually in such a way that, when the right time comes, the Truth will reveal itself. The more we know about Ill the more

clearly shall we see the unsatisfactory state of "being" in which we find ourselves, and the "dry method" of approach will perhaps enable us to face up to Ill in all its myriad manifestations.

There is no English word that will render all the meanings of the Pali *dukkha*. "Ill" serves the purpose pretty well, so to a certain extent do the terms "suffering" and "anguish." There remains a deeper, more general meaning, given by Evola as "a state of agitation, of restlessness or commotion rather than suffering . . . it is the antithesis of unshakeable calm."

There are three different angles from which we can consider the way that *dukkha* impinges on the senses.

1. *Generalised Dukkha*. The mass suffering due to war, famine and pestilence that overwhelms large groups of humanity at the same time, and the less appreciated concealed *dukkha*, common to all, dependent on our underlying restlessness and discontent—the rubs and frustrations of everyday life, and the moods and emotions that

interfere with the inner life, which, for want of a better word, we call "spiritual." As St. Paul put it: "We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now."

2. *Adventitious Dukkha.* By this is meant *dukkha* that comes under our immediate observation, but which does not primarily involve ourselves: street accidents, the sick neighbour, the live thrush caught in a strawberry net.

3. *Dukkha that is Private and Personal.* This is the Ill that affects each and all of us according to our kamma, and as such it is of the first importance to our own poor little egos. It will be dealt with more fully later on, but first let us consider some of the reactions that are evoked by dukkha in general.

1. "*Blinkers*". Many people find the thought of suffering very unpleasant, and they try to shut it out as far as possible. "I'm so sensitive I can't *bear* to hear about it," or, more callously, "It's not my funeral." Those who are "born

lucky," or in fortunate circumstances are prone to wear blinkers. These, when they first contact Buddhism, are repelled by the idea that life is fundamentally unsatisfactory; they think of their pleasures past, present and future, and ignore the minor frustrations of everyday life. An extension of the "blinkers" idea is that of the "rose-coloured spectacles," the wearers of which think that "all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds." Voltaire's "Candide" is a bitter satire founded on this theme.

2. *Blind Acceptance.* This is characteristic of animals and some primitive races who accept the miseries of an uncomfortable situation, or the hazards of existence, because such things are part and parcel of their ordinary life.

3. *Prayer* . The reaction of the "faithful" is to look for supernatural aid. This, performed in a somewhat perfunctory fashion, may be a day set apart for nation-wide prayer in the advent of some calamity, or the prayers of an individual in distress. From the Buddhist standpoint this reaction is useless if there be no God, and a gross impertinence if there is one. Psychologi-

cally the individual may feel comforted by the thought that he has shifted his responsibility on to a higher power.

4. *Lamentation.* This is very usual when a valued treasure has been lost, or in the case of bereavement ("Where are you, little only son? Where are you, little only son?" Majjh. Nik. 87). A frequent form of lamentation in the West is "Why should this happen to ME?" Why shouldn't it? Have we never heard of kamma?

5. *Grumbling.* A useless proceeding; moreover it is likely to create fresh *dukkha.* The confirmed grumbler is disliked, and is consequently avoided by his acquaintances who leave him "to stew in his own juice."

6. *Worry and Flurry (Agitation).* This, one of the Five Hindrances, is destructive of Calm. Work is badly performed, and the unfortunate sufferer may in time wear himself to a shadow. "We worry because we want to do so." This is a hard saying, but worth some wise reflection.

7. *To Look for a Quick Remedy.* "I've got a headache. Where's the aspirin?"

8. *Drink and Drugs.* "He drowned his sorrows in drink, and got the helluva hangover!" "She's taken to chain-smoking, and it ain't 'alf done 'er cough good!" The Welfare State has had sad repercussions in the way of addiction to "Tranquillisers" and "Pep Pills", and the smuggling of cocaine and heroin. "Drugging" may take a mental or intellectual form, such as the incessant use of radio and television. The constant reading of sensational literature, space-fiction or who-dun-its, is another example. This sort of thing, especially when read in the small hours, is likely to exacerbate rather than relieve nervous strain.

9. *Hate and Ill-Will.* Another Hindrance, and very liable to crop up when one has suffered a real, or supposed, injury by somebody else. A common example is the "slanging match" that ensues when two motor cars have been in collision. The injured party lets off at the other fool, who immediately retaliates, and so, probably because both are suffering from shock, they increase each other's *dukkha*. On a lesser scale is the ill-will that is engendered when one

encounters a rude shop-assistant, or is pushed about in a queue. The tendency is to shove back, or be sarcastic, and these minor frets linger in the memory for a long time afterwards.

Revenge is a deadly extension of the Hate reaction. "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." The worst results are individual murders, and the age-old blood feud, or vendetta. For the Buddha's advice on this subject see "The Parable of the Saw," Majjh. Nik. 21.

10. *Envy*. "I've been ploughed in my 'finals,' but that blighter X. has pulled off an honours degree!" And so on, in every walk of life. There is one form of envy which we, as Dhamma farers, must be especially careful to avoid. This arises when our own practice is going badly, and we hear of someone else who has "made gains". If we are not careful we fret, and lose heart, with disastrous resuits. Does somebody whisper "*Muditā* - sympathetic joy?" That ought to be the reaction.

11. *Hysterical Outbursts*. This type of reaction is very interesting. Floods of tears, outbursts

of profanity, and the smashing of crockery are frowned upon by society, but in actual fact they have a cathartic effect: a vast accumulation of emotion is worked off in a very short time, and when the sufferers come to their senses they feel much better for having given way.

12. *Enjoyment of suffering*. The worst manifestation is sadism, which is fortunately rare. There is, however, a delight in spectacles that involve suffering to others, such as the gladiatorial combats in ancient Rome, the Spanish bull-fights, and sports that frequently involve serious accidents, These things provide thrills for the spectators who thereby satisfy their craving for sensation. The Tragic Drama of ancient Greece was designed for a different purpose, that of arousing Pity and Terror in the audience. The effect was intended to be cathartic: by witnessing *dukkha* on an Olympian scale the spectators gained a sense of proportion, and were purged of their own emotions. The effect can be quite terrifying; on one occasion a translation of "The Trojan Women" of Euripides, acted on an English stage, reduced the whole audience to

tears. The reaction was a strange mixture of pain and exaltation.

In a more subtle form there is enjoyment of one's personal *dukkha*—the sensation of being a martyr. And it is possible to feel that because one is capable of great suffering this faculty raises one above the insensitive herd. This appears to be a superiority conceit.

13. *Capitalisation of misfortune*, as in the case of midgets, "armless wonders" and Siamese twins who earn their living by exposing their deformities to the public gaze. A degrading example of gain from another's misfortune is the case of the Spanish beggar who displays the distorted legs of his own little boy. A minor example of this is the desire to make the most of one's own affliction as when a blind man or a cripple hurls himself into a stream of traffic because he knows that everything will give way to him. And have not many of us been tempted to prolong a period of convalescence?

14. *Relapse into Dullness (Moha)*. Sometimes it seems that the ego can no longer contend with

life; it throws up the sponge, so to speak, and the sufferer becomes mentally deranged. Any form of mental disorder may occur; and the patient has the doubtful blessing of being freed from his responsibilities. Another type of this reaction occurs in people who, tired out with the hardships and monotony of life, refuse to get out of bed after an illness. There they will lie, year after year, content to spend the rest of their lives as social parasites.

15. *Physical*. *Dukkha*, which is always associated with some kind of emotion, shows out physically in a number of ways. Sudden bad news has the effect of a blow in the stomach, and in times of stress there is a general feeling of weight in the abdomen; continued worry frequently produces gastric troubles of an organic nature. Shock can turn the hair white in the course of a few hours, and fear, now, as in the Buddha's time, can make the hair stand on end (Dig. Nik. I. 2.). Sweating is another phenomenon associated with fear and nervousness, so is palpitation. "My heart went into my boots!" is a common expression signifying a

state of alarm. When anger arises as a result of some unpleasant happening circulatory changes are very common: the red, or even purple, face, and there is a "white anger" that is still more devastating.

16. *Suicide:* the last resort of the anguished. In the eyes of the Western Church it is a "mortal sin"; the law regards it as a crime, and the public believes that it is due to either cowardice or lunacy. The Stoics thought otherwise: "Remember that the door stands open. Be not more fearful than children; but as they, when weary of the game, cry 'I will play no more.' Even so, when thou art in like case, cry 'I will play no more' and depart. But if thou stayest, make no lamentation" (Epictetus). For the Buddhist suicide is a grievous mistake because it is a kamma-producing act, and on account of its violence will produce some violent form of kamma in a future life. The only exception is the Arahant, a perfected one whose kamma is no longer operative; he may end his life how and when he will.

This is a formidable list, though incomplete; the most obvious reaction has been left out. Can readers supply it for themselves? On looking through this unedifying catalogue the writer was horrified to find how many of our reactions to *dukkha* stem from the Three Roots of Evil, Greed, Hate and Delusion. There remain, however, several reactions that are, in the main, healthy.

1. *Endurance.* "The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the Lord." That is the endurance of the "faithful", and it is dangerously near blind acceptance. In Buddhism endurance is a positive virtue which eliminates some of the cankers *(āsavas)*. Uncomfortable physical conditions, minor pains and injuries, "irritating talk" are things to be taken in one's stride, without complaint and without ill-will, and without even the wish for a more comfortable situation (Majjh. Nik. 2.).

2. *The Heroic.* "Curse God and Die!" That is defiance of Fate in the person of Omnipotence.

> "Under the bludgeonings of chance
> My head is bloody, but unbowed."

Pride, "stinking pride", but there is nothing craven in it. A very different heroism is that with which the blind and the disabled fight their way back again into a useful existence, and the unrecognised courage of the women who cope with the *res angusta domi*—the littleness and bitterness that domestic life so often involves. It can be said that the heroic reaction is needful to all of us; only those disciples who possess the Ariyan, or heroic spirit will be able to remain steadfast.

3. *The Philosophic.* "There are worse things happen at sea!" "It'll be all the same in a hundred years." On a somewhat higher level Lady Mary Wortley Montague wrote to Pope: "Let us then, which is the only true philosophy, be contented with our chance of being born in this vile planet, where we shall find however, God be thanked, much to laugh at, though little to approve." For "chance" read kamma, but let us keep the laughter (it is one of the "selling points" of Zen). Humour, besause it is aware of the incongruities of existence, is in reality a sense of proportion. It ought to be possible to

see oneself as of less importance in the general scheme of things than is a solitary louse, crawling down Piccadilly, compared with the rest of London.

4. *The Creative.* Poets, in company with artists and musicians, often find that their best work is done when they are suffering from some stress. *Dukkha* is then kept under control, and actually serves a useful purpose. This reaction occurs in less exalted people who, instead of moping, have the will to get up and *do* something. This is the beginning, in a very modest form, of the virtue of Energy.

5. *Compassion.* This age is usually referred to as money-grubbing and self-centred. But when obvious *dukkha*, of the adventitious order arises there is a quick response. A bad railway accident or a motor smash brings out the fundamental decency of humanity; help is proffered quite regardless of reward, or even of thanks. The infirm and the blind are surprised by the number of helping hands held out to them. On the contrary, the less obvious signs of Ill are usually overlooked. Who has compassion on

the grumblers, the bores, and the poor fools whom we imagine to be inferior to ourselves These people, for whom we have an aversion, are equally in need of compassion. We are under no obligation to seek them out for the purpose of doing them good, but, when they cross our path we can at least deal gently with them. Lastly, there are occasions when we should have compassion on ourselves, particularly our body, *rūpa-kkhandha*, "Brother Ass," who has to carry the weight of all the other *khandhas*.

Personal Dukkha, "wherein the heart knoweth his own bitterness," is our inescapable heritage. From earliest childhood we have been occupied with "I-making and mine-making" until we have persuaded ourselves that "I" am the pivot around which the whole universe, that is to say the samsāra, revolves: our sense of proportion is completely lost. Does it matter to the beings on Mars, if any, that Miss A. has been jilted? "But it matters to ME!" is the instant reply of poor Miss A. And for practical purpose it does matter to Miss A.'s immediate associates how the unfortunate girl will react.

She might, for instance, (a) drown herself, (b) go into a convent, (c) get on with her job, and stop lamenting, or (d) take to writing poetry.

There are several aspects of personal "ill" that hit us all sooner or later. The most conspicuous of these are:

1. *Pain and Illness.* "Not death or pain is to be feared, but the *fear* of death and pain" (Epictetus). Pain itself is an extraordinary problem. We know that in many cases it is a danger signal indicating that some part of the body is out of order, and we think that pain is felt at the site of the injury or disease. This is not the case, for pain is an affair of consciousness, and is felt in the *mind* where it produces an emotional reaction. This is so deep-seated that we do not recognise its emotional nature, and consequently do not label it. Personally I think it is a mixture of self-pity, resentment and fear, all of which arise from *Dosa*, the Evil Root of Hate. Certainly we know from experience that an agonising pain produces a mental state of sheer, blind misery. A strong argument that

pain is emotional is to be found by watching the results of an injection of morphia. The patient who has had a "shot" frequently notices a queer phenomenon: the pain is *still there*, but he doesn't care a tinker's curse about it! The morphia has acted on the emotional centre in the brain, and damped it down to such an extent that the self-pity, resentment and fear have vanished.

This emotional element explains the very different way in which people react to pain. An apparently trivial injury can lay out someone of the emotional type, while those whose temperaments are phlegmatic or philosophic merely yelp or swear. The intensity of the pain experienced clearly depends upon the consciousness of each individual. The perfected consciousness of the Arahant is above both pain and pleasure, the emotional life is so controlled that he is aware of both feelings, but does not "mind" either of them. This suggests that an objective approach to our own pains will diminish our suffering. The analysis of the whole thing from start to finish helps to draw

off the mind from the actual feeling, and thereby lessens the emotional reaction. The old idea of the soldier "biting on the bullet" is no idle fancy, for if he concentrates on the bullet he cannot at the same time concentrate on the pain. What probably happens is that his mind flickers with incredible rapidity between the two ideas; the pain is still there but may be reduced to bearable dimensions.

