

Buddha's model of Deliverance: An Analysis

Bodhendra Kumar

Abstract— Having a treasure of rich classical traditions, India has always played a significant role in emancipating the lives of people around the world. Among these traditions, a non-Vedic tradition, Buddhism is still enhancing the lives of people, globally. The main factor responsible for its worldwide acceptance is its non-metaphysical and non-sectarian nature of deliverance, as Buddha's method is independent of race, region, culture and religion. Buddha's model of Deliverance integrates the worldly knowledge into a classical prototype to convert suffering into bliss. Buddha's deliverance catapults one from mundane conventions to moral liberation. The truth Buddha had penetrated the fourfold division of knowledge, expressed as the Four Noble Truths. These Four Noble Truths comes first in the Buddha's teaching and further summarises in his deliverance. His deliverance does not include contemplation of the absolute knowledge, but he employs the technique of meditation, using ordinary objects of meditation, as the path to attain the ultimate knowledge. According to his model of purification, the process starts with conceptual development with the acknowledgement of Ignorance (Avijjā) as the root cause of all sufferings in the present and future lives. He further conceptually develops the 12 links of cause and effect – Paticcasamutpada, which explains the development of ignorance into mind and body and he talks about Pragya – wisdom which forms the primary tool to remove suffering. Buddha's meditation starts with observing Pancasila with the practising of the Eight-Fold Path and then dwelling in Metta (compassion). His method Trans mutates ignorant beings to enlightened beings.

In this research paper, the researcher has attempted to conclude the distinctiveness of theoretical and practical approaches used by Buddha in alleviating suffering from the lives of masses.

Index Terms— Deliverance, Non-metaphysical, Objects of meditation, Avijjā, Paticcasamutpada, Pragya, Nibbana.

I. INTRODUCTION

Prince Siddharth Gotama renounced the worldly pleasures and became as ascetic for the search of the ultimate solution to the universal problem of beings, i.e. suffering. On the path of searching the truth, he placed himself under numerous teachers prevailing at his time, Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta were two prominent ones. As they were not the logicians but followers of *Yoga*, Siddhartha practised different types of *Jhānās* (Mental Absorptions) to raise consciousness at a higher level. (Thero, 1993, p. 824) But Siddhartha, practising the methods taught by his teachers, did not find absolute knowledge or enlightenment, which was prerequisite for liberation. After practising their methods for some time, Buddha turned up to practice extreme asceticism which eventually also did not help him in attaining enlightenment, on the contrary, he realised that an entirely new mode of approach was needed to break the entanglement of conceptual thinking and to achieve the absolute knowledge.

Bodhendra Kumar, Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh

In due course, resorting solely upon himself and making himself and his original quest as the guiding principle, he started working to illuminate himself above the ideas and entanglements. Siddhartha recalled an incident of his childhood when his king father was performing a ritual of spring-ploughing. He recalls the flock of birds following the wake of the plough; he notices them eagerly scratching the freshly turned furrows for worms and insects. They all were driven by hunger. He contemplates over the attribute of 'Absolute Love' attributed to the creator of this world. On the other hand, he observed that one of the most delicate and beautiful creation in nature, birds, are driven by all demanding hunger, and it is this hunger which makes them excited by the sight of food and further unmercifully quarrelling, striking and fighting with each other. Siddhāttha realised that this condition could not have been otherwise. Birds had to satisfy the urge to live, and for their food, they had to prey on others and compete with others. So it was throughout nature, and the generalisation was drawn to the same universal truth. Not only is nature indifferent to cruelty and pain, but they are necessitated upon all living creatures as the fundamental condition and price of their existence. To suffer, that is the law of life. By avoiding extremes and by such intuitive penetration into self, Siddhārtha after removing all entanglements attained Buddhahood. (Samyutta Nikāya 56.11) Siddhartha after accomplishing the enlightenment addresses the group of five monks.

