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**THE IMPACT OF LUST, HATRED, AND DELUSION ON  
MENTAL HEALTH: A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE AND  
ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS**

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# The Impact of Lust, Hatred, and Delusion on Mental Health: A Buddhist Perspective and Its Implications for Marital Relationships

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## Introduction

This article discusses about the Buddhist point of view on mental disorder, mainly focusing on the role of lust, hatred and delusion which are considered as three unwholesome roots in Buddhism. It examines how these unwholesome roots are contributed to mental suffering and dejection, while hindering the development of the important mental faculties. Further, it describes how those findings impact on marital stability. The main object of this article is providing comprehensive understanding on mental disorders and practical methods to develop the mental wellbeing, especially within the marital dynamic.

According to Buddhism mental suffering, arise due to emotions like lust, hatred and delusion and mostly effect on mental wellbeing and interpersonal relationship. Key Buddhist suttas - *Aññatarabrāhmaṇasutta*, *Vitthārasutta*, *Vajirūpamasutta*, and *Aññatitthiyasutta* - highlight the detrimental effects of these negative emotions on mental health and behavior. This article dives into the causes of hate, its impact on marriages and Buddhist approaches to mitigating these emotions to foster healthier and more supportive marital dynamics.

## 1. Causes of Hate and Mental Suffering

According to Buddhist point of view, Lust, hatred and delusion are the three unwholesome roots that lead to arise mental suffering. These tree kinds'

emotions manifest ground for harmful thoughts and actions, conducive to considerable personal and relational distress.

### I. Lust (*rāga*)

As the Buddha said, lust arises from too much attachment to attractive objects. This attachment leads to obsession and desire, which cloud judgment and fuel an endless cycle of craving and dissatisfaction. When unfulfilled, lust turns into frustration and disappointment, sparking further mental unrest.

The *Aññatarabrāhmaṇasutta*<sup>i</sup>, emphasizes how lust-filled folks experience a mental fixation that leads to harmful intentions and actions, towards themselves and others. This obsession manifests as mental suffering and dejection.

### II. Hatred (*dosa*)

The next negative thought is hatred which stems from focusing on repulsive object, creating aversion and hostility. This aversion disturbs mental peace and calmness and lead to raise negative emotions that make harmful behaviors.

The *Vajirūpamasutta*<sup>ii</sup> uses the metaphor of an open sore to describe the impact of anger and irritation. An angry person reacts with hostility even to minor provocation, worsening mental suffering and perpetuating a cycle of irritation and bitterness.

### III. Delusion (*moha*)

The last one is delusion which comes from ignorance and misunderstanding, make unclear judgment and perception. This ignorance prevents persons from seeing things as they truly are, leading to misperceptions and unwise actions.

The *Aññatitthiyasutta*, the Buddha has clearly mentioned how delusion produces harmful behaviors under false pretenses, often with the intention of gaining power. Such behavior certainly brings personal distress and harmful consequences

## 2. Hindrances to Mental Faculties

The *Vitthārasutta*<sup>iii</sup> explore how these three-fold unwholesome roots hinder the cultivation of crucial five mental faculties such as faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom, necessary for the well-being of individuals.

### I. Faith (*saddhā*)

Faith or *saddhā* in oneself and others is essential to maintain mental stability and confidence. Doubt or insecurity may arise in individual and waves faith on both oneself and others when someone dominated by lust, hatred and delusion.

### II. Energy (*virīya*)

Energy or effort is one of very important qualities to overcome challenges in life. Negative emotions weaken one's energy or effort and result in lack of interest to work hard to active one's goals in life and even to do the day to day activities.

### III. Mindfulness (*sati*)

Live in present or performing activities with mindfully is mindfulness. Emotions like lust, hatred and delusion distract person from living in present and leading to a confusing and unfocused mind.

#### IV. Concentration (*samādhī*)

Concentration is definitely considered necessary for deep mental engagement and clarity. The three unwholesome roots, lust, hatred, and delusion disrupt concentration, making it tough to focus and achieve mental calmness.

#### V. Wisdom (*paññā*)

It is due to wisdom one can understand the true nature of reality or things as they really are. Negative emotions cloud wisdom, preventing clear perception and sound judgment.