The same objective attitude applies to *illness*. As is also the case with pain illness impairs the mental functions. The practice of Dhamma is hindered, and the sick man becomes dejected and ashamed. "Wherefore, house-father, thus should you train yourself: 'Though my body is sick, my mind shall not be sick.' Thus, house-father, must you train yourself." (Some Sayings of the Buddha: p. 132). The right reactions, therefore, to both pain and illness are Endurance and Courage—heroism.

2. *Attachments*. Though attachments to things can constitute a menace, attachment to persons produces greater woe than all the rest of our

misfortunes put together. There is a very important sutta "On 'Born of the Affections'" (Majjh. Nik., Vol. II No. 87) that emphasises the *dukkha* due to personal relationships. We grow up believing that in human love lies our greatest happiness. And for ordinary people *it is so*. Then, why all this fuss about grief, sorrow, suffering, lamentation and despair? The answer brings us up against one of the basic facts of existence: *anicca*, impermanence. Love is a conditioned thing—because it arises it must also cease. It is hard to realise that love, even in its most idealistic form, is in reality a manifestation of *tanhā*, craving. We grasp at it hoping for security, for understanding, for fulfilment—for the assuaging of our "primordial anguish." And for a fraction of time we may experience all these, and deludedly believe that the riddle of the Sphinx has been answered. This is not so.

Two things are to be apprehended in respect of all attachments, the first of which is Death. The sword of Yama sweeps away pets, children, friends and lovers, and we are left—left to grow

old. That, in human terms, is a tragedy, but it is a *clean* ending. Secondly, Disillusion sets in when the glamour of the contact has worn off. We notice "alteration and otherness" in the beloved object, and a blight comes over the relationship. This may be so serious that the attachment may be broken off, leaving in many instances heartache and bitterness frequently accompanied by a sense of shame. In extreme cases love turns to hate. This arises when the hater thinks he has been cheated or deceived; he hates himself for being a fool, and it is this self-hatred which is projected on to the erstwhile loved one.

Some form of "alteration and otherness" *must* occur in every case because we ourselves are altering all the time. Enduring friendships and life-long loves do occur because the partners consciously or unconsciously adapt their behaviour to the altering circumstances, and by so doing alter themselves in the right direction.

The cynic will ask : Why love at all if the end-result is always *dukkha*? Because, while

we are unenlightened, we are impelled into it by the driving force of our own kamma; it is a necessary experience. We shall never understand what *mettā* really is unless, in this or former lives, we have lived through heights and depths of human love. *Mettā*, which is love on a self – transcending plane, irradiates the whole world, whereas human love can only glorify two bundles of khandhas for a limited period. "Whenever, wherever, whatever happiness is found it belongs to happiness." (Majjh. Nik. Vol. II No 59.) The Buddha, though he emphasised *dukkha*, never forbid nor denied happiness. His teaching noted the happiness of the sensory world, and led on to the happiness to be derived from the practice of Dhamma. Beyond this is a happiness "that is more excellent and exquisite", known only in the transcendental states.

3. *Ageing*. Strictly speaking ageing begins at the very moment of conception. A baby in the throes of teething experiences suffering due to ageing, and so too do teenagers at the time of puberty. But the Ills of old age are the most

obvious. The bodily changes bear hardly on those who were once good-looking, less hardly on the "homely" or the ugly. There is an irksome slowing down of one's physical activities; one can only move in second gear. There is the boredom of too much leisure occupied by too few interests. These things arouse in many people a wild rebellion—"I hate old age!" This is a useless reaction; it only intensifies the the suffering.

Old age is a time of limitation, but it could be, indeed ought to be, a time of opportunity. Late nights, motoring, continental journeys and even gardening are gone forever. These, and similar pleasures, are material things: they belong to *samsaric* existence. They must go, but now we have the chance to let them go willingly, with knowledge, but without repining. This is the time to break old habits, to realise that living is just another habit, and prepare ourselves to break with that too. Furthermore, it is an opportunity to notice, and to break up Clinging, a time to stop accumulating, and to begin disposing of superfluous possessions.

4. *Death.* It is impossible while we are still alive to react to death itself; we can only react to the thought of it. At the moment of writing it is still a future event that may happen twenty years hence, or it might occur within the next twenty minutes. One's thought leaps to the other side of death: What happens afterwards? Here we encounter ideas that vary according to our upbringing and our later studies.

"Rest after toil,
Port after stormy seas,
Death after life
Do greatly please."

Very pretty; very pretty indeed, but probably wrong. As long es "I" want to be *I* (and a long time after), "I" shall plunge back into the *saṁsāra*, the essentially restless state in which "I" am now living. An animal birth? A birth in one of the purgatories, or in a deva world? We do not know. Nor do we know how long it will be, according to time-as-we-know it, before that rebirth takes place. Can consciousness, having provided itself with a mental body, or "body of craving," still function in the interval

between death and rebirth? The Tibetan Book of the Dead has much to say about the Bardo, the Intermediate State, but the Pali canon gives no hint of it; such speculations were put aside as "wriggling, scuffling and speculative views, the wilds of speculative views." The Buddha would have nothing to do with views.

"Let be the future." Our concern is with the Here—Now. Death is Ill because it puts an end to the opportunities we now have, as human beings, for the study and practice of Dhamma. It behoves us, therefore, to cultivate a sense of urgency with regard to death. Paradoxically, at the age of seventy death seems as far away, or even further, than it did at seventeen. The old have the habit of living so strongly developed that they cannot conceive the idea of doing anything else. They dislike being disturbed: death will not only disturb them, but it will tear them away from their rightful background. They resent this: the "I" without its conventional attire will feel so naked. The Christian heaven has scant attraction for the average Christian because it equates with the Unknown.

Many young people respond to the thought of death in an entirely different fashion: "To die will be a great adventure'." That is the Heroic Reaction of the young—and the young in heart.

Erasmus, the greatest scholar that the Reformation produced, wrote a treatise on The Art of Good Dying, or How to Achieve a Good Death. He held that a deathbed repentance and the Rites of Holy Church availed nothing. In order to die well a man must live well in the highest sense of the word. That is sound doctrine. For us it means Morality, Concentration, and Intuitive Wisdom coupled with the sense of urgency.

"Now' this, monks, is the Noble Truth about the Ceasing of Ill. Verily it is this Noble Eightfold Path, that is: Right View . . . RIGHT MINDFULNESS, Right Contemplation."

Students who are well-trained in Mindfulness cope with *dukkha* in a very different fashion from the rest of us whose minds are still at the

"drunken monkey" stage. Our personal "Ills" sizzle around us like virulent mosquitoes; if the suffering is severe our own Mindfulness is completely overwhelmed by *SELF—PITY*, which is both a "muddy" and a muddling reaction. Our sense of proportion is lost, and we make matters worse for ourselves by imagining a host of unpleasant developments that might arise in the future. If, when we are in this state of woe, we will pause and sort out our reactions—they are usually mixed—to the situation, naming each in turn, whether they are healthy or otherwise, we shall be practising Mindfulness with regard to Mental States, a very important branch of Right Mindfulness. This is a very helpful practice because the mind is drawn away from the *dukkha* itself, and is switched on to something that is really worthwhile.

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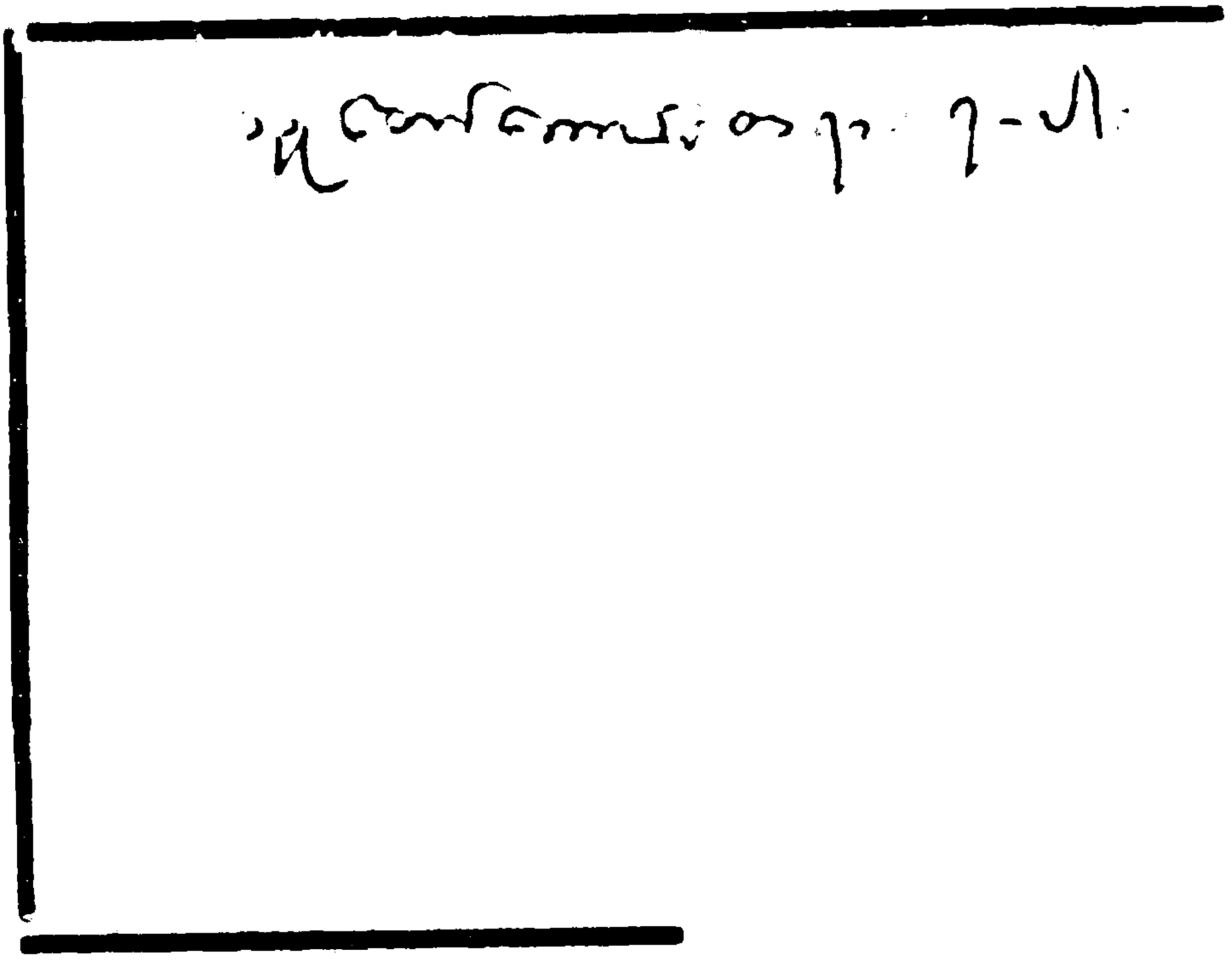
TREASURES OF THE NOBLE



Soma Thera

TREASURES OF THE NOBLE

Soma Thera

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY
Kandy 1965 Ceylon

BODHI LEAVES No. B. 27.

TREASURES OF THE NOBLE

THE treasures of the noble disciples of the Buddha are not precious stones and pearls, silver and gold, or fields and houses. Nor are the noble treasures connected with the power and glory of earthly sovereignty:

> These are the seven treasures the noble have:
> Confidence, virtue, the sense of
> shame and fear,
> Learning, bounty, and understanding right.
> Not poor is the man endowed with these,
> Not empty is his life of worthy things.
> Therefore should he who is in
> understanding fixed,
> Be diligent working to gain confidence,
> Virtue, clarity, and vision of the truth,
> Mindful of the Law of Him who understood.

On a certain occasion Ugga, the chief minister of the King of Kosala, came to where the Blessed One was, saluted him and sat on one side.

And the chief minister, who was seated at one side, said this to the Blessed One: Wonderful, venerable sir, marvellous, venerable sir, is the amount of riches, wealth, possessions of Migara Rohaneyya.—What is the extent of his vast treasures, his vast wealth, Ugga?—Of gold alone he has a hundred thousand. What should one say of silver?—Ugga, I do not deny that there is treasure of that kind. But, Ugga, such treasure is the common booty of fire, water, kings, robbers and unloved heirs. But there are seven kinds of treasure that are not the common booty of fire, water, kings, robbers and unloved ones. What are the seven? The treasure of confidence, of virtue, of the sense of shame and fear, of learning, of bounty, and of right understanding.

These are the seven treasures the noble have:
Confidence, virtue, the sense of
shame and fear,
Learning, bounty, and understanding right.
Not poor is the woman or man
with this great wealth,
Unlosable in the world of gods and men.

Therefore should he who is in
understanding fixed,
Be diligent working to gain confidence,
Virtue, clarity, and vision of the truth,
Mindful of the Law of Him who understood.

In order to gain these treasures of the noble a man should be devoted to the doctrine of the Buddha. Therefore men of old said this :

'Except the doctrine of the Perfect One,
There is no father and no mother here.
The doctrine is your refuge and support
And in the doctrine is your shelter true,
So hear the doctrine, on the doctrine think
And spurning other things live up to it'.

i. Confidence (Saddhā)

A noble disciple is confident, trusts in the Enlightenment of the Perfect One, the Tathagata, 'Thus indeed is the Blessed One : He is an arahat, perfectly enlightened, endowed with knowledge and conduct, sublime, a knower of the worlds, a guide of men, a teacher of divine and human beings, enlightened and blessed.'

Confidence, according to a great Buddhist writer, is the entrance to the ocean of the Buddha's law, and knowledge is the ship in which a man travels in that ocean.