"There are these two extremes that are not to be indulged in by one who has gone forth. Which two? That which is devoted to sensual pleasure regarding sensual objects: base, vulgar, common, ignoble, unprofitable; and that which is devoted to self-affliction: painful, ignoble, unprofitable. Avoiding both of these extremes, the middle way realised by the Tathāgata — producing vision, producing knowledge — leads to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to Unbinding." (Access to Insight, 2013)

The truth Buddha had penetrated the fourfold division of knowledge, expressed as the Four Noble Truths. These Four Noble Truths comes first in the Buddha's teaching and summarises in his deliverance that follows. Concerning the first declaration of these truths, the Buddha explains that ageing, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, despair, unwanted associations, unfulfilled desires and attachment towards self is suffering and describes this as the universal conditioning of composite beings. Henceforth, this becomes the First Noble truth explained by Buddha.

"Now this, monks, is the noble truth of suffering: Birth is suffering, ageing is suffering, death is suffering; sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are suffering; association with the unbeloved is suffering, separation from the loved is suffering, not getting what is wanted is suffering. In short, the five clinging-aggregates are suffering." (Bhikkhu, 1993)

This first Truth is drawn from a critical examination, not only of the human conditioning but also of all aspects of the life of sentient beings.

As entailed because of its necessity on teleological grounds, and directly through personal knowledge or the evidence provided by others based on hypnotic trance and past life regression, the existence of past lives lays, and continuity of existence lays a logical foundation for the Second Noble Truth.

And this, monks, is the noble truth of the origination of suffering: the craving that makes for further becoming — accompanied by passion and delight, relishing now here and now there — i.e., craving for sensual pleasure, craving for becoming, craving for non-becoming. (Bhikkhu, 1993)

In this division of truth, Buddha presupposes the continuity in existence and postulates that it is the elemental urge to be in existence as the cause of suffering. He says the deep craving for sensual pleasures, deep craving for becoming in this existence and craving for not being in this existence lays roots for taking birth again and again. This continuity in births occurs with suffering as the central conditioning.

As the Third Noble Truth, Buddha postulates the most profound discourse of dependent co-arising (*Paticca samuppāda*) and not-self (*anattā*) in an outlined context about the functioning of these teachings. Dependent co-arising forms the basis of all teachings of Buddha. The discourse traverses the factors of dependent co-arising in sequence from effect to cause, tracing them down to the mutual dependency of name-and-form (both mental and physical activity) on the one side, and consciousness on the other. Further, it reviews the inter-relationships of all the factors, showing how they can explain stress and suffering, both on the individual and the social level.

The fourth Noble Truth outlines the practical means by which *Nibbāna* has to be realised. In this division Buddha explains that there are two extremes to be avoided: on the one hand, that of sensual indulgence, which is “base, low, vulgar, impure and unprofitable,” and on the other, the practice of extreme physical asceticism, which is “painful, impure, vain and unprofitable.” Self-mortification weakens one's intellect, and self-indulgence retards one's moral progress. In contrast to these extremes “The Middle Path” (*Majjhima Patipadā*) discovered by the Buddha, enables one to see and to know, which leads to peace, to discernment, to full knowledge, to *Nibbāna*.

"And this, monks, is the noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress: precisely this Noble Eightfold Path — right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.“ (Samyutta Nikāya 56.11)

The eightfold path, which is to be practised by laypeople, for ease of understanding, is divided into three sections *Sila*, *Samādhi* and *Pañña*.

A. Buddha's method of Deliverance

1) *Sila*

Buddhist Ethics comprises of the three stages or the three divisions of the path, which forms the standard Code of their religious practice leading to *Nibbana*. Buddha's teachings of The Eight-Fold Path can be divided into three parts *Sila*, *Samādhi* and *Pañña*. (*Majjhima Nikāya* 44) *Sila* is the virtuous actions of body and mind which express the inner virtues outwardly. Three folds of the eightfold path, Right

Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood are classified under *Sila*, which acts as the foundation for the remaining five elements of the eightfold path. (*Samyutta Nikāya* 56.11) Buddha's deliverance starts with the prescription for laypersons to follow the five precepts, i.e. *Pancha-Sila*. (*Anguttara Nikāya* 8.39) *Pancha-Sila* has two aspects, first is negative, which is called as *Nivritti Paksha* and another is positive aspect called as *Pravritti Paksha*. The *nivritti paksha* prohibits individuals from engaging in particular unethical or immoral behaviour. These inhibitions are of five types.

