

WHICH WAY TO HAPPINESS ?



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PREFACE

Venerable Upatissa Thera, in his discourse in writing, titled *Which Way to Happiness?* Gives the reader a clear insight into the Buddhist perception of happiness, as stated by the Buddha. The writer quotes the Buddha word, relates incidents from the Buddha's life, and refers to people of the time of the Buddha to make clearer what he intends saying.

His aim in the writing is to make clear what happiness in the true sense of the word means; the happiness of a practicing sincere follower of the Buddha, in contrast to temporary happiness that one gets from sensual pleasure, the accumulation of wealth and indulgence in mind altering drugs and alcohol.

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Reference is made to the Noble Eightfold Path, which followed, brings happiness to the layman; happiness, serenity and equanimity to the *arahant*; and eventually, the supreme joy of *Nibbana*. It details the happiness that comes of living a good life of *sila*-observing the Five Precepts and cultivating the *Brahma Viharas*. From experience, Ven. Upatissa touches on the joy and fulfillment the renouncer feels when he gives up lay life and goes forth into monkhood.

If the reader assumes this book to be esoteric and a high sounding sermon; s/he is completely wrong. Ven. Upatissa writes on very ordinary concerns, everyday situations, such as, to quote but two concerns, the joy of being free of debt; duties of parents to their children and gratitude and obligations of children to parents.

The Venerable Thera's intention in writing and publishing the book, and then distributing it as a Dhamma *dana*, is to make people accept the fact that Buddhism brings happiness to those who follow the Buddhist teaching. One can be really happy as practicing and devout Buddhist, while enjoying the good of things of this life; and then be assured of good future lives too in *Samsara*.

Thus Venerable Upatissa, quoting *suttas*, relates what the Buddha taught about everyday life so that life in spite of its attendant *Dhukka*, can be joyous.

Nanda P. Wanasundera
Colombo, Sri Lanka
March 2003

NOTE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JEEVANA Shrestha, a son of Ashta Man Shrestha and Lakshemi Kumari Shrestha, was born on 25th November 1966, in Guruju Dhara, Balambu, Nepal. He completed his preliminary education at the Sri Prabhat Madyamika Vidyalaya, Kathmandu.

In 1981 he was ordained at *Sangharama*, Luti-Dhalko, Chhetrapati, by the Most Ven. Amritananda Thera, the late Sangha Nayake of the All Nepal Bhikkhu Sangha, and since then, Jeevana Shrestha is known by the name Upatissa- a pupil of Ven. Ashwaghosha Thera.

He received his higher ordination in Sri Lanka in 1989m under the Tutelage of the Maha Sanghanayake of the Amarapura Sect, The Most Ven. Madihe Pannaseeha Maha Thera.

Reverend Upatissa, in 1993, was successful in the Pandit Degree Examination conducted by the Sri Lanka Classical Languages Development Society, recognized by the President and Government of Sri Lanka as an educational institute. On 22nd August, 2000, he was conferred the Degree of Master of Arts, completing the prescribed course of study

conducted by the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka.

In 1999, Reverend Upatissa was invited to the Sri Lanka Buddhist Vihara, Brisbane, Australia, to take up the position of incumbent monk of the Vihara. During his stay, the name of the temple was changed to *Buddhist Vihara of Queensland*, with the intention of serving the interests of the people in the State of Queensland, and elsewhere. He continued working in Australia until December 2002.

Which Way to Happiness? is the first book by Reverend Upatissa. In it, he has tried to present his thoughts, based on some Buddhist teachings, outlining a concept of happiness as an essential part of life. He also details certain possible approaches to happiness through understanding Buddhism and the reality of Samsaric life.

His intention is to make a Dhamma dana of this book so more people would understand and accept the fact that Buddhism brings happiness to those who follow the Buddha's teaching.

WHICH WAY TO HAPPINESS?



A closer view of the Maha Bodhi Vihara

The Sound of Dharma Words is a consolation program designed to impart compassionate teachings of the Lord Buddha through email correspondence. The purpose of this program is to offer you a kind of consolation to encourage you to find peace within yourself at a time of need. In the modern society peace has become the most significant aspect of life in achieving any kind of goal.

If you have not gained peace of mind, and if you are still dissatisfied, the answers anticipated from this program might help you overcome dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction is a lack of mental peace, which needs to be reduced gradually from understanding one's own reality of life.

When you have a chance to hear appealing "The Sound of Dharma Words," you will find the truth within yourself, which could be a password for you to find a way to peace of your mind.

Therefore, I will consider your questions prior to answering! And in the course of time, you may find peace-that's not far from you!

May peace prevail on earth and all sentient beings are well and happy!

When you hear some one speaking to you from an unseen corner of the world, you may be surprised!

It is all about compassionate teachings of the Lord Buddha, which are good enough to relate to one's life. The Buddha never spoke a word in vain. His words are sacred as they bring us peace of mind. The thoughts, which arise after reading, must be pure to put into practice. Peaceful mind always makes us happy. So, first we have to cleanse the impurities of mind as they are burdensome and with impurities in mind we find it difficult to carry out goodwill and wholesome deeds. Although impurities are not visible to our naked eyes, they can influence in the way we behave and that type of behavior might be harmful to others too.

So, being good to oneself itself means that the good person has something to share with his friends. And what he has to share with his friends and other people in common must have generated from the pure thoughts of his mind. Generosity at least in ideas of pure thoughts can bring you happiness. If you think you are happy while hearing "The Sound of Dharma Words," that's what I like you to be!

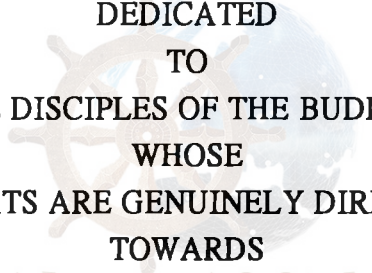
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am thankful to Ven. Mangala and Ven. Vajirabuddhi for encouraging me to publish this book at the Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taiwan.

The education officer, Nanda P. Wanasundera has devoted the precious time and energy to proof reading and correcting “WHICH WAY TO HAPPINESS?” with full care. And also by writing the “PREFACE” for this book, a kind of taste to the reader has been added. I wish my gratitude and sincere thanks to Nanda P. Wanasundera.

My thanks are also due to the Corporate Body of the Educational Foundation as I have been enabled to contribute some valuable teachings of the Buddha to the reader!

Bhikkhu Upatissa
Sangharama
Luti-Dhalko, Chherapati
Kathmandu, Nepal



DEDICATED
TO
ALL DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA
WHOSE
EFFORTS ARE GENUINELY DIRECTED
TOWARDS
THE REALIZATON OF TRUTH!



WHICH WAY TO HAPPINESS?

Most people while listening to a speech of a friend or a conversation with a friend, can decide for themselves what kind of speech it is. Likewise, the friendship itself. Some friends speak soft words and some friends harsh words. For a friend to speak soft words, his intention must be pure. Soft words are the outcome of compassion. If a friend speaks soft words with impure thoughts, a friend of this nature cannot be a good friend. So the words uttered by such a friend might be soft but because of his impure thoughts, he cannot be considered to be a good friend.

Harsh words are of course very unpleasant to hear. Harsh words are normally spoken if the intention is to hurt others. When people are angry they find it difficult to control the language and they might use harsh words to hurt others. The possibility of controlling anger can reduce harsh words and a mind without anger does not give a chance to speak harsh words.

However, human beings are not perfect in every way. The latent tendencies such as jealousy, greed, aversion or illusion always tend to emerge, and when people learn to work with

mindfulness, they will not allow the mind to go astray, so that the negative human attitude will be controlled and kept in the inactive position of the mind.