Says the Buddha, 'In these places, Ananda, should you establish, fix and make firm, your friends, companions, and kith and kin, who think they ought to hear the doctrine. In what three places? In wise confidence concerning the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, should you establish them, fix them, and make them firm. There may be change, Ananda, in the four great elements, earth, water, fire, and air, but the noble disciple who is endowed with wise confidence concerning the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, cannot change. That is to say, it is impossible for him to be reborn in hell, or as an animal, or where unhappy spirits dwell".

Confidence of the highest kind is that produced in objects connected with the realisation of Nibbana, the peace arising out of the final destruction of craving. As the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, are the objects most intimately connected with Nibbana, these best of

all jewels in the world inspire the greatest confidence in a Buddhist.

The reason for absence of inner development is primarily lack of confidence in truth. It is said that the bhikkhu who lacks confidence departs from the practice of the virtue. He becomes dead to all good, and is unable to establish himself in the Law of the Buddha and the noble discipline. Confidence is the first of the seven treasures of the noble, and the first of the mental powers, and the controlling faculties of the mind. Around the magnet of confidence cluster energy, the sense of fear and shame, mindfulness, concentration, right understanding, and many other qualities of the noble mind.

When confidence in the Buddha's enlightenment is strong in a person, the hindrances: sensuality, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and anxiety, and uncertainty are suppressed, the passions are dispersed, and the mind is bright and clear. There is no possibility for a disciple of the Buddha to fall into states of demerit so long as he has confidence in the Master and the truth: it is

when uncertainty as regards what is good possesses him that a disciple is assailed by influences that lead him away from the right path. The Buddha says that he watches a disciple so long as the disciple fails to produce confidence, but once the disciple produces confidence the Master stops watching the disciple knowing that he is self-warded and incapable of slacking.

Confidence is the hand for gathering the merit of good deeds, wealth for the attainment of happiness, and seed for harvesting the fruit of immortality, the deathless nibbana. Therefore it has been extolled by the Buddhas and regarded by them as the indispensable qualification for discipleship in the Dispensation of the Perfect One.

Confidence in the Dhamma begins with temporary conviction or belief in morally wholesome objects and reaches its crest in settled trust in the Perfect One, his teaching, and his noble order.

2. Virtue (Sīla)

Goodness is the best thing in the world ;
The man of knowledge is indeed supreme.

Amongst deities and human beings,
From good and knowledge springs all victory.

—(Therigatha).

A noble disciple refrains from destroying living beings, from theft, from sexual misconduct, from telling lies, and from drink. This is called the treasure of virtue.

—(Anguttara Nikaya).

Virtue provides a person with strength to realise the noble path leading to the extinction of ill. Vice is a swamp; who is in it sinks. The factors of enlightenment cannot be developed by one who is involved in vice. As the earth for those who live on it, so is virtue for the yogi; he has to be supported by virtue. Essentially virtue is restraint, non-distraction is concentration, and penetration is wisdom.

If a person does not think, speak, or act in a way harmful to his own and others' welfare, he restrains his mind from ruining itself. One who examines his own thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and volitions, will find the natural, untrained mind inclined to do harmful things. What the

virtuous person does is to gather strength for not letting the mind master him and for mastering the mind.

Virtue is necessary not only for reaching the highest happiness, Nibbana, the extinction of ill, but for living untroubled in the world too. A virtuous man gathers a great mass of wealth through diligence, his good reputation spreads, he enters an assembly confidently, he meets his end mindfully, and is at death reborn in a happy existence, says the Buddha.

A virtuous life is a life full of excellence as it removes the corruptions of hate. Without virtue man is not different from an animal. Without a strong and pure character man decays and becomes useless to himself and others. Greatness in the dispensation of the Buddha is established in compassion through renunciation of the destruction of living beings, in honesty through renunciation of theft, in chastity through renunciation of sexual misconduct, in truthfulness through renunciation of false speech, and in sobriety through renunciation of indulgence in strong drink and mind-confusing drugs.

The virtuous man does not act hurriedly; he is patient in all circumstances; he acts only after careful thought; he acts not as a slave but as a master at all times and everywhere. Having built for himself a strong citadel of noble qualities he lives where he can never be taken by Mara. Through guarding their sense faculties, the virtuous preserve their energies, and use them for proper and useful action.

Virtue cannot thrive in minds that are fanatical, violent, avaricious, dogmatic, and inconsiderate of others' well-being. In fact one of the reasons for a man's becoming virtuous is to give fearlessness to others through kindly, thoughtful, self-denying activities. The fragrance of the most sweet-smelling flowers does not travel against the wind, but the influence of a virtuous life pervades all space, and the memory of such a man continues to sweeten the world for a long time.

3 & 4. Shame and Fear

(hiri - ottappa)

A noble disciple is endowed with the sense of shame, is ashamed of doing wrong in thought, word, and bodily behaviour, is ashamed of committing evil, bad deeds. This is called the treasure of the sense of shame. A noble disciple is endowed with the sense of fear, is afraid of doing wrong in thought, word and bodily behaviour, is afraid of committing evil, bad deeds. This is called the treasure of the sense of fear. Principally connected with the sense of shame is self-respect and principally connected with the sense of fear is the censure of the wise. These two qualities, shame and fear, are also called the protectors of the world. True and good men, with fear and shame, the bright qualities, are said to be those who are god-like in the world. These two qualities have always been praised by the Buddhas, the peerless guides, teachers of the world, because they provide effective stimulus to noble action. The man who has these two qualities will keep himself from slackening and going astray. The

man who has these qualities is always on the alert always awake to a sense of his duties : on the one hand he thinks, "Wrong action, thoughts, and words are not suitable for me, because I am a man of good upbringing who follows the Buddha and the Dhamma. Further I am loyal to my fellows in the noble life, and I do not wish to do wrong when they think I am doing what is right. To do wrong or to be slack in doing what is right is not the way to pay homage to the Buddha and the Dhamma I follow. To act in that manner is definitely to be disrespectful and disregardful of the Teacher and the Law. Only when I, by practising the precepts, develop the qualities of compassion, honesty, chastity, truthfulness, and sobriety, do I serve the world and honour the Master and his teaching, through the giving of the gift of fearlessness to all beings". On the other hand he fears the consequences of evil deeds here and hereafter.

The man with a sense of shame and fear has a lofty standard of conduct. Morally he is very sensitive. (He will never be careless of the means

he uses to achieve his ends. (For him the end cannot justify the means. The means must also be clean, non-violent, truthful, sober and honest. Nothing, not even the doctrine and discipline of the Perfect One, the Supremely Enlightened One, the Blessed One, will he defend dishonestly, violently, and untruthfully. If he is attacked, he will not retaliate. Retaliation is wrong according to the Parable of the Saw taught by the Blessed One. In that instruction he said, "Were villainous dacoits with a two-handled saw to cut off a man's limbs and were he even then tainted in mind, he would not be carrying out my instruction". The sensitive person, he who is endowed with a sense of fear and shame, keeps these words of the Master in mind at all times, especially in times of stress and meets with compassion his opponents who wish to destroy him.

The effective observance of the Buddha's teaching depends on the practice of universal compassion and the true follower of the Buddha will think of those who know not what they do with compassionate mind, grown great, lofty, boundless and free from enmity and ill-will.

5. Learning (Suta)

The Blessed One said, "A noble disciple is learned, and is one who bears in mind what he has learned. By him is learned, borne in mind, recited, pondered on, and penetrated with right understanding, the meaningful, well expressed doctrines good in the beginning, middle and end, which speak of the absolutely complete, perfectly pure holy life. This is the treasure of learning". With that is stated the highest kind of learning known to humanity—the learning that ends all learning.

Other kinds of learning bring a man not to the cessation of suffering; they lead to further suffering, wants, deficiencies, that is to further birth, disease, decay, unions with the unloved, separations from the loved and disappointments. Such learning is worldly, partial, defective and unsatisfactory from the standpoint of one who has seen that all is impermanent, all is ill, and all is beyond the control of the self, except the renunciation of the whole mass of ill through the renunciation of craving.

The Buddha's teaching of liberation from ill is what the noble disciple learns especially. To hear the doctrine and to master it is the object of the follower of the Buddha who has understood this. What arises ceases; what has an origin has also a cessation. But what does not arise does not cease; what has no origin has also no cessation.

Now the learning in which the noble disciple is a master, has to be gained through study of the actual instruction of the Buddha now found in the Pali Canon which gives the most complete account of the Buddha's teachings without the ambiguities of the Mahayana, and which is historically the oldest recorded account of the Buddha's words.

The learning of the scriptures by the noble disciple is different from the learning of the words of the Master by the worlding. The noble disciple learns the doctrine through the intensity of diligent practice as well as through the study of it and so reads Law with the body and the

mind; but the worlding knows it in a shallow way, through grasping the teaching intellectually and not applying it diligently to his life. The full profit of learning the Law comes only with the understanding of life that makes a man get rid of the attachment to life, that makes a man renounce the world. "It is impossible" says the Buddha "that he who is full of sensual aims, enjoying sensual pleasures, devoured by sensual thoughts, consumed with sensual heat, and eager in the sensual quest, should know, see, attain, and realise, what has to be known, seen, attained and realised (that is, the Law), by renunciation".

6. **Bounty** (Cāga)

The noble disciple lives in the house with thought freed from the stain of avarice, bounteous, with hand stretched forth to give, delighting in letting go, devoted to giving, and happy in distributing gifts. This is the treasure of bounty.

Through avarice and through negligence,
Thus indeed is an alms not given.
Alms must be given by him who is wise,

And wishes merit to accumulate.
Even when little they have, some do give :
Some do not give who have very much.
A giving of alms from a scanty store is thought
Equal to alms with a thousand pieces bought.
A battle and almsgiving are like its said :
A few good men can overcome a host.
Who trusting in the good gives though a little,
Will in the world to come be happy though
giving.

Renunciation, which is the essence of the Buddhist Way of Life, begins with the practice of bounty. First the aspirant for enlightenment learns to give away his external possessions; then he learns to become indifferent to his own body and to follow in the path of the Master, who in his Bodhisatta days, gave limb, life, and all that he held dear, for the sake of perfecting the virtues necessary for the attainment of the highest good. The whole way to enlightenment is adorned with bounty. There is no property the man bent on Nibbana cannot part with,

Through bounty a man becomes dear to others and finds peaceful and noble-hearted associates. The bounteous man's good reputation spreads far and wide; he enters an assembly without embarrassment, without diffidence and when he dies cannot but find happiness in the thought that he is taking with him the treasure of bounty to the next life. Appreciation of the fact that to give is to be endowed with mental treasure is not confined to the East. Bounty was as it now too is, held in high esteem in the West.

We find recorded in Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire' this epitaph of Edward Earl of Devon: "What I gave I have; what I spent I had; what I left I lost". The line of great givers of the West continues unimpaired. Although there is no one who could emulate the Emperor Asoka, whose munificence is without parallel in the records of princes of the earth, there are many great and good men who have impoverished themselves for the good of the world like the great Anathapindika. Unbroken as the tradition of the Dhamma knowledge has been the

tradition of the bounty in the East; but it could be made stronger and nobler were we to reduce our personal wants, and cut down our desires. The desire to hold on to money, property, power, and position, regardless of the suffering of others must be destroyed. Under no condition, does the Buddha encourage blindness to the suffering of others. The stir of mind (samvega) necessary for pushing a man to nibbana comes from seeing the subjection of the world to suffering, and acting in accordance with that vision by letting go, renouncing.

Not only in the Dhamma, but outside it too the importance of renunciation has been stressed. Meister Eckhart says, "O man, renounce thyself and so with toil-free virtue win the prize or, cleaving to thyself, with toilful virtue lose it... He who both has and is resigned nor ever cast one glance at what he has resigned but remains firm and unshaken and motionless in himself, that man is free". To the attainment of unshakable deliverance of the mind through training in the art of renunciation does the practice of bounty

lead him who is bent on transcending evil deeds,
evil thoughts, and wrong understanding.

Through renouncing zest for every sensuous thing,
For sake of freedom from the thought of self-conceit,
The lust of life in fine-material states,
And states of pure mind, all restlessness,
And every form of darkness, ignorance,
The fires of craving will become extinct.

7. Right Understanding

(*sammā-diṭṭhi*)

"The noble disciple has right understanding; he is endowed with right understanding which leads to the knowledge of the rise and fall of phenomena, and with excellent penetration which leads the complete destruction of ill."

The summit of the Buddha's teaching is reached when understanding of the nature of life becomes complete, and everything that helps to

that right understanding is included in this treasure which is the most valuable of the treasures of the noble. Without right understanding it is not possible to reach what is beyond the reach of becoming, of existence. To be able to appreciate the happiness of the cessation of becoming, and to work for reaching that happiness, a man has to grow in understanding the impermanence, subjection to ill, and the absence of any self whatsoever in the components of sentient life. He who knows that only ill arises and ceases when there is arising and ceasing of any kind is firmly established in knowledge founded on direct perception and not on knowledge founded on belief in another's word. One who has such direct perception of the fact of ill and impermanence is a man of right understanding. At this right understanding does a man who trains himself according to the instruction of the Buddha decide to arrive when he takes refuge in the Three Jewels : the Buddha, his Law, and the Order of Purified Ones.

In the Dhamma men are purified finally and completely, not by virtue and concentration, but

by right understanding. Virtue and concentration, are requisites for preparing the mind for right understanding. Therefore the Buddha praised the life lived with right understanding as the most excellent. How is that life developed ? Through association with those who understand rightly, through receiving right instruction, and through becoming dissatisfied with the personality. The Buddha taught us to compare matter to a foam-ball, feeling to a bubble, perception to a mirage, formation to a plantain trunk, and consciousness to an illusion. If a man sees according to the instruction of the Buddha he will realise the insubstantiality of all phenomena and develop disenchantment in regard to the things that bind beings to life. With the growth of that disenchantment, he will reach the freedom from all craving, the freedom for the sake of which men of good family go forth.

