

# Dukkhanirodha

By: Professor Angraj Chaudhary

The third Noble Truth is *dukkhanirodha* i.e., *dukkha* can cease (*nirodha*). If one does not hanker after anything and if he has no desire left in him, he does not suffer and *dukkha* ends. To *know* that suffering can come to an end is just called *ñāṇa* (knowledge). But to *know* and *experience* that it can cease to be is *kiṅka ñāṇa*. When one has *realized* that *dukkha* (suffering) has ended, i.e., there is no more of it, it is called *kata ñāṇa*. This is knowing the third Noble Truth completely in all its three aspects.

*Dukkhanirodha* is nothing but *nibbāna* (*nirvāṇa* in Sanskrit). This is the summum bonum of human life according to the Buddha. When the root of *dukkha* is eliminated, suffering in life and continuity of life, i.e., being born again and again in the cycle of birth and death, stops forever. This state is called the state of desirelessness (*taṇhākkhaya*) which is characterized by complete extinction of desire.

What this state of *nibbāna* is cannot be answered adequately and perfectly in human language, which is not capable of describing experiences beyond our sense organs. It is here that the limitation of language becomes obvious. However, there are terms, though negative, which attempt to describe it. *Taṇhākkhaya* (extinction of desire), *asaṅkhata* (unconditioned), *nirodha* (cessation), *virāga* (non-attachment) and *nibbāna* (extinction) are such terms. From these terms at least one gets an idea that *nibbāna* is the absence of desire, extinction of desire and non-attachment to the various objects, viewpoints and *dhammas* of the world. In the Saṃyutta Nikāya the Buddha himself has defined it as ‘the complete cessation of that very *taṇhā*, giving it up, renouncing it, emancipation from it, detachment from it.’ (*Yo tassāyeva taṇhāya asesavirāganirodho cāgo, paṭinissaggo, mutti, anālayo* 3.484.)

In the same Nikāya (1.162.), it has been defined as ‘*Sabbasaṅkhārasamatho sabbūpadhi paṭinissaggo taṇhākkhaya virāgo, nirodho, nibbānaṃ*’, i.e., ‘calming of all conditioned things, giving up of all defilements, extinction of all “thirst”, detachment, cessation, *nibbāna*’. In the same Nikāya (2.24), Sariputta defines it as *rāgakkhaya* (extirpation of desire), *dosakkhaya* (extinction of aversion) and *mohakkhaya* (extinction of ignorance). (*Yo imesu*

*pañcasu upādānakkhandhesu chandarāgavinayo, chandarāgappahānā so dukkhanirodhoti.*)

In the Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta, Sāriputta pithily defines *nibbāna* as the destruction of desire and craving for the five aggregates of attachment. (*Yo imesu pañcasu upādānakkhandhesu chandarāgavinayo, chandarāgappahānā so dukkhanirodhoti.* Majjhima Nikāya 1.252) Musila, one of the disciples of the Buddha, says that *bhavanirodha* (cessation of continuity and becoming) is *nibbāna*. (*Bhavanirodho nibbānanti* -- Nidāna Saṃyutta Kosambi Sutta 1.102). In short, it is a state where one ceases to burn from the three fires of craving, aversion and ignorance.

The Buddha identifies *nibbāna* with truth (*Taṃ saccaṃ yaṃ amosadhammaṃ nibbānaṃ* -- Majjhima Nikāya 3.294)

One important point should be considered here. When one says that *taṇhākkhaya* is *dukkhanirodha*; does it mean that the extinction of *taṇhā* is the cause of *nibbāna*? The answer is an emphatic ‘No’. *Nibbāna* is not produced or caused. It is not *saṅkhata* (produced). It is *asaṅkhata* (unproduced).

Walpola Rahula gives an apt simile to bring this point home to us. ‘There is a path leading to the realization of *Nirvāṇa*. But *Nirvāṇa* is not the result of this path. You may get to the mountain along a path, but the mountain is not the result, not an effect of the path. You may see a light, but the light is not the result of your eyesight.’

Here what I have said in the topic titled “*Nibbāna*” should be added because *nibbāna* is nothing but *dukkhanirodha*.

Questions:

- 1 What do you mean by *dukkha nirodha*? Define.
- 2 What are the three aspects of the third Noble Truth? How can these aspects be comprehended?
- 3 What are the three kinds of *paññā* (*prajñā* in Sanskrit)? Explain all three of them giving examples.
- 4 How can the *sacchikataṃ* aspect of the third Noble Truth be realized?
- 5 *Dukkha nirodha* is *rāgakkhaya*, *dosakkhaya* and *mohakkhaya*. Elaborate.

- 6 Can we identify *dukkha nirodha* with *nibbāna*? Will it be justified? Give your arguments.
- 7 The Buddha identifies *nibbāna* with truth. Discuss.
- 8 Can *nibbāna* be produced or caused as we produce oil by pressing mustard seeds?
- 9 *Nibbāna* is the destruction of the craving for the five aggregates of attachment. Elaborate.
- 10 Explain '*Bhavanirodho nibbānanti*'.