Once the Buddha was living in Jeta's Grove in *Savatthi*. Prince *Abhayaraj* invited the Buddha for the next day's meal in his palace.

When the prince finished serving the Buddha he took a lower seat to sit before the Buddha. Then the prince asked two questions as his religious teacher, *Mahaveera*, taught him.

“Venerable Sir, do you use harsh words to train your followers?”

“Venerable Sir, do you use soft words to train your followers?”

The Buddha answered straightforwardly, “I do not answer one-sided questions.”

At that time the prince had a young tender infant lying on his lap. The Buddha used a simile about an infant and said to the prince.

Prince, now you tell me! Due to the negligence of parents or a nurse, if this infant were to put a stick or a pebble in his mouth what would you do to this infant?

Mahaveera assumed the Buddha would find it difficult to answer and said to the prince if the Buddha replied, “yes” for the first question he could easily defeat Him in debate.

The Buddha would not be a different person between general people and himself if He had answered “yes” for the first question. The Buddha should not have spoken harsh words with *Devadatta* if He said, “yes” to the second question. This is how *Mahaveera* imagined judging the Buddha. But the Buddha did not answer one-sided questions and that made the prince very uncomfortable. Then the prince accepted the teaching of the Buddha

Since the Buddha was fully compassionate He did not ignore any one in society; whether he is a member of the community of monks or any one who would have come to Him seeking a truth. The compassion of the Buddha excluded no one; rather the Buddha went on foot as many miles as He could whenever He saw people deserving His compassion in overcoming the misery of the life. Only those who were not less fortunate had the warm compassion of the

Buddha and eventually listening to a discourse, they found a way to get rid of suffering. So, the sacred words of the Buddha were like a kind of remedy that healed the suffering humans in the Buddha's day.

In the discourse to Prince *Abhaya*, the Buddha gave a detailed account about what sort of talks were suitable to speak with people. Speech is a powerful media that conveys one's inner thoughts of mind. If one speaks with a wicked mind the consequence will be gross and unpleasant so that the speaker will experience discomfort in return. On the other hand, if one speaks with a pure mind the consequence of his pure words will bring advantages to listeners and they benefit from his words. So, the Buddha mentioned suitable circumstances before bringing one's words out of the mouth. While considering words; what kind of words am I going to speak, which after being spoken if they are not beneficial; it is better to remain silent rather than hurting.

In this *Sutta*, as the Buddha has explained the nature of a suitable speech, it is not so much difficult to speak words of truth. What is required to practice is that of mindfulness while speaking with people. Even the true words were not encouraged to speak unless they are unhurting. So the Buddha said one should rely on time and be patient until a

proper time is ready for him. Words spoken at random could hurt although they were true. “Mindful words” means of a person who knows the words that are true, correct, beneficial, welcome and agreeable to others. In the case of the Buddha, He would not be in a hurry to speak though His speech was full of the above mentioned ‘true’ etc. adjectives; because He knew the time to use a speech. When the Buddha had known the time to use His speech, He did not delay to correct his followers although the words He used were unwelcome and disagreeable. He uttered such words, as they were true, correct and beneficial to them.

The Lord Buddha is comparable to loving parents of children. The parents who have unconditional love for their children cannot see them going astray and they will not allow them to carry out works, which are harmful. If a mother sees her infant baby trying to put a stick into his mouth, she will never allow her to do so.

Due to her negligence, if her baby had put a stick or a pebble, she would not stand and stare any long. She would take the stick or the pebble out of the baby’s mouth. She would not mind that her baby might suffer while trying to take it out of the baby’s mouth. So, just as a loving mother, the Buddha used to protect His disciples with unconditional love. That is

why the Buddha used even unwelcome and disagreeable speech to Devadatta, but it was true, correct and beneficial speech. The Buddha knew the proper time to heal other's weakness so that they might overcome the danger of suffering in the world. Since the Buddha had compassion for beings, he used to take the risk to save them from suffering of life. Compassion of the Buddha was boundless and it did not distinguish anyone.

On the other hand prejudice-free words are important if members of any society love to live in peace. Some people might speak in favor of some one who could be a relation of his or her family. Although it is a general attitude of most people that they are attached to their wealth, family-member and relations, it is not nice to take the side for wealth, reputation and so on. When you speak taking a side, in favor of those whom you like most, and at the same time if you hate others; the possibility of peace to dawn is very low. If you are with an absent mind, either attachment or hatred will conquer your mind. So, in return you will have to repay for the words you have exchanged.

Blind belief based on ignorance might cause damage so that the person who suffers the damage would find it uncomfortable to cooperate with other people. True words are prejudice-free, and do not lead to form wrong ideas of

another person. To be truthful is to prepare all the necessary conditions to make a society peaceful. On listening to you, all the people are not supposed to rely on what you said although you speak true words. Those who do not rely on you might try to find a chance to bring harm so that they put you into fear. Nothing is achieved with fear or one's aspirations collapse when fear begins to strike your mind. That is how truth gives courage to defeat liars, and when you stick to the truth you become brave so that you will easily tackle most problems in spite of those who hesitate to listen to your true words.

Liars are almost everywhere in society looking for chances to let you down. They might praise you at a time they are in need of your support in order to make their way to an easy livelihood. Once they had enough things for themselves, things that led to their well-being motivated by selfish attitude; they would not let you to rise though you had been instrumental in their well-being.

In fact, it is difficult for every one to be truthful always. However, if the intention is of peace and harmony which is conducive to the creation of well-being of many people, is an aim of peace-lovers and wise people they need not give up the truth even at a difficult time because they know that the

'truth' and the 'lie' cannot co-exist. So, those who wish to make a great sacrifice for common well-being will try to uphold the truth for themselves. Truthfulness is the consequence of one's inner purity that becomes the base to every successful action of a person.

According to the Bodhisattva ideal, definition of the truth is profound for its meaning goes far beyond what we accept as a truth. During every lifetime of the Bodhisattva, his sacrifice was aroused by compassion, skillfulness and policy. He had enough courage to take up any sort of challenges and to face with the challenge, he utilized his compassion, skillfulness and policy. A major feature of the Bodhisattva ideal was that he did not break promises, which he had carried out aiming at full enlightenment. So, the resolution of not breaking any promises, which have been undertaken to uphold and maintain the truth, is a characteristic of the Bodhisattva ideal.

After fulfilling all the perfections (*paramitas*) He became the Buddha and on a certain occasion He said, "The taste of truth excels all other kinds of tastes; the tastes which are seen, touched, cognizable, perceivable and enjoyable for most people on earth." "Truth is of the best taste among other tastes.

As an essence of life truth remains while all the other sorts of deeds change according to time. Wholesome deeds (kusala kamma) are required for upholding the truth. Whenever you forget the essence of wholesome deeds, you find it difficult to get hold of the truth. If an infant baby catches a flame he gets his flame fingers burnt. The infant baby knows only the beauty of the fire, but he does not know the danger of the fire. The truth is that the fire has both; the utility and the danger. If you know the fire in use, you have benefits out of the fire. If you know the danger of the fire, you escape from the fire. So, the knowledge of the fire is required to protect the infant baby. The knowledge is ‘fire burns and fire is not reliable although fire is useful in many cases!’

Wholesome deeds are of course the outcome of verbal and mental actions. When you see a baby nearing to touch a fire, you have already thought that it would be harmful to the baby and you would shout to stop him touching the fire. Before you shouted, you had thoughts in your mind, “This baby will be injured by the fire!” And then your mind directed your words to shout, and to stop the baby you personally hurried to get the baby out of the fire. The baby knows only beauty of the fire whereas you know its danger

too, and that helps you prevent the baby from the imminent danger.