Saddhā dhanaṁ sīla dhanaṁ
hiri ottappiyaṁ dhanaṁ
suta dhanañca cāgo ca
paññā ve sattamaṁ dhanaṁ.

Yassa ete dhanā atthi
itthiyā purisassa vā
adaliddo'ti tam āhu,
amoghaṁ tassa jivitaṁ.

These are the seven treasures the noble have:
Confidence, virtue, the sense of shame and fear,
Learning, bounty, and understanding right.
Not poor is the woman or man endowed with these,
Not empty is his life of worthy things.

Anguttara-nikāya, Sattaka-nipāta, No. 5

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A LARGER RATIONALISM

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still be left outside that decision. For while Buddhism is certainly not supernatural revelation, it does go far beyond the empirical knowledge with which it begins, while never coming into conflict with what we are able to observe and verify for ourselves. Instead of contradicting knowledge and reason, Buddhism accepts, utilizes and supplements them.

It sometimes happens that people change their religion not because one form of theistic revelation satisfies their reason more than another, but because the emotional appeal of a certain faith, or its associations, or perhaps simply revolt against the dogmas of their childhood, impels them to do so. But that is not always the case. There are some for whom the question of why they have not chosen one of the non-religious attitudes which others find satisfactory cannot be answered in terms of filling an emotional need, or following the attraction of the exotic. The rationalist may believe that it can; but his own case may not be so simple as it appears to him. Behind his rejection of all religion there may lie disguised a deeply-rooted

feeling that if the faith of his ancestors and compatriots is outdated, all other creeds must be even more so. There is a kind of loyalty in this, but it is not exactly rational.

Those who have decided that Buddhism has more to offer them than theistic faith on the one hand and the uncertain ethics of humanism on the other, usually come to that conclusion because they have been seeking a more comprehensive view of human experience in all its enigmatic, paradoxical variety, and a more acceptable explanation of it, than either can give. For obvious reasons, religion which offers a supernatural account of man's being in the world is unsatisfactory; at the same time, it is hard to find any superiority in a system which offers none at all. Whatever view we may choose to take of the universe and man's place in it, there are teleological considerations in the very structure of our thinking which refuse to be ignored; there are problems of purpose and of value which insist upon intruding into our picture. The rationalist who succeeds in treating them as though they did not exist is tricking

himself in the same way as the religionist who firmly closes the doors of his mind against the improbabilities of his creed.

Rationalism is believed to be based upon a scientific view of the world. But the popular phrase, 'a scientific view', calls for more clarification than it usually gets. A view that is rigidly confined to what happens to be scientifically demonstrable rigidly confined to what happens to be scientifically demonstrable at any given time is not the same as a scientific view. If it were, no outstanding scientist could be said to have a 'scientific view', for every advance in science has been the result of someone taking an imaginative leap beyond the bounds of what is already known. The mind which does not reach out, like a plant thrusting towards the light, is dead. Should we accuse Einstein of not having a scientific view because he divined the general principle of relativity first by a kind of insight, and only verified it scientifically afterwards?

At present, scientific thought is satisfied with tracing and defining the operations of the

physical world, and its speculations have to proceed cautiously, step by step. It does not concern itself with why these operations take place. Its interest is limited and selective, and is unfortunately bound to become more and more so as specialized knowledge accumulates. We have come to a stage at which the separate departments of knowledge are as clearly marked out as political territories on a map. And just as the map is concerned with nothing more than these arbitrary divisions as they exist, while the reasons for them come within a different province altogether, that of the historian, so the scientist, as far as the field of his particular research extends, can quite happily dispense with all notions of purpose and design, and he is quite justified in doing so.

To take one example, we know biological evolution to be a fact. We are more or less familiar with its general development, and science does not encourage us to ask ourselves precisely why this complicated process began at all; or, having begun, what guiding impulse it was that by laborious trial and error over aeons

of time converted elementary single-cell organisms at last into the highly-complex, though still imperfect, structure of human beings. Once it is seen that no Creator-God is necessary–that such a God is not only redundant, but actually impossible—it is thought that all problems connected with a purpose and a directing principle can be set aside. The layman is inclined to believe that because science disregards such questions they are of no importance, or that they have been answered. In this way a mythology of science has grown up which is not the fault of the scientist, but rather of the ordinary man who confuses science with omniscience. It is of course true that some knowledgeable specialists take the view that because science has not so far disclosed any purpose in the universe, there cannot be one, but they are becoming fewer as the vistas of knowledge extend. By appropriating to itself more and more of the supernatural (or what would have been considered so, not very long ago), science is becoming increasingly metaphysical. But it is only by taking a survey of it that is at once minute and comprehensive, that this fact can be appreciated.

In regard to the origin and development of life on this planet, it may quite reasonably be assumed that some fortuitous combination of chemical elements gave rise to the first emergence of living from non-living matter; there is nothing improbable in this. We now know for a fact that living cells could in the beginning have developed from non-living substance, and that it could quite well have happened accidentally or in the normal course of events. It must in fact be inevitable under the right conditions, and for this reason we are justified in assuming that there are other inhabited worlds besides our own. But, granted that life had this beginning, why did not the process stop at unicellular protoplasm? Or, if it did not stop altogether, why did it not go on repeating the same elementary forms instead of, as it actually did, progressing from one stage to another with an ever-increasing organic and sensory equipment?

The answer usually given is that it was in order to master the environmental conditions. But this in itself is an answer on the teleological level. It prompts the further query, *What* was

it that gave apparently intelligent direction to these developments? Was there a something which was able to discern particular needs, however dimly, and to work through natural selection and other biological principles to produce the required organs? For after all, living structures show a degree of organization, with many details still not understood, which seems unaccountable on the theory that it was reached by the purely negative process of eliminating the inefficient. A positive, active process must be in operation before a negative one can take place. Although we see that there could not have been any omniscient power guiding the series of events (since had there been such a power the fumbling process of trial and error, with all its ruthless wastage, could have been by-passed) are we altogether justified in dismissing the problem as irrelevant?

Even the earliest forms of life were undoubtedly fitted to survive in their surrounding medium, and many have survived to the present day. If, therefore, the sole objective was to produce living forms that could survive and

propagate, they were perfect from the beginning. Even locomotion is not essential to life, for plants exist successfully, and in complete adaptation to their environment, without it. All that is needed for the act of living organically is a mouth, a stomach and an excretory system. There was no real need for the single-cell protozoa to develop more organs; no need for successive appearance of eyes, fins, legs, wings or any other embellishments to the primary forms. We choose to regard these as aids in the struggle for survival, but there is another point of view in which they may be seen as causes of that struggle. From either of these two viewpoints, however, the question of *what* it was that foresaw each need, and experimented until the need was met, remains unanswered.

It worried no less a person than Darwin, to such an extent that he was compelled to put forward, without evidence, a theory by which every cell in the body was supposed to send its representative to the germ cells, there to debate, in parliamentary fashion, the best course for the next generation. Unlike his more timid followers,

Darwin repeatedly emphasised the need for speculation. 'How odd it is,' he wrote in his autobiography, 'that anyone should not see that all observation must be for or against some view if it is to be of any service.' So to meet a need he did not hesitate to regard cells as thinking, willing and desiring entities.

To discuss questions of motive without being able to define what it is that experiences the motivating urge, is unsatisfactory; but in this instance we have no alternative. It is at all events necessary to assume some connecting principle between one generation of living beings and another which converts each generation into a link between what is desired and its realization. Biological evolution may choose to ignore this, but it cannot dispose of the need, nor close up the gap in our understanding which it leaves, so long as it is treated as an illegitimate field of speculation. Where we see something like intention at work it is natural to ask from what the intention derives. And when, because it blunders towards its goal and operates extravagantly and amorally, we can no longer believe

it to be the activity of an omnipotent and merciful Creator, we are not thereby compelled to reject the possibility of other sources of activation.

If the development of more complex and refined organisms was not absolutely necessary to survival, we have to seek elsewhere for a possible cause. We find then that while the acquisition of higher sensory organs did not contribute materially to the ability to survive, it contributed to the ability to *enjoy*. A tree lives longer than a man, but a man's life is preferable.

So it becomes apparent that survival is not the sole or chief objective: there is another motivation, that of hedonic satisfaction. And this is not merely ancillary to the survival motive, but is in reality the objective that lies beyond it, and to the realization of which survival is only the first necessity. Biological evolution is subservient to the pleasure principle; its purpose is nothing but the development of organisms that are capable of heightened sensory experience, the pleasures of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching – and thinking.

It is precisely this desire for sensory pleasure that Buddhism declares to be the life-impulse, the causative principle behind every living form, whatever may be its particular stage of development, and whether it be on this planet or any other. Defined simply as Taṇhā (literally, thirst or craving), this takes the place in Buddhism of a 'Creator'. Since it is self-renewing, the process of creation is perpetual and cyclic, and there is no need for a First Cause. Although our universe had a beginning, and will one day come to an end, in the Buddhist view it is only one of a series of universes, and the series had no ultimate beginning. According to Buddhist cosmology, when a world-system comes to an end a long period ensues during which matter remains in an unorganized state; then by degrees it forms into fresh world-systems, or island universes, and gradually life appears once more. When it does so it is the result of the rebirth of beings from the previous world-cycle, whose Karmic force acts together with chemical processes in nature to produce the first organic structures. The process is described in a mixture of literal and allegorical language in the Aggañña Sutta of the

Dīgha Nikāya and elsewhere. In interpreting the Buddhist account of evolution it is useful to remember that we have no geological record of the very first living organisms that appeared on earth. Being protoplasmic they passed away without leaving any fossilized traces. For all we know, there may have been other, even less substantial beings in existence before them, and the Aggañña account may be more literal than it appears.

Craving is a mental impulse, and Buddhism treats mental energy as a force in some ways analogous to electricity, or perhaps to electro-magnetic waves That thought-impulses do take some such form is supported by the evidence of their actiop on the Hans Berger encephalogram. We will leave aside any reference to telepathy because, although it has been proved to the satisfaction of most reasonable people, there are still those who refuse to acknowledge its reality. Even leaving aside all arguments that can be drawn from parapsychology, science has shown that the great governing principles of the universe operate by means which are themselves invisible

and often indefinable. Electric current under the right conditions is transformed into heat, light, sound and power; yet still its actual nature eludes definition. Gravitational force keeps the galaxies in place and the moon gives us our tides, but we can find no physical connection between the moon as a body in space and the water on our planet. We are not even certain whether gravity is a property of matter or a special function of curved space. It is often necessary to remind ourselves that while science points to causal relationships between events it cannot always explain just what these relationships mean in physical terms. Some philosophers of science are even ready to throw the whole concept of causality to the winds. A great part of the scientist's time is devoted to examining and measuring the tangible effects of forces which themselves cannot be examined, and so remain essentially a mystery. If this is true of physics it is even more true of genetics and biology.

So when Buddhism asserts that it is 'Craving' which gives directional impulse and purpose to

the processes of physical evolution, through mental energy transmitted by one being to another in successive lives, the materialist may raise his eyebrows but he is unable to point to any established scientific truth that is outraged by the theory. The Buddhist, on the other hand, can offer in support of his view the opinion of several eminent men of science to the effect that something like thought and intention is visible in our universe.

In this world, mind depends upon matter for its manifestation, just as the electrical current depends upon some more ponderable agency to convert it into heat, light or power. This fact has given rise to the very unwarranted assumption that mind is a product of matter. It is unwarrantable because the position could quite well be reversed, without changing the picture of the universe as we know it. But avoiding these two extremes, Buddhism maintains that matter and mentality are interdependent; the living organisms produced in the evolutionary pattern have been the result of a transmitted will-to-live, a current of 'becoming' which is based upon

craving, and which can be perceived only through its material manifestations, the various grades of living beings. Mind, or mental energy, operates on and through matter to attain its ends.

There is one truth which science impresses upon us very strongly: that this universe is not a universe of 'things' but of events. It is a complex of dynamic processes in which an everlasting 'becoming', that never reaches the state of perfect 'being', is the sole actuality. This is the truth as it was seen and taught by the Buddha from the beginning of his ministry. The much-misunderstood doctrine of rebirth in Buddhism does not mean the transmigration of a soul, for the existence of any such persisting entity is completely denied. There is no question of a personal survival or immortality, either partial or complete. Personality is seen as a collection of aggregates, physical and mental, which come together and disintegrate again in obedience to natural law and to the mind-originated causes from the past. Everything that is subject to conditionality is subject to dissolution, and can never attain completeness. Each state of

existence is therefore only a momentary link between past and future states, and what we call life is nothing but a causal continuum. To put the case in simple and concrete terms, an old man is not the same person as the infant he once was; that infant has vanished for ever. The old man is the present result of the infant's having existed in the past. Between these two extreme points in the current of cause and effect that makes up the individual's world-line there have been innumerable other continuity-links from childhood to maturity, and it is not possible to single out any particular stage and say of it, 'This is the man as he really is—this is his essence and real self.' In the same way, at his death there can be no totality of 'selfhood' to survive and be reborn. Instead of the animistic concept of an unchanging soul-essence there is the transmission of his thought-potential, by which his will-to-live produces another being (or a further stage in the causal series) to carry on the tendencies engendered in the past. It was this concept of the *will* manifesting itself afresh in a new individual which Schopenhauer called 'Palingenesis'. If the term can be dissociated

from Haeckel's use of it in a biological sense it will serve as well as any other to express the Buddhist idea of rebirth.

