

Relevance of Buddhist Principles in Building the Post-Covid New Normal world Order

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Abstract

Today the life of people is disturbed due to covid 19 pandemic, whereby So many people have lost their job. The works in offices, companies, factories, shops are closed due to lockdown by the government. The people of all over the world are facing so many problems like constant worry and tension due to lockdown. It is also troubling our peace of mind and forcing us to question our survival. While scientists from all over the world are working hard to unearth medical solutions, thoughts from Buddhism can provide us with a little comfort in our overloaded minds. How we can benefit from the Buddhist principles during these times and after the pandemic time. This is really a testing time for all people of the world. The teachings of the Buddha can help play a major role in current challenging times of fear, anxiety, and isolation to get out of the covid-19 Pandemic.

While Buddhist Principles state that everything is Constantly Changing.

As the Buddha's quote from Dhammapada :

sabbē saṅkhārā aniccā iti yadā paññāya passati

atha dukkhē nibbindati ēsa visuddhiyā maggō

All component things, all things that are put together, all created things are transient, impermanent, and non-constant. When this is often realized through insight, one achieves detachment from suffering. This is the path to total freedom from blemishes.

All hardened things are impermanent.

(Dhammapada, Chapter XX, verse 277)

Whatsoever difficulty we're facing right now, whatsoever painful emotions we're experiencing, they will all leave behind because they are impermanent. So powerful Buddhist principles that everything is changing and impermanent. We can say that this terrible period will also pass, and a good time will come when we meet each other without fear. Once again we will arrange parties, meetings, and interaction with students like same before covid. Buddhist principles can play an important role to build the post-covid new normal world order, whereby people across the world live a life without fear and peaceful way. Further, they can help to build friendly relation ties to all the countries in the world, whereby it realizes peace and happiness to the entire world.

While the main focus shall be on this research paper, how to create a post-covid new normal world order with the implementation of Buddhist principles. The proposed research paper will elaborate on these points in detail.

Key words: Buddhist principles, happiness, post-covid, peace, world order

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Introduction:

Today the drastic loss of human life worldwide due to pandemic covid-19, and presenting an extraordinary challenge to food systems, public health, and the world of work. This pandemic has caused economic and social disruption that is devastating, while millions of people are at risk of falling into extreme poverty. Nearly half of the world's global workforce is at risk of losing their livelihood. Presently, many countries have declared restrictive measures, such as lockdown, stay at home orders to contain the pandemic at the local level. Due to this situation, many people are unable to feed themselves and their families. For the majority, no income means no food, or, at best, less food and less nutritious food. Now the entire world is buzzing with uncertainty and questions: How long will the pandemic last? What will people's lives look like once the pandemic is over? Aristotle, the renowned philosopher, taught, "it is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light." Thus, this is perhaps the right time to look ahead at the expected improvement in the post-Covid world.

Now more than five vaccines have been approved by the world health organization, while people are being vaccinated from across the world. When the entire population shall be vaccinated, then covid-19 may be controlled in the world.

My research is only focused on the Post-Covid new normal world order, wherein the Buddhist principles can provide the way to the people across the world for making life easy during difficult times. The entire life of Gautama Buddha has provided a path and message to all people, How to live life happily and peacefully in the world.

Siddhartha Gautama was the founder of Buddhism. He was born in a royal family, spent his childhood and youth as a prince. All ease and comforts available at that time were easily available to him. However, worldly attractions could not deter him from taking the course of homelessness. He got married to a beautiful girl Yaśodharā and got a son-Rāhula as well her, but to no avail. He set out in search of some lasting answer to the perennial problem of 'suffering' that affects every being. His severe austerity for six long years ultimately yielded the desired fruit in the form of realization of the four noble truths, which he made face to face at the age of 35 years at Bodhgaya. Now he became the perfect enlightened one.

Though the Buddha stayed at Bodhgaya itself for seven weeks, enjoying the bliss of his knowledge, keeping in mind the well-being of all the beings, he left for Sarnath. Where he preached for the first time his five friends, who had deserted him at the time of his accepting the sweet rice offered by Sujātā.

When the number of his disciples rose to 60 and all became arhats, the Buddha dispatched them in different directions with the clear-cut instruction of spreading his message for the welfare of more and more people and even deities.

"Caratha,bhikkave,Cárikam bahujanahitáya bahujana-sukháya lokánukampáya attháya hitáya sukháya devamanussánam¹."

In brief, the Buddha fixed up the mission of his life at the 'well-being' of others.

This is right that the Buddha organized an unparalleled system of missionary activity. His disciple went from village to village and city to city for proclaiming.