Same as the fire, all that brings dangerous consequences to a family or a society is regarded unwholesome deeds. You may not be a follower of any faith, but this does not say you escape from the wrong deeds of your life. You may hide for some time until the truth is revealed. Still, you know yourself better than anyone else. That is how wrongdoers undergo an unavoidable punishment for their misdeeds while the other performers of wholesome deeds are offered rewards for their sacrifice of time and energy on behalf the public.

Right Speech, a part of the Noble Eightfold Path is absolutely verbal action of a person, which is put into practice through the knowledge of the first and second part of the same Path: Right Understanding and Right View. When you have acquired proper knowledge that concerns the entire phenomenon, you will see their true nature and will learn to train yourself. Eventually you speak to people with pure thoughts and that kind of verbal wholesome action tends to peace and harmony. From the text of Buddhism, right speech means the abstention from lies, coarse language, and harsh speech and backbites. While seeing an incident or

experience of an event, (if) you abstain from these speeches; you will not fall from the Noble Path.

Venerable Rahula was a small monk ordained at seven by Venerable Sariputta. One day the Buddha visited Rahula to train him in speech, and a simile of the water pot was given. If a recluse speaks a deliberate lie he is similar to the empty water pot, said the Buddha. Then the Buddha further said the importance of wise reflection on the actions of body, speech and mind. Body, speech and mind are the three doors, which always conduce to the accumulation of wholesome or unwholesome actions. A simile of mirror and its usage was given to Rahula.

Happiness of wholesome actions is a permanent truth whereas happiness derived from material goods such, as wealth and property; and also happiness of sensuality are a truth; but it is a truth of impermanence indeed.

The Buddha himself has showed the importance of happiness gained from worldly affairs. It is true all are not born rich and those who are brought up in the lap of luxury have become poorer and found it harder in society. After falling to the low life, becoming poorer, they may realize some causes of their decline. Due to the ignorance of the essence that

every life does have in finding its own way towards success, some children who depend on their parents will meet hardship later in their life. However, in order to keep the flow of life smooth all the children do not need to grow in parental wealth. After a certain stage of life they must learn to work for themselves without thinking to depend on parents every time, and this kind of process will be an approach to economic stability. Economic growth is conducive to the solution of most problems of family life and the Buddha also has not ignored the approachable procedure to an economic condition because the outset of this particular aspect is as a member of a family and 'growth' depends on how much time he devotes himself to his own works.

Although poor in wealth, most parents can help their children by providing the necessary requirements. Parents work hard at a time of need to provide all that is required for their children's health, care, education and guidance towards a prosperous life. So, as a son or a daughter of good parents, the children's responsibility is to assist them in their reasonable efforts, and with their guidance make another effort for one's own goodness. It might seem a tough task, but for a healthy atmosphere and to bring peace and harmony to a family, happiness between children and parents is a basic need.

An approach to happiness according to the teachings of the Buddha is not beyond one's effort. You just need to have a bit of knowledge about the nature of happiness and if the access is appropriate for you, be a mindful person over the nature of happiness. Happiness from certain things, which you have, is more precious than trying to gain happiness from others. So, unity of a family life offers true happiness and to achieve such kind of happiness, you must have your own property, proper use of the property, you must not be indebted to others, and you must lead a flawless life.

Sufficient wealth or any material possessions belonging to you is a source of happiness. The Buddha said it as a kind of happiness derived from one's own belongings (*atthi-sukha*). When you have enough wealth, happiness comes to you for being able to lead an independent life. Dependant life is not easy because those who impose power on a dependant life always try to hamper even sincere ideas and the plan of dependant life. So, wealth is happiness and happiness increases when you have earned your property without harming others' happiness.

Buddhism does not lay stress on wealth alone; as you have earned enough you learn to spend it on useful purposes: on

your family life, children's education and health care, and other types of domestic affairs. Apart from secular purpose, you also must not forget to spend on meritorious deeds, which offers benefits to the recipients who have devoted their lives for the sake of others' welfare. The result of generosity is spiritual happiness that you gain in return for supporting welfare activities of society. By practicing generosity you do not miss out a chance of giving up greed, and when the mind is free of greed, you would love to share food and non-alcoholic drinks with all in your family (*bhoga-sukha*).

Happiness of generosity is higher than other types of happiness for it has a tendency of offering spiritual satisfaction to the donor when he reflects on his charity. Other types of happiness mostly of worldly affairs will not last long; rather you might even repent for what has been done in the hope of happiness. Although you lose a little of your wealth, happiness that comes to you from contribution, charity, and helping those in need is a way of achieving real happiness. Your contribution could be small, but the consequence would be a great support to welfare activities of a just society. When you see a welfare society developing, merits will come to you for you also have helped it with a generous mind.

In case of a person too, if you have extended kind support willing his/her well-being, you can be happy looking at your own generosity. So, the happiness that lasts is spiritual and it is superior to other types of happiness derived from sensual pleasure and material wealth. According to Buddhism 'sufficient wealth' is not meant only for one's own life and family needs but also encourages you to contribute a little of your wealth for the poor and needy. Then you know you have a feeling for poor people and with your contribution they will become good citizens of a nation. If your relatives are in a difficult situation, you can also extend your support and they will also be grateful to you. This is how one's sufficient wealth is supposed to be put into proper use. Happiness originated from the proper use of one's wealth is called *bhoga-sukha*.

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In present day life in the world it seems difficult to cope with all that is required. Without a reliable job or a ready-made plastic card in the hand, no one might trust you. Very few things are carried out for the sake of goodness. Money has a major role in society though money alone does not solve every problem of society. When a person is reliable and holds a good position or a job, it could be a bit easy for him to live in modern society. If not so, no one might think about

his situation and he could experience hardships. He would not find it easy to attend to his requirements unless he had courage in the mind.

Mutual cooperation is another relevant issue to uplift poor people of any nation. Some people who seem as if rich in wealth extend their cooperation only after looking at an economic standard. The intension of mutual cooperation must mean a help to the needy without weighing the economic condition of poor people. They might not be able to return loans to the lender. And even a little of common wealth given to those who are urgently in need could be a great consolation for them to solve some of their problems.

As poor people find it difficult to pay back, there is no sense to give them a loan. It is appreciative if those so-called rich show their generosity without any conditions and poor people do not need to ponder over taking a loan. If they were given interest-free loans, they could still repay the capital by working hard. When the pressure of interest is put on poor people, it might take long to pay off the capital and this could bring them stress. Most people are bound to work hard since they have been provided loans. Provisions of loans have become a kind of fashion in Australia and without state support students might not reach their hopes of life.

Thoughts of repayment could result in taking alcoholic drinks. Thinking to subdue tension and worries about loans some people might take liquor and other alcoholic drinks but this is not the solution. If you are a wise person you still can save a little instead of taking cigarettes and alcoholic drinks. What has been saved can also be used for domestic affairs so that you have fewer burdens. Even with a little income you can sort out most problems if you know how to confront the situation of economics.

Pattakamma sutta: gives a detail of a person's wishes regarding his wealth. How does a person think to possess wealth? Actually a person does not like to keep anything, which comes to him from unlawful sources. So, whatever he has earned with his earnest effort is considered as lawful wealth. The Buddha recommends proper use of this lawful wealth for the sake of one's own benefit and goodness of others. The Buddha says lawful wealth is one of four difficult things to acquire in the world, and the other four difficult things to acquire are good reputation, long life, and a happy life.

When a man has acquired lawful wealth, he then wishes to gain a good reputation. Good reputation could be a result of

right livelihood. According to the teachings of the Buddha prohibited jobs would bring various harms to society and those who have been involved in the prohibited jobs might carry enormous dangers from one country to another.

