

Buddhist Contribution to Healthy Living

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ABSTRACT

United Nations established after the end of the Second World War aims to establish a peaceful, prosperous and just world upholding the human dignity, equality and equity to all people in general, and children and the most vulnerable in particular. With a view to achieve this, the Millineum Summit held on September 06-08, 2000 at United Nations Headquarters in New York outlines certain goals which are known as the Millennium Development Goals. They are to: (1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (2) achieve universal primary education; (3) promote gender equality and empower women; (4) reduce child mortality; (5) improve maternal health; (6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; (7) ensure environmental sustainability; and (8) develop a global partnership

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for development. All the world's countries and the world's leading development and educational institutions are committed to achieve these goal. In this respect to look forward to the attainment of aforesaid goal in future, it is vital to honour the knowledge and heritage of the past that has brought us to this day. Buddhism is one of such knowledge and heritage which provides us immense guidelines in respect of almost every field of knowledge, such as polity, economics, philosophy, ethics, psychology, medicine and so on, although, it primarily deals with human existential problem "suffering (dukkha)" and its solution "cessation of suffering (dukkhanirodha), as is apparent from the following statement of its founder, the Buddha.

“Pubbe cāham bhikkhave etarahi ca paññāpemi dukkham ca dukkhanirodham.”

It would not be out of context that the Buddha did not enunciate any philosophy or religion, but a way of life, based on the psycho-ethical analysis of the phenomenon and nounmenon. Not only it prescribes a path to attain eternal peace in form of Nibbāna, but it also speaks of the way to lead a healthy life. While making known the world about the realization of his truth (sambodhi) at Isipattanamigdāva (modern Sarnath) near Vārāṇasī, the Buddha talked about suffering, its cause, its cessation and the way leading to the state of cessation of suffering in the form of Four Noble Truths (cattāri ariya saccāni). He further explained that the suffering manifests in one's life in many forms like birth, disease, decay, death, separation from the beloved one and so on. Herein, disease is one of the several types of the suffering a being faces in his/her life. According to the Buddhism, the Buddha as a bhisaka or bheṣajyaguru, pronounced that the various types of diseases is the outcome of unhealthy way of living. He explained further that there are two kinds of diseases – physical and mental. There are 32 types of the physical diseases caused by occurrence of imbalance in cough, bile and wind, and thus, there are ninety-six types of diseases. Similarly there are 48 types of mental diseases as described in the Mahaniddeśa. As an antidote to these diseases, the Buddha did not prescribe any emetics but a way of life that makes its followers healthy and peaceful. The several texts of Buddhist canon (both Sravakayana and Bodhisattvayana), such as Mahavagga (bhesajjakkhanda),

Dighanikaya (Mahasatipatthana-sutta), Mahaniddesa etc are replete with the information of physical and mental diseases, their symptoms, their causes and their remedies.

Since, one of the Millennium Development Goals aims to ensure the eradication of diseases from the world, the present paper aims to deal with contribution made by Buddhism to healthy living, and how this contribution could be effectively applied in achieving the goal set forth by the United Nations.

Today we live in the era of globalization. The era of globalization, which began as liberalization of economy in the decade of 1980s, demands unrestricted flow of material goods across the globe. Therefore, the emphasis is on around development in the field of human resources, economy and environment. This aspect of globalization has influenced tremendously the every walk of our life, particularly the materialistic outlook, which tempts people to indulge in sensual pleasure¹. On the other hand, there are the people who have not even a glance of these objects. Such state has created a sense of alienation and deprivation in them. Besides, the materialistic outlook, the process of Globalization has developed extensively the tendency to follow the concept of *yāvaṃ jīvet sukhaṃ jīvet, ṛṇaṃ kṛtvā gṛtaṃ pīvet*²; all resulting in the development of different types of mental perversion causing lethargies, greed, hatred, frustration, conceit, deprivation, fear, jealousy, worry etc. In short, the present framework of development, adopted by some of the nations to accomplish the goal of globalization has resulted into material enrichment on one side, and mental impoverishment on the other side. The net result of this is the prevalence of an atmosphere of unrest, inequality, unhappiness, stressful life, violence, conflict, mistrust etc. all over the world.

