

STUDIES IN THE DHAMMAPADA

IMPURITY

17. *There is no fire like passion; there is no strangler like hate; there is no net like delusion; there is no torrent like craving. (251)*

The Buddha said: “Whatever an enemy may do to an enemy, whatever a hater may do to a hater, a wrongly directed mind will do to us greater harm.” By our passion, hatred, delusion or craving, we create for ourselves a true hell, right here on earth. Passion is a state of desire which has gone beyond our control. There is an obsession to achieve the object at any cost. When Arjuna asked Krishna the reason why a man is propelled to commit offences, almost against his will, as if constrained by some secret force; Krishna tells him that it is due to passion. . . . Hatred gives rise to anger or frustration, particularly when it does not find an outlet. Enmity increases, it eats up the vitals of man and has strangling effect. Psychosomatic diseases are often an outward expression of suppressed emotions such as anger, hatred or anxiety. The person in inferior position often suffers from impotent but intense hatred which has certain bodily consequences. In all the circumstances of life, a true disciple is asked to cultivate “resignation.” He is expected to remember that nothing befalls anyone unless there is some karmic connection. As Mr. Judge puts it: He must be ready to say, under whatever circumstances, whether expected or unexpected: “It is just what I in fact desired.”

18. *Easy it is to see the faults of others; difficult it is to see our own. One winnows others’ faults like chaff, but his own faults he hides even as a cheat hides a losing throw. (252)*

19. *He who is given to finding faults in others and is ever censorious increases his own weaknesses. Far indeed is he from their destruction. (253)*

It is easy to detect faults in others, particularly when we do not like the person. When we like someone, we are able to ignore his faults. Man’s perception of others is often a reflection of what he is. When noble-minded Yudhisthira was asked to find an evil person, he said that he searched and searched hard, but he could not find a single person who was evil. When evil-minded Duryodhana was asked to find a good person, he said that he searched and searched very hard, but he could not find single good person.

We are asked not to judge another. But if it happens to be our responsibility to judge another, then we require knowledge and objectivity to be able to take total view of things. In any matter, when there is something of ours at stake, we are emotionally attached, and then it becomes difficult to remain objective. A mother would find it very difficult to blame her own child. A judge may also find it difficult to pass judgment against his kith and kin. A surgeon is not to perform surgery on his own dear one. No doubt, there are always exceptions.

In the article “Laws Governing Elementals,” the sage tells the pupil that every time you harshly and unmercifully criticize another, you produce an attraction to yourself of certain quantities of elementals from that person. They fasten themselves upon you and endeavour to find in you a similar state or spot or fault that they have left in the other person. It is as if they left him to serve you at higher wages, so to say. As a result, you may find the very same fault developing in yourself. Finding fault with others is a subtle sign of sense of superiority— the holier than thou attitude. It often is an attempt to hide our own faults. Such people try to rise by showing faults of others. They criticize others and forget the beam in their own eyes. . . .

20. *There is no path in the sky; there is no true monk outside the Order (Sangha); mankind delights in worldliness; Buddhas are free from worldliness. (254)*

21. *There is no path in the sky; there is no true monk outside the Order; nought survives in the phenomenal world; but the Buddhas are ever the same. (255)*

Just as there is no path in the sky, there can be no true monk (*samana*) in the outside world, *i.e.*, outside the *Sangha* or the Buddhist order. Mankind delights in worldliness – craving and false views; the Buddhas are free from them. The Buddha was trying to reform people. He was asking them to follow the path by joining the *Sangha* – the spiritual community, where one can have the benefit of guidance of other advanced monks and company of other likeminded disciples. He encouraged people to join the *Sangha*. . . . It is a call of the Master to the worldly to wake up and realize the transient nature of the phenomenal world. That which is true, that which is eternal and unchanging is the Self within. That Self is verily the Buddha sitting in the hearts of every being. “Look inward, thou art Buddha.”

~ CONCLUDED ~