In this modern world people daily watch adverse effects of talks concerning terror; and peace effort of most nations have failed in bringing peace to people. Despite a great effort in regard to peace process, many countries are under constant threat of terror and security to their lives. No solution could be attained for people to stay without fear until the productivity of harmful weapons and explosive artilleries increase. Instead of increasing arms if rich countries have encouraged programs of eliminating poverty, social welfare, and tolerance among inter faiths; this earth would have become peaceful for every one.

In this regard Buddhism offers justice and common thoughts to peace loving nations. Buddhism does not encourage trade in arms and weapons; killing animals; intoxicating drinks, poisons and professions that bring harm to oneself and others. So, working for one's living out of the frame of right livelihood is inviting danger for oneself and others. The Buddha said, "Abstaining from wrongful occupations, an

earnest person makes an honorable living.” (*Miccha ajivam pahaya samma ajivena jivikam kappeti*)

At the time of the Buddha there were different people and their positions were also differentiated by social status. The Buddha ignored their status and said no one could be a higher person unless and without noble qualities. Actions (karma) of a person decide his social position whether he is noble or ignoble.

As most people work to live, their main aim could be to earn more and more. When they have enough wealth they invest their wealth for the quest of knowledge, good reputation, power and so on. *Pattakamma Sutta* gives a detailed account of general wishes of most people in regard to their wealth.

Certainly most people like happy and long lives. If any one likes to live a long and happy life he needs to prepare to gain the blessing of a long and happy life from wholesome deeds. Some people invite relatives and friends on their birthday and memorable occasions. Sharing greetings and presentations they wish happy and long life. Good thoughts have a power in bringing a positive result to the performer of wholesome deeds. Thoughts associated with loving-kindness, compassion, altruistic joy and equanimity will not cause

harm to participating relatives and friends. Those who respect elders are supposed to achieve long life, beauty, happiness and energy.

At the time of the Buddha a farmer had only one son in his family who was destined to die in a few days. The father thought of saving his son's life by providing him medication. However, he did not succeed and the news was revealed to the Buddha. Then the Buddha realized that his son needed to change his destined death by performing wholesome deeds. The Buddha said that the father should carry out meritorious deeds at his home for seven nights and days and his son would escape death. Thus, listening to the advice of the Buddha, the farmer invited to his home the order of monks headed by the Buddha. These monks chanted the sacred scriptures for seven nights and days. During these days by listening to the sacred words they achieved merits. On the concluding day by serving the Buddha and the monks they accrued a lot of merits and eventually that ensured his son a long life.

Every birthday means that one is closer to death by one year. It is a suitable time to reflect on one's past. While reflecting on what has been done, one could have a sense of urgency (*samvega*). It is possible to make life better than before by

reducing wrong thoughts of mind. So, meritorious deeds overcome unwholesome sates of mind. This incident shows a kind of power that could be gained by respecting those worthy of respects. Pure thoughts of the Buddha and the monks who were free of lust, hatred and delusion could influence their blessings on those genuine followers. Even today those who believe in their faiths receive blessing by performing rituals towards each other. So, on the other hand performance of duties is a blessing that could be carried out without ignoring anyone in one's family or society.

This was said by the Buddha: Those who look after their parents, respect the elders at their home, speak politely, give up slandering, devoid of the thoughts of greed; uphold truth and overcome anger; are grateful humans. To receive blessings for success in one's life, goodwill of elders and one's own conduct towards them needs to be proper. Blessing is an outcome of pure thoughts of elders which children at their home expect to overcome difficult times in their lives.

On memorable occasions parents might not forget to present their children gifts and encourage them with right understanding. A piece of advice given at the proper time is worthier than random advice. When parents fail to pay

proper attention concerning the well-being of their children, they can take an opportunity to ignore parents' advice. Parents can set an example to their children to create a peaceful atmosphere for themselves and neighbors.

Every one likes to live a happy life. It is a common aspiration from a child to an adult. What kind of life can be a happy life? It seems as if a difficult point to answer the nature of an absolutely happy life. Some are happy when they have their wishes fulfilled and at the same time they are not happy if their wishes do not turn out properly. As long as their wishes concern worldly issues they cannot find lasting happiness because whatever activities carried out with a thought of making one's life happy by worldly issues can be more desirous of them. When desire is fulfilled one might seem satisfied but he is not happy indeed

A criterion of a happy life according to the Buddha's teachings is not to hurt oneself in finding happiness or by hurting others to achieve happiness. A person is not considered happy though he is rich in wealth and a person is not considered unhappy just because he has to live a hard life. Happiness concerns a way of his life and how he works to be a happy person among others. So 'a happy life' is also one of the four difficult things to achieve in this world. The way

people try to achieve happiness can be different from one social value to another. However, when people are far beyond from mere secular thoughts of making oneself happy, they have a chance of relating themselves to spirituality. Happiness derived from spirituality will last long and travel with one just like the shadow of a walking person in the sun.

Once the Buddha visited a pupil of Mahaveera when he was torturing himself in the sun. He laid flat on a large stone warmed by the sunshine and with his closed eyes looking towards the sun. Without a cloth on the body he was burning defilements. As his teacher Mahaveera had taught him a way of eliminating evils of former lives, he was washing away stains by torturing himself in the sun.

The Buddha approached him and asked why he was laying in the burning sun. He said he was practicing his teacher's hints to wash away all evils of his past lives. "Once evils of former lives have been washed away I am pure and happy," he explained. "Are you certain about your evils of the past?" the Buddha asked.

"No, Venerable Sir!" the pupil replied.

“If you are not certain about your evils of the past, there is no sense of giving intentional pain by burning in the sun.”

No one can achieve eternal happiness in the worldly issues. Even King Bimbisara cannot be happy though he has constantly satisfying things inside the palace. It is not possible for him or any other rich person to satisfy his life for seven days and nights without a break. “But in my case it is totally different. Without taking any meal for seven days and nights I can be happy and satisfied with meditation,” the Buddha said.

Though the Buddha did not deny the concept of social values of other faiths, He showed the correct way to happiness of mind, which is gained by those who could put into practice by following in the steps of the Buddha. The Buddha did not say happiness was possible in happiness nor did He say happiness was possible for one to attain by giving desperate pain. So, nobody can ever purchase happiness!

Considering the above account, most kinds of happiness are not supposed as a long lasting happiness of life. However it may be difficult to achieve and brief may it be at a time of experiencing, no one would like to miss happiness. This may be a reason for some people, as they do not mindful of

returning loans rather even with a loan they are prepared to make happy. It seems better not to hold celebrations as long as one is indebted to loan-owners. If one has a pressure of returning loans, firstly he has to pay off before thinking to hold a celebration of any event. The Buddha did not appreciate a person who, having taken a loan, does not return if when he is asked to do so. Because he cannot face the person who has lent him and he normally escapes from the sight of loan-owner or he may pretend as if he has not taken a loan. Such a person is condemned in society.

Those who commit grave mistake cannot escape from state punishment. For some time they might be able to stay behind the curtain. When the time ripens and brings them results for what they have done, they will confess or remain as a liar. A liar is a dishonest person to himself and he might do even wrong deeds just for the sake of his living. So when a person finds it difficult to return loans he might speak lies to excuse himself. According to the Buddha there is no impossible evil for a liar. When a person is used to lie or disappoint others by speaking lies he might pretend as if he is doing a lot of things. Indeed he cannot escape from deliberate lies, as the deliberate lies become reproductive karma in return.

