



# BHUDDHA IS ESSENTIAL FOR CONTEMPORARY INDIA

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## **Abstract:**

The present society is in condition of pathetic approach in its social, political, cultural and the economic atmosphere. It may be due to the lust of human nature, lust for power, lust for existence, lust for authority has created the society into the hazardous atmosphere. Mind is the index of the society. Buddha ascertained the three signs which were essential for human being to lead a happy and prosperous life with a rule of law can be attained only one should understand the three signs which profounded by the Buddha will enrich mankind to lead a life with a suitable condition. The condition we have to popularise the Buddha three fold paths, four fold paths and the eight fold paths in which we will come across humanism, kindness, happiness, self respect, self relevance, self sacrifice and the above all humanistic moral, ethical value which were essential for the present society. So the government of India and state governments has to organize the international, national, state seminars on Buddha philosophy and ideology, which enhance the values of Buddha for the present society could be understood.

**Key words:** Buddhism, Four Noble Truths, Eight Fold Path, Society, Humanity, Mankind, Self Respect, Moral values and Ethical Values.

## **Introduction**

The present society is in condition of pathetic approach in its social, political, cultural and the economic atmosphere. It may be due to the lust of human nature, lust for power, lust for existence, lust for authority has created the society into the hazardous atmosphere. The society has lost the human values and humanity for the sake of self sufficient power to enjoy only for them self not for the sake of the others. In a such a condition society may not grow towards the lawful nature of the society may drawback to the 3-4 hundred years back how the society was their if it is continuous the humanity will vanish and the quarrels will take place in the society may least to the collapse of the mankind from the earth. Only Buddha ideology and philosophy can survive the

society to attain the humanism and humanistic values in the society in general particularly to the mankind. So, the people of the society has to understand the ideology and philosophy of Mahatma Buddha mere understanding will not help the next generations of the world one has to understand and follow the ideology and philosophy of Buddha in their life activity then only the society will come to the right path of humanism.

Buddha emphasis was on the quality of “mindfulness” – awareness, without judgment, of mind, body and environment. He remembered that as a child he had meditated and focused on his breath and that this had brought him a sense of both pervading calmness and awareness. He undertook a long and arduous period of meditation and contemplation that culminated in his acquiring deep insights into the human condition. Finally, in overcoming the temptations of the demonic Mara, he believed he did attain *nibbana* (or *nirvana*) – the understanding that liberated him from the family life.

Mind is the index of the society. Each and every aspect has decided by the mindset of the mankind. By knowing the fact of the mind that Buddha meant, the totality of thoughts sensations feeling and consciousness, there are experienced at each moment. The mind has great potential, but the undeveloped mind is like a wild horse: difficult to stay attentive, it craves stimulation, jumping from thought to thought, dwelling in the past or in the future, with thoughts that often cause anxiety or fear. When this undisciplined mind does pay attention to the present, it does so with opinions and emotional reactions rather than being in the present. To bring the mind under control is necessary, but it requires patience, skill, and persistent training.

Buddha examined the spiritual self-sufficiency and responsibility, rather than depending upon the Brahmin priests. He taught that spiritual attainment was no longer limited to certain castes, but possible for everyone, without discrimination based on gender, age, social status, or moral standing. He saw himself as a healer, not a god. He was never represented in human form until 300–400 years after death. When asked how he should be described, the Buddha said “*Remember me as one who is awake.*”

Many believe that religion is a constant presence in human society. When he converted to Buddhism with more than 600,000 of his fellow Dalits, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar said that humanity needs Dhamma, but also outlined the major difference between Dharma *and* Dhamma (Buddha and His Dhamma 1957, Book 4, Part 1, Chapter 2). Whereas Dharma denotes religion, or a set of beliefs that need not to be questioned but followed, Dhamma refers to the Buddhist philosophy that gives us a set of ethics and morals to be applied in daily life. This application is intended for the betterment of all and the maximizing of collective wellbeing (based on the concept of *Bahujan Hitay Bahujan Sukhay*—for the happiness of the many, for the welfare of the many).

For millennia, we have been conditioned in such a way that we need some supernatural power to rely on for our own good. Religion imparts hope, direction, and meaning. Yet while human beings created religion, everyone believes that religion created humanity. Be it Christianity or Hinduism or Islam, everyone has their own theory of human development. When we talk about religion, we set logic aside; popular expressions of religions do not generally permit us to question its laws and theories. It is believed that God, gods, or other divine powers, through religion, have been guarding human beings. The reality on the ground contradicts this assumption: it is human beings who have been guarding their religions.

## India and Religious Politics:

India has been a democratic republic for more than 70 years, a diverse country rich in cultures, languages, and beliefs. Its values of fraternity and secularism are enshrined in its Constitution. Tragically, the majority religion of Hinduism has often contradicted this ideal of “Unity in Diversity,” despite acknowledging differences. It has done so by discriminating and stratifying differences *within* the religion itself. This deeply rooted cultural inclination is called the Varna System, which has four major Varnas and thousands of castes within. The architects of this divide-and-conquer game benefit at the expense of millions of people, who are taken advantage of and misled.

