

Editorial

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Beyond the reality

The one simple thing that could make much of almost everything much easier and smoother, yet seemingly impossible to accomplish is the act of coming clean. It would indeed take a much greater strength of character to own up our mistakes and short comings, and still greater willpower to refrain from deliberately committing acts we consciously know is wrong and false.

The few fortunate ones who have the grit and will to transcend these urges are acknowledged and respected. On the other hand, a new breed of "Go-Getters" who would not stop at anything to achieve their goal is on the rise the pressures of present day society helping in developing and pruning such mindset to perfection. They are the restless, hyperactive and aggressive ones who do not cater to emotions and aesthetics.

Modern parents and guardians are increasingly urging their wards to adopt the letter approach towards life in order to carve out a place in the society that invariably results in a level of respect-respect that again is dependent on the earning capacity, the social circle adopted and living status maintained. Increasing compulsions for security in terms of food, shelter and a step towards a more secure future could be the factors that prompted the collective thinking towards adopting such an attitude towards life.

But then, does that mean the adage "All is fair and love and war" will be made true? Is our life becoming a daily struggle, a battle-if not a war, we are destined to wage every single living day of our lives? Where does that leave us with any room or opportunity for improvement not the financial kind, but a more rounded and holistic, as a person?

The present developments in the society-particularly that of mindless atrocities and lack of considerations that is becoming rampant would be a spill-off of this new approach towards life.

The struggle for security-for the basic necessities of life has become the all-consuming tryst for wealth which invariably leads to the thirst for power and influence. Greed takes over everything else, making our lives worse off than when we started.

What then could be the panacea for these aberrations that has come to plague our lives of late?

The answer lays within us common knowledge which just needs to be acknowledged, and more importantly to act on. Putting up a façade of make-believe and a show of benevolence and righteousness will not absolve anyone of the crimes and wrongs.

This is of utmost importance for everyone, and more so for those who are donning the role of public representatives who we are following. Concepts like beauty, peace and harmony can only be experienced if we can rise above our petty urges and look at life-that of ourselves and the ones around us in a different and totally new perspective one that does not have anything to do with wealth, power or fame.

"The earth has enough to satisfy man's needs but not man's greed". Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

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Buddhism is free from compulsion and coercion and does not demand of the follower blind faith

By Thangium Sanjoo Singh

The Buddha appeared at a time when autocracy was prevalent in India. But his teaching was somewhat of a threat to such autocratic government. He did not, however, interfere with the politics and the government of the country; for he was never a meddler in things where interference was useless, but that did not deter him from giving voice to his democratic thoughts and views. The Buddha's teaching definitely encourages democratic ideas and institutions. Though the Buddha wisely refrained from interfering with the then existing governments, he made the *sangha*, the community of the monks, an absolutely democratic institution. As the Marquess of Zetland, a former Viceroy of India said:

'It is probable that the tendency towards self-government evidenced by these various forms of corporate activity received fresh impetus from the Buddhist rejection of the authority of the priesthood and further by its doctrine of equality as exemplified by its repudiation of caste. It is indeed to the Buddhist books that we have to turn for an account of the manner in which the affairs of these early examples of representative self-government institutions were conducted. And it may come as surprise to many to learn that in the assemblies of Buddhists in India two thousand years and more ago are to be found the rudiments of our own parliamentary practice of the present day. The dignity of the assembly was preserved by the appointment of a special officer - the embryo of "Mr. Speaker" in our House of Commons. A second officer was appointed to see that when necessary a quorum was

secured - the prototype of the Parliament Chief Wip, in our own system. A member initiating business did so in the form of a motion which was then open to discussion. In some cases, this was done once only, in others three times, thus anticipating the practice of Parliament in requiring that a Bill be read a third time before it becomes law. If discussion disclosed a difference of opinion the matter was decided by the vote of the majority, the voting being the ballot.' Characteristic, again, is the Buddha's method of teaching the *Dhamma*. The Buddha disapproved of those professed to have 'secret doctrines' saying: 'I have taught the *Dhamma*, Ananda, without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrine, for in respect of the Truth, Ananda, the Tathagata has no such things as the "closed fist" of a teacher, who hides some essential knowledge from the pupil. He declared the *Dhamma* freely and equally to all. He kept nothing back and never wished freely to extract from his disciples blind and submissive faith in him and his teaching. He insisted on discriminative examination and intelligent inquiry. Buddhism is free from compulsion and coercion and does not demand of the follower blind faith. At the very outset the sceptic will be pleased to hear of its call for investigation. Buddhism, from beginning to end, is open to all those who have eyes to see and mind to understand. The Buddha never interfered with another man's freedom of thought; for freedom of thought is the birthright of every individual. It is wrong to force someone out of the way of life which accords with its outlook and character, spiritual inclination and tendencies.

