

Buddhist Perspectives on Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity

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ABSTRACT - The teachings of the Buddha are based on the morality, ethics and equanimity. He is known as the Spiritual teacher and ethical master of the Tiloka (three world). The Buddha gave his Dhamma among to all visible and non-visible Sattava (beings). According to teaching of the Buddha, Liberty means eradication from all mental defilements which is known as Nibbāna. It doesn't belong to particular any caste, phylum, race, apartheid or religion. This Liberation can be obtained by any individual. The Bramha Vihāras (Sublime State) teach fraternity toward to all sentient beings. Right now, world is suffering from the injustice, racism, intolerance, inequality, cold war and terrorism. If any country or a being follows or engages in the teachings of the Buddha, surely these problems can be overcome and peace can be established in the world.

Keywords - Moha, Sīla, Samādhi, Mettā, Karūnā, Muditā, Brāhmaṇa, Pañña, Anattā.

Introduction - On the mid night of Vesākha Pūrnimā, Buddha contemplated the Paṭiccasamuppāda (Dependent-Origination) in two-way Anuloma (clockwise) and Paṭiloma (anti-clockwise). It is the core teaching of the Buddha. The first link of the Paṭiccasamuppāda is Avijjā (Ignorance) and it is associated with Akusala Mula of Moha. The Moha is derived from Pāli Dhātu $\sqrt{Muḥ}$, to delude. It is delusion, stupidity, bewilderment.¹ Its function blinds the mind and covers the true nature of the objects as dark clouds cover the Sun. This Moha leads to Egoism and the wrong view of Attā (self). It creates the problem of the injustice, inequality, casteism, enmity etc. in this world. The main causes of these problems are attachment towards the self-perception, philosophical view, rituals and having belief in the permanence of the things. These kinds of problems and its solution has found in the Sutta. These Kinds of problems and its solution has been found in the Suttas of the Tīpiṭaka.

Many types of Philosophical beliefs were prevalent in the contemporaries of the Buddha. The problem of casteism or inequality was the main problem at this time. It found in the Ambaṭṭha Sutta, Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta, Vasala Sutta, Sabhiya Sutta, Vāsetṭha Sutta and so on. The dialogue between the Bramhaṇa and Buddha is given in the Ambaṭṭhasutta. The Ambaṭṭhasutta told to the Buddha 'Cattārome, Bho Gotama! Vannā- Khattiyā ca, Vessā ca, Suddā. Imesaṃ hi Gotama, cattunnaṃ tayo vaṇṇān- Khattiyā ca vessā ca

1 Manual of the Abhidhamma, page no.31.

suddā ca-Aññadatthu Brāmahṇasseva paricārikā sampajantī.² This means there are four Varṇa in the society-Kshatriya, Brahmin, Vaishya, and Śūdra. Out of these three Varṇas, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Śūdra are the servants of all the three Brahmins. Buddha replied to him ‘Vijjācaraṇasampanno so seṭṭho devamānuse’ti’ means He is best among the deities and human beings, who are superior in knowledge (Paññā) and conduct, then he may belong to any caste. “Na kho, Ambaṭṭha, Anuttarāya Vijjācaraṇasampadāya jātivādo vā vuccati, gottavādo vā vuccati, mānvādo vā vuccati”.³ This attainment of the unexcelled knowledge-and- conduct can be tied neither in casteism nor in clan nor in conceit; you are worthy for me; you are not worthy for me. A being is called Vijjācaraṇasampanna ‘One who practices the Sīla, controls his Indriya (senses), and attains the Jhānas. Thus, he develops conduct. He attains various insights and discards all defilements and beyond this no further development of knowledge and conduct that is higher and more perfect.

The Sīlapaññākathā from Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta, Soṇadaṇḍa is answering to question, which had been asked by the Buddha regarding the essential characteristic and conduct of the Brahmaṇa. He took an example of his nephew and explain ‘Aṅgaka is handsome, good looking, and fair complex. He is the knower of the Vedas and recites the mantra. He is well-born on both sides. I know his parents. But if Aṅgaka kills beings, steals, commits adultery, speaks lie, and drinks intoxicant and alcohol. If a person has all these defects, then what should be done about being very handsome, knowledgeable, and born in the Brahmina family?’ He said about the Sīla and Paññā ‘Sīla paridhotā paññā, paññā paridhotā sīla. Yatha sīlaṃ tatha paññā, yatha paññā tatha sīlaṃ. Sīlavato paññā, pañnavato sīla.’⁴ It means wisdom is purified by morality and wisdom leads to the purification of morals. Where there is morality there is knowledge and where there is wisdom there is morality. The moral man has wisdom and the wise man has morality.