It is quite commonly supposed that modern science knows all there is to be known about genetics. This is an exaggeration. Enough is known, certainly, to account for the reproduction of species considered only as a mechanical process, but whether it is sufficient to cover all the phenomena is another matter. The biologist is satisfied to name the chemical DNA as being the carrier of the genes which provide the fundamental units of heredity. It appears that all the necessary information concerning physisal structure is somehow packed into this substance and thus transmitted from one generation to another. But the theory does not carry us any further than that. It may be adequate to explain how the blueprint of the unborn being is fed into the genetic machinery, but it leaves little room for variations on the given design. Yet variations of a minor kind are constantly occurring, and without them evolution itself would have been impossible. It does not attempt to explain how

individual modes of thinking, specific character-traits and, above all, the complicated patterns of instinctive behaviour found in certain animals, can all be conjured into a chemical which, without doubt, we shall soon be able to produce artificially. It is all rather like the unsophisticated savage's notion that the London Symphony Orchestra is seated inside the radio receiving set. Whether there are such simple aborigines today is questionable—but we still have the scientific theorists. Had Flaubert been living now he would probably have found no reason to alter his dictum that heredity is a true principle misunderstood. The real function of DNA may be just what it is claimed to be, but that does not make it anything more than the physical conductor of an unknown force. According to Buddhism, that unknown factor is Kamma, and DNA is just another material auxiliary to the process of rebirth.

Sometimes it is said that the Buddha made no direct pronouncement concerning God, and that his position was agnostic. This is completely false. The Buddha categorically denied

the existence of a Creator or Overlord, and his system of philosophy leaves no room for a 'Supreme Being'. The Buddha's refusal to discuss eschatological questions was not due to the agnostic's lack of knowledge; it came from the fact that the mind in its purely intellectual functioning is not capable of dealing with anything outside the realm of relative concepts, and there is no language to express those areas of experience which lie beyond the temporal and spatial relations. We can think and speak only in terms of comparison and contrast, and our communication of ideas is limited to those things we all know and can name. Of ultimate truth nothing at all can be predicated. On the other hand, our need to think in terms of a beginning and a 'First Cause' is conditioned by our habitual use of ideas which involve relationships. Ordinarily, relationships and sequences dominate our thinking as space dominates our physical movements. Yet there is no need to resort to metaphysics in order to understand that the idea of a beginning to time is self-contradictory. Although, like the curved space of Einstein's mathematics, it is a truth with which

formal logic and semantics cannot cope, we can discover its necessity by reminding ourselves that space and time are concepts derived from the relationship between things and events. There could not have been any time before objects and their movements existed. Consequently, the idea that the universe could have arisen from nothingness at a particular point of time is a contradiction.

But while the life-process had no point of beginning in time, it can be brought to an end by the individual, for himself. He can put a stop to his own particular current of existence, the 'wearisome round of rebirths', and Buddhism offers a technique of mental cultivation by which this is possible. It consists in the total elimination of all the craving impulses. This fundamental psychic transformation is accompanied by the development of higher faculties of perception and insight, in which the reality beyond conditioned existence is directly experienced. It was this knowledge that the Buddha possessed, and the evidence for it is in the doctrine he taught — a doctrine so different

from any other creed that it is even doubtful whether it should be included under the heading of 'religion'. In his method of approach, starting from observed facts, analysing and probing into causes and relationships, the Buddha more nearly resembled a scientist of today than any of the mystical dogmatists who have provided the world with religions. But his area of exploration was the mind, not the physical universe. It may be that the future of our own science will also lie in this direction. To understand the external world is merely knowledge; to understand oneself is wisdom.

The humanist and rationalist viewpoints appear to leave no opening whatever for a continuity of experience beyond that of the one life known to us. The good man and the bad, and the man whose life has been nothing but a chronicle of failure and frustration, alike come to the same end, a dark oblivion. If that is indeed the case, the most outstanding characteristic of life is its enormous inanity, its fatuous meaninglesness. Those who have contributed to human progress have no share in its results;

they die without even any assurance that the progress they worked for is a reality. We who live in the present century can no longer believe in progress in quite the same way that our grandfathers did. The idea that evolution marches in a straight line to perfection has had to be discarded. Science itself, which holds out to us gifts with one hand and swift destruction with the other, is rapidly qualifying for a place among the discarded gods. On what evidence can we believe that science will ever succeed in abolishing disease, congenital mental deficiency or deformity? If it cannot do this, it cannot ever assure happiness to all. Even its very real material contributions, which no one can deny, have not brought the happiness which we take to be the chief goal of existence; instead, they have given us more desires. And for many people those desires can never be satisfied.

Apart from these facts, we are confronted by the disturbing realization that this view of life gives us no rational justification for ethical principles. It is useless to talk of a purer ethic emerging from the multiplication of desires;

that is the last fatuity of wishful thinking. If the sole object of living is experience of pleasure — which we must accept if we confine our vision to the goal of biological evolution — the most successful organism, be it a man or an animal, is the one that has experienced most pleasure. The means by which it has done this do not matter; the cardinal rule of life on the biological level is that survival and enjoyment are to be achieved at the expense of other, weaker, organisms. Therefore, any moral principles that man may import into the system are entirely artificial and unnatural. Let those who use the word 'unnatural' as a rhetorical term of condemnation stop for a moment to consider what is 'natural' and what is not! The plain truth is that Nature is amoral, and in this view man's introduction of morality is a perversion. When the humanist says, truthfully, that he experiences happiness in working for others, he is unconsciously denying the basis of what he understands by a rational philosophy. What his experience really suggests is that the ethical motivations which religion has brought into an amoral world survive in certain types of men even when religion

or Brahma), and directs them to the ways of discrimination and research, and urges them to get busy with the real task of developing their inner forces and qualities. He says: 'I have directed you towards deliverance. The Dhamma, the Truth, is to be self-realized.'*

The Enlightened Ones, the men who saw truth, are the true helpers, but Buddhists do not pray to them. They only revere the revealers of Truth for having pointed the path to Deliverance. Deliverance is what one must secure for oneself. Buddhist monks are not priests who perform rites and sacrifices. They do not administer sacraments and pronounce absolution A Buddhist monk cannot and does not stand as an intermediary between man and 'supernatural' powers; for Buddhism teaches that each individual is solely responsible for his own liberation. Hence there is no need to win the favour of a mediating priest. 'You yourselves should strive on; the Buddhas only show the path'.** The path is the same Ancient Path trodden and pointed out by the Enlightened

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* *Majjhima*, Sutta No. 38

** *Dhammapada*, v. 276

Ones of all ages. It is the Noble Eight-fold Path leading to Enlightenment and highest security.

Another distinguishing characteristic is that the Buddha never preserved his supreme knowledge for himself alone. To the Buddha such a wish is utterly inconceivable. Perfect Enlightenment, the discovery and realization of the Four Noble Truths (Buddha-hood) is not the prerogative of a single being chosen by Divine Providence, nor is it a unique and unrepeatable event in human history. It is an achievement open to anyone who earnestly strives for perfect purity and true wisdom, and with inflexible will cultivates the Noble Eightfold Path.

When communicating the doctrine (Dhamma) to his disciples the Buddha made no distinction whatsoever amongst them; for there were no specially chosen favourite disciples. There is not even an indication that the Master entrusted the Dispensation *(sāsana)* to any particular disciple before he passed away. He did not appoint anyone as his successor. In this connection it is interesting to note that the Buddha made clear to his disciples, before he

passed away, that he never thought of controlling the Order of monks, the Sangha. Addressing the monks who assembled round his death-bed the Master said:

'The Doctrine and the Discipline *(dhamma-vinaya)* which I have set forth and laid down for you, let them after I am gone be the teacher to you.'* Even during his life time it was the *Dhamma-vinaya* (Doctrine and Discipline) that controlled and guided the monks.

Characteristic, again, is the Buddha's method of teaching the Dhamma. He disapproved of those who professed to have 'secret doctrine' saying, 'secrecy is the hall-mark of false doctrine.' In his own words, 'The Dhamma proclaimed by the Tathagata, the Perfect One, shines when revealed and not when hidden.'** Addressing the Venerable Ananda, the personal attendant of the Master, the Buddha said: 'I have taught the Dhamma, Ananda, without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrine, for in respect of the Truth, Ananda, the Tathagata has no such thing as the

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* *Digha*, Sutta No. 16

** *Anguttara-N.* i

"closed fist" of a teacher who hides some essential knowledge from the pupil.'*

He declared the Dhamma freely and equally to all. He kept nothing back and never wished to extract from his disciples blind and submissive faith in him and his teaching. He insisted on discriminative examination and intelligent inquiry. In no uncertain terms did he urge critical investigation when he addressed the inquiring Kālāmas in a discourse† that has been rightly called 'the first charter of free thought.'

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* *Digha, Sutta* No. 16

† See Wheel No. 8, "*Kālāma Sutta*" translated by Soma Thera. Buddhist Publication Society.

BUDDHISM

WHAT the Buddha taught is popularly known as Buddhism. Some prefer to call it a religion, others call it a philosophy, still others think of it as both religion and philosophy. It may, however, be correct to call it a *'Way of Life'*. But that does not mean that Buddhism is nothing more than an ethical code. Far from it, it is a way of moral, spiritual and intellectual training leading to complete freedom of mind. The Buddha himself called his teaching *'Dhamma-vinaya'*, the Doctrine and Discipline.

Those who wish to call Buddhism a religion may bear in mind that it is not 'Action or conduct indicating belief in, reverence for, and desire to please, a divine ruling power; the exercise or practice of rites or observances implying this . . . recognition on the part of man of some higher unseen power as having control of his destiny, and as being entitled to obedience, and worship.'§

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§ *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 1956*, under the word Religion.

Those who prefer to call Buddhism a philosophy may note that it is not mere, 'love of, nor inducing the search after, wisdom' but an encouragement of a practical application of the teaching that leads the follower to dispassion, enlightenment and final deliverance.

The Buddha emphasises the practical aspect of his teaching, the application of knowledge to life — looking *into* life and not merely *at* it. Wisdom gained by understanding and development of the qualities of mind and heart is wisdom par excellence. It is saving knowledge, and not mere speculation, logic or specious reasoning. It is not mere theoretical understanding that matters. For the Buddha the entire teaching is just the realization of the unsatisfactory nature of all phenomenal existence or conflicts of life *(dukkha)* and the cultivation of the path leading away from this unsatisfactoriness. This is his philosophy. His sole intention and aim was to explain in all its detail the problem of suffering or unsatisfactoriness, the universal fact of life, to make people feel its full force and to convince them of it.

Though we call the teaching of the Buddha

'Buddhism', thus including it among the *'isms'* and *'ologies'*. it does not really matter what we label it. Call it religion, philosophy, Buddhism or by any other name you like. These labels are of little significance to one who goes in search of truth and deliverance. The Buddha has definitely told us what he explains and what he does not explain.

WHAT THE BUDDHA TAUGHT

ONCE the Buddha was living at Kosambi (near Allahabad) in a simsapa grove. Then gathering a few simsapa leaves in his hand, the Buddha addressed the monks :

"What do you think, monks, which is greater in quantity, the handful of simsapa leaves gathered by me, or what is in the forest overhead?"

— "Not many, trifling, Venerable Sir, are the leaves in the handful gathered by the Blessed One, many are the leaves in the forest overhead."

—"Even so, monks, many are the things I have fully realized, but not declared unto you; few are the things I have declared unto you. And why, monks, have I not declared these? They, monks, are indeed, not useful, are not essential to the life of purity, they do not lead to disgust, to dispassion, to cessation, to tranquillity, to full understanding, to enlightenment, to Nibbana. That is why, monks, they are not declared by me.

And what is it, monks, that I have declared?

This is suffering—this have I declared.

This is the arising of suffering—this have I declared.

This is the cessation of suffering—this have I declared.

This is the path leading to the cessation of suffering—this have I declared.

And why monks, have I declared these truths? They are indeed, useful, are essential to the life of purity, they lead to disgust, to dispassion, to cessation, to tranquillity, to full understanding, to enlightenment, to Nibbana. That is why, monks, they are declared by me."*

* *Samyutta*, v. 437

itself has been discarded. How else can we explain this curious phenomenon of happiness arising from a subjugation of self-interest which is contrary to all the principles of survival in nature?

There is in fact another explanation, and it is the one that Buddhism offers. There is a larger rationalism, in which it is reasonable and good to introduce pity into a pitiless world, justice into a world of injustice, unselfishness into a system of survival by selfishness. In the higher types of men this knowledge exists subconsciously; they instinctively follow its promptings, whether it agrees with their philosophy or not. But to make the higher instinct rational we have to cast our vision beyond the limitations we have ourselves imposed. It is necessary to leave the dogmas of both religion and science behind. We may then arrive at the Buddhist truth that while all manifestations of life, from the amoeba to man, are dominated by craving and are therefore doomed to perpetual dissatisfaction, there is a fulfilment of another kind to be sought and striven for. and that the moral

principle is an inherent part of the universal law of cause and effect. In place of the endless struggle for existence, with its emphasis on egocentric values, Buddhism puts a perfection to be reached on a higher level, the annihilation of desire and the final extinction of the life-asserting urges. When this becomes the end in view, morality ceases to be a morbid exerescence on the natural lust for life, and becomes a logical necessity. The transitory and incomplete happiness that the humanist finds in labouring for mankind is then enlarged to an all-embracing compassion, in which the individual ego is seen to be an illusion.

Then is the Buddhist goal a merely negative one? To the life-worshipper it may appear so. But when we re-orient ourselves to a view that is neither pessimistic nor optimistic concerning man's portion of happiness, but is realistic in its acceptance of the facts, we find that the oppositions of negative and positive have no significance. Or they take on a different meaning in the new context. If all the life-processes are, as Buddhism teaches and experience confirms, impermanent,

subject to suffering and void of ego-substance, it follows that their cessation, the Nibbāna of Buddhism, must be the sole reality.

The real cannot be described in terms of the unreal, and the only possible answer to those who wish to know what it is must lie in the Buddha's own words: 'Come, and see for yourself.' Buddhism does not ask us to take any belief on trust, and the Buddha was the only religious teacher in the world's history who condemned blind faith. The worship of science is after all nothing but another kind of religion. The appeal of Buddhist thought to the Western mind is that it has no 'Either/Or'. It opens the door to a wider rationalism.

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Detachment

T. H. PERERA

DETACHMENT

by

T. H. Perera

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"CONSORT not with those that are dear, never with those that are not dear, not seeing those that are dear and seeing those that are not dear, are both painful."