1. Abandoning the taking of life, the disciple of the noble ones abstains from taking life.
2. Abandoning taking what is not given (stealing), the disciple of the noble ones abstains from taking what is not given.
3. Abandoning illicit sex, the disciple of the noble ones abstains from illicit sex.
4. Abandoning lying, the disciple of the noble ones abstains from lying.
5. Abandoning the use of intoxicants, the disciple of the noble ones abstains from taking intoxicants. (*Anguttara Nikāya* 8.39)

On the other hand, the *Pravritti Paksha* of *Shila* acts as the second stage of morality. After inhibitions in *Nivritti Paksha*, *Pravritti Paksha* encourages individuals to perform various deeds which reinforce the moral code of conduct. The ignorant people who lack the right knowledge of virtue cannot observe the restraints prescribed in *Pancha-Sila*. Ignorance also inhibits the development of *Sila* from negative to its positive aspect. (Acharya, 2002, p. 195)

These five precepts are the minimal ethical code of conduct necessary for initiating the meditative process. Ignorance towards the knowledge of *Sila* deprives one of the benefits from them.

2) *Samādhi*

Samādhi is generally understood as “concentration” in Buddhist meditation, and it derives its meaning from prefixed verbal root *saṃ-ā-dhā*, which means to collect or to bring together and therefore to suggest the concentration or unification of the mind. The word *Samādhi* is also interchangeable with the word *samatā*, which means equanimity. (Gunaratna, 1980) According to Buddha, *Samādhi* is the one-pointedness of mind as the distinct mental factor present in every state of consciousness. It is the psychological conditioning of the unified mind upon its object ensuring that each state of consciousness takes up one and only one object at a time. Such occasions of one-pointedness providing mind some degree of steadiness and non-distraction counts for *Samādhi*. Subsequently, from psychological standpoint, *Samādhi* can be present in unwholesome states of consciousness and wholesome states or equanimous states. The former is called a *Micchā Samādhi* (wrong concentration) and later is called as *Sammā Samādhi* (right concentration). The deliberate transmutation of mind to the heightened level of calm and stable state is the result of only *Sammā Samādhi*, i.e. right concentration.

Further Buddha recommends 40 objects of meditation required for the development of *Sammā Samādhi*. They include some of the essential methods such as *Metta-bhāvanā* (meditation of loving-kindness), *kāyagatāsati* (the reflections on 32 impure parts of the body), *ānāpānasati* (mindfulness on

breath), maraḍānu-sati (reflection on death), etc. (Buddhaghosa, 2010, p. v)

3) *Pañña*

The Term *Pañña* is often translated as ‘wisdom’ in English and is composed of the prefix ‘*pra*’ and the root *jna* which means knowledge. *Pra* combined with the root *jna* gives the sense of penetration, spontaneity and transcendentality. Eventually, the term *Pañña* can be translated as ‘specialised penetrative knowledge. *Pañña* is also understood as intelligence, comprising all the higher faculties of cognition, reason, wisdom, insight and knowledge. (Davids, 2009, p. 435) In the real sense *Pañña* means the understanding of Anicca, Dukkha and Anatta, the real nature of all composite things, through the practice of insight meditation. (Khin, 1981, p. 4)

Observation of Sila and practice of Samādhi is elementary for *Pañña* to develop. It is only the case when one is strictly following Sila can get established in Samādhi, and the one who is established in Samādhi can develop *Pañña*. (Khin, 1981, p. 3) The practice of Sila, Samadhi and *Pañña* lays the foundation of Buddha’s method for moral and spiritual emancipation. The non-metaphysical and secular nature of the eightfold path, prescribed by Buddha, makes it widely acceptable to the people belonging to different sections of society.

B. *Objects of Meditation*

Strict adherence towards the five precepts lays the foundation for a layperson to get developed in Samādhi. In order to establish in Samādhi, meditation objects play an essential role. The object of meditation is carefully chosen by the teacher and pupil so that the layperson can attain Samādhi, and the work of purification can start.