Compulsion is every form is bad. It is coercion of the blackest kind to make a man swallow beliefs for which he has no relish; such forced feeding cannot be good for anybody, anywhere. The Buddha's sole intention was to make clear that seeing things as they are is not the result of mere belief in, and fear of, some external power, either human, superhuman or even infra-human. In the understanding of things, belief and fear do not play any role in Buddhist thought. The truth of *Dhamma* can be grasped only through insight, never through blind faith, or through fear of some known or unknown being. The history of religion reveals that it is fear in man, enmeshed in ignorance, which creates the idea of an omnipotent external agency; and once that idea is created, men move in awe of the child of their own fear and untold harm to themselves, and, at times, to others, too. Instructing the monks, the Buddha says: 'Those who have mere faith in me, mere affection in me, they are bound for a good state of existence (but they do not attain the highest, *arahatta*, final emancipation). Those who are striving for *Dhamma*, who are bent on the path, they are bent on the path, they are bound for awakening, for *arahatta*. These are clear indication that the Buddha did not want his followers to recognize anything indiscriminately and without reason. Not only did the Buddha discourage blind belief, and fear of the omnipotent as unsuitable approaches for understanding the truth, but he also denounced adherence to unprofitable rites and rituals because the mere

abandoning of outward things, such as fasting, bathing in rivers, animal sacrifice and similar acts, do not tend to purify a man or woman, do not make a man/woman holy and noble. We find this dialogue between the Buddha and the Brahmin Sundarika Bharadvaja. Once the Buddha addressing the monks explained in detail how a seeker after deliverance should train himself and further added that a man whose mind is free from taints, whose life of purity is perfected, and the task done, could be called one who bathes inwardly. Then the Brahmin Sundarika Bharadvaja seated near the Buddha heard these words and asked him: - Does the Venerable Gautama go to the bath in the river Bahuka? - Brahmin, what good is the river Bahuka? - Indeed, Venerable Gautama, the river Bahuka is believed by many to be holy. Many people have their evil deeds (papa) washed away in the river Bahuka. Then the Buddha made him understand that bathing in rivers would not cleanse a man of his dirt of evil and instructed him thus: 'Bathe just here (in the Doctrine and Discipline - *Dhamma-vinaya*), Brahmin, give security to all beings. If you do not speak falsehood, or kill or steal, if you are confident and are not mean, what does it avail you to go to Gaya. Your well at home is also a Gaya. The Buddha proclaimed a path free from all superstition and cruelty, that is, he made it impossible for his followers to behave in any way detrimental to the welfare of living beings by outlawing all oppression, spoliation and plunder. The writer is a lay Buddhist and a Vocalist of a Rock Band called 'No Name'.

Responsible government under Manipur state constitution act, 1947; Extra constitutional powers of the Dominion agent and the dewan

By- Dr. Kh. Ibochou Singh

Introduction

Prior to the advent of the British power in Manipur, the State had no constitution to govern the state authorities. The king was the seat of political powers. The administration was run on the wise counsel of the nobles with overriding power of the king. To be true, there was a system of absolute Monarchy. The establishment of a responsible government in Manipur under the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 was the result of prolonged strains on the part of the people of the state in their attempt to discard absolute Monarchy and adopt, in its place, a democratic constitutional Monarchy.

1.2 Administration Rules, limiting the powers of the state administrative agencies, were introduced consequent upon the British subjugation of the state after the Anglo Manipuri War in 1891. Since then, some sort of limited Monarchy emerged under the British suzerainty. However, there was no proper legislature. The Manipur State Darbar (the Darbar henceforth), which later became the Manipur State Council since 1 July, 1947, performed the combined functions of an advisory executive body and a legislature.

