

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF A BUDDHIST IN THE PRESENT DAY WORLD - II*

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Buddhism is on the march, with fast growing popularity, overcoming the problems and sufferings which have been originating in the present world. Its popularity is due to the fact that many of the modern nations feel that this religion lays emphasis on the progress and welfare of human beings. Buddhism has spread nearly all over the world in small and big communities, alike. The popularity of the religion can be traced to the preaching of some devoted Buddhist in the past. This responsibility of the old ones has been passed on to the Buddhist of today. This does not mean that the Buddhist of today have to preach, but, instead, they have to set an example which will impress others and convince them.

The responsibilities of a Buddhist are innumerable. The primary responsibility is to remove caste system. A Buddhist should not recognise the difference in caste, colour or race. One should feel that those of the lower castes are his own brothers with the same flesh and blood. Caste, colour or race is no handicap for one to achieve salvation if one leads a good life.

The pure life which a Buddhist is supposed to live is a life free from sexual lust, greed, jealousy, hatred and sorrow. Sorrow and suffering, as Lord Buddha said, are not entraneous to human beings. If one understood oneself and others, and then controlled one's actions, it is said that one can become perfect free from sorrow or suffering. This shows that to develop oneself, one ought to know one's own self. The present world is full of problems and these problems are due to misunderstanding, selfishness, passion, greed, hatred and lust for things, property and knowledge. If instead of these emotions, there was understanding, love, compassion, sympathy for others, non-injury to any kind of life and control over desire, the world certainly would be rid of problems, and be a peaceful and better place to live in.

Sorrow and suffering seem to be a part of human life. But, truly, it is not so. It is one's own deeds and actions which make one suffer. Sorrow and suffering can be got rid of by leading a perfect life, that is, by following the path which would stop sorrows and lead one to the path of perfection. A Buddhist should set an example for others who are blind with misfortune. The human mind is a great cause of sorrow and suffering. As for example one might speak sweet words. But with an impure mind, it leads to misfortune worse than anything done by an enemy. To purify one's mind one ought to lead a righteous life, which consists of right understanding, right thinking and right actions.

As it is the mind which causes sorrow and misfortune one should try to develop one's mind. As undeveloped mind is powerless and is a victim of lust, greed, grief, fear etc., which cause sorrow and suffering. To develop one's mind one has to have

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control over one's deeds, actions, speech and life. An uncontrolled mind is easily attracted towards evil. Evil is said to originate in mind resulting in evil actions. Purification of mind depends upon one's ownself. Purity and impurity of mind of Buddhist depends upon the kind of life he leads. The control of mind is achieved when one's mind is strong enough to overcome lust, greed, desire etc.. If one's mind is not strong, it is like a house which is ill thatched and cannot withstand rain. The control of one's mind brings peace and happiness to oneself and others.

Evil deeds make one repent when one knows that one is wrong. One living righteously will not have to repent as his deeds and actions are controlled by right judgement, before performing them. Human by nature, try to find fault with others and desire for success through unjust means. This is what Buddhism intends to overcome. It says other's happiness. One should be impartial to gain or loss, success or failure and face it calmly.

Everyone wants happiness in the present world to obtain happiness one has to have complete mastery over his mind and body. One has to struggle and suffer in this world for the sake of happiness. Happiness does not mean only enjoyment. It actually means the peace of mind. To achieve this happiness, one has to obtain salvation. But a Buddhist should not only be concerned about his own salvation but also that of others.

So, a Buddhist in the present day world must look inwards and reflect over one's thoughts and actions. This, in turn, would make one aware of one's responsibility towards others, and help to create a more peaceful and tolerant world.