We, the human beings wish to get rid of such situations, and are eagerly in wait to get some sorts of solution. To have such expectation is not a new phenomenon. Even in the past, rather, from the very beginning of the

1. One of the two extremes, expounded by the Buddha.

2. While life endures let life be spent in ease And merriment; let a man borrow money From all his friends, and feast on melted butter. – Durant, 418

human civilization man has always been in the quest of some sorts of path or mechanism to overcome or solve his worldly problems, as they wish to lead a better, happy and prosperous life. To lead a happy and prosperous life a peaceful and congenial atmosphere is a must. The creation of peaceful and congenial atmosphere is hardly possible if there is no way to lead a healthy life. Today, we lead our life in a way we often like to live in. But, are we aware of the way to live a healthy life? Answer to the question is emphatic “No”. In the past, our ancient *r̥ṣis*, *yogis*, sages etc. played a great role in this direction and worked hard to find out certain means and mechanism (such as yoga, samādhi) so that human being could lead a better peaceful and harmonious life. Similarly, the United Nations established after the end of the Second World War aims to establish a peaceful, prosperous and just world upholding the human dignity, equality and equity to all people in general, and children and the most vulnerable in particular. With a view to achieve these aims, the Millinnium Summit held on September 06-08, 2000 at United Nations Headquarters in New York outlines certain goals, which are known as the Millennium Development Goals.³ They are to: (1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (2) achieve universal primary education; (3) promote gender equality and empower women; (4) reduce child mortality; (5) improve maternal health; (6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; (7) ensure environmental sustainability; and (8) develop a global partnership for development.⁴ All the countries and the leading development and educational institutions of the wrold are committed to achieve these goals.

The perusal of aforesaid goals automatically manifests that they are more or less linked to each other and aim to create a healthy and congenial atmosphere in the world for the betterment, happiness and peaceful co-existence of the human beings. Though the UN has outlined guidelines and the time framework for the attainment of aforesaid goals for which all the countries and the leading delopment and educational institutions are committed, it should not be sole criteria for their accomplishment. Rather, along with it, honouring the knowledge and heritage of the past like

3. www.un.org/millenniumgoals/retrieved on January 27, 2014

4. Ibid

Buddhism seems vital for the accomplishment of aforesaid Millennium Development Goals. Buddhism provides us immense guidelines in respect of almost every field of knowledge, such as polity, economics, philosophy, ethics, psychology, medicine and so on, although, it primarily deals with human existential problem “suffering (*dukkha*)” and its solution “cessation of suffering (*dukkhanirodha*), as is apparent from the following statement of its founder, the Buddha.

“*Pubbe cāhaṃ bhikkhave etarahi ca paññāpemi dukkhaṃ ca dukkhanirodhaṃ.*”⁵

It would not be out of context to mention here that the Buddha did not enunciate any philosophy or religion, but a way of life, based on the psycho-ethical analysis of the phenomenon and nounmenon. Not only he prescribed a path to attain eternal peace in form of the realisation of *Nibbāna*, but he also talked of the way to lead a healthy life. While making known the world about the realization of his truth (*sambodhi*) at *Isipattanamigdāva* (modern Sarnath) near Vārāṇasī, the Buddha talked about suffering (*dukkha*), its cause (*samudaya*), its cessation (*nirodha*), and the way leading to the state of cessation of suffering (*nirodhagāminipaṭipadā*) in the form of Four Noble Truths (*cattāri ariya saccāni*).⁶ Explaining those truths, he described first the Noble Truth of suffering according to which birth, disease, decay, death, separation from the beloved one, association with undesirable ones, and not getting what one wants to get are (the different manifestation of) suffering.⁷ Thus, according to the First Noble Truth, enunciated by the Buddha, disease is one of the several types of the suffering, a being faces in his/her life.

It is notable here that among the eight Millennium Development Goals, the goal no. 4, 5, and 6 directly refer to combating the diseases (one of the sufferings outlined by the Buddha) like malaria, HIV/AIDS, child mortality, which human beings are subjected to, while the goal no. 1

5. Alagaddūpamasuttaṃ, MN.1.3.2.246, VRI.1.194

6. Pañcavaggiyakathā, Mv.1.15, VRI.13

7. “Idaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ. Jāti pi dukkhā, jarā pi dukkhā, vyādhi pi dukkho, maraṇaṃ pi dukkhaṃ, appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho, yaṃ picchaṃ na labbhati taṃ pi dukkhaṃ, saṅkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā.” – SP. P. 7

and 7 aim to improve the domestic and environmental conditions so that the occurrence of some of diseases like malaria, malnutrition etc. could be prevented, and immunisation of the people could be improved. The remaining goals are supportive in nature to create a healthy atmosphere.