To improve the condition and maintain activities normal again he will need to make efforts or pretend as if he is an honest person. Because of loans if people have to lie, their happiness cannot be lasting. It is just like trying to make others blind with misconception of happiness whilst deceiving oneself. As long as people are indebted, they are confined even as a thief to a jail. When a person has no more to pay, the happiness he experiences is just like the happiness of the thief released from the jail. So according to Buddhism, a life free of loans can be happier than those who have not paid off their loans. It sounds good if people can maintain happiness whilst they have not finished paying back. However, *anana sukha*, happiness emerged in the freedom of loans is superior.

As people have paid off their loans they have time to think about goodwill of their families, relatives and friends. There are five kinds of things from which people are not supposed to escape. Government taxation (*raja-bali*) is one of them, and the others are four kinds of offerings in the name of kinsfolk (*nati-bali*), guests, (*atithi-bali*), departed relatives (*pubbapeta-bali*), and deities (*devata-bali*).

Transference of merits to departed relatives is widely known among Buddhists. These people normally do not tend to

forget their departed ones even several years after their death. Though their beloved kinsfolk was dead and gone, those concerned keep their virtues as a song of memory in living hearts. So they make offerings, and merit gained out of the offerings are transferred to their departed ones.

The Buddha said this: “children should not forget their parents even after their death.” To remember virtues of parents their children should give offerings from time to time to those who deserve them.

Children can never return the gratitude to their parents for valuable and sincere duties, which have been carried out for children’s goodness. Only parents know how much trouble they have taken in bringing them up. They do not mind to take any risk if their children imitate the image of their correct lifestyle. So the Buddhist view on this particular aspect of lifestyle shows a relationship of children and parents. The relationship is based on mutual and familial duties, which have an important role in family life. Failure in fulfilling these duties by children or parents tends to future regrets.

As parents, their duties are: 1. Refrain children from evils 2. Find ways for children to engage themselves in good deeds 3.

Give them a good education 4. Marry them into a suitable family. 5. Share the birthright with them.

In return children are expected to fulfill the following duties towards their parents: 1. Look after parents 2. Help them in their work, small or heavy 3. Preserve the honor of generation 4. Preserve the heritage handed down by parents 5. Transfer merits to parents after they have passed away.

For children, it is not easy to get rid of the debts of their parents' since they have enormously suffered to bring them up by fulfilling their duties. The Buddha said parents have given their children eyes to see the world and made them walk and nourished them. (*imassa lokassa dassera apadaka posaka*). If children wish to get rid of the debt of their parents they might do a lot of good things to make them happy; still they are not freed of the debt. Though they cater to every need of their parents they are indebted. Children would not be free from parents' debts though they carry them on their shoulders. The only possible solution, as the Buddha has showed us, is to change their wrong views of lifestyle or change their wrong beliefs by persuading importance of faith, morality, generosity and wisdom.

There are three kinds of sons/daughters. One group of sons is superior to parents while the other group is inferior. The middle group is just like an image of their parents. They like to listen to their parents and act accordingly.

Those children who are superior to their parents know much more about the correct way to take them upward. Some children are skilful in their very childhood. Parents do not need to make much effort to convince them, whereas some are such difficult children that parents might need a lot of effort to guide them in the correct way. Difficult children are considered to be inferior ones as they are not ready to accept the guidance of their parents.

Maybe there are other reasons why some parents find it difficult to train their children despite much energy and effort they have exhausted for the sake of their goodness. However inferior children need much care, above all parents' exemplary behavior is valuable to set them in the correct way which offers them strength to face society and cope with social affairs.

Inborn skillfulness is believed to have accompanied along with the birth of a child as the child would have done wholesome deeds in his former lives which became a

potential and that made him an important superior person to even his own parents so that he is quick in understanding.

Family-relationship is tied up by fulfilling duties among the members. When a member ignores the importance of his duty, negligence might cause a setback to result in disorder in the family. Nobody is supposed to ignore any duties since peace and harmony totally depend on the fulfillment of duties. Duties are to be carried out deliberately. If any body carries out a duty unwillingly, the other members of the same family will be on a difficult track. In particular, parents should never show their children even the slightest distinction. They must look after every one in the family equally so that they would think their parents treat them with unconditional love.

Once upon a time the merchant *Anathapindika* visited the Buddha in Jeta's Grove. The merchant had only one son whose name was *Kala*. *Kala* was unlike his three other sisters; *Chula*, *Mahachula* and *Sumana* who were very faithful in the teachings of the Buddha while he was naughty and did not accept a word of his father. When his father paid a visit in Jeta Grove, the Buddha suggested he should send his son to Him.

The merchant went back home and thought of how he could convince *Kala*. He knew that power of money could change the way of some one's life. So he decided to motivate his son with a thousand rupees (*kahapanas*). One day he said *Kala* should go to Jeta Grove and train himself in the higher precepts. As his father told him, he did so. Immediately after returning home from Jet Grove, he asked his father for the promised money. His father first asked him to take the meal and get the money later. *Kala* did not agree with his father's suggestion and eventually he was given the presentation of money.

Next time the merchant asked his son to repeat a discourse that he had brought in his mind from the Buddha. If he repeated a sermon, he said he would give him a double presentation of money. *Kala* was extremely happy about the money he had been given and he decided to have further presentation from his father.

Another day *Kala* went to the Buddha, and sat in front of Him as if an obedient son. The Buddha knew what brought him to Jeta Grove. So first the Buddha cleared layers of illusions of *Kala*, and gave him a beautiful sermon. As he was listening with a concentrated mind, he forgot about his father's promise and eventually attained the first level of

sainthood. When he went back home his father brought him the presentation but he was rather ashamed and refused to receive it.

The merchant was surprised and upon an inquiry the Buddha revealed the secret why his son did not receive his presentation of money. The Buddha further said attainment of the first level of sainthood (*sotapanna*) was better than any other position or material wealth on this earth.

Obviously, most people like to be reborn in heaven and they may make various prayers to see their dreams come true. However, according to Buddhism no one is supposed to suffer in hell eternally nor eternal bliss is achieved in heaven. Those who are born in heaven will also be reborn either in a higher or a lower realm of the world depending on the force of Karma. *Sotapanna* means “a stream-winner” who is bound to the destination of *Nibbana*.

This person (*sotapanna*) has almost finished crossing over the currents of the world-ocean. Hence, he is closer to *Nibbana* and the Buddha says “*Sotapanna*” is more prestigious than any other position of the world.

Those influenced by the Buddha's teachings speak to their own minds. As a result they gain knowledge of material objectives and their true nature ties them in this world. So when a person is on this stage of sainthood, he cannot be misguided, and he does not have to be reborn more than eight times through *Samsara*. Being an honest person he has eliminated personality view (*sakkaya ditthi*), doubts about the Buddha and His teachings (*vicikiccha*) and misleading wrong beliefs (*silabbataparamasa*).

Real happiness of flawless life is achieved by this kind of person while the other people who are lower than a stream-winner might find it difficult to attain. However, the Buddha did not ignore any person; rather, His teachings encouraged the follower to find happiness within oneself from the practice of correct lifestyle. For some people it could be a problem to understand the Buddha's teachings. So the happiness of flawless life (*anvajja sukha*) has an important role for those working on this field to find inner peace and harmony.

The Buddha's way of teaching is particularly to lead from suffering to happiness. For those who do not have even the slight knowledge of suffering will not be inclined to accept what the Buddha has taught. In the pursuit of happiness a life

without any mistake is an expectation to most people. But it does not seem to be happening for the goodness of the many.

A major difficulty lies in human behavior; the difficulty of living without making a mistake and the expectation will not come true unless people do not consider the importance of faultlessness. It is worthy to know how far people can adjust themselves and others to live without making a mistake in the pursuit of happiness. Human attitude is apt to mistakes and most people need guidelines to correct themselves and also show their friends and relatives the correct path so that all might find an access to inner happiness within themselves.