The Buddha challenged the Vedic Dharma, which was and remains based on social discrimination and hierarchy. Thus Buddha denied “Dharma” and established “Dhamma,” the Middle Way, as the way for equity and equality. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar wrote: “India’s history is nothing but mortal conflict between Buddhism and Brahmanism.” (*Revolution and Counter-revolution in Ancient India*, Part 2, Chapter 7). Since the era of Yuddha (as mentioned in the *Rigveda* and *Vishnupuran*), there was always a conflict raging between the indigenous kings of the land and the so-called “Arya” Brahmins that imported their Vedic Dharma into the subcontinent. Despite being a minority, the Brahmins have successfully bamboozled the majority population of indigenous Indians to see Hinduism as a majoritarian religion under threat. This Vedic bias has been guiding Indian politics for centuries. Today Hinduism has reached the apex of its power. The Brahmin-affiliated classes have used religion as the most useful tool to push the notion of Vedic superiority and its “manifest destiny” over India’s large population.

A non-Indian might see Indian history as a recurring conflict between Hindus and Muslims, Mughals versus Marathas, or partitioned India against Pakistan or Bangladesh. The divide-and-rule policy is blamed on the British, who did use it among Indians, but it originated among the Brahmins, who have used it against indigenous Indians for centuries. Even today we see Hindus and Muslims being divided up for cynical political ends. Hindus are not monolithic, but a collection of many castes segregated by hierarchy, while Muslims in India are converts from lower Hindu castes, similar to the Buddhists that converted after 1956 under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar. Although our Constitution frames freedom of religion as a fundamental right and an individual’s choice, actual moves to conversion mostly occur in the so-called lower castes of the caste system, many of whom were treated as untouchables. Thus, during the Mughal period these untouchables chose Islam, during the British Raj they chose Christianity, and in modern India they come to Buddhism in large numbers.

Many Muslim homes have been burned down, women harassed, men killed, and students beaten. The tragedy is that those committing the violence are themselves indigenous people excluded from knowledge and development for thousands of years. Without education, their ways of proving their citizenship, and moreover their sense of nationality and patriotism, is by proclaiming exclusionary, inflammatory slogans such as “Jai Shri Ram,” and acting out their loyalty and love for India through violence. Their alternative is being subject to violence or even murder themselves.

## The ideology of Buddha and Humanism

### The Three Signs of Being

Buddha ascertained the three signs which were essential for human being to lead a happy and prosperous life with a rule of law can be attained only one should understand the three signs which profounded by the Buddha will enrich mankind to lead a life with a suitable condition.

The three signs viz., (1) Change (2) Suffering (3) no 'I' The first, Change, points out the basic fact that nothing in the world is fixed or permanent. We ourselves are not the same people, either physically, emotionally or mentally, that we were ten years - or even ten minutes ago! Living as we do, then, as shifting beings upon shifting sands, it is not possible for us to find lasting security.

As regards the second Sign, we have already seen how it was the experience of Suffering that sent the Buddha off on his great spiritual quest, though suffering is not a very good translation of the original word, dukkha. Dukkha implies the generally unsatisfactory and imperfect nature of life. However, it does not follow that Buddhists believe that life is all suffering. Buddhists do believe that there is happiness in life, but know that it does not last and that even in the most fortunate of lives there is suffering. Happiness is subject to the law of change and impermanence.

No-I, the third Sign, is a little more difficult. Buddhists do not believe that there is anything everlasting or unchangeable in human beings, no soul or self in which a stable sense of 'I' might anchor itself. The whole idea of 'I' is in fact a basically false one that tries to set itself up in an unstable and temporary collection of elements. Take the traditional analogy of a cart. A cart may be broken down into its basic components - axle, wheels, shafts, sides, etc. Then the cart is no more; all we have is a pile of components. In the same way 'I' am made up of various elements or aggregates (khandhas): form (rupa-khandha), feeling-sensation (pleasant, unpleasant, neutral), (vedana-khandha), perception (sanna-khandha), volitional mental activities (sankhara-khandha), sense consciousness (vinnana-khandha).

### The Four Noble Truths

Four noble truths of Buddha if a man understand the deep sense of its root which will automatically a feel our self to be a part of the society and whatever the conditions and situation which will come in front of us has to face with a patients and humbleness why because every creature on the universe will have sufferings for the suffering there will be a cause will be there that can be eliminated with the cessations of sufferings and that will let to the eradicate with the eight fold path of the Buddha.