In Vāsetṭha Sutta, Buddha preached Jātibheda; Tree and plants do not claim Jāti. Yet they have traits of Jāti. The tree and plants are divided into a creeper, herbs, shrubs, climber, and so on. Insects, moths, and even ants have racial signs, due to which they have different species. Known even small and big animals, also have ethnical characteristics, there are different species. But for human beings, it is not applicable. Buddha told this verse

“Yathā etāsu jātīsu, liṅga jātimayaṃ puthu
Evaṃ natthi manussesu, liṅga jātimaya puthu”
Na kesehi nasīsena, na kaṇṇehi na akkhihi.
Na mukhena nanāsaya, na oṭṭhehi bhamūhi vā⁵
Paccattaṃ ca sarīresu, mausseswetam na vijjati.
Vokāram ca manussesu, puthu sippena jīvati.⁶

Just there are traits of different species in these species, so there are no traits of different species in humans. Unlike the other species, in the human case, there is no indication of race in the hair, head, ears,

2 Dighanikāyapāli, page no.100

3 Dighanikāyapāli, page no.108

4 Dighanikāyapāli, page no.133.

5 Suttanipāta, page no.132.

6 Suttanipāta, page no.134.

eyes, face, nose, lips, and eyebrows. There is no such difference between human beings as there is a difference in the body of animals. The difference between humans is negligible.

In modern times, countries are facing the social crisis of theft, civil war, dacoity, unemployment, smuggling of animals and human beings, killings, etc. The methods of removing this social crisis and developing of society have been mentioned in the Kutadantasutta and Cakkavatti Sihanāda Sutta. According to Kutadantasutta, if in a state where various kinds of troubles and obstacles arise like theft, dacoity, robbery-murder, etc. At that time the king of that state should not collect the tax. To solve these problems, the king thinks that by killing and catching these thieves and murderers, putting them in jail, condemning them, and expelling them from the country, he will get the solution to all problems. Even after doing all this, the roots of the social problems of the state will not be destroyed. The remaining criminals of these will again trouble the public in the future. The roots of these problems can be destroyed by these steps; when someone comes to reside in your state, you give them seeds and land for agriculture. Give capital for business. Or those who come to work for the service of your state, you should give them a respectable living wage, and give employment to those who are unemployed. In the same way, all people will be busy in their work and being obliged by you will not do any such work on their behalf which will cause any harm to you or your people and state, and your treasury will also increase in many ways and thus all will be happy.

The Cakkavattiyasuttaṃ Sutta mentions the duties of the emperor ruler to establish and maintain peace in his kingdom. King Daḷhanemicakkavattirājā was a Dhammikko king. He followed the five precepts and gave respect to all beings. The king was giving his kingdom to his eldest son when he told him about the Āriyacakkavattivattaṃ (Ariya wheel turning monarch). You should practice of the Dhamma, honoring, revering, and cherishing the Dhamma, paying homage to Dhamma and venerating it. Dhamma is your badge, flag, and banner, acknowledging the Dhamma as your teacher or master. You should protect and guard your people your own household, your army, your troops, your nobles, your brahmins, birds and beasts, and your state according to Dhamma. Always keep in mind that there should not be any unrighteousness and crime in your kingdom. Give money to those who are poor. Those who are Samaṇa and Brahmins in your kingdom, are engaged in the practice of taming himself, each one calming himself and trying to attain the higher wisdom, from time to time you should meet Samaṇa and Brahmins and ask them; Bhante! what is to be followed? what is not to be followed? What action leads to run long harm and sorrow? What action leads to establishing harmony, welfare, and peace? After lightning the advice, you should abstain from unwholesome deeds and cultivate the wholesome deed.

The root cause of the social problems arising in society is not observing the Pañcasīla (five precepts). All the problems of society are arising because of the Avijjā (ignorance), Micchā Diṭṭhi (wrong view), and Taṇha (Craving). Ignorance creates the wrong view. There are three characteristics of the Dhamma as Anicca (impermanence), Dukkha (suffering), and Anattā (No-self). But ignorance hides the nature of the things, it creates an illusion like Anicca perceives as Nicca (permanence), Dukkha perceives as Sukha (happiness), and Anattā perceives as Attā (soul/ self). The Miccha Diṭṭhi is not believing in the Kamma Niyāma (action and their result) and believes in it there is a soul in us. Believe in the existence of a creator or a god who created this world.