For the next forty-five years of his life of Gautama Buddha until passing away, he devoted himself for the sole purpose of enlightening others. Until the last instant of his mortal existence, He followed an active daily routine and spent every second of his life purposefully while enlightening others in the matters related to this life and the next.

While, the Buddha talked about various ways of the path in daily life, which was good or false for all people. We can say that life of Buddha had dedicated to giving always the right direction for the welfare of all human beings.

Considerate the teachings of Gautama Buddha help to realize the world and the accurate meaning of life. It assists to alter the insight positively. While, the meditation provides a sense of tranquil, calm, and an unbiased environment that benefits both your emotional well-being and overall health. Furthermore, mindfulness meditation has benefits for health and performance, including improved immune function, reduced blood pressure, and enhanced cognitive function². Gautama Buddha had engaged himself for forty-five years spreading Buddha's insight and teachings in India. Later their disciple spread the teachings to other close by countries. These teachings are four noble truths, the noble eightfold path and three universal questions³.

Role of three characteristics of Existence:

Impermanence (anitya) is one of the most fundamental teachings of the Gautama Buddha. The Buddha taught that the source of human suffering and discontent is that we crave and cling to the things of this world under the mistaken view that they will last forever. Impermanence, anitya, or anicca in Pali, is one of the Buddha's three marks of existence, three conditions that characterize all of life, and are always present. (The other two marks of existence are anatman (Pali: anatta), or not-self, and dukkha (Pali: dukkha), suffering, or dissatisfaction.)

Anitya means the absence of continuity and permanence. Anitya is a universal law that applies to all phenomena of the universe, indeed to all our sensual experiences.

Dukkha (Suffering) - Everything is unsatisfactory. There is nothing that can be relied upon. There is nothing that can bring true happiness.

Anatma (No Soul) - Everything is deprived of a self. There is no self-inherent entity, nothing that can be controlled

Our bodies decline and decay. Hair and teeth fall out. Mental attitudes also change. Enthusiasm and annoyance occur and then fade away. Our good health and happiness are only temporary, we will ultimately make sick, age, and die, as will our friends, enemies, relatives, and strangers. Human life is concise.

The world around us may appear solid and unchanging, but even rivers alteration course, mountains crumble, seas dry up, and stars blow out. The whole universe is during a process of constant flux, arising and falling away. Our brief lives give us the privilege of witnessing this grand procession for just a flash.

Considerate impermanence is key to understanding the chain of dependent origination, the thought of emptiness, and various other significant Buddhist concepts. Because all of existence is conditioned by the three marks, Buddhist practices intend to loosen our attachment to the planet as it is and help us comprehend impermanence and the way it touches all aspects of our lives.

What is reality? Reality may be a non-reversible fact, which is universally verified which are often applied to all or any phenomena. That fact is threefold:

All phenomena that appeared will disappear.

All phenomena undergo the law of impermanence, the law of change - Anitya.

All phenomena that appeared have an incomplete duration

So everything is happening in the world due to the pandemic of covid-19, it will end soon. Thereafter people all over the world will keep staying as same before. While the Buddhist teachings can play a significant role in building post-covid-19 new normal world order.

The basic teaching of Buddha: Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Path

While the Buddha found the root of misery to be within the mind. He has given a therapy whereby the common mentality may be transcended and suffering overcome. This was, in fact, the First Sermon of Gautama Buddha. Which can give a way to entire people of the world to handle the problem that creates due to Covid epidemics.

Gautama Buddha taught the Four Noble Truths by addressing the existence of suffering, its cause, and its end. It is considered to be the first teaching of the Buddha and one of his most important teachings.

The four noble truths: (Buddha's diagnose of human ill)

1. There is suffering. (Dukkha: bad state of mind)
2. There is a cause of suffering. (duḥkha-samudaya Craving, lust, attachment, selfishness)
3. There is a destruction of suffering (duḥkha-nirodha A cure is possible, but not easy)
4. There is a way leading to the destruction of suffering. ((duḥkha-nirodha-gāminī-pratipad, Sila: Ethics, Samadhi: Pure mind, Prajna: wisdom)

According to the First Noble Truth, birth is suffering, old age is suffering, death is suffering, sorrow, grieving, dejection, and despair are sufferings. Contact with unpleasant things is suffering; not getting what you want is also suffering. In short, the five aggregates, that is to say, mind and body are suffering.

The Second Noble Truth states that there is a cause of suffering, and the cause is Desire. Furthermore, there are three types of Desire, such as (a) Sensual desire, (2) Mundane desire (Worldly desire), and (c) Supra-mundane desire.

