

Zile Singh  
Ambassador(Retd.)

### Buddha Purnima

“Believe nothing, no matter where you read it or who has said it, not even if I have said it, unless it meets with logic and common sense.”- The Buddha.

Buddha Purnima, May 07, 2020 (Full Moon Day) marking the birth, enlightenment and Nirvana of Gautama the Buddha was celebrated worldwide. Siddhartha Gautam was born into a royal family in Lumbini, in Nepal, in 563 B.C. As a Prince, he was brought up in a kingly luxurious environment. At the age of 29, he realized that wealth and luxury did not guarantee happiness. So, he explored different methods and philosophies available at that time to find the key to human happiness. After six years of ascetic and hermit life, he finally found ‘the middle path’. He called it enlightenment or a stage of mindfulness. After Enlightenment, the Buddha spent the rest of his life teaching the principles of the Eight-fold-Path – called the Dhamma, or Truth – until his Pr Nirvana, in 483 BC, at the age of 80.

Someone asked Buddha, “What have you gained? He replied “Nothing. However, let me tell you what I have lost: anger, anxiety, depression, insecurity, fear of old age and death.” Buddha was an apostle of logic, reason, equality, liberty, fraternity, love and compassion. He, to start with, preached in the northern parts of India almost 500 years before the Christ, and over time, he became the “Light of Asia” and finally his Dhamma spread in the neighbouring Asian countries and the western hemisphere. Unfortunately, in India, Hinduism could not tolerate this path of reason and logic devoid of rituals, blind faith and superstitions. In the West, his teachings are like the ‘New Testament’. Today, there is a clear and consistent demand for the life and teachings of Buddha all over the world. His Dhamma is not in search of God but is in search of human happiness.

After attaining Enlightenment on the Vaisak Purnima in 588 B.C. the Buddha taught the Dhamma for 45 years on the origin and cessation of suffering. In no other religion, the values of knowledge and evil of ignorance are so much insisted upon as they are in Buddhism. Buddhism has the glory of judging rightly the capability of man to work out his

salvation without any outside aid or assistance. According to Buddha, (The Blessed One), human misery is caused by the stupidity of blind faith without any stress on knowledge. The Dhamma exalted human consciousness to the highest level of love and compassion.

Long before Pythagoras, a mathematician and a rationalist (570 BC - 490 BC) and after that for centuries, men have sought to know what Buddha called “equanimity”, what Epicurus called “tranquility” and what the poet Whittier called “the harvest song of inward peace.” He talked about an insidious form of violence called structural violence, which kills people slowly by depriving them of basic rights and needs. The verdict of the Buddha is that no one can give you the gift of a serene mind, a calm and tranquil way of life but yourself. It is something you must develop for yourself with the help of yourself.” Buddha’s Dhamma, for the first time, placed the man and his actions above everything. The God, the Priest, the dogmas, rites, rituals and all blind faiths were pushed in the background. The crux of the Buddhist philosophy is the Four Noble Truths- the suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of sufferings and the true path leading to the cessation of sufferings; and the Eightfold Path – right view, right resolve, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right Samadhi, and the Five Precepts - no killing, no stealing, no lying, no intoxication and no undue sex.

Buddhism is becoming popular in western countries for a number of reasons. The first good reason is that Buddhism has answers to many problems in the modern materialistic societies. Buddhism goes further by providing a long- term purpose of our existence, through wisdom and true understanding. It only preaches and leaves the decision to the individual. It depends more on understanding than on blind faith. The Buddha himself asked his followers to test his teachings rather than accept his words as true.

Every living being has the potential to become a Buddha by completely purifying his mind of all faults and delusions such as hatred, greed and ignorance. Religions subsequent to Buddhism have revived the dogmas, rituals and ignorance-based old systems.

The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, in his message on Buddha Purnima (Vesak) said, “In a time of growing intolerance and inequality, the Buddha’s message of non-violence and service to others

are more relevant today than ever. Let us renew our commitment to building a world of peace and dignity for all.”

Lord Buddha’s relevance during COVID –Crisis:

The disease and suffering are but sure.  
The wondrous Dhamma has their cure.  
Meditation and resolve combined together.  
Right mindfulness is must in COVID weather.  
What to talk of Corona, nothing is permanent.  
Buddha taught that everything is impermanent.