As human beings, it is possible making mistakes. Let them be aware of the mistakes, which could cause decline and bring bad reputation. When a friend is out of the correct path let him know about his shortcomings and he will be closer to you if you have been friendly with him. When thoughts are motivated in taking an advantage from a friend, friendship does not last though you make him known to his shortcomings.

A major characteristic of friendship is marked by the presentation of gifts. Instead of helping or giving a friend, a

friend will no longer trust a friend; rather he will take him as a pretending liar and will deny friendship with such a person. So an intelligent man thinks his lonely life is more important than with association of pretending friends. In a lonely life those intelligent men may find happiness of the flawless life. But we have been unable to read the nature of the flickering mind, which is often changed by motivation, and we still need a lot of effort to train in the precepts to avoid mistakes. Pretension is a deception!

An evil of any nature has its base on a mistake. When people fail to look into a possible mistake they will commit many mistakes sooner or later and then consequences of the evil begin to follow them. As evils have a base on mistakes, the Buddha said, “Be alert about even a slightest mistake.” On the other hand He insisted on working vigilantly without getting involved in wrongful activities. Without letting scatter the thoughts of mind, which are pliable to the commitment of faults, guard one’s mind with constant vigilance and mindfulness.

When a person takes responsibility for keeping the five precepts, a lot of mistakes are avoided. Violation of the precepts naturally conduces to one’s own spiritual decline. One could be dishonest for the failure of keeping the

precepts and many faults will escort him towards his downfall in life. While maintaining the precepts one might face hardships but wise people will not let a chance to conquer the mind go.

Whatever is done by oneself will come after one. No one can escape from one's deeds, which could be good or bad results. If a deed is unwholesome its result will defile him whereas a wholesome deed does not. However, Buddhism does not give any kind of authority to any acting agency for one's personal purification. Just as a hungry person needs to work if he wants to eat, even so one is responsible for maintaining the precepts if he likes to recall happiness of purity.

Purity and impurity of an individual are personal matters. So an individual is totally responsible for his activities of mind, word and deed. Generally an intentional mistake is formed in mind first, and then carried out by words and deeds. An activity based on intentional thoughts has an effect on words and deeds of a person. When an intention of a person is worked out then it becomes an action (*kamma*).

Considering the nature of the mind deeply, no one is said to have been devoid of mistakes. Sometimes mistakes could be a source redress and then a resolution not to repeat the same

mistake can be made. While eliminating wrong thoughts of a mind based on evils, those who have been wise enough could advance in the spiritual aspect.

It is very risky to point at other's faults unless a person who has made a fault is ready to accept his mistake. A complaint against his fault could be wrong if you do not have sufficient evidence and he might be angrier taking your accusation seriously. He might look for a chance to find your faults to insult you later. So tell others what you do; if you tell others what you do not do; the wise will know you.

Out of compassion the Buddha used to correct others' shortcomings. He did not have faults nor made mistakes. He was firm and mindful about what He said and did it for the welfare of the many. Religious teachers of other faiths made complaints against the Buddha when they could not tolerate His teachings flourishing widely across India. Pupils of Jainism often tried to find fault with the Buddha, but they did not succeed in their effort.

Insults against the Buddha were refuted by universal compassion. Once some pupils of Jainism wanted to bring dishonor to the Buddha and made every possible effort to kill the character of the Buddha. They sent *Chincha Manvika* to

the Buddha and wanted her to ask Him to be her husband. Venerable Ananda, the immediate attendant of the Buddha, requested Him to move to another township to escape her rude and unmatched complaint. She pretended to be a pregnant woman and claimed that the Buddha had abused her.

According to Buddhism, except the Buddha, all are likely to make mistakes. Even the *arahants* who were free from lust, hatred and delusion had mistakes in their lives as the last resulting force of their previous births. These are known as a “habitual attitude”, which could follow-up until the last birth of an *arahant*.

In regard to the Buddha, habitual attitude did not follow since He had completely destroyed all defilements on attaining full enlightenment by Himself, all alone at the base of *Bodhi* tree, *Bodhgaya*. No remainder of any defilement dwelled in Him after He had become the Enlightened One (*savasane kilese so*). So even in the lifetime of the Buddha He was honored and respected by making offerings towards Him.

Buddhism never encourages harboring harmful thoughts as this kind of thoughts could pave the way to a decline of

oneself and others. Instead, a positive attitude has been given priority, which by cultivating one becomes gentle in words and deeds. An accumulation of good thoughts of a mind will certainly lead towards the spiritual aspect of life. Today, most Buddhists consider the noble qualities of the Buddha as a living embodiment of Himself and by paying homage, Buddhist people enhance their knowledge and walk in the footsteps as pointed out by the Buddha. Those who learn and practice the Buddha's teachings will also approach the ethical aspect of society and then they are enabled to achieve strength of the mind.

To achieve spiritual values, Buddhism is much more concerned with guarding one's mind, words and deeds. These three are the major doors, which always tend to bring about most disorders of life's activities. Human beings are generally dependant on each other. Nothing is possible for life's journey without co-operation of members of a family and friends. Ignorance of social values and customs might create disturbances and then life's journey could become chaotic. At least a little knowledge with regard to the significance of norms and customs of a society and a tending mind in accepting rules and regulations are required so that one can overcome tension and restlessness of mind and then most problems are sorted out gently.

Emotional activities normally do not tend to calm down the mind. Emotion means an expression of an unsettled mind. When people reach their aims of a dream world, they might not be able to control the emotion. Many sudden reactions, which could have a cause in an emotion do not appease one's feelings of mind. Tears of happiness or sadness might be noticed of those faces who suffer emotionally from the riddle of life. Courage in one's mind is required to see the things happening around in life. Neutral thoughts are important to balance the mind if an expectation does not seem to come true immediately.

Kamma might influence and delay even good thoughts in a mind which could have not been allowed by outside force. Reliable friendship in society is very scarce and good thoughts are difficult to put forward with the hope of meeting success in life. Still courage might help overcome difficult situations.

Kamma is an action carried out by deliberate thoughts, which in return certainly influences the alteration of previous decisions. This kind of alteration is not clear to explain to a person who has been a victim of his fate. However, all that happens is not the result of one's *kamma* of former lives. An act of a person, which could lead him towards decline or

development, might also be changed by his way of living. If a person has done a lot of mistakes in his life he will have no excuse for every mistake. Some of his mistakes might be ineffective and escape from the result of mistakes. This kind of act is known as *ahosi kamma*.

As every deliberate act should have a result, *ahosi kamma* might not exist to repent or gladden the doer of an act. The teachings on kamma are beyond the knowledge of a general person, as it cannot be decided by just looking at an incident. Buddhism stands unique for the reason that *ahosi kamma* offers many chances to a doer of an act enhancing him/her relevant knowledge in regard to wholesome or unwholesome deeds. Due to a former fault of a person, if he delays to involve himself in wholesome activities, he might fail to achieve the benefit of wholesome deeds.

While taking the fault as a lesson he has chances to find his own way to peace of mind. Since peace has a major role in achieving success he is not supposed to repeat former faults. By putting them (faults) into inoperative system of volitional thoughts, he can find another way to peace of mind. To attain peace under this kind of circumstance he needs to devote to wholesome deeds by cleansing impure thoughts off his mind. This is a possible way of overcoming former faults

and making them ineffective in return. Of course noble efforts are frequently required to subdue impure thoughts as these impure thoughts might appear again and again.

