



The Role of Sekhiyā Dhammā in the Restrain of Senses

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Abstract

The teaching of Shakyamuni Gautam Buddha is source of happiness, peace and joy. He delivered His teachings as *Dhamma* & *Vinaya*. He preached it for the welfare of whole humanity. *Sekhiyā Dhammā* is an important part of *Vinaya Piṭaka*. *Sekhiyā Dhammā* is made for monks and nuns to control their daily activities & behavior. *Sekhiyā Dhammā* is a group of precepts, which were preached by Gautam Buddha for the welfare of monks and nuns at that time. It consists of seventy five instructions, which are preserved in the form of *Pātimokkha*. Gautam Buddha has taught *Sekhiyā Dhammā*, which is full of moral education. It teaches us how to restrain our senses. The restrain of senses is very good in human life. It is a good source of moral and ethical values. It teaches us to develop moral behavior. The restrain of the senses plays very important role in the peace and growth of human life. It should be accepted and practiced in our daily life. The whole society will be benefitted. Having practiced it in daily life, the importance of *Sekhiyā Dhammā* can be understood very nicely.

Keywords

Shakyamuni Gautam Buddha, *Dhamma*, *Vinaya*, Loving Kindness, Compassion, *Sekhiyā Dhammā*, *Pātimokkha*, *Vinaya-Pitaka*, *Nibbāna*, Restrain, Senses, Morality, Mental Discipline, Wisdom and Theravada Buddhism, Gratitude, Love, Calmness, Veneration, Pity, Self-control, Purity and Generosity.

Introduction

The teaching of Shakyamuni Gautam Buddha is source of happiness, peace and joy. He delivered His teachings as *Dhamma* & *Vinaya*. He preached it for the welfare of humanity. For the establishment of humanity, He has established Buddhist Order of monks and nuns. He has opened the doors of *Dhamma* for monk, nun, lay man, and lay woman of society. By preaching *Dhamma* & *Vinaya*, Gautam Buddha tried to establish freedom, equality and social justice in society. He taught His *Dhamma* irrespective of caste, color & class. He commands His disciples to teach real *Dhamma*, which can provide the state of *Nibbāna* (salvation), deathlessness, and heedfulness. He preached Middle Path, which leads to real peace, happiness, joy and wisdom.

The collection of His teachings is known as Pāli Tipitaka Literature. It consists of *Vinaya-Piṭaka*, *Sutta-Piṭaka* and *Abhidhamma-Piṭaka*. According to one classification, *Vinaya Piṭaka* can be divided into five parts. They are considered as *Bhikkhu Vibhaṅga* (*Bhikkhu Pātimokkha*¹), *Bhikkhunī Vibhatga* (*Bhikkhunī Pātimokkha*), *Mahāvagga Pāli*, *Cullavagga Pāli*, and *Parivāra Pāli*. It is true that *Pātimokkha* is considered as an oldest part of *Vinaya Pitaka*. *Pātimokkha* can be called summary of whole *Vinaya Pitaka*. *Pātimokkha* mainly deals with the rules and regulations of the Order of monks and nuns. Gautam Buddha did not lay down rules for the control of the Buddhist Order. Later, as the occasion arose, the Buddha formed rules for the future discipline of the Buddhist Order. Thus it can be said that it describes about the gradual development of the Buddhist Order.



The summary of *Vinaya Pitaka* is found in *Pātimokkha*. It is known as *Pātimokkha*, which means the collection of two hundred twenty seven rules of monks.² If one wants to understand Buddhism, one must study the development of the Buddhist Order in the early period. The study of *Pātimokkha* is the best way to understand this development. *Pātimokkha* is found and practiced by every school of Buddhism. There are some changes in terms of rules and regulations of *Bhikkhu Pātimokkha* and *Bhikkhunī Pātimokkha*. According to Theravada Buddhism, *Bhikkhunī Pātimokkha* is an essential part of *Vinaya Pitaka*. Based on *Theravada Bhikkhunī Pātimokkha*, there are three hundred & eleven rules, which are made by Gautam Buddha for the nuns. But according to *Bhikkhu Pātimokkha*, there are two hundred twenty seven rules for monks.

Sekhiyā Dhammā term is made of two terms. They are *Sekhiyā* and *Dhammā*. *Sekhiyā* means training. *Dhamma* means moral quality, object of mind, quality, justice, characterstice, condition, function, nature, practice, idea, thing, and duty. In Buddhism, *Dhamma* is considered as way of life. *Sekhiyā Dhammā* is made for monks and nuns to control their daily activities & behavior. *Sekhiyā Dhammā* is a group of precepts, which were preached by Gautam Buddha for the welfare of monks and nuns at that time. It consists of seventy five instructions, which are preserved in the form of *Pātimokkha*.

Sekhiyā Dhammā is very useful for all human beings. Most of these rules were laid down at Sāvattihī on account of undisciplined behavior on the part of a group of six monks. These rules can be divided into four groups. The first group of twenty six rules is concerned with good conduct and behavior when going into villages and towns. The second group of thirty rules deals with polite manners when accepting alms-food and when taking meals. The third group of

sixteen rules prohibits teaching of *Dhamma* to disrespectful people. The forth group of three rules relates to unbecoming ways of answering the calls of nature and of spitting.³

According to *Theravada Bhikkhu Pātimokkha*, there are seventy five *Sekhiyā Dhammā*. In the same way, seventy five *Sekhiyā Dhammā* are found in *Theravada Bhikkhunī Pātimokkha* like *Bhikkhu Pātimokkha*.⁴ *Sekhiyā Dhammā* is divided into seven chapters.⁵ They are known as *Parimattala-Vaggo Pathamo*, *Ujjagghika-Vaggo Dutiyo*, *Khambhakata-Vaggo*, *Sakkacca-Vaggo*, *Kavata-Vaggo*, *Surusuru-Vaggo*, and *Pādukā-Vaggo*. There are ten *Sekhiyā Dhammā* in the first six chapters each. But, seventh chapter has fifteen rules of *Sekhiyā