1) *Recollections as the object of meditation*

The recollection inspired by the Enlightened One is the *recollection of the Buddha*. In this recollection, the qualities of Buddha are recollected in mind, and these qualities are used to stabilise mind with and attain Samādhi. When a person is devoted to this recollection of the Buddha, he becomes respectful and deferential towards his Master. As a result of this recollection, he attains the fullness of faith, mindfulness, understanding and merit. He attains much happiness and gladness, and he conquers fear and dread. (Buddhaghosa, 2010)

That Blessed One is such since he is accomplished, fully enlightened, endowed with [definite] vision and [virtuous] conduct, sublime, the knower of worlds, the incomparable leader of men to be tamed, the teacher of gods and men, enlightened and blessed (Anguttara Nikāya III 285)

Another recollection is inspired by the Law, and it is the *recollection of the Dhamma*. In this recollection, the qualities of Dhamma are recollected in mind and are used for mindfulness. As a result of this recollection, the person penetrates deep into the mind and establishes in Samādhi.

“The Dhamma is well proclaimed by the Blessed One, visible here and now, not delayed (timeless), inviting of inspection, onward-leading, and directly experienceable by the wise” (Anguttara Nikāya III 285).

Another recollection is inspired by the Community, and it is the *recollection of the Sangha*. In this recollection, the qualities of Sangha are recollected in mind and are used for

mindfulness. As a result of this recollection, he attains a higher level of consciousness and establishes in Samādhi.

“The community of the Blessed One’s disciples has entered on a good way, the community of the Blessed One’s disciples has entered on the straightway, the community of the Blessed One’s disciples has entered on the true way, the community of the Blessed One’s disciples has entered on the proper way, that is to say, the four pairs of men, the eight persons; this community of the Blessed One’s disciples is fit for gifts, fit for hospitality, fit for offerings, fit for reverential salutation, as an incomparable field of merit for the world” (Anguttara Nikāya III 286).

Next recollection is inspired by virtue, and it is the *recollection of virtue*. According to this recollection, the recollection of untornness, unblockedness, unrentness and unmottledness of mind by the bonds of sexuality, anger, enmity and other evils is done. As a result of this recollection, Samādhi is attained.

“On that occasion, his mind is not obsessed by greed, or obsessed by hate, or obsessed by delusion, his mind has rectitude on that occasion, being inspired by virtue” (Anguttara Nikāya III 286).

Another recollection is inspired by generosity, and it is the *recollection of generosity*. According to this recollection, the mindfulness of generosity’s unique qualities is practised, which lead to non-greediness and eventually one attains a higher level of Samādhi.

Another recollection is inspired by death, and it is the *recollection of death*. According to this recollection, the mindfulness towards the termination of the life faculty is observed. As death is the object of meditation, one who intends to develop this recollection, then one should go into solitary retreat and exercise attention wisely by thinking “Death will take place; the life faculty will be interrupted,” or “Death, death.” (Buddhaghosa, 2010)

Another recollection is inspired by the body, and it is the *Mindfulness occupied with the body*. According to this recollection, the mindfulness towards the different constituent parts of the body is developed and as a result of which higher level of Samādhi is achieved.

“Again, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu reviews this body, up from the soles of the feet and down from the top of the hair and contained in the skin, as full of many kinds of filth thus: In this body there are head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidney, heart, liver, midriff, spleen, lungs, bowels, entrails, gorge, dung, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, spittle, snot, oil of the joints, and urine” (Majjhim Nikāya III 90)

Next recollection is inspired by breathing, and it is the *mindfulness of breathing*. According to this recollection, the awareness towards the sign of in-breaths and out-breaths is developed. As a result of this recollection, the mind is developed enough to cut off the applied thoughts acting as a hindrance in the development of Samādhi.

2) *Kasinas*

According to the Kasinas as the meditation objects, the signs are observed, and they are well guarded against disturbances making these signs as the tool to attain a higher level of meditation and eventually entering into Samādhi. These signs are made with the help of natural surroundings. The kasinas are as follows Earth Kasina, Water Kasina, Fire Kasina, Air

Kasina, Blue Kasina, Red Kasina, Yellow Kasina, White kasina, Light Kasina and Limited space Kasina. By making kasina as meditation object one enters into higher mental absorption and masters the ways to attain Samādhi.