According to the above explanation we can conclude that unwholesome roots effect to slow down the progress of the mental clarity and enlightenment.

### 3. The Metaphor of the Open Sore

In the *Vajirūpamasutta*<sup>iv</sup> of the AN, a person who is prone to anger and easily exasperated, is compared with an open sore. Qualities of such a person are, if he is criticized slightly he loses his temper and becomes irritated, hostile, and stubborn; he displays irritation, hatred, and bitterness. Just as a festering sore, if struck by a stick or a shard, will discharge even more matter, so too some person here is prone to anger....and displays irritation, hatred, and bitterness. This person is said to have a mind like an open sore.<sup>v</sup> Understanding this metaphor helps illustrate how deeply rooted anger can affect an individual's mental state and behavior, leading to chronic suffering.

#### 4. Behavior of the Deluded

In the *Aññatitthiyasutta*, the Buddha has explained how a person, who is overcome by greed, hatred, and delusion, behaves. When a person is overcome by bad unwholesome qualities born of greed, hatred and delusion, with his mind obsessed by them, he inflicts suffering upon another under a false pretext— by killing, imprisonment, confiscation, censure, or banishment— [thinking]: I am powerful, I want power, and dwells in suffering in this very life, with distress, anguish, and fever, and with the breakup of the body, after death, a bad destination can be expected for him. This behavior leads to a life of distress and torment.

#### 5. Causes and Consequences of Mental Disorders

Greed and hatred is arisen due to careless attention to attractive and repulsive object lead to mental disorders. This condition is caused to disturb the mental functioning and as a result, a person loss confidence, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom. When these five faculties do not function properly person may suffer from nervousness or depression.

#### Mental Disorders and Their Symptoms

We can identify various symptoms of mentally disturbed persons such as frequent pain and dejection, loss of confidence and energy, reduction of mindfulness and concentration and weaken wisdom.

As the Buddha said, person who dominated by greed and hatred often experience frequent emotional pain and dejection. This condition certainly leads to chronic sadness and hopelessness. This hopelessness greatly affect

on self confidence. When loss his self confidence, people may doubt on their abilities and value, resulting reducing of motivation. This condition leads to live with negative emotions which conducive to loss energy and cause fatigue. The constant negativity disrupts mindfulness and concentration and struggle to live in present and focused on work. This condition leads to complete the task properly in day to day life. All the disabilities mentioned above, prevent person from seeing things clearly and wisely. It pay path to poor decision making and difficulties to reach challengers effectively.

## **6. Impact on Marital Relationships**

Depression significantly affects marital stability. Depressed persons often struggle to maintain healthy relationships, characterized by increased aversion and frequent negative exchanges. These marriages are marked by conflict, poor communication, dependency, hostility, withdrawal, and lack of affection.

- **Conflict and Poor Communication**

Depressed individuals may find it tough to communicate effectively with their partners. Misunderstandings and unresolved conflicts become common, further straining the relationship.

- **Dependency and Hostility**

Depression can lead to dependency on the spouse for emotional support, creating a burden on the relationship. This dependency may breed resentment and hostility, worsening marital tensions.

- **Withdrawal and Lack of Affection**

Depressed folks often withdraw from social interactions, including with their spouses. This withdrawal leads to a lack of affection and emotional intimacy, eroding the relationship's foundation.

- Perceived Accusation

Spouses of depressed individuals may perceive their partner's unspoken misery as accusatory, feeling blamed for the depression. This perception creates further emotional distance and strain.

## 7. Buddhist Therapies for Removing Resentment

According to the *Paṭhamaāghātapāṭivinasutta*, the Buddha introduced five specific therapies to address and eliminate resentment:

- I. Loving-Kindness Therapy
- II. Compassion Therapy
- III. Equanimity Therapy
- IV. Ignoring Therapy
- V. Understanding

### I. Loving-Kindness Therapy

Loving-kindness, or *mettā*, is the cultivation of unconditional love. In a marital context, practicing loving-kindness is constantly wishing for happiness and well-being of spouse. This practice can significantly reduce feelings of resentment by replacing negative emotions with positive, loving thoughts.