Buddhism while dealing with the issues of disease describes two types of diseases - physical (*kāyika*) and mental (*mānasika*). There are thirty-two types of the physical diseases, such as diseases pertaining to eye (*cakkhu-roga*), ear (*sota-roga*), nose (*ghāṇa-roga*), tongue (*jīvhā-roga*), body (*kāya-roga*), head (*sīsa-roga*), disease of trickling down (*kaṇṇa-roga*), mouth (*mukha-roga*), tooth (*danta-roga*), cough (*kāso*), asthma (*sāso*), cold catarrh (*pināso*), burning (*dāho*), fever (*jaro*), internal complaints i.e., belly-disease (*kucchi-roga*), fainting (*mucchā*), diarrhea (*pakkhandikā*), rheumatism (*sūlā*), cholera (*visucikā*), leprosy (*kuṭṭham*), bowl (*gaṇḍo*), dry leprosy (*kilāso*), dry asthma (*soso*), cutaneous eruptions (*daddu*), scab (*kacchu*), itch (*kaṇḍu*), *rakkhāsi*, scabies (*vitaacchika*), red bile (*lohitapittam*), diabetes (*madhumeho*), dribbling/salivation (*aṃsā*), pimple (*pīlaka*), fistula (*bhagandalā*), epilepsy (*apamāro*), and touch poison, infections (*nakkhasā*).⁸ The reference of diseases like dysentery (*atisāra*), acidity (*kaṭukattā*), jaundice (*pāṇḍu*), sun strokes etc. are also available in the *Tipiṭaka*. The *Bhesajjakkhandhaka*, a part of the *Vinaya-piṭaka* also enumerates the different kinds of diseases.⁹

The *Sallekhasuta* refers to a list of forty-four types of the diseases.¹⁰ They are torturing and hurting others (*parevihimsakā*), killing beings (*pāṇātipāta*), taking things that belong to others (*adinnādāyī*), sexual misconduct (*abrahmacārī*), telling lie (*musāvādī*), back-biting (*pisuṇāvācā*), using harsh words (*pharusāvācā*), uttering futile words or indulgence in frivolous talks (*samphappalāpī*), desire for the things that belong to others (*abhijjhālū*), corrupt minds (*vyāpannacittā*), wronging views (*micchā-diṭṭhi*), wrong evil thought (*micchā-saṅkappa*), uttering wrong words (*micchā-vācā*), wrong activities (*micchā-kammanta*), wrong livelihood (*micchā-ājīva*), wrong effort (*micchā-vāyāma*), wrong

8. KN. Vol. IV, part-1, 1.1.5, p. 12

9. Bhesajjakkhandhakam, SP., p. 141-176

10. Sallekhasuttam, - MN.1.1.83-85, VRI.1.53-54

mindfulness (*micchā-sati*), wrong concentration (*micchā-samādhi*), doing wrong and saying it right (*micchā-ñāṇī*), wrong liberation (*micchā-vimutti*), oppressed by slothfulness (*thīnamiddhapariyuṭṭhitā*), pride (*uddhatā*), doubt (*vicikicchā*), short temper (*kodhanā*), imbalance hatred (*upanāhī*), hypocrisy (*makkhī*), duality of mind (*palāsī*), stubbornness (*thaddhatā*), egotism (*atimānī*), disobedience (*dubbacā*), having evil friends (*pāpamittā*), reluctance (*pamattā*), lack of devotion (*assaddhā*), lack of shame (*ahirika*), lack of fear to sin (*anottapi*), lack of knowledge (*appassuttā*), lethargy (*kusīta*), lack of mental alertness (*muṭṭhassati*), foolishness (*duppaññā*), and holding to one's own view (*sandiṭṭhiparāmāsī ādhānaggāhī asandiṭṭhiparāmāsī*).¹¹