(1) The Noble Truth of Suffering (2) The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (3) The Noble Truth of Cessation of Suffering (4) The Noble Truth of the Way leading to the Cessation of Suffering: The Noble Eightfold Path. Buddhism begins with the fact of suffering. However, before we can do anything about it, we must know its cause, which is the deeply-rooted sense of 'I' that we all have. Because of this we are always struggling to get things that are pleasurable and avoid things that are painful to find ease and security, and generally to manipulate people and situations to be the way 'I' want them. And because the rest of the world does not necessarily fit in with what I want, we often find ourselves cutting against the general flow of things, and

getting hurt and disappointed in the process. Suffering may be therefore brought to an end by transcending this strong sense of 'I' so that we come into greater harmony with things in general. The means of doing this is The Noble Eightfold Path.

### **The Noble Eightfold Path**

If the man in the society who follows and felicitate the eight fold path of Buddha will become a humanist, these eight fold paths provides the humanistic, moral values and the ethical values among the human beings lead a happy and prosperous life with a taking account into the social responsibility among themselves.

(1) Right View (2) Right Thought (3) Right Speech (4) Right Action (5) Right Livelihood (6) Right Effort (7) Right Mindfulness and (8) Right Concentration. The Wheel is the symbol of the Dharma and is shown with eight spokes which represent the Noble Eightfold Path. Right View is important at the start because if we cannot see the truth of the Four Noble Truths then we can't make any sort of beginning. Right Thought follows naturally from this. 'Right' here means in accordance with the facts: with the way things are - which may be different from how I would like them to be. Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood involve moral restraint refraining from lying, stealing, committing violent acts, and earning one's living in a way harmful to others. Moral restraint not only helps bring about general social harmony but also helps us control and diminish the sense of 'I'. Like a greedy child, 'I' grows big and unruly the more we let it have its own way. Next, Right Effort is important because 'I' thrives on idleness and wrong effort; some of the greatest criminals are the most energetic people, so effort must be appropriate to the diminution of I, and in any case if we are not prepared to exert ourselves we cannot hope to achieve anything at all in either the spiritual sense nor in life. The last two steps of the Path, Right Mindfulness or awareness and Right Concentration or absorption, represent the first stage toward liberation from suffering. To be aware and at one with what we are doing is fundamental to proper living, this practice takes many forms but in the West the formal practice is called meditation. In the most basic form of Buddhist meditation, a person sits cross-legged on a cushion on the floor or upright in a chair. He/she quietly watches the rise and fall of the breath. If thoughts, emotions or impulses arise, he/she just observes them come up and go like clouds in a blue sky, without rejecting them on the one hand or being carried away into daydreaming or restlessness on the other. It should be learnt under the guidance of a teacher just as the Buddha too learnt meditation.

In General 'Not to do any evil; to cultivate good; to purify one's heart - this is the teaching of all the Buddhas.' Although Buddhists value highly such virtues as loving kindness, humanity, patience and giving, perhaps they value wisdom and compassion most of all. The idea of ahimsa or harmlessness is very closely connected with compassion. The compassionate desire to cause no harm to all beings including animals, plants, and the world in general. In all things Buddhism places great stress on self-reliance and the Buddha himself told his followers not to believe without questioning, but to test it for themselves. Buddhism is also a very practical religion and aims at helping people to live their lives peacefully.

Buddhists also try to practice the Buddhist virtues actively in their everyday lives. The final goal of all Buddhist practice is to bring about that same awakening that the Buddha himself achieved through an active transformation of the heart and passions and the letting go of I.

## Conclusion

Humanism and Buddhism are the two faces of single coin, the society need the humanism at the best due to the social hazardous conditions which have hampered the humanism so to draw the humanism into the society. That can be attained through the ideology and philosophy of Buddha without which it can't be possible. So knowing the condition we have to popularise the Buddha three fold paths, four fold paths and the eight fold paths in which we will come across humanism, kindness, happiness, self respect, self relevance, self sacrifice and the above all humanistic moral, ethical value which were essential for the present society. So the government of India and state governments has to organize the international, national, state seminars on Buddha philosophy and ideology, which enhance the values of Buddha for the present society could be understood.

Humanism and Buddhism are often considered philosophies or worldviews and not religions. This is a semantic quibble I don't care to comment on here. But it is clear that there are some key differences that separate the two from most other religions, especially from the Abrahamic and Vedic religions they were born into. Both worldviews were born of rebellion and therefore are much more anti-authoritarian, placing an enormous emphasis on reason and thinking for ourselves. This common core I believe to be unique among worldviews.

Humanism and Buddhism are quite compatible, and note that at the Harvard Humanist Community, we have a "secular Buddhist" mindfulness group that meets weekly. We, of course, discard the doctrine of rebirth. However, the "four noble truths" and "eightfold path" are pretty consistent with humanism. Buddhism and Humanism are twins, but over 2500 years, Buddhists have been trying different things, and some of the ideas they have come up with are useful. Humanism has a Eurocentric origin, and could stand to evaluate and assimilate some of the ideas originating in the modern world.

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