- Emotional Bonding

A strong emotional bond is produced in couples who engage in loving-kindness meditation. This bonding cultivates strong relationship and mutual understanding.

- Reduction of Resentment

Spreading loving kindness each other helps to change negative emotions with positive ones. Through wishing happiness, individual can remove feeling of anger towards spouse and build harmonious relationship.

- Enhanced Communication

By practicing loving kindness, spouses can communicate openly. They can discuss the problems arisen in family dynamic more calmly which lead to resolve their conflicts and keep harmonious relationship.

## II. Compassion Therapy

Compassion or *karunā* means understanding the suffering of one's spouse and do necessary to get rid from it. By doing compassion towards each other, husband and wife can response with kindness when he/she in struggle.

- Empathy and Understanding

Compassion develops empathy, allowing partners to understand each other's emotions and feelings. When both understand each other well, it leads to develop more supportive relationship.

- Reduction of Negative Emotions

Compassion certainly reduces negative emotions like anger and frustration. When one practice compassion, one can focus on their partner's

suffering, individuals can respond with kindness and support rather than hostility.

- Strengthened Emotional Connection

Due to compassion towards each other couple can enhance lovable connection. It manifests a sense of mutual support and develops a more effective and stable relationship.

### III. Equanimity Therapy

Equanimity or *upekkhā* means possibility to react for joy and misery in the same manner without getting irritated. This quality is very essential to keep calm during conflict and preventing arise negative thoughts toward the partner.

- Emotional Regulation

Equanimity helps individuals regulate their emotions, preventing them from being overwhelmed by negative feelings. This regulation promotes a more stable and peaceful relationship.

- Objective Conflict Resolution

By maintaining mental calmness, couples can approach conflicts more objectively. This objectivity helps in resolving disagreements more rationally, reducing emotional confusion.

- Increased Resilience

Equanimity fosters resilience, helping couples navigate challenges and stressors more effectively. This resilience strengthens the relationship, promoting long-term stability and happiness.

#### IV. Ignoring Therapy

There is two path of ignoring such as, disregarding minor irritations and understanding *kamma*.

- Disregarding Minor Irritations

This characteristic encourages partners to ignore most of the times some minor irritations and keeping them aside without affect the relationship. It does not mean neglecting the issue but not allowing small issues to cause resentment and create path for a conflict.

- Understanding *Kamma*

According to Buddhism theory *kamma* individuals are responsible for their action and consequences. Understanding this theory help partners to view their spouse's behavior with more patiently and foster forgiveness.

### 8. Impact on Marital Relationships

I strongly believe that, practicing these five Buddhist therapies in the daily life will definitely transform their family into better environment which build up strong and lovable relationship. These therapies develop effective qualities necessary for a healthy and positive relationship such as compassion, kindness, mutual respect and mindfulness. Further, those qualities make strength individuals to regulate their emotions which reducing the impact of negative feelings on the relationship. As a result, they can develop more stable and harmonious marital dynamic. Since practicing Buddhist therapies make possible to reduce resentment, couple can experience more positive and

supportive relationship. Consequently, they experience less conflicts and more positive interactions that enhancing their overall well-being.

## **Conclusion**

Resentment is an inferior quality that breaks a marriage life. Recognizing the causes of hate and apply strategies to less its effects can significantly develop the mental wellbeing and marital relationship. Recognizing them is important since without recognizing we cannot identify that we have problem to solve. Through practicing the **Buddhist therapies, married couple can definitely develop compassionate, empathetic and supportive partnership which will lead to build up more harmonious marriage life** since those practices promote emotional regulation and mutual respect that create foundation for long term stability and happiness in marriage life. Through reducing resentment couple can cultivate positive emotions, leading to improve sound communication, greater intimacy and a strong bond in a marriage life.

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## End Notes

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<sup>i</sup> AN. 3. 53 p. 251

<sup>ii</sup> AN. 3. 25 pp. 123-124

<sup>iii</sup> AN. 4. 162 pp. 149

<sup>iv</sup> AN. 3. 25 pp. 123-124

<sup>v</sup> Ibid