The Khuddakanikāya also enumerates a bit different type of the list of mental diseases, such as grudge or enmity (*upanāha*), hypocrisy (*makkhā*), unmercifulness or malice (*palāsa*), envy (*issā*), misersness (*macchariya*), deceptive appearance (*māyā*), treachery (*sātheyya*), obduracy, hypocrisy and deceit (*thambha*), impetuosity (*sārambha*), conceit (*māna*), arrogance (*atimāna*), extreme sexual excess (*mada*), indolence (*pamāda*), anxiety or distress (*darathajā*), fever of passion (*pariḷāha*), depression, suicidal tendencies, sorrow, constant repentance, lamentation etc.¹²

According to the Buddhism, the Buddha, a *bhisaka* or *bheṣajyaguru* who calls the human body *rogaṇīḍa* (the repository of diseases), does not confine himself to the enumeration of different types of ills, but he like the modern physician, diagnoses the symptoms (*lakkhaṇa*) and the cause(s) or root(s) of these diseases (*rogamūla*). The physical diseases, according to him, are caused by occurrence of imbalance in secretion of bile (*pittasamuṭṭhāna*), phlegm (*semhasamuṭṭhāna*), and wind (*vātasamuṭṭhāna*).¹³ The imbalance secretion of the bile, phlegm, and wind is the outcome of unhealthy way of living. The aforesaid diseases are also caused by seasonal changes (*utupariṇāmajā*), disharmonious attention or avoidance (*visamparihārajā*), some contrivance (*opakkamikā*), union of

11. KN, Vol. IV, part 1, 1.1.5, p.12

12. Ibid.

13. Thus, there are ninety-six types of physical diseases.

humour (*sannipātikā*), the result of action (*kammavipākajā*), cold (*sīta*), heat (*uṇha*), hunger (*jighacchā*), thirst (*pipāsā*), dung (*uccāra*), urine (*passāva*), insects (*ḍamsaka*), mosquitoes (*makasa*), the touch of reptiles (*sarisapa samphassānam*) etc.¹⁴

A minute perusal of the mental problems, stated above, reveals that they are primarily mental blemishes or mental defromities or the weaknesses of the hauman being. They occur when a person gets enslaved by the evil tendencies, inherent in the mind in the form of Immoral Psychic Factors (*akusala cetasika*). The Immoral Psychic Factors – covetousness (*lobha*), aversion (*dosa*), and ignorance (*moha*), which are also known as immoral roots (*akusala hetu*) are main motivational factors in generating different types of desires – the desire of sensual pleasures (*kāma-taṇhā*), the desire of becoming (*bhava-taṇhā*), and the desire of self-annihilation (*vibhava-taṇhā*).¹⁵ When these desires remain unfulfilled, a being suffers from the different kinds of mental and physical problems. As long as any of the mental diseases affects a being's mind, a person is not able to control and restrain himself. Consequently, affected person is not in a position to do anything concrete for himself but cause immense harm not only to himself but also to the other members of the society. It is, therefore, essential for a being to get rid of such kinds of ills. Herein, it would be appropriate to cite the example of cases of HIV/AIDS. It is known to us that excessive and unnatural indulgence in sexual relationship is one of the causes of this disease. One indulges in excessive and unnatural sexual relationship to gratify one's desire of sensual pleasure. Person afflicted with this disease not only suffer himself/herself, but also affects other whosoever establishes sexual relationship with him/her. By refraining from sexual misconduct, as outlined by the Buddha, the occurrence of such kind of diseases could be prevented.

Having diagnosed the root(s) of diseases the Buddha also talks of the cure and prevention of the diseases. The different kinds of medicines (*bhesajja*), prescribed by the Buddha for different types of physical