“He with Ten Powers, whom all things did see, Tells ten kasióas, each of which can be The cause of fourfold and of fivefold jhána, The fine-material sphere's own master key. Now, knowing their descriptions and the way to tackle each and how they are developed, There are some further points that will repay study, each with its special part to play.” (Nanmoli, 2010, p. 166)

3) Foulness

With foulness as the object of meditation, the foulness about the corpse is recollected and meditated upon. The bloated corpse, the livid corpse, the festering of corpse, the cut-up in the corpse, the gnawed corpse, the scattered corpse, the hacked corpse, the bleeding corpse, the worm-infested corpse and a skeleton in corpse is recollected. (Buddhaghosa, 2010, pp. 169-181) As a result of such recollection, various signs are to be apprehended about the corpse. As the sign, the colour of the corpse shall be apprehended. The corpse shall be studied by marks on it, by its shape, by its demarcation, by its joints, by openings in it, by its concavities shape, by its convex shapes, and all-round. Such recollections about the corpse help one in breaking the bondage of lust and greed and eventually establishing one in higher level of Samādhi.

As a result, one should apprehend the signs in the body, and wherever the aspects of foulness are manifested, whether in a living body or in a dead, one should make the meditation subject reach absorption. (Nanmoli, 2010, p. 183)

C. Paticcasamutpada

The understanding of the principle of dependent origination or conditioned co-arising is central to Buddhist practice and development of Buddha's method of deliverance. Buddha's chief disciple once said, “Whoever sees Conditioned Co-arising sees *Dhamma*, whoever sees *Dhamma* sees Conditioned Co-arising” (Majjhima Nikāya I.191) In its purest sense, dependent origination is the principle of conditionality, applied to all processes, events, and composite things, physical or mental, in the whole existence. Their birth, sustenance and death exist due to the presence of particular cause and effect relations, and it ceases once these causes are removed. Only Nibbana is considered to be independent of the causal relationships explained in dependent origination. This doctrine lays the foundation of the teaching of “no permanent and independent self,” i.e. Anatta and Aniccha. The dependent origination enumerates the 12 conditioning links which culminate in the arising of *dukkha* from Ignorance.

The Four Noble Truths acts as the foundation of Buddha's deliverance and the principle of dependent origination acts as its philosophical mainstay. Second and Third Noble Truth, the origination of suffering and cessation of suffering are philosophically supported by the relation of co-origination. With the help of 12 links, Buddha explains how Ignorance develops into bondage and how by removing ignorance the bondages can be removed. It is this principle which defines the conceptual working for the attainment of Nirvana.

From the arising of ignorance is the arising of the constructing activities; from the stopping of (spiritual) ignorance is the stopping of the constructing activities. This Noble Eightfold

Path is itself the course leading to the stopping of the constructing activities. (Sutta Nipata II.43)

The causal relationship explained by Buddha in Patichsamutpada finds no parallel in any other philosophy.

II. CONCLUSION

The theoretical and methodological analysis of Buddha's method of Deliverance proposes that Buddha's deliverance capably guides an individual from worldly conventions to blissful liberation. His teachings neither include the usage of any absolute metaphysical knowledge nor does he use any supernatural subject in his reflective process of meditation. Instead, Buddha uses worldly meditating objects such as Earth Kasina, Water Kasina, Air Kasina, Fire Kasina, qualities of Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha to help one in establishing into Samādhi and further attain higher mental absorptions. His method starts with establishing laypersons into morality with the help of Sila. This Sila supports one to get established in Samādhi, and with proper meditating subjects, one attains *Pañña* which is the liberating wisdom. Buddha acknowledges the truth of suffering comprising in all composite things and further postulates the impermanence and non-existence of self. Buddha's method and conceptual framework of deliverance culminate into the Eight Fold Path prescribed by him. This Eight Fold Path actualises the philosophical notion of cause and effect articulated in Patichsamutpada. Buddha's deliverance is purely for laypersons and does not require a high level of preconditions, such as higher births or Vedic knowledge for a person to train.

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