1. Sensual desire: this type of desire is a desire for things that we can realize through five sense objects, such as sight (eye), hearing (ear), feeling (skin), taste (tongue), and smell (nose). Examples include: desire for certain yummy food, or sounds, desire for affectionate touch, attractive sites and smells, wanting to have an exquisite meal, and so on
2. Mundane desire: This is the desire for something or someone in this world. For example, the desire to be wealthy, muscular, better at something, and so forth.
3. Supra-Mundane Desire: This is the desire for something, which is beyond this world, viz. heaven, good rebirth, et cetera

The Third Noble Truth says that the destruction or cessation of the cause that is responsible for suffering, and that cause is Desire. In other words, if a person wants to be free from suffering, then he or she has to destroy the desire. Once the Buddha himself was asked what his teaching was, he said that it was whatever led to the true cessation of misery. Buddhism, therefore, is also, and maybe we could say mainly a therapy. The Buddha perceived the universality of sorrow and prescribed therapy for this universal sickness of humanity. The uppermost conceivable happiness, according to the Buddha, is Nibbāna, which is the total extinction of misery.

The Fourth Noble Truth is a path leading to the destruction of suffering. The Path is the prescription to follow for the destruction of suffering. This path is called the Noble Eightfold Path. The Eightfold Path is enumerated below:

1. Right View (Samma ditthi), an understanding or view of the nature of things in the world as they truly are. In particular, one should understand the first three Noble Truths: (a) the nature of suffering, (b) the cause of suffering and (c) the cessation of suffering.

2. Right Determination (Samma sankappa), Making confident or firm our thoughts and intentions toward others and ourselves are meant to help and support.
3. Right Speech (Samma vaca), Always communicate to promote harmony and understanding and avoid any harmful communication
4. Right Action (Samma kammanta) Our actions promotes moral and honorable conduct
5. Right Livelihood (Samma ajiva), The work you do in the world must not harm anyone or anything or compromise any of the precepts
6. Right Effort (Samma vayama), Master your thoughts to promote loving-kindness and abolish negativity
7. Right Mindfulness (Samma sati), Awareness of all activities in the body and surroundings that are tangible and intangible.
8. Right Concentration (Samma Samadhi), in association with meditation and involvement in a state of full meditative absorption.

Following this path, that is to say, the Eightfold Path, we can make our minds pure and free from suffering. Our mind is simply influenced by negative thoughts like anger, greed, envy, attachment, and the likes. It is through proper training, which is the Eightfold Path that we can eradicate negativity in thought and action. The eight-fold path can show the way to handle every problem generated due to this Covid epidemics.

The role of Brahma vihāra:

The Brahmavihāra is one of the most important teachings and sermons of Gautama Buddha. It is construed as sublime ideas. "Brahma Vihara (Four Immeasurables)" is four fold⁵ which is enumerated as Loving-kindness/friendliness (Mettā), Compassion (Karuṇā), Joy and Happiness (Muditā) and Equanimity (Upekkhā).

Buddhist teachers believe these four attitudes can replace anxious and fearful states of mind. When emotions around fear or anxiety become too strong, Buddhist teachers say one should recall examples of compassion, kindness, and empathy. The pattern of fearful and despairing thoughts can be stopped by bringing oneself back to the feeling of caring for others. Compassion is important even as we maintain distance. Dealing with isolation could be done through conversations with our loved ones but also meditation practice. As meditates breathe in, they should acknowledge the suffering and anxiety everyone feels, and while breathing out, wish everyone peace and well-being.

The Metta Brahmavihāra gives a sense of brotherhood and solidarity with fellow citizens in the world. The other Brahmavihāras, such as the Karuṇā, Muditā, and Upekkhā are also helpful in getting peace and harmony all over the world. The Karuṇā Brahmavihāra has been emphasized by Gautama Buddha, and the Buddha is called Mahākṛtika. It destroys rivalry and jealousy, and gives loving kindness.

While the application of Brahmavihāra regarding achieving peace and harmony in the world is now a recognized fact. These four-fold sublime ideas can create a peaceful, harmonious, and congenial atmosphere amongst persons and nations in the world. While these values of Brahmavihāra are giving the path how to work unitedly in building post-Covid new normal world order. Whereby, unitedly effort of entire people of the world can establish better life very easy way.

Different meditation techniques for rebuilding new world order:

Mindfulness meditation is the practice where an individual purposefully brings one attention to surrounding experiences without judgment. The research has shown that mindfulness provides numerous benefits - decreased stress and sadness, increased level of focus and happiness, improved immune function, enhanced cognitive function, etc. There are various mindfulness techniques from simple to advance. One of the easiest and simple to follow is breathing exercises⁶. Additionally, you can place a Buddha statue inside the room as it helps to foster peace in the mind, heart, and soul⁷.

