

Tolerance

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Attachment is common to all human beings and non human beings. Buddhist Teachings lead all beings to a life of peace without conflicts. Although people think that it is possible to live without anger, hatred, and non-violence, they cannot prevent those defilements from arising. But evil and clinging are not overcome by such defilements. There are many psychological tendencies which cause conflicts such as attachment to material and non material things, wanting things that give happiness, rejecting things that cause unhappiness, protecting what one has, seeing others enjoying benefits one wishes to have but does not have on account of limited resources, holding on tenaciously to one's views. In this situation the teachings in *Sakkasamyutta* of *Samyuttanikāya* are very useful to understand the environment around one and to spend one's life peacefully. Not only are those teachings useful but there are teachings in other *nikāyas* as well that are related to attachment and that are most relevant to living a peaceful life without conflict.

It is mentioned in the *Chakkavattisihanāda-sutta* of *Dīghanikāya* that victory by means of *Dhamma* is real victory. Hate is not overcome by hate; by love (*metta*) alone is hate appeased. It is mentioned in the *Majjhimanikāya* that *Nibbāna*, the highest goal of the Buddhist ethical path, is mental peace.

The *Vepacitti-sutta* reveals the characteristics of anger and two occasions calling for tolerance. The weak one endures all the time. If a powerful one practises forbearance for the sake of the weaker, then that is the highest tolerance. People think weakness is strength when a fool tries to show off his so called strength. But the strong one, protected by the Teachings, does not change his path. He knows that it is evil to make someone react in anger. The person who does not arouse anger in the one who made him angry, wins the battle. He conducts himself for the welfare of both, his own and the other. If someone conducts himself mindfully, knowing the other is angry, he heals the wounds of both his own and the other. People who are not wise in understanding the teaching will say they are foolish.

Tolerance is greater than fighting with others. It is spiritually and physically more beneficial to overcome the harmful effects of anger, defilements, and stress. Normally the weak puts up with anything all the time because it is

difficult for them to get involved in fighting. To practise tolerance is greater than fighting. But it is far nobler to control oneself and practise forbearance for the sake of the weaker. That is the highest restraint. The wise man always controls himself and endures for the sake of the weaker. So his mind and body are very strong. Therefore, enduring with patience, the wise keep away from the foolish. The following are a few qualities that are highlighted in this *sutta*.

The wise man does not get into a conflict with the weaker, He behaves mindfully in front of the foolish one who is angry, Whatever the weaker thinks of him, he tolerates because of his principles. In the wise man there is power and strength of the Dhamma, It makes him strong. No one can say that forbearance is not powerful. It is a very powerful spiritual quality. The wise man behaves for the welfare of both himself and the other. Therefore, his unwholesome roots diminish and wholesome thought processes develop. It helps him to attain Nibbāna. So he becomes well and happy and a most pleasing personality. There are a few bad qualities that appear in *Vepacitti-sutta* of *Samyuttanikāya* as follows. The foolish man makes others angry, not controlling his anger. The fool thinks the other is patient because he is frightened of him. He scolds using harsh words when he meets his enemies, The foolish one rises into the air as if to overcome the wise one and people say such weakness is strength, when a fool tries to show off his strength in this way, but the wise do not say so.

There are ten factors in *Vattūpama-sutta* that cause conflict with people among. In *Dhajagga-sutta* of *Samyuttanikāya*, lust, greed and hate, in *Vepacitti-sutta* of *Samyuttanikāya* anger and debasing words, *Isayosamuddaka-sutta* of *Samyuttanikāya* anger and harm to virtuous people, in *Dubbaṇṇiya-sutta* of *Samyuttanikāya*, anger are the defilements that cause conflict with others.

These *suttas* make the point that we have conflict with others due to anger. This is harmful to oneself. Therefore, a quality of a Noble One is not to get angry with those who are angry, not to have hatred towards them or harm them. These are the qualities that help to build a peaceful ethical society.

References

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