(*Dhammapada 210, tr. by Nārada Thera*)

The *Māra Samyutta* of the *Samyutta Nikāya* provides us with superb acting by the three daughters of Māra, whose names are immortalised in temple murals, verse and song as Taṇhā, Rati and Rāga. Taṇhā is personified to represent the thirst to satisfy the senses, Rati represents the clinging or the insatiate thirst to satisfy the senses and Rāga represents the desire or the craving for the senses (*kāma*). They are, thus, the three dimensions of the all-pervading Desire present in man eager to drink his fill from the founts of the senses. No wonder, then, that man clings convulsively to life when Death is about to

lay his icy hands upon him. It should be noted here that these sense founts are called in Pali *Āyatanas*, in the sense that they lengthen *Samsaric* existence instead of shortening it.

Kāma or Lust stands both for Sense-Desire and the object desired (*klesa-kāma* and *vatthu-kāma*). In its highly intensified form it is known as Clinging to sense-desires (*kāma-upādāna*), the germ of future life or becoming (*bhava*). Man, in his ignorance or inability to see reality, invests it with a Self or Soul, when it comes to be called Clinging to a self or soul (*att'upādāna*). Thus arises the belief in a Self or Soul (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*). The deluded "being" called Man goes about saying: "This is my Self", or "I have a Soul", or "This is mine", or "This belongs to me" and so on.

The *Anguttara Nikāya* (iii, 55) gives a graphic description of this poor "Soul" running and sweating and demanding, for himself and those near and dear to him, the things of the world; not only demanding, but when

frustrated, how he becomes the prime mover in causing untold misery to others and inevitably the cause of his own unhappiness and ruin: "Enraptured with lust, enraged with anger, blinded by delusion, overwhelmed, with mind ensnared, man aims at his own ruin, at others' ruin, at the ruin of both parties, and he experiences mental pain and grief. But, if lust, anger and delusion are given up, man aims neither at his own ruin, nor at others' ruin, nor at the ruin of both parties, and he experiences no mental pain and grief. Thus is Nibbāna immediate, visible in this life, inviting, attractive and comprehensible to the wise."

The three daughters of Māra danced, each one trying to excel the other. Lord Buddha sat beneath the Bodhi-tree and looked on with a mind free from lust (*vītarāgaṁ cittaṁ*) with a mind free from hate (*vītadosaṁ cittaṁ*), with a mind free from delusion (*vītamohaṁ cittaṁ*). The initial step to achieve these three supreme states of mind, He had taken six years before when as Prince Siddhattha, He left behind all that the heart of man is attached to, in

other words, on that great night He made the unique Renunciation—*Nekkhamma*, the very opposite of Sensual Desire (*Kāma-rāga*)—and left home for homelessness (*pabbajjā*) in quest of Truth—the noble quest (*āriyapariyesanā*). Thus detached from all those that are dear, He strove ceaselessly for six long years, and ultimately gained Concentration (*samādhi*), which rewarded Him with Wisdom (paññā), with Enlightenment and Nibbāna.

Permit me, at this point, to digress a little. We often hear the phrase "leaving the world" used to mean that a person has left behind much or little, donned the yellow robe of renunciation and sought the shelter of a sylvan hermitage. Yet, he is in the world, as much as you and I are in the world. Let us hear what the Blessed One tells of His supreme Renunciation. The reader is referred to the *Ariyapariyesana Sutta*, *Majjhima*, No. 26: "I went from home-life (*āgārasmā*) into homelessness (*anāgariyaṁ*)." What He actually did was to change his environment from the pleasures of Kapilavatthu to the rigours of a solitary life

on the banks of Neranjara. It was here that He developed His mind (*bhāvitaṁ*) to the highest peak of perfection and understood the world as it really is. Let me quote His words as recorded in the *Rohitassa Sutta*: "In this very one-fathom-long body along with its perceptions and thoughts, I proclaim the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world and the path leading to the cessation of the world. "In other words, the Buddha as well as Arahants have discovered the world (suffering) in this one-fathom-long body, namely the Four Noble Truths, the re-discovery of which by any one of us, in the manner taught by the Buddha, brings to an end the turmoils, the tribulations, the tortures, the tyrranies and the sorrows of samsaric existence. Hence, "to leave the world" really means to endeavour with determined zeal to achieve total abandonment of craving, the cosmic energy present in every being carrying in it the germ of suffering. And this supreme consummation, according to the Buddha Dhamma, can only be achieved as a human being, born in the cycle of a Buddha, while sojourning on this physical plane conventionally called the world—

be it in a forest glade, a mountain cave or in a cloistered sanctuary.

"In the world" according to the Buddha has only one meaning. It means in this very body. To the Buddha the body is synonymous with the world because of its breaking up and crumbling away. The "world", also, stands for the five groups of clinging (*pañcupādānakkhandha*), namely: matter or form, feelings, perceptions, mental tendencies and consciousness. Each of these is void, is empty, is insubstantial. It is the self-realisation of the voidness of each of the factors of the five groups of clinging that demolishes the belief: "This is mine", "This am I", "This is myself". Thus Right Understanding of oneself as he really is leads to Right Intention or thoughts of non-covetousness or non-hankering (*anabhijjhā*) for this "world". Thus the Path is paved to rid oneself of sense-desires which keep on feeding craving constantly and thus give rise to fresh rebirth or becoming (*bhava*). Therefore, one does not "leave the world", but makes the best use of the "world"

to put an end to the recurrent cycle of births and deaths.

I feel happy in the thought that I have diverted the digression into a channel in which flows the crystal-clear water leading to liberation. The more one contemplates on this "world" of the five groups of clinging the more does the urge to detach himself from all family ties, to leave behind much or little property, to forsake one's friends—be they a small or a large circle—the more does this urge prompt him to go forth (*pabbajjā*) from home to homelessness. To the wandering ascetic Vacchagotta the Buddha said: 'There has never been a householder, Vaccha, who without forsaking household ties, has, at the dissolution of the body, made an end of suffering."

Lord Buddha has succinctly formulated the arising and passing away of each of the constituents of the five groups of clinging in this wise:—

Thus is form, thus it arises; thus it passes away;
Thus is feeling, thus it arises, thus it passes away;
Thus is perception, thus it arises, thus it passes away;
Thus are the mental formations, thus they arise, thus they pass away;
Thus is consciousness, thus it arises, thus it passes away.

One, who in his leisure moments of relaxation contemplates each of these items, and experiences the truth residing in each of them, is drawn closer and closer to the one reality of existence, which is impermanence. But, because of the callings of the domestic life, the continuity of his contemplation is disturbed and interrupted. However, one who has experienced such moments of the impermanency of existence, concludes that. bound by the demands of the household life, it is not possible to gain the perfect realisation of the truth of impermanency inherent in existence, its unsatisfactoriness and its impersonality. Then,

there arises in him the irresistible urge to leave home for homelessness. This urge and its consummation are considered as selfish by those who are victims to the deluded belief in a Self.

Permit me to support my submission from a passage of the *Ariya Pariyesana Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* (No. 26) where Lord Buddha tells His disciples the reason for His Great Renunciation: "Now I, O disciples, before my Enlightenment, being not yet fully enlightened, while I was a Bodhisatta myself, still subject to birth, decay, disease, death, sorrow and impurities, there came to me the thought, Why do I, being subject to birth, decay, disease, death, sorrow and impurities, thus search after things of like nature? How if I, who am subject to things of such nature, realise their disadvantages and seek after the unattained, unsurpassed, perfect security which is Nibbāna?

"Then; disciples, after some time while I was still young, a black haired stripling, endowed with happy youth, in the prime of manhood, against the wishes of my father and mother who

lamented with tearful eyes, I had my head and beard shaved, and, wearing yellow garments, went forth from home to the homeless state."

As I mentioned earlier, when one's mind is intellectually agitated in regard to the evanescence, the unsatisfactoriness and insubstantiality of all existence, then there arises in him the inner urge to detach himself from all those near and dear to him in order to realise by his own efforts the utter voidness of life, and reach the goal taught by the Buddha. The mind is now engaged in a tug-of-war. On one side is the pull towards the domestic hearth, on the opposite is the pull towards faring forth (pabbajjā). The pull towards homelessness triumphs over the domestic life. This victory seals all attachment towards possessions, father and mother, wife and children, friends and relations. He now goes forth with a mind freed from worldly affection, and redolent with the Will for Deliverance (*muñcitu-kamyatā*). Wherefore the Blessed One says in the Dhammapada: "Clearly perceiving one's own welfare, let one be intent on one's own welfare" (v. 166).

In this Buddha-statement welfare means one's ultimate goal, that is Nibbāna. This statement must not be given a selfish twist. What it does mean is that like a man whose head is on fire, one should first of all try to extinguish the fire of craving which is consuming the entirety of his being. The Buddha highly commends selfless service.

In certain quarters, this breaking away from one's kith and kin is stigmatized as a heartless act, as a betrayal of the trust and love divinely bestowed upon man by his Maker. Let me hoist these kind friends on their own petard. In the Gospel of St. Matthew at x. 37 it is clearly stated: "He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son and daughter is not worthy of me."

Detachment or the total giving up of attachment is, indeed, a supreme achievement, the result of a supreme effort of self-abnegation, which is the initial step, to the realisation by wisdom of the non-existence of a Self or Soul on which theists stumble and introduce a "Supreme

Being" invested with the highest soul. There is no Being, but actually there is a *Becoming* — a mighty flow of efficient energy, with its characteristic of arising and passing away from moment to moment with no abiding eternal entity in it.

Detachment is an exceedingly rare commodity. It is because of its rareness that the Buddha says that only a few reach the Further Shore (Nibbāna) while the majority of beings run up and down on this shore. *Detachment* is the final flowering of the plant of life, the seed of which had been planted in the past, and through many a life in Samsāra; the plant that grew from it had been instinctively tended to by weeding out greed and hate that grew around it, and assiduously cultivating it with many a meritorious act of letting go. These were the people who felt that true freedom of mind lay in giving up everything, who came to feel the urge of the ascetic life, and to whom a few words from the Buddha or His Arahants were sufficient to bring about enlightenment and the end of suffering. But many were the people who heard the Buddha word, but their hearts were not properly tuned to receive it.

After the demise of the Buddha there were people who heard the Dhamma from the Arahants—people who had given up everything without the least regret — and gained illumination of mind to see things as they really are.

To some people Detachment, that is to give up one's material possessions, leave behind parents, wife and children, friends and relations, appears as immoral, as unnatural, as moral cowardice, as a mental aberration and as the act of a fool. They say that they perform their duties by their parents, wife and children, they associate with their friends and relations, and, on the whole, they are quite satisfied with the snug comfort of the domestic hearth. We do not want to dispute what they say. We would refer them to verse 214 of the *Dhammapada*:

"From attachment springs grief, from attachment springs fear; for him who is wholly free from attachment there is no grief, much less fear.

(Tr. by Nārada Thera)

There are, also, a few people who in their heart of hearts yearn for the ascetic life; but do not possess the moral courage to break themselves away from family ties and associations. To such people the Buddha says:

> "Wise people do not call that a strong fetter which is made of iron, wood or hemp; passionately strong is the care for precious stones and gold rings, for sons and a wife".
>
> "That fetter wise people call strong, which drags down, yields, but is difficult to undo; after having cut this at last, wise people take to the ascetic life, free from cares; and leaving the pleasures of sense behind."
> -*Dhammapada 345-346 (Tr. by Max Muller)*

There are, also, some people, who have detached themselves from all that belongs to them, from their kith and kin, and having taken to the ascetic life, for some reason or other, best known to them, return to the lay life, from the free life of solitude to bondage. These are the people about whom the Dhammapada says:—

"He who, having got rid of the jungle of lust, gives himself over to lust, and who, when free from the jungle, runs to the jungle, look at that man—though free, he runs into bondage!"

v. 344 (Tr. by Max Muller)

We now come to those very few people who, being really stirred by the misery of existence: the recurrent misery of being born, of decaying and of dying; whatever may be their ages, young, middle-aged or old, are overwhelmed by the urge to leave home for homelessness in order to walk the Path which the Buddha trod. Each one of them goes forth, chanting to himself:—

"May faith awaken my wisdom,
May faith awaken my insight
To see things as they really are:
Their arising and their vanishing,
And reach the goal which the Buddha taught:
The end of birth, old age and death."

These noble sons of the Buddha, having left father and mother, wife and children, relations and friends, wealth and sensual desires, roam at

will in forest glades, reflecting on the many facets of the Dhamma, sorrowless, secure and alone like the rhinoceros. To them the *Dhammapada* pays this handsome tribute:—

> "He who dwells in the Law, delights in the Law, meditates on lhe Law, recollects the Law; that Bhikkhu will never fall away from the true Law."
>
> *v. 364 (Tr. by Max Muller)*

Thus a genuine disciple of the Buddha should conduct himself in accordance with the second factor of thc Noble Eightfold Path, namely: Right Thought or Right Aspiration (*sammā sankappa*) to which are conjoined as auxiliary steps Right Understanding (the first factor of the Path). Right Effort (the sixth factor) and Right Mindfulness (the seventh factor). According to *Dīgha Nikāya* (No. 22) Right Thought is defined as follows:

1 Thoughts free from lust (*nekkhamma-sankappa*).
2 Thoughts free from ill will (*avyāpāda-sankappa*).

3 Thoughts free from cruelty (*avihimsā-sankappa*).

Right Thought is again subdivided into two, namely: 1. Mundane Right Thought (*lokiya-sammā-sankappa*) the fruits of which are visible in this world and produce good results in the next, and 2. Supramundane Right Thought (*lokuttara-sammā-sankappa*) which is extra-sensory and extra-worldly and which occurs simultaneously along with the other seven factors of the Noble Path at the moment of Path consciousness (*magga-citta*). This thought originates in a highly developed and purified mind being the direct result of Detachment, and it does not embrace "I", "me", or "mine".