One major cause of inequality and suffering is the attachment toward the Pañcakhanda (Five Aggregates). In First Ariya Sacca mentioned that ‘Saṅkhitena Pañcūppāda khand Dukkha’. The Five

aggregate is the formation of the Nāma (mind) and Rūpa (matter). It is Paramattha Lakkhaṇa is Anicca, Dukkha, and Anattā. Because of ignorance man, beings attached to his body and complexion prides himself on his body and humiliates others.

According to the teachings of the Buddha, liberation is the higher stage, which belongs to Lokuttara (Supramundane) means beyond these five aggregates of clinging. The Nibbāna is defined in the Abhidhammatha Saṅgo as

“Nibbānaṃ pana lokuttara saṅkhātaṃ catumaggañāṇena sacchikātabbaṃ magga phalānam ālambanabanabhūtaṃ vānasakhātāya taṇhāya nikkhantattā nibbānaṃ ti pavuccati.”⁷

Nibbāna is termed Supramundane and is to be realized by the wisdom of the four paths and fruits. It becomes an object to the paths and fruits and is called Nibbāna because it departs from craving, which is entangled.

It is the stage, there is no inequality, no discrimination, no injustice. Nibbāna is derived from ni+√vān, Ni means devoid and Vān stands for cravings. Detachment or Devoid from craving is known as the Nibbāna.

Theragathā of Sunīta expressed I was born in a lowly family, Poor, without food. My work was outrageous, I collected the bad, flowers withered from shrines and threw them away, people found me disgusting, hated me, despised me. lowering my heart, I showed reverence to many. Then I saw a self-awakening with arrayed monks. I approached him to pay reverence and requested to become part of the Saṅgha. With Compassion, he allowed me and ordained me as a monk. I stayed in wiled and followed Supreme one whatever he taught me. I recollected my past lives in the first watch, in the middle watch, and purified the divine eyes. In the last watch, destroyed the deep root of Avijjā (Ignorance). Then, the night began to end and the sun began to rise. The Indra and Brahmā to me and they pay homage to me.⁸ To see me, arrayed with a squadron of devas, the Teacher smiled & said:

“Through austerity, celibacy,
restraint, & self-control:
That’s how one is a brahman.
He is a brahman supreme.”⁹

The Mettā (loving-kindness), Karūnā (compassion), and Muditā are the Brahma Vihāra (Sublime States). Metta is the state of true friendship. It is also a Kammatthāna of meditation. When we practice the Metta, sharing of loving kinds with all visible and invisible beings that time Citta is associated with Adosa root. It is the opposite of the hatred, ill will, and, aversion state. Buddha preached Karniyemmetta Sutta, Khanda Sutta, Metta Sutta, and so on. It is defined as the do wish for welfare and happiness for all beings without any expectation. The Karunā is a state of the mind, whenever you see the suffering of a being your heart quiver. You also feel his pain in your heart. Muditā is joy and happiness to seeing the success of a person, you can’t feel jealousy to see other’s success.

Conclusion- The teaching of the Buddha is applied in all eras. The Buddha taught in the Salla Suttam, the impermanence of the life of a being. Life is too short and, in this period, man creates suffering in

7 Comprehensive manual of the Abhidhamma, page no.258.

8 Poems of the Elders: An Anthology from the *Theragāthā* and *Therīgāthā*, page no.72.

9 Poems of the Elders: An Anthology from the *Theragāthā* and *Therīgāthā*, page no.73.

others' life for self-happiness. He is attached to himself and performs unwholesomely without any remorse. The Kalaha Sutta explained that 'Discord, controversy, lamentation, grief, pride, and slander arise from dear things. Human beings develop an attachment to dear things, and people and continue to be unhappy.

“Animittamaññātāṃ, maccānaṃ idha jīvitāṃ.

Kairāṃ ca parittāṃ ca, taṃ ca dukkhena saññuttāṃ”¹⁰

Here man's life purpose is inferior, unknown, difficult, erratic, and too full of misery.

Yathā'pi kumbhakārassa, kata mattikabhājā.

Sabbe bhedanapariyantā, evaṃ maccāna jīvitāṃ.¹¹

Just as all the earthen pots made by potter are about to explode, in the same way, is the life of human beings.

We should apply the teaching of the Buddha in our daily life to overcome all mental and physical suffering. The Anicca, Dukkha, and Anattā are the Ultimate reality of all things, and Avijjā (Ignorance) causes of inequality, stupidity, injustice, conceit, etc. We should practice of the Sīla (morality), Samādhi, Vipassanā, charity, loving-kindness, and so on.

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10 Suttanipāta, page no.126

11 Suttanipāta, page no.126