14. KN. Vol. IV, part-1, 1.1.5, p. 12

15. Pañcavaggiyakathā, Mv.1.15, VRI.13

diseases are enumerated in the *Bhesajjakkhandhaka*.¹⁶ The perusal of this section of the *Vinaya-piṭaka* reveals that the Buddha prescribes varieties of therapies for the illness of the monks when he traveled around in villages, cities, and forests with a large number of monks as retinue. In such journey medicines were not taken along. Nor is a physician accompanied them. Hence, he prescribed medicine (*bhesajja*) as well as surgical operations in terms of the requirement, occasion and nature of the disease.¹⁷ For instance; the Buddha prescribed the intake of five things – ghee (*sappi*), oil (*tela*), butter (*navanīta*), honey (*madhu*) and molasses (*phāṇita*) to regain vigour for the monks who were affected and weakened by diseases like cold fever. The four primary forms of filth (*mahā vikata*) – faeces (*mala*), urine (*mutta*), hot ashes (*carika*), and clay (*mattika*) were administered against snake-bite. For jaundice the aralu nut in cattle urine was prescribed; for stomach aches was salt sediment; and pot roast was prescribed for emaciation. When a person had swallowed poison, he was made to drink faeces diluted in water. A mustured plaster was placed over a wound. Unguents were applied for eye diseases. Bark savings and cow-dung were boiled together and applied for itching. Various forms of herbs, varieties of salts yams, juices, and roots were prescribed. In this way we find that the *Vinaya-piṭaka* refers to the use of certain roots, leaves, fruits, gums and salts etc. like turmeric (*haliddi*), ginger (*siṅgivera*), *vaca* (a kind of root), andropogon muricatum (*usīra*), the bitter juice of *nimba*-tree i.e., *azadirachta indica* (*nimbakasāva*), leaves of the *nimba*-tree (*nimbapaṇṇa*), *wrightia anitdycentica* (*kuṭaja*), basilentkraut (*sulasipaṇṇa*), cotton (*kappāsapaṇṇa*), *erycibe paniculta* (*vilaga*), *asafetida* (*hiṅgu*), a kind of perfume made of berry of an aromatic plant (*kaṭukaphala*) etc. for the sake of medical purposes.¹⁸ It also prescribes the patients (*ābādhika*) the method of preparing and taking of medicine, its doses, time and the expiry time of the medicine. Since the same is not the matter of the discussion of the present paper, the same is not discussed here in detail.

In case of mental problems, no remedy or medicine is, however,

16. *Bhesajjakkhandhakam*, SP., p. 12

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*

available outside the personality of a human being as the basic cause(s) of these problems is the arousal of evil tendencies (immoral psychic factors, lying dormant in mind), that arise on account of finding suitable atmosphere, provided by the three immoral roots – greed, hatred, and delusion.¹⁹ Hence, their remedies, one has to find within one's own self i.e. mind. Prescribing the remedies to get rid of different mental problems, the *Sallekhasutta* describes that these blemishes could be removed by developing the attitudes of non-violence, not killing beings, not taking things that belong to others, not indulging in sexual misconduct, not telling a lie, not indulging in back-biting, not using harsh words, not uttering futile words or non-indulgence in frivolous talk, not desiring for the things belong to others, not having corrupt minds, right views, right thoughts, uttering right words, right activities, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration, right wisdom, right liberation, eradicating slothfulness, humility, doubtlessness, not being angered, being devoid of imbalance hatred, not being hypocritical, lack of duality of mind, lack of jealousy, lack of miserliness, not being deceitful, lack of pretension, lack of stubbornness, lack of egotism, obedience, having good friends, non-reluctance or diligence, possessing devotion, shamefulness, fearing sin, possessing or possession of right knowledge, effort, mental alertness, being full of wisdom, and not holding to one's own view.²⁰ They are nothing but the development of different kinds of virtuous qualities, immanent in the stream of our consciousness in the form of wholesome psychic factors (*kusala cetasika*). Development of such tendencies purifies a consciousness, and thus a being.²¹

When we look into the different goals of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, it appears that they basically intend to create a healthy materialistic aspect of life; they have least concern for mental development. Only one of the eight goals earmarks to achieve universal primary education. The primary education what is imparted these days in the developing nations is hardly capable of developing mind. Similarly,

19. "dīgharattamidaṃ cittam saṃkiliṭṭhaṃ rāgena dosena mohaṇā"ti.cittasaṃkilesā, bhikkhave, sattā saṃkilissanti." - Khandhasaṃyutta, SN.2.1.8.100, VRI.2.135

20. Sallekhasuttaṃ - MN.1.1.83-85, VRI.1.53-54

21. "...cittavodānā sattā visujjhanti." - Khandhasaṃyutta, SN.2.1.8.100, VRI.2.135