Man's thoughts and actions are fundamentally dependent on three forces that lie dormant in his mind. Given the least provocation they prompt him to act in a manner detrimental to his own welfare as well as to the welfare of others. These forces are: greed, hatred (aversion) and delusion. Greed or craving is attraction, while hatred is repulsion and delusion is one's inability to see the real nature of things, and, therefore, it is the parent of both attraction and repulsion. Thus man

with deluded mind regards what he desires or craves as pleasant and lovable, and what he hates as painful and unlovable. It is this delusion that is the cause of the eternal conflict (*dukkha*) in man to be associated with the loved and to be parted from the unloved. Separation from the loved is suffering (*piyehi vippayogo dukkho*) and union with the unloved is suffering (*appiyehi sampayogo dukkho*).

Now, Lord Buddha saw that not only the five groups of existence, which put together is called a being, but also everything, animate and inanimate, in the cosmos is in a constant state of arising and passing away, everything is a constant change (*anicca*), and, that nothing is static (*nicca*) even for a split second. It is because of one's inability to see this real nature in the cosmos that man craves, and is greedy (*lobha*) to posses the loved or the pleasant which is in a constant state of change; und then he weeps, laments and grieves (*dosa*) when he loses the loved and the pleasant or is united with the unloved. In short, the cosmos is indifferent to human suffering, and, it is sheer folly to expect security or eternal

happiness while one sojourns in a cosmos subject to constant change. All along it is DUKKHA. Therefore, Detachment is the only way to put an end to *dukkha*.

How can there exist a Self or Soul in a cosmos subject to constant change? Yet, poor souls who are unable to see this true state in nature cling to a self or soul. The Buddha-Dhamma alone, of all religious beliefs, categorically denies the existence of a soul or self. This denial is not a dogma. You and I can see it, if we totally detach ourselves from sense-desires and unwholesome things in the full glare of wisdom. Follow the Noble Eightfold Path in its triple division of Morality, Concentration and Wisdom and you will be rewarded with the full comprehension of not-self (*anattā*).

This is the reward which crowns the ceaseless effort of the worldling (*puthujjana*) who has gone forth and first followed the Noble Eightfold Path in its mundane aspect. He is now no more a worldling. He is elevated to the sphere of a Noble One (*ariya-puggala*). It is at this precious moment that he perceives and realises the Supramundane Noble Eightfold Path, or, in other words, he

enters the Stream (*sotāpatti*). As a Stream-Winner (*sotāpanna*), he is entitled to rank as a First Samaṇa. A Sotāpanna realises that nowhere is there to be found a self or soul. The Ego-belief (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) in him is shattered. However, he has not yet totally eradicated the concept of a self. He eradicates it completely while standing on the threshold of Arahathood.

You will admit that it is purely due to selfishness that man craves and is bound up with lust and pleasure, which give rise to fresh rebirth. It is only when he becomes fully aware of Not-self through his own efforts at gaining wisdom that he transcends the world of desires to the extra-sensory world, and graduating through the four stages and their immediate Fruits (*phala*), he cuts across the cosmic ocean of births and deaths to arrive at the Further Shore—Nibbana. Detachment is the preliminary step to gain the knowledge of Not-self. However, those who love the world and its so-called pleasures will not be enamoured of leaving behind all that man holds as dear. May they also arrive at Wisdom, one day, to see Reality.

"How sweet the peaceful solitude of him
Who has both learned and then perceived
the Truth!
Happy to be hate-free—kind to all
Happily rid of passion and desire
And Self-delusion—that is Supreme Joy."

(*Udāna*—Ch. 2. 1.)

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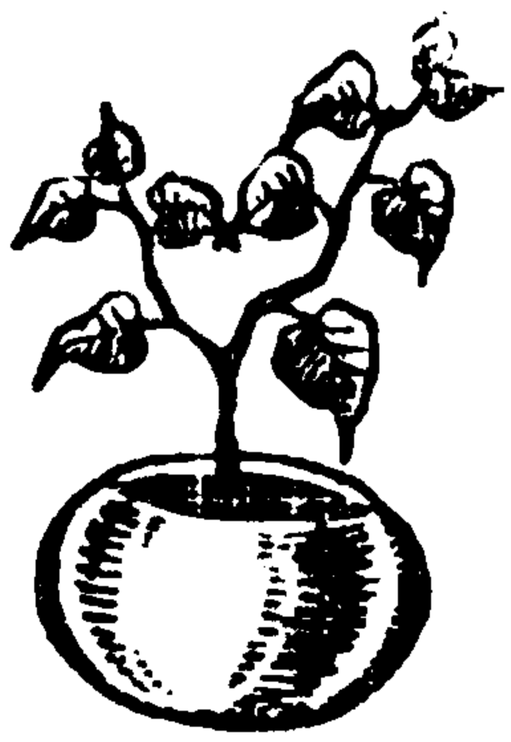

Extinction Without Remainder

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu

Extinction Without Remainder

The Fruit of Meditation

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu
of Thailand

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY
Kandy 1967 Ceylon

"Bodhi Leaves", No. B. 33.

EXTINCTION WITHOUT REMAINDER

Extinction without remainder is approached in two ways. In one method one should habitually maintain the extinction without remainder of the attachment expressed as 'This is I' and 'This is mine'. In the other method, when the body is about to break up one should let go of everything, including body, life and mind. Let them be extinguished for the last time, and do not allow any fuel whatever for another birth to be left or desired. One should therefore use the first method as the regular daily practice. When the body is about to break up, or in an accident when one does not die on the spot but has some full and clear consciousness left for a time, one should use the latter method. If one dies suddenly and is extinguished with the consciousness of one who has practised according to the first method, then the result is similar; that is, one does not wish to be reborn.

The first method should be practised regularly either before bedtime or fresh from getting up, or whenever one has the spare time to purify the mind. One should compose the mind until it becomes steady by counting the breaths, or by whatever method suits one best. This should be done for a time, and then one should investigate various things in order not to be attached to them, or to cling to the view that they are one's own. There should be no exception whatever. One should see that they are only dependent factors circulating in the wheel of life. If one is attached to anything one is bound to suffer immediately. Circulation in the wheel of life is a direct suffering. Every time one is born one suffers. However one is born it is suffering. As whatever one is born it is suffering according to the type of birth. For instance, if one is born as a son, one suffers as a son. If one is born a rich man, one suffers as a rich man. If one is born as a poor man, one suffers as a poor man. If one is born as a good man, one suffers as a good man. If one is born as a bad man, one suffers as a bad

man. If one is born as a fortunate man, one suffers as a fortunate man. If one is born as an unfortunate man, one suffers as an unfortunate man. Therefore nothing is better than not to be born as anyone: that is extinction without remainder.

When we speak of 'birth' it means not only birth from a mother's womb, but also the birth of the mind; that is, of the idea 'I am such' which arises from time to time—for instance, I am a son, I am a poor man, or a rich man; I am a good-looking person, or I am an ugly person; I am a fortunate person, or an unfortunate person, and so on. These are what we call grasping thoughts of 'I am such' and 'Mine is such ' This 'I and mine' is called grasping. It is born from the womb of its mother, which is ignorance. It is born thousands of times each day, and whenever it is born, suffering is unavoidable. Whenever the eye sees forms, or the ears hear sounds, or the nose smells, or the tongue tastes, or the body touches through the skin, or the mind thinks of past events and makes them into a complete story, the word 'I'

will be born immediately if one does not keep the senses under control. And as soon as the 'I' arises, suffering must also occur. Therefore one must be careful never to let the 'I' poke its head out from its mother's womb. When the eye sees forms, or the ears hear sounds, and so on, one should have the wisdom to know what to do with them, or one should remain unperturbed. The act of seeing or hearing is quite all right, provided that one never allows the 'I' to be constructed out of desire or feeling connected with the object which one sees or hears. If this is done we can say that the 'I' is not born. That is, it has no existence. When it is not born it does not die, and so there is no suffering. This is what I mean by saying that to be born does not only mean physical birth direct from the mother's womb. It also means the birth of the idea of 'I' from its own mother's womb—ignorance.

Here, extinction without remainder means not allowing the 'I' to arise. Since it has ignorance as its mother, one should kill its

mother with knowledge, or with the wisdom that there is nothing worth being attached to.

On the other hand the thought of 'I' may arise when one is not mindful. If one tends to be unmindful very often, it can be cured by being ashamed or afraid. One is ashamed that one has given way to ignorance, which is the chief characteristic of undeveloped minds, and is unworthy of those who aspire to true knowledge. By being afraid I mean that there is nothing more dangerous than the birth of a thought dominated by ignorance. It opens the way to craving, and these two are the double gates of hell and all states of suffering. In this way uncorrected ignorance leads to ruin. When there is often shame and fear of this kind, mindfulness will gradually get better until one becomes a person who follows the road to extinction without remainder perpetually.

Every day before bedtime and on getting up one ought to keep an account of this business of cultivating the way towards extinction without remainder, for one should know the income and expenditure all the time. This is

done by taking a survey of one's thoughts and actions. It is more beneficial than prayers and should be practised as an adjunct to one's regular meditation, either before or after it.

This business of extinction without remainder is not connected with gazing at an object, or seeing colours or visions with closed eyes, or seeing strange miracles, or sacred beings. It is concerned with intelligent wisdom or direct clear awareness. If one really has perfect mindfulness it can produce bodily and mental lightness, an indescribable bodily and mental ease. But one must never think of this, because to do so would make it a source of new grasping. If that happens it will never be extinguished, but will remain for ever. That is, it will be born endlessly and will be the cause of even worse worry than before.

Those who are not successful in practising insight are those who want to grasp happiness, and they aim at Nibbāna according to their own way of grasping. The 'I' always arises in the view of Nibbāna which each person grasps. It will never be extinguished in that way.

Therefore if ones wants something to contemplate, one must contemplate, that there is nothing to cling to, even such a thing as Nibbāna. *Sabbe dhammā nālaṁ abhinivesāya:* all things should not be grasped at.

To summarize, one must have a clear understanding of non-attachment constantly, every day and night, awake or asleep One should maintain intelligent wisdom all the time. Never let the grasping by way of 'I' or 'This is mine' occur. Even if one happens to die during one's sleep one still has the possibility of not being born again. This is called 'existence in extinction without remainder', in other words the state of non-self, having only Dharma in a mind which is void of self. Then it can be said that 'self' is not born and there is only 'extinction without remainder'. If one becomes unmindful of this fact one way or another, one should be willing to start again. Do not be discouraged or get tired of this mental exercise, as we do with our physical exercise all the time. Let the body and mind receive the correct training together. Whenever one prac-

tises, with every in-breathing and out-breathing one should maintain wisdom. Then mistakes will never arise.

The second method of practice is done when one is about to die. I should say that it is a very easy practice, like jumping down steps when one is already falling over them. It would be difficult only if one dare not jump when one is falling over the steps. This would be painful, because one would fall down in a hopeless manner. After all, this body cannot continue any longer. The mind or "the owner of the house" should therefore jump down too. At that time one should have the wisdom to see clearly that nothing is worth grasping, hoping for, existing for, or being born again for, Let it end. Let the curtain drop on the last scene, because whatever one touches or in whatever form of being one is born it is all suffering. If one can practise this, the mind will lose its hope, and when the hope is destroyed there will be nothing to cling to. The mind will then be extinguished with the body, leaving no fuel behind for another birth. By

'fuel' I mean 'hope' or 'desire', or clinging to something in particular. Suppose, for instance, that one is injured by a fierce animal coming from behind, or one is run over by a car, or is crushed by a falling building, or is suddenly murdered, and so on. Should there be any consciousness left even for a second one should, at that moment, direct one's mind towards extinction without remainder or clarify this idea in the mind in the way that one is used to practising every day and night. Then allow the mind to be blown out. This is enough for 'jumping down the steps' towards extinction without remainder. When the mind is blown out without having any time to become conscious, one should regard the practice of the awareness of extinction without remainder, which is contemplated on and aimed at perpetually, as the basis of extinction. It is still extinction without remainder.

If one suffers from great pains or torturing illness, one should stick out one's mind to receive this great pain and make a mental remark: 'The more painful it is, the sooner

extinction without reminder will coue. 'Thanks to the pain!' When this is done the joy in the Dharma will curb all pains. They will not appear, or at most will be very slight. Thereby we shall be restored to our normal sanity, and then we can laugh at the pain itself.

Suppose that one suffers from an illness such as paralysis and one is to die of that disease. One should hold that one's self has ended when the illness numbs the body The body that is left with winking eyes has no meaning. This is because one's mind has been inclined to extinction without remainder before one was taken ill, or when one still had perfect control of the body. Therefore when that control is lost it should be the end of it all. Although the life is not yet ended there is nothing to be called 'Tbis is I' or 'This is mine.' Therefore, when one's body is still in a good condition one should complete the extinction without remainder with the help of intelligent wisdom. It will remain effective until the time of the illness, even in the case of paralysis as mentioned before. There will be

no failure nor any possibility of being defeated by any pain whatever, since one has destroyed the 'I' completely with the body still in sound condition.

To summarize all methods of practice, one must understand extinction without remainder in two categories; namely, one must have a mind really filled with wisdom, clearly understanding that there is nothing to hold on to, or to grasp. In this mind completely void of clinging and attachment there is no 'I' or 'This is mine.' There is only Dharma, the absolute deliverance which is nominally called 'The Three Gems' or 'The Path of Deliverance', or whatever it is which is the sublime hope of those who cling. But we shall not attach ourselves to these things. This is extinction without remainder, or Nibbāna. In its full sense 'Ni' means without a remainder and 'bāna' means going, or blowing out. Nibbāna therefore means going without any remainder. It has the characteristics of a meaning, a practice, and a blessing as described above.

Work all work with Void-Mind,
Give the fruits to the Void
Eat from the storage of Void.
Die well from the first day.

Dharma, Blessings and Loving-kindness
to all beings.