Wise reflection on thoughts, words and deeds leads towards the eradication of faults and thus one attains purity of mind. Generally faults recycle themselves to trouble poor and powerless people. So when the poor and the powerless happen to confront those who are in power, it becomes very uneasy to pick up a decision about the confrontation. This kind of situation is not the fault of the poor but due to excessive desire of some rich people to maintain their power by hook or by crook. They might sow seeds to create difficult situations for the powerless. Faults are nothing rather than recycled impure thoughts of those who, lacking proper knowledge of the truth, think to cause troubles.

The practical aspect of Buddhism is difficult for most people as it is conducive to the reality of life, which bases on the truth. Truth is an aspect of the *dhamma* and failure to adhere to the *dhamma* means that those who are considered strong and powerful are helpless at the time of confronting the *dhamma*. This could be a reason why they use their authority and power to keep their level smooth by defeating or putting the life of the poor in a difficult situation.

The nature of the *dhamma* has its own role in giving unavoidable results of good and bad. A word used in the *pali* text is “*dhamma samadana*” to refer to the result of behavior of a person. Faults are the result of human weaknesses. When people fail to pay attention to their weaknesses or try to ignore them, faults will mount. People with lots of faults certainly find it difficult to put them to an end. With an expectation of achieving inner happiness, intelligent people will not let faults to rise; rather they might try to mend themselves or redress at the first sight of their faults.

Faults are considered to be a treasure when the wise reveal them wishing to correct those who have made faults. All people cannot see their faults and sometimes they might even ignore the faults as faults. So they require someone like the wise to correct their way of thinking and behavior. Upon seeing one's own faults they might not repeat them so that they could achieve inner happiness through the decrease of faults.

In the case of children parents have a right to show shortcomings and correct them where they have gone astray. Likewise those who are concerned with relationships might advise out of compassion so that no one would be hurt and in

return on taking the advice; children, students or friends might be grateful towards their parents, teachers, and friends. Mutual understanding is basically required prior to showing others faults; otherwise it might bring about anger, enmity, thoughts of retaliation, instead of harmony and tolerance.

As mentioned above “*dhamma samadana*,” the result of either good or bad will take place at a proper time. It is the fourfold acquisition of the law, which does not change in bringing about the result of any sort of act. This law applies to every person equally.

- (1). There is this law of the dhamma, which conduces to suffering at the present and the future.
- (2). There is this law of the dhamma, which conduces to suffering at the present and happiness in the future.
- (3). There is this law of the dhamma, which conduces to happiness at the present and suffering in the future.
- (4). There is this law of the dhamma, which conduces to happiness at the present and future.

Suffering is a major teaching of Buddhism. Without the knowledge of suffering, people normally cannot approach to deep understanding of Buddhism. When people fear to experience suffering at the present and the future, they will not dwell on harmful thoughts. Some thoughts might not seem as if hurting oneself at the present time, but later the result of one's thoughts will activate to repent. When people fail to investigate at the time of birth their thoughts, they will be carried away by these thoughts and subsequent result will be an experience. "As you sow so shall you reap a harvest. Those who do good will reap a good harvest and those who do bad will go through suffering of evils." said the Buddha.

Suffering being a major subject of Buddhism, a study on this particular subject could lead to find a way out of it. Since birth, sentient beings are subject to suffering. Whether they like it or not, they have to accept the law of the "*dhammasamadana*" as they are given. As an eternal truth of life no one has been exempt from suffering. Some people suffer from mental disorders and others from physical illness. Physical illness is curable and there are people who are not often physically ill and who might even live long; but no one is free from mental illness though they seem as if strong in appearance.

Escape from suffering is very difficult until one has completed suffering the result of past misdeeds. In order to overcome the result of misdeeds a lot of effort is required. While engaging in welfare activities and without allowing the mind to repeat wrong deeds, one could improve oneself in his way of life and reduce the result of suffering.

Whether suffering is of the past, present or future; it is an outcome of excessive desire. Suffering that arises from desire changes when the mind does not allow the desire to continue dwelling on the mind and instead of suffering, peace and calm can be attained. Due to changeability, when ever people seek to overcome suffering, they might not achieve the results for which they worked. However, they should trust in the moral aspect of their conduct, concentration of mind and wisdom gained thereof. The target of these steps is directed towards eliminating suffering. Following these steps can decrease excitement, fear, distress or trauma and the mind gradually liberates itself from most reasons of suffering. If people do not take desire as a major root of most cases, they will not be able to find any solution to the riddle of life.

Desire is really hard to be destroyed though it seems a trifle for some people. Desire is like roots of a huge tree, which

have gone deep down to the earth. Because of the roots even a strong wind cannot fell the tree. Only if the roots were decayed the tree might collapse, otherwise it stands amidst the blowing wind. Even so is the nature of desire of most people and they will not escape from subsequent result of suffering, (though they may consider it as happiness). Desire generally grows and people cannot cut it off easily for its nature of delusion.

When people do not see reasons of suffering they will not consider suffering in a deep sense. Just to forget the burden of the mind, by engaging in various amusements they could try to seek different ways and suppress the emotional aspect of the mind. The amusements, which based on desire and delighted them, will not be a lasting method of suppressing emotions. The nature of desire leads to find more and more amusements so that those who try to find happiness through satisfying their senses are blinded by illusion. Lots of faults and misdeeds will come into being as a result of illusion.

Study on human suffering shows that no one is free of suffering since birth. Due to the experience of suffering, some people try to find out a remedy to escape from suffering. As long as desire is not completely destroyed the

end of suffering cannot be attained. Though there seems a glimpse of delight or satisfaction in sensual pleasure, in return the pleasure is considered to be a cause of suffering. When people are blinded by pleasure they cannot see the right way.

Some strong words are used to explain how hard to beat the attraction, admired by many people through the contact of the sense faculties with their sense bases. Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and *dhamma* are the sense faculties and when these faculties come into contact with these bases: object, sound, smell, flavor, touch and phenomenon, there arises the consciousness from each contact.

Sensual desire (*kama chanda*), love of pleasure (*kamasneha*), sensual stupor (*kamamurccha*), thirst of sensual desire (*kamapipasa*), and burning desire for sensuality (*kamadaha*) are the five strong words which have been mentioned in many discourses. Depending on the interpretation of these words suffering is not just an outcome of what has been seen or experienced through the contact of senses and their bases. Desire is the major point and produces suffering. When people are not aware of the nature of desire they generally tend to develop the above-mentioned characteristics of desire and they cannot get rid of the eventual result of suffering. Desire naturally grows and when people add some more

things with an intention of satisfaction, it continues growing like a fire that has been added new fuel. A tree, which has not been uprooted, will continue to grow though its branches were cut down. Due to life's struggle it is not so easy to give up desire at once. Despite certain knowledge of suffering most people are still looking for various ways to please themselves.

As mentioned in the second Noble Truth of Suffering, desire is of three perspectives i.e. desire for sensual pleasures (*kamatanha*), desire for existence and becoming (*bhavatanha*) and desire for non-existence (self annihilation *vibhava tanha*). Whether it is possible or not to give their considerations to this perspective of the nature of desire, those who look only for their satisfaction will not be able to reduce their desires. So the Buddha always wanted to show a way, which could lead suffering people to overcome the reasons of suffering. Unless and until people are not mentally strong enough, they might not take His teachings as a remedy to suffering. Every ethical aspect of Buddhism is directed towards minimizing of suffering.

Suffering is generally a cause of not being able to see an object as it is. As thoughts of a mind are directed its result will lead towards the formulation of thoughts. This world is

led by the mind (*cittena niyati loko*). When the exact nature of an object is thoroughly understood, the mind will no longer cling to the object. However it is not as easy as people generally think to live without considering the thoughts arising from the contact of eye and form.