Yogney Mingyur Rimpoche advises watching the sensations of anxiety in the body and seeing them as clouds coming and going. Regular meditation can allow one to acknowledge fear, anger, and uncertainty. Such acknowledgment can make it easier to recognize these feelings as simply passing reactions to an impermanent situation.

By slotting in pure mindfulness or Right Mindfulness in our daily lives, we can develop self-confidence, determinate our efforts, build up awareness, meditation, knowledge, and calmness. While we apply these strong points serving pure meditation to increase, further will also unearth how to break down the blockades of their mental pollution. In this way, the entire blockades of narrow-mindedness and disbelief in society may be broken and set up peace and harmony for the welfare of the entire society in the world⁸.

The technique of Vipassanā meditation is a simple and practical way to achieve real peace of mind and lead a happy and meaningful life. Vipassanā means "to see things as they are". It is indeed a process of mental purification through self-observation.

Meditation is a method of mental training. It is also a universal technique. It can stop worry, relax mental tension, eradicate mental depression, offer instant peace of mind, and lead to Samadhi, Jhana, Vipassana-nana, Maggas, and Phalas⁹.

Vipassana's capability to put under the human mind, changing its instability to calmness with increased liveliness, makes it a positive mental health measure and an excellent human potential development method. The mediator becomes free to live for higher values, richer goals: loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and peacefulness. Vipassana thus leads people from narcissism to mature, social love, to a life of altruism and this personal transformation becomes the catalyst for social change and development. Today, Vipassana meditation centers are resigning more and more all over the world. Especially, we can see tens of thousands of meditation centers across Southeast Asia, in Myanmar, India, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, and Laos, and millions of people are practicing this wonderful technique and get benefits in their present life.

We have mentioned above that before enlightenment the Buddha himself practiced Samatha meditation and attained all the Jhanas¹⁰ but realized that the peace and tranquility he achieved was not lasting. The Buddha was looking for a way to end all suffering forever. Finally, he discovered the path of Vipassana; he was able to realize the ultimate truth, Nibbana, the unconditioned state.

Vipassanā meditation enables us to experience peace and harmony: It purifies the mind, releases it from suffering and the deep-seated causes of suffering. The practice leads step-by-step to the uppermost pious target of complete liberation from all mental defilements.

The approach can be summarized in a few short lines, as revealed by the Buddha:

"Sabba pāpassa akaraṇaṃ, kusalassa upasampadā/

Sacitta pariyoḍaṇaṃ, etaṃ Buddhāna sāsanaṃ//"¹¹

To abstain from evil, to perform moral and to purify one's mind, this is the gist of the Buddha's teachings.

The individual has a key: he or she must be treated with love and compassion; he must be trained to improve himself—not by exhortations to follow moral precepts, but by being instilled with the authentic desire to change. He must be taught to explore himself, to initiate a process that can bring about transformation and lead to the purification of mind. This is the only change that will be enduring. Vipassana can transform the human mind and character. It is an opportunity awaiting all who sincerely wish to make the effort.

We can say that all people practice this technique honestly; their families would be serene and joyful. If the individual families have tranquility and bliss. The public will be peaceful and the globe will be a good place to live in.

Further, the Vipassana meditation technique is being kept in its perfect purity in the world, while it can be a specific role to play for the encouragement of welfare, peace, harmony, and happiness of mankind.

Conclusion

Like today all countries are helping each other to fight this drastic pandemic. If they will unitedly effort to build the world order after the covid pandemic then the problem may be solved early. During the ongoing global fight against the corona pandemic, India is leading from the front. India has emerged as the pharmacy of the world by helping out the 123 needy countries supplying hydroxychloroquine and other medical assistance¹².

When India had needed help during the 2nd wave of covid, then all countries of the world come forward to help. Likewise, if the entire world works unitedly to handle the problem generated by Covid, then we can make the post-covid proper life very comfortable way. The Gautama Buddha's message of "atta deepo Bhava" — every man can be a light unto himself, a savior of himself through personal efforts — is apt to alter the individualistic approach¹³. As peace and sustainable growth are interlinked, and the Goutama Buddha's principle can be the guiding light to every single stakeholder from local to global institutions, to work together for promoting the exchange of ideas, harmony, and fair dealing based on compassion and wisdom.

Lastly, we can say that Buddhist principles provide the way for the entire people of the world, how to live peacefully and happy life. While so many difficulties/suffering will arise after this pandemic of covid-19. However if people of the world will follow the teaching of Gautama Buddha, then we can build post-covid normal life world order without difficulty.

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