The Darbar acted as the judiciary as well before the establishment of the Chief Court in 1940. Such administrative practice continued till the framing and implementation of the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947. However, the proper functioning of the Constitution was, at times, hampered by the calculated design of the Government of India

in their pursuit to become the successor government after the lapse of British Paramountcy in India. It will be worthwhile to mention about the role played by Manipuri Nationalism in the process of the change.

2. Manipuri Nationalism Revitalized

The British occupation of Manipur showed a scene of domination and exploitation. The old Palace site, Kangla, had been converted into garrison for the British forces in Manipur. A large area of land in the heart of Imphal town, including Kangla, was declared 'British reserve' meant for settlement of the British Indian subjects in Manipur. The non-Manipuris, known as Foreigners' controlled all the spheres of economic and political life of the State. The people of Manipur suffered such a sorry plight without any sort of protest for about three decades.

2.2 By 1920 the Manipuri Nationalism got revitalized. It had gathered spirit and strength to rise in protest openly against foreigner's exploitation. In September, 1920 a peaceful agitation was launched by the people known as 'Bazar Boycott'. The main slogans were: (i) Stop export of rice; (ii) Boycott all shops owned by foreigner's for purchase and sale of goods; (iii) Reduce prices and stop looting the illiterate state subjects; etc.' The agitators went to the extent of requesting the Maharaja for a separate market place for the state subjects. The movement subsided peacefully without any positive result as the Maharaja made an appeal on 19 Nov. 1920 to return to normal condition. But, the agitation proved a severe blow to the suppliers of rice from Imphal to military outposts outside the state.

2.3 The Nationalist feelings

increased as time rolls by. The liberal policy of the Darbar had promoted expansion of education horizontal and vertical. The number of educated Manipuri citizens multiplied with a higher degree of political and social awareness among the people. In 1928, when the Indian States Committee (known as Butler Committee) was formed, the Darbar ventilated their wishes by adopting resolutions sharply reacting against the British Government's arrangements in Manipur administration. The Darbar demanded: (a) Restoration of possession of Kabo Valley to Manipur; (b) Retrocession of Kangla to the State of state use; (c) Redemarcation of Manipur boundary according to existing records; (d) Handing over of hill administration to the Maharaja; (e) Maharaja's decision in appeal and revision cases should not be subject to approval of the Political Agent; (f) Appointment of permanent President of the Darbar; (g) Removal of trade restrictions imposed by the Government of India; etc.²

At the time of adopting the resolution, the Darbar contended to place it before the Indian States Committee; but later on, changed mind and submitted it to the Government of India for consideration through proper channel. Unfortunately, the proposal could not get favorable recommendation from the local agents. Thus, there was no encouraging response from the Government of India in any of the items listed above.

2.4 The birth of the Nikhil Manipuri Hindu Mahasabha (later Nikhil Manipur Mahasabha) in May, 1934, accommodating members from Manipur and the adjoining states like, Assam, Burma, Cachar, Tripura, etc., further intensified the Nationalistic trend. Since 1938, apart from religious aspects, the Mahasabha took up political and social issues. The Mahasabha fought for removal of social evils like, Munga-Sengba, Wakhesel, Chandan Selkhai, Dolaireng, etc., which were considered as evil practices at the whim of the Maharaja and the Brahmasabha. Side by side, the Mahasabha, been turned into a training ground for the inexperienced young British officers who were misfits if not trained in states like Manipur. The educated elites in the Darbar even challenged the competency of the superiority of the British officers to the local talents. They claimed that the qualified Sons of the soil should be given suitable appointments in the state services.³

3. Constitutional Making Committee:

Drafting of the Constitution During the period 1941 to 1946 there could not be much headway towards constitution reforms in Manipur due to a cluster of factors. Firstly, since 1938 the Government of India had declared that they would not pressurize the Indian Princes to introduce constitutional changes in the states. Secondly, Maharaja Sir Churachand Singh, during whose reign hectic discussions on the subject took place, had become inactive on health grounds; and he died in Nov. 1941.

(to be contd.)