Sometimes even a little knowledge of the corresponding nature of eye and form is required as they respond one to another and with the knowledge subsequent suffering is subdued for a while. Because of the contact, mind still suffers and to maintain peace of mind people need to understand the reality of life. Most sufferings are the result of excessive desire of sense pleasures and desire of property and wealth. This is a reality of life for most people. Whatever they do is connected to this reality and they can never escape from suffering. Sensual desire, thirst for sensual pleasures generally burn those who go after them. When one is addicted to the gratification of senses, desire increases in him and subsequent suffering will be unavoidable.

As long as the nature of suffering and one's understanding in regard to the suffering are not investigated, those suffering human beings will need to maintain the faith of morals that they believe in. Faith is a basic approach to the truth and

while leading to the understanding of suffering; it gives an enormous confidence to oneself and in the moral practice, concentration and wisdom. Comprehensive knowledge of *Dhamma* leads to the insight enabling the adherents to train in the nature of the mind.

As there is a kind of pleasure (*assada*) generally most people find it difficult to get rid of it. Suffering is realized when they investigate the adverse effects of what has been considered as a pleasure (*adinava*). No longer attachment to the pleasure will exist as soon as those who have gained comprehensive knowledge of suffering (*nissarana*). In the *Cula Dukkha Khandha Sutta* a simile of a teenager girl was given as an example to convince that how suffering was brought about generally.

Two types of truths are considered to have embraced all that is seen and unseen in the world. They are namely: conventional truth and ultimate truth. Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind normally come into contact with sight, sound, odor, touch and mental objects. Consciousness arises after they have contacted with each other i. g. the contact of eye and sight is eye consciousness. People generally like to have a look at pleasant objects, and because

of attachment they want to possess them and they might even try if the pleasant things are high in advantage for them.

All the things that we see or feel are able to generate thoughts in our minds, which are the decision of “consciousness.” So, conventional truth means a truth, which is accepted by every one. For example, health is a great happiness. Although health is a great happiness, people are vulnerable to sickness and death. Happiness of the gained health of a person changes when he/she is sick. Happiness is true indeed, but it is not supposed to be a lasting happiness. Any kind of happiness arising through contact will not last although we long for it. Sadness is a result of that particular happiness as we find it difficult to keep “happiness” always with us. We eat delicious food and we think we enjoy it, but in reality when we are hungry we need to work and prepare food for another day. So, during hungry days, the same kind of happiness will not return to us. Happiness is a truth but it does not last and eventually we work hard to be happy again!

Ultimate truth does not change since it is conducive to ever lasting happiness. If a person is good in his conduct, what he practices will be good lead him to ever lasting happiness. The ten types of wholesomeness is the proper approach to ultimate truth. Right Understanding and Right View about

theses ten types of wholesomeness cleans one's mind, and with the mind purified, he/she is closer to this ultimate truth. So, the Buddha's advice in regard to the approach to the ultimate truth is very clear which is very simple and common to every one, but while trying to relate to one's life, it seems as if ever lasting happiness is a difficult process.

*"Sabbapapassa akaranam kkusalassa
upasampada
Sacitta pariyodanam etam buddhanam
sasanam"*

Based on this criterion, we decide what kind of steps have been given to us by the Buddha to attain everlasting happiness through the realization of ultimate truth.

It is all about moral conduct, concentration of mind and thereby wisdom. The approach to the ultimate truth is not possible while one's mind sticks to wrong conceptions regarding everlasting happiness. So, when one's mind is pliable to accept the ten types of wholesomeness (*dasakusala*), he will try to learn for himself and then put them into practice by following the steps of moral conduct, concentration of mind, and thereby he attains wisdom.

Everlasting happiness is the ultimate truth of the authentic training in body, speech and mind, which is also known as the restraint of physical, verbal and mental activities. Proper

understanding of suffering is likely to lead towards the restraint. Above all confidence (*saddha*) is required to convey every thought of pure mind to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha.



Buddhism has not denied access to material wealth although some less learned people consider Buddhism as a religion of pessimism. There are no pessimistic teachings in Buddhism as it encourages the adherents to take the proper way to find one's goal of life through determination.

Confidence (*Saddha*), energy (*viriya*), mindfulness (*sati*), concentration of mind (*samadhi*) and wisdom (*panna*) are the essence of one's life which are conclusive to the realization of truth. The way to the realization of truth depends on how

far you have developed these attributes with a view to enhance your life.

These are the result of the practice of the Buddha's teachings and while adhering to these five attributes; you will attain spiritual happiness which excels the other type of happiness gained from your belongings. As the happiness you have gained from confidence, energy, mindfulness, concentration of mind and wisdom, grows, you will not be moved by worldly affairs. You are sure to attain success of all that you carry out for yourself and for the benefit of others since you have inspired these five attributes.

Confidence of Buddhism is deeper since it is the main entrance to get rid of suffering. Those who wish to learn and practice the teachings for themselves need to establish themselves first in the confidence. Without a trust in the Buddha's teachings, the result of just a study becomes futile. They do not find a time to implement energy and the rest of the faculties of senses when they lose confidence in the Buddha's teachings.

After the attainment of enlightenment the Buddha gave this message to the world. Before the Buddha was born into the world, most people in India were seeking a way to get rid of

fear. They thought they might find refuge in the worship of nature's creations such as trees, stones and pagodas etc. But the Buddha saw their weakness and said that no one could escape from suffering without knowing the exact way to get rid of the cause of suffering. So, there was no option for those fear-stricken people to get rid of fear before the birth of the Buddha.

The Buddha said refuge was not found anywhere outside the world; refuge was to be found with the clear comprehensive knowledge of the four noble truths.

When one is able to look into the nature of one's own activities, and understands where does fear come, he certainly eliminates the reason for fear. Wise reflection of one's own activities is required so that one can see the reasons of fear and to overcome it one has to relate himself to right livelihood.

Most of us do know the four noble truths: the noble truth of suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the path to the cessation of suffering. Right action and right livelihood are two major points that concern one's bodily activities and livelihood. These two come under the group of the Noble Eightfold Path.

Abstention from killing, stealing and sexual misbehavior is right action. Trade in weapons; flesh, slavery, poisons and husbandry for slaughter are not right livelihood. So, while pointing out the dangerous consequence of wrong livelihood, the Buddha wanted people to cultivate wholesome thoughts in order to escape from harmful thoughts leading to fear and destruction of oneself and others. The cultivation of wholesome thoughts is possible only from the practice of wise reflection. The value judgment of wise reflection depends on right understanding, which enhances the knowledge of the four noble truths. According to the Buddha, when one has gained an insight into the nature of phenomena one is able to get rid of suffering.

The Vatthupama Sutta gives in detail about defiling thoughts of a mind. When a person entertains defiling thoughts he will not be able to get rid of suffering. Because of the defiling thoughts he constantly lives with fear and worry. So, reflection on the Triple Gem often gives rise to overcoming the defiling thoughts and then he approaches the realization to the four noble truths. At the same time he also pervades the four sublime states; loving kindness, compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity. Then the chances for the defiling thoughts cannot co-exist and as he develops the sublime states, he experiences bodily and mental comforts.

DEDICATION OF MERIT

May the merit and virtue
accrued from this work
adorn Amitabha Buddha's Pure Land,
repay the four great kindnesses above,
and relieve the suffering of
those on the three paths below.

May those who see or hear of these efforts
generate Bodhi-mind,
spend their lives devoted to the Buddha Dharma,
and finally be reborn together in
the Land of Ultimate Bliss.
Homage to Amita Buddha!

NAMO AMITABHA

南無阿彌陀佛

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we request that it be treated with respect.
If you are finished with it,
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Thanks for your co-operation.
Namo Amitabha!



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