❖

Translated from the Thai by Prieb Bunnag

THE FRUIT OF MEDITATION

The fruit of meditation is twofold. The first fruit is a new kind of happiness that we have never had before. This happiness is not based on sense-objects which are only the causes of emotional happiness, and this in its turn is nothing but potential Suffering. The happiness derived from meditation is inexpressibly cool and calm. We may say that it is like the tasting in advance of the attainment of NIBBANA, or the freedom from the defilements. Although NIBBANA, has not yet been attained, one may presumably compare the taste of the attainment of NIBBANA with this present experience, the only differences being those of subtlety and Intensity. This is the first fruit of meditation. It is technically called DITTHA - DHAMMIKATTHA, Immediate Profit. If one's energy is exhausted after having reached this stage one's effort is not totally in vain. One has still profited.

The second fruit of Meditation is that the mind is fully prepared to have penetrating

Insight into all the phenomena, for practising meditation is like sharpening a knife for cutting cleanly, or like polishing a glass so as to see clearly. A well trained mind is amenable like a tame monkey or elephant. It is active, strong and unwavering under the impulse of passion, anger, hate, envy and the like. Such a mind cannot be overpowered by these defilements. When these evil forces try to stimulate the mind there arises a sense of humour and one laughs at them, and so they cannot distract the mind which is well trained.

When your mind is endowed with these two fruits of meditation, namely the Immediate Profit and the Penetrating Insight, you can see the world through inward sight. Henceforth nothing in the world can prick you through your sense organs. Nothing can lead your eye, nose, ear, tongue or body into temptation. Your mind will be free from all kinds of temptations and attachments. All worldly objects or allurements will appear to be something humorous. You can laugh them off. You will feel as if the world as a whole is reduced

to a handful of something and is completely in your grip, for it cannot delude your mind while you see it inwardly in its real nature. If you can establish your mind in this state and do not lose your inward sight, no matter in what posture or place you may be, it must be regarded as a very great attainment of stability. But as you are not yet very skilful, for your introversion or intuition is newly grown and undeveloped, it may easily fade away. So you must guard it with all your efforts. As the Scriptures say: Just as a chief queen takes care of the child in her womb who will one day be a Wheel-Turning Monarch (a World-Emperor ruling by righteousness), lest she should have a miscarriage, so one should guard diligently one's newly-grown insight until it is stable. For its sake you should willingly give up income and rights in much the same way as when we are ready to sacrifice everything upon contracting a fatal disease. To this end, you must live in an environment which is suitable for Meditation and avoid disagreeable persons and

places in the same way as a sick person avoids taking things which disagree with him.

Now you should also know that the practice of controliing the mind in this manner does not make you abnormal or disagreeable to society, or make you walk, stand or sleep in unusual or strange ways. Also, you are not supposed to sit meditating all the time or everywhere you go, for after you have gained mastery over Meditation the taste of it becomes one with your mind. Although you have done or practised meditation for the first time, your mind is bathed in the pleasing taste of it for a considerable time until, for want of heedfulness on your part, it fades away. Defilements such as passion, delusion, anger, hatred and jea. lousy can hardly pollute you. If you are a politician you can debate carefully, patiently and convincingly. If you are a missionary you can laugh off the strongest opposition and mockery of non-believers. Whatever may be your occupation or profession, you can do it successfully and you will be self-sufficient. You may go to any place or associate with anybody,

and you will be able to maintain mindfully the state of equilibrium, or what has now become a normality for you. All that has been said will suffice to show how the mind well trained through the practice of meditation is useful both from the material as well as the spiritual point of view.

So, to conclude this brief account of meditation, we have seen that mind control results in happiness and Immediate Profit or DITTHA-DHAMMIKATTHA and makes you able to atta n still higher states. To see things in their real nature or to attain Buddha-dhamma calls for one-pointedness of mind. The stronger the one-pointedness of mind you have, the easier and more rapidly you can attain Buddha-dhamma In case you fail to attain the Dhamma now, you will manage to attain it before long if you make it your way of living and are determined to practise it all years and months until the end of your days.

There is another important way that should be taken into consideration for attaining

Buddha-dhamma. That is to serve others. It means to render help to others by teaching or showing the way to Buddha-dhamma itself. When you have trained your mind to the extent that you can keep a check on your emotions, you are able to teach or guide others in proportion to the experience that you derived therefrom The Buddha disapproved of teaching what one cannot put into practice by oneself. But he encouraged the teaching of that which one can really practise. The Buddha himself served humanity in this respect. Teaching others is beneficial, for one teaches oneself as well regarding the attainment of Buddha-dhamma, in the cultivation of benevolence or friendly feeling, and moreover the intellect is developed. Also, one should know that this is the line of conduct that the Buddha set forth as an ideal way of conduct. Therefore I exhort you out of your compassion to help others towards their emancipation, by guiding them to the extent you have emancipated yourself. The friendly feeling that you cultivate through guiding others is very beneficial for the concentration and culture

of mind. This is so because when you are cross-questioned you have to investigate and think over the issue carefully and deeply. You have to understand the matter thoroughly before you can reply. So in this way, by helping others you help to elevate yourself. We find in the VIMUTTAYATANA SUTTA that some people attained the Summum Bonum while trying to explain to others that very matter, i. e., regarding the Summum Bonum itself. This is because some individuals have a strange kind of mentality in that they can better and more easily think and feel delighted when they teach or advise others. In the case of such people, new ideas flash into the mind and phrases leap to the mouth simultaneously and they, out of their deep understanding, feel very much exhilarated all the time. So it is clear that to try to think in order to guide others when asked is not only to enlighten others but to enlighten oneself at the same time. Thus it is something desirable and to be practised; and it is clear that the line of conduct explained above constitutes a salient feature, and that to serve

others is very beneficial for the attainment of Buddha-dhamma.

In conclusion may I repeat that the way to attain Buddha-dhamma is to harbour no feeling of attachment to anything, no matter whether it is sense-objects, views or one's own assumed (supposed) 'self.' All troubles arise from attachment, which has ignorance as its mother. The feeling of attachment is an instinct which is common to all creatures who can think, and the more one thinks (outwardly), the stronger the attachment will be. The power of thinking makes one able to enjoy the different kinds of tastes of sense-objects more and more. And the more one clings on to the taste, the stronger the bond of attachment becomes.

What I mean is that man should use his faculty of thinking for higher values; that is to say, he should try to be free from self-deception in proportion to the products of his brain. So let the production of your mind be your servant rather than being your master. Let it be helpful rather than destructive to your wellbeing. It should not delude you. Man must be better

than the animal by using his power of thinking in a proper and constructive way. His knowledge should not bring about his own ruin. He should possess decisive knowledge with regard to good and bad, right and wrong.

To do away with attachment is to gain that Wisdom which drives away ignorance. When a man has no attachment or attraction the very forms, sounds, etc., do not delude him, for they lay bare to his insight their real nature. Man can then handle them in the right way; that is, they can no longer exercise an influence on him in terms of passion, grievance and the like. On the contrary, they become helpful and instructive and promote his quietude or healthy state of mind and body. The moment you dismiss the feeling of attachment from your mind, you realize the Buddha-dhamma radiating in you. You discover or rediscover what the Great Buddha discovered and taught. Every one of us should attain it, for it marks the standard of perfection in manhood. This is the end of the holy life. This is the *realistic ideal*, or aim of life. You must strive for it, for you

can raise yourself above the world and worldly phenomena, and can control them thereby. You can be free from or above all the problems of life whatsoever.

Indeed, no problems of life can touch you and you become superior to all worldly things. There is no state of your being, whether monk or nun, layman or lay woman, male, female, young or old, which can be a hindrance to you, and there is no form, sound, odour, taste or tangible thing in this world or in any other world—truly, there is absolutely notbing whatsoever which can in the least disturb your majestic quietude. Indeed, the only thing left is an immovable and unmoved state where there is no birth, old-age, suffering or death. This state is the very perfection of the values of life which everybody who earnestly follows the Great Buddha, the Enlightened One, the Perfect One, hopes for and sets his heart on.

From 'Towards Buddha-Dhamma,'

translated by

Nagasena Bhikkhu.

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HOW TO LISTEN TO DHARMA

Herbert V. Guenther Ph. D.

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HOW TO LISTEN TO DHARMA

It is a long time — more than 2500 years—since the Buddha preached His first sermon at the Deer Park near Benares, and yet His message, the Dharma, has lost nothing of its original vigour and life-giving power. On the contrary, it has attracted and influenced most of the finest thinkers of the modern world and the Buddha Himself has in spirit if not entirely in name won the hearts of more of the earth's inhabitants than any other religous leader. He has won this allegiance by tolerance and His message is first of all a message of peace, of peace with ourselves and with our fellow-beings. Therefore it may be concluded that the growing interest in Buddhism might be something like a guarantee

that fighting. war-mongering, and all those useless and silly tensions with which we make our own lives as well as those of others unhappy, will be stopped once and for ever. However, this is surely a vain hope. But can the Dharma be blamed for this short-coming? Certainly not. The reason that peace does not not come to us or to others is so simple that it is overlooked because of this simplicity. Mere listening to the Dharma will not help much, nor does a superficial attraction lead to great results. The attraction only shows that there is something in the Buddhist Dharma which the modern world needs and that people are dimly aware of this fact. This something is scientifically speaking, the phenomenological approach* to life and its problems

* That is, seeing things as phenomena, as conditioned processes, and hot as substances or entities. (Ed.)

which in the course of its study leads to definite knowledge, and the abhorrence of theological dogmas which obfuscate mind make it believe that there is knowledge where in reality there is utter ignorance, But to have a superficial acquaintance with Buddhist tenets is not enough. In order to understand the Buddha's message intense concentration is needed for which most people have, admittedly, neither time nor strength. But unless we take time to reflect we shall remain divided against ourselves and continue to oppress others, and unless we listen properly to the Dharma and its meaning we remain defective. This the Buddhist texts stated by way of various similes. In the following I shall give a translation of a significant passage for the proper way of listening to the Dharma from a Tibetan hand-book for the study of Buddhism

called the Rdzogs. pa. chen. po. klod. chen. sñiṁ. thig. gi. sṅon. 'groi. khrid. yig. kun bzaṅ, bla mai zal. luṅ 'bearing the Sanskritized sub-title Samanta - bhadraguror mukhāgama-nāma-mahā-sandhi-mahādhātu - citta-tilakasya pūrvagatīnām nāyakam varṇṇa viharati sma):

"Three defects comparable with those of a pot are: not to listen is the defect of a pot turned upside down; not to bear in mind what one has heard is the defect of a pot with a leaky bottom; to be affected by emotional instabilities is the defect of a poisonous pot.

"The first simile means: When one listens to the explanation of the Dharma one must listen to the voice of him who explains the Dharma, without allowing the ear to stray to some other sound. When one does not listen in such a way, what

happens is like juice being poured on a pot with its opening turned down, and though one's body is present in the teaching room, one actually does not hear a single word of the Dharma.

"The second simile means: When one does not bear in mind the Dharma which one is going to hear, though the words have reached our ears, what happens is like juice being poured into a pot with a leaky bottom — however much one may pour into it, nothing will remain there; and however much of the Dharma one may have heard, one does not know how to instil it into one's mind and how to take it to heart.

"The third simile means: When one hears the explanation of the Dharma, but listens to it while one is concerned with thoughts about a worldly life and the desire for fame

or with thoughts tainted by the five poisons of indolence, frivolity, distrust, lassitude, and sluggishness) due to the three emotionally disturbing factors of addictedness, aversion, and dullness, not only will the Dharma not become beneficial to oneself, it will even turn into its opposite, and this is like healthy and nourishing juice being poured into a poisonous pot.

"Therefore the saints of India said :

'When one listens to the Dharma one must be like deer listening to the sound of music. When one thinks about it one must be like a man from the north shearing sheep. When one makes it a living experience one must be like a man getting drunk. When one establishes its validity one must be like a Yak eating grass hungrily. When one comes to possess

the fruit of the Dharma one must be like the sun free from clouds'.

'When one hears the explanation of the Dharma, like deer enamoured of the sound of the lute and, though shot by a stray hunter with a poisoned arrow, unable to understand or to fathom what has happened, one must listen to the Dharma with the hairs on one's body rising with joy, with eyes filled with tears, with hands folded, and not being distracted by other thoughts. But when one's mind is running after its own constructions, when the doors are opened to idle talk, when the mouth gets busy and the eyes roam hither and thither, although one's body is present in the teaching room, then the listener should at this moment, since such conduct of his is improper, devotedly memorize and count the beads of his rosary. When he listens in this way, he will

bear in mind the meaning that is explained, and having made it unforgettable, he will constantly take it to heart. The great Sakyamuni also said:

Although I showed you the
means of liberation,
You must know that liberation
depends upon yourselves.

"Since the teacher who explains the Dharma to the disciple, teaches him the way how to listen properly, how to renounce evil, how to acquire the good and wholesome, and how to take the teaching to heart, the disciple, on the other hand, must bear the teaching unforgettably in his mind and take it to heart and realize it. But if he does not bear it in mind, then, although there may be the mere benefit of listening to the Dharma, because of not understanding a trifle of the meaning of the words of the Dharma there is no

difference from not hearing the Dharma at all.

"If one is affected by emotional instabilities, though one bears in mind the teaching, the Dharma does not become pure and effective. As has been said by the incomparable Dvags. po. lha. rje:

If one does not practise the
Dharma as it should be done,
The Dharma creates the condition
for falling into evil existences.

"Thus he who has unwholesome thoughts such as erroneous conceptions about the Guru and the Dharma, who abuses his friends who do not put any obstacles in his way, and who shows arrogance and contempt, must renounce these unwholesome traits, since they create the condition for evil existences."

This short account contains also those factors which made Buddhism

a cultural and spiritual force: to listen to it, to think about it, and to embody it in one's life. To embody it in one's life is the secret of peace and happiness for us and for all others.

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