these goals have been set forth to apply universally without taking into consideration the various conditions and needs of the different societies. Contrary to this, the Buddha used to preach his discourses keeping in view the mental elevations, attitudes, temperments, professions and faith etc. of the audiences or the potential beneficiaries. Besides, the Buddha realized that most of the people suffer in the world because of mental defilements. This is why; the Buddha laid much emphasis on the cure of mind rather than physical ailments, as in his view, man's mind tremendously and profoundly influences and affects the body also. If allowed to function viciously and entertain unwholesome thoughts, mind can cause a great disaster, may even kill a being, but mind can also cure a sick body. When concentrated on right thoughts with right understanding, the effects mind can produce are immense. Mind not only makes sick, it also cures. In fact, it works both as a friend and an enemy. When wrongly directed, it does the sort of harm as is done by a fearful enemy. When rightly directed, it showers benefits as done by a good friend. The words of the Buddha are very clear on this issue: "whatever harm an enemy does to his enemy in all the ten directions, the harm done by the mind, when it is directed wrongly, is greater; the parents, friends, and well-wishers may do great good to their friends or beloved ones but, the most good can be done by mind which is rightly directed."²² Modern Physicians also say that even for several bodily ills, the cause is the mind.²³ Hence the Buddha though described both the physical (*kāyika*) and the mental (*mānasika*) diseases; he laid much emphasis on the cure of mental blemishes. For the removal of mental blemishes, the development of healthy living standard is essential. This is why, the Buddha always asked the people to strive for the purification of mind for which he prescribes the medicine of righteousness (*dharmosadhi*)²⁴, to be followed by those who aspire

22. "Diso disaṃ yaṃ taṃ kayirā, verī vā pana verinaṃ; micchāpaṇihitaṃ cittaṃ, pāpiyo, naṃ tato kare. Na taṃ mātā pitā kayirā, aññe vāpi ca ñātakā; sammāpaṇihitaṃ cittaṃ, seyyaso naṃ tato kare." – Dpd. 3.42-43, VRI.18

23. Personal communication with Dr. R. K. Mangalam, PMCH, Patna, Bihar, India

24. "Dhammosadhasamaṃ nathi etaṃ pibatha, bhikkavo" ti" (O Monks, there is no medicine as effective as the medicine of Dhamma. Please drink (undertake) it. - Milindaṭṭhikā, VRI. 481 CSCD, Third version.

to get rid of suffering. The *dhammosadhi*, though include many things²⁵, the practice of right mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*)²⁶ is sufficient to cure both types of diseases – physical and mental. This primarily happens because the *satipaṭṭhāna* enables a being to keep constant vigil/guard on the different movement and posture of the body; different feelings; the nature and types of the consciousness; and the different aspects of the mental states.²⁷ Consequently, a being, practising *satipaṭṭhāna*, is able to uproot the mental deformities or diseases, caused by covetousness (*lobha*), aversion/hatred (*dosa*), and ignorance (*moha*), as they are the root cause for the origin of the desires of sensual pleasure (*kāma-taṇhā*), becoming (*bhava-taṇhā*), and self-annihilation (*vibhava-taṇhā*).²⁸ When these desires remain unfulfilled, a being suffers from the different kinds of mental and physical problems. Their elimination from the mind of a being not only purifies him/her but also brings solace and peace in his/her life. Hence is said, “*Ekāyano ayaṃ, bhikkhave, maggo sattānaṃ visuddhiyā, sokaparidevānaṃ samatikkamāya dukkhadomanassānaṃ*

25. The medicines of dhamma are: the Four Foundation of Mindfulness (*cattāro satipaṭṭhānā*), Four Right Exertions (*cattāro sammappadhānā*), Four Means of Accomplishment (*cattāro iddhipādā*), Five Faculties (*pañca indriyāni*), Five Powers (*pañca bala*), Seven Factors of Enlightenment (*sattabojjhaṅga*), and Noble Eightfold Path (*ariya-aṭṭhaṅgikamagga*). All the factors, mentioned as *Dhammosadhi* under seven categories are collectively known as *bodhipakkhiyadhamma* (the factors leading to Enlightenment). From the *Abhidhammic* point of view, they could be reduced to fourteen psychic factors, one being the consciousness and the other thirteen psychic factors, namely; energy (*virīya*), conation (*chanda*), one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*), initial application (*vitakka*), rapture (*pīti*), faith (*saddhā*), mindfulness (*satī*), tranquility (*passaddhi*), equanimity (*tatramajjhataṭṭā*), abstinences (*viratī - sammā vācā, sammā kammanta, sammā-ājīva*) and *paññā*.

