

*Continued from BOSAT: Vol 1- No. 3)*

## **THE BUDDHA'S TEACHING<sup>1</sup>**

*by*

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### **Importance of having an open mind.**

..... The follower of the Buddha in upholding truth and rejecting untruth, according to his understanding, will not go beyond clearly stating what he believes to be true and not subscribing to and not supporting in any way what he has found to be untrue. He will not hate those who hold views different from his. He will always act free from resentment even under the most difficult circumstances. Adherence to the truth is an important factor for leading a good life. It produces the mental environment to acknowledge error and to change a course of action that has been found to be wrong. This humility, tractability, and freedom from pride, can be seen in all who have an open mind, which is most needed for the attainment of inner peace.

As the Buddha's teaching is one that inculcates the idea that every man is responsible for his deeds and for what he is, no one can blame another for his own unhappiness, misery, feeling of insecurity, or anxiety. Every man is the heir of his own deeds, his deeds are his possession, his relative, and his refuge. Due to his own deeds a man continues in Samsara. All good depends on nobility of character, and it may be justly said that the Buddha's teaching, which tells us to seek security and freedom in ourselves, in our own minds, purified by virtue, is the best of all conceptions of human liberty based on a realistic view of life.

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1. The Buddha's Teaching by Soma Maha Thera – Vol. XXIII, No. 5. Whole No. 111

The Buddha sees not only suffering but also the transcending of suffering. He teaches us to avoid what produces unhappiness and to do what produces happiness. He says that the evil-doer suffers here and hereafter and that the doer of good rejoices now and afterwards. The transcending first of evil by mundane good and the transcending of both evil and good later through attainment of the ultramundane constitute the path to freedom proclaimed by the Buddha.

This path is a gradual one free from harsh and violent methods as it must be since it is a teaching of moderate principles suited for practice by all intelligent beings. In the Ganaka Moggallāna Sutta, the Blessed One says that just as a horse-trainer, having got a good thorough-bred first accustoms him to the bit and then trains in what further training he must get, step by step, so the Master leads the tameable human being who comes to him, along the way of purity, by stages.

Unlike the paths of some other teachers, who believe that happiness has to be reached by suffering, the Blessed One's path is a turning away from what is unhappy to what is not. When according to the Buddha's instruction a person sees the world's ill, he is not depressed by it because the Buddha shows also to him the happiness possible of attainment here and now, and so he gains confidence in the Master's teaching. Such a person through such confidence gains joy, calm, gladness, concentration, and the vision of things as they really are. Then turning away from the happiness connected with the temporary to that which is unconnected with mundane perception, he reaches dispassion, freedom, and the knowledge of the supreme bliss of the Extinction of ill, Nibbana. After that, as an extinguished one he lives unsullied by the world as the lotus, which, having risen above its native pond, stands unsullied by the water in which it has grown.

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