26. “*Cattāro satipaṭṭhānā kāyānupassanā, vedanānupassanā, cittānupassanā, dhammānupassanā.*” - ACMA, p.278

27. “*Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhiijjhā-domanassaṃ, vedanāsu vedanānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhiijjhā-domanassaṃ, citte cittānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhiijjhādomanassaṃ, dhammesu dhammānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhiijjhādomanassaṃ.*” - *Mahāsatiṭṭhānasuttaṃ*, DN.2.9.372, VRI.2.213

28. *Maggasaṃyutta*, VRI. 3.186 [The four Mindfulness is the only way for the purification of beings, extinction of sorrow and lamentation, getting rid of pain and displeasure, attainment of knowledge, and the realization of *Nibbāna*, the eternal bliss.]

atthaṅgamāya ñāyassa adhiḡamāya nibbānassa sacchikiriyāya, yadidaṃ cattāro satipaṭṭhānā."²⁹

Besides, *satipaṭṭhāna*, the Buddhist way leading to the attainment of mental purification and happiness, is also termed variously in the Pāli scriptures (Tipiṭaka) such as "*Samādhi*", "*Jhāna*", "*Vipassanā*" etc. The unification of wholesome consciousness properly and evenly onto an object is called "*Samādhi*".³⁰ It is concentration in the sense of concentrating (*samādhāna*). It is the centering (*ādhāna*) of consciousness and consciousness-concomitants evenly (*samaṃ*) and rightly (*sammā*) on a single object; placing, is what is meant. So it is the state, in virtue of which consciousness and its concomitants remain evenly and rightly on a single object undistracted and unscattered, that should be understood as concentrating. It is concentration (*Samādhi*) in the sense of concentrating.³¹ Burning of the mental blemishes which prevent unification of mind onto an object is "*Jhāna*"³² while perceiving things differently in proper perspective is "*Vipassanā*"³³.

The basic aim of the meditation, prescribed by the Buddha is the attainment of mental purification, and the development of gradual detachment from the worldly possessions and positions in general, and getting rid of the cycle of repeated existence (rebirth and death) in particular. It is a well known fact, as the Buddha says, the root cause of all problems are "Delusion", "Greed" and "Hatred". Under the influence of delusion, which covers the intrinsic nature of the objects (impermanence, suffering, and essenceless), and creates false impressions in one's mind contrary to the real characteristics of the objects, one sticks to the mundane things and wants to possess at any cost those material things, which generally appear pleasant and loving to one. Further, one develops the negative tendencies, particularly the tendency of harming those things, which or those persons who come in one's way to acquire them. Besides, there are several other

29. Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasuttaṃ, DN.2.9.372, VRI.2.213

30. "Kusalacittekaggatā samādhi." – Vsm.3.38, VRI. 1.82

31. The essence of the Path of Purification, p.53

32. "Sabbakilese jhāpetiti jhānaṃ." - Paṭisambhidāmaggaṃ, 1.217, VRI. 231

33. "Kusalacittasampayuttaṃ vipassanāñāṇaṃ paññā." – Vsm.14.422, VRI.2.62

unwholesome mental factors, such as distraction, conceit, miserliness, sloth, torpor, flurry, worry, perplexity etc. which arise in the stream of our consciousness along with delusion, greed and hatred, and act as defilements, finding the suitable atmosphere. These factors act as hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*), wavers mind, and obstruct the unification of mind onto the object, selected for the centralization of mind on that very object.

As per Buddhism, the negative forces are inherently available in the stream of our consciousness in three layers, first, they are in inactive form, flowing with the stream of our consciousness; second, they become active when objects appear in the range of our of sense-organs; and they become hyper active to possess the object, when the object appears pleasant and loving, and leaves its deep imprint on one's mental surface. Only after the suppression or elimination of these factors unification of wholesome mind onto an object is possible. The course of meditation i. e. the cultivation of mind consists of *Sīla* (moral precepts), *Samādhi* (concentration) and *Paññā* (wisdom) eliminates those negative forces from the stream of one's consciousness in three stages. First, "the moral precepts", which entail avoidance of killing, stealing, sexual misconduct etc. purify one's physical and vocal activities. Second, "concentration" suppresses the evil tendencies of excessive indulgence in enjoyment of sensual pleasures, ill will, sloth and torpor, flurry and worry, and perplexity. And, the third "wisdom" eliminates those negative tendencies completely, and thus purifies one's consciousness. The pure state of consciousness is perfectly calm, tranquil and peaceful.³⁴

Thus, "Meditation" not only removes evil tendencies, but also helps in developing the positive tendencies, such as the tendency of donation, saving one's life, helping other materially, morally and spiritually, being man of integrity and so on. The removal of negative forces from one's mental stream and development of positive forces therein bring about peace and happiness not in one's life but also in the society one lives in. It is so because the society is formed of individuals. Hence, as would be

34. "Pabhassaramidaṃ, bhikkhave, cittaṃ. Tañca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi vippamuttaṃ." – Ekanipātapāli, AN.1.5.51, VRI.1.13

the character of individuals, the constituents of society, so would be the nature of society. Individual's mental purification is a must requirement not only for the establishment of global peace and harmony, but also for the accomplishment of Millennium Development Goals, as it is the consciousness that regulates the world.³⁵

To conclude, though the UN Millennium Development Goals proceed with solemn intention of creating a congenial atmosphere for living a peaceful and happy life in the world, it appears paying much heed on the material development without taking into consideration the needs and wishes of the local people. Further, it seems based mainly on the analysis of data available with United Nations and its members. There is lack of the input of personal and social experiences of the people and societies, suffering from poverty, health-problem, under growth, deprivation, atrocities etc. On the other hand, the path, prescribed by the Buddhism is based on the personal experience of its proponent, the Buddha, who proclaims different stages of the path of purification according to the needs of the people, afflicted with suffering. Herein, it appears pertinent to refer to the story of Kisā Gotamī.³⁶ It is said that Kisa Gotami when her only son died, consulted all the physicians of her time but, she was not able to bring back his child to life. At last, she approached to the Buddha, the greatest of all physicians. The Buddha asked her to bring a handful of mustard from a house where none had died. But, she could not find it as prescribed by the Buddha. It is remarkable here that the Buddha asked to bring a handful of mustard from the house, where none had died, not to bring back her dead son to life but to cure the mother as she was, then, mentally ill due to loss of her only son. When she failed to procure a handful of mustard as prescribed by the Buddha, she regained her consciousness and realized the truth of the life. Prescribing such medicine, the Buddha thought to cure not the dead body but her who was alive. Similarly, Buddhism has different sets of path, leading to the state of happiness, which could be prescribed in accordance with the requirement of the people. In this background, it would be suffice to say that the proper application of therapy is essential to flush out the mental blemishes. Defiled consciousness distract people from achieving

35. "Cittena nīyati loko..." - Devatāsaṃyutta, SN. 1.1.7.2.62, VRI. 1.44
 "Cittena kho, bhikkhu, loko nīyati.." - Brāhmaṇavagga, AN. 19.4.186, VRI. 1.206,
 36. Thi.A.10.1, VRI.195

the solemn goals as outlined by the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, hence, the need is to proceed for the attainment of aforesaid goals by devising a way which should be based on the happy blend of the aforesaid goals and the purified state of mind, which could be attained by following the solemn path of meditation (both *samatha* and *vipassanā*) set forth by the Buddha. In fact, they would enable a being to realize the true knowledge of the world and, consequently, to act accordingly for one's as well as others welfare and benefits. The Buddha himself states, "With these forms of medicine, he flushes out wrong views and wrong concepts and administers them as emetics to all blemishes. As a result, he not only pulled stakes and spikes out of the minds of men but also cured such illness as birth, decay, old age, death, sorrow, wailing, unhappiness and suffering through laxatives and emetics." The Pāli scripture is full of such information. In fact, the teaching of the Buddha, primarily, aims to cure the mental problems, which cause problems in the material world. Hence, it could be stated that the application of the teachings of the Buddha while executing the program to actualize the Millenium Development Goals, could be of great help to the material world. At this point a question may be raised as to "Why are all the Buddhist nations underdeveloped and have the most social problems?" Simple answer to this question is that most of the Buddhist nations became subservients in the past to the nations, mostly are developed today. Their resources were brutally utilized by the ruling countries for their own benefits. However, it should not be overlooked that even after facing acute hardship, the people of Buddhist nations are always seen smiling. So far as social problems in these nations are concerned, even the developed nations are not untouched of it. Are the developed nations free from HIV/AIDS, atrocities on women, racial hatred and so on? The Buddhist concept of "impermanence (anicca)" provides them a tool of hope that the alternation of situation will certainly take place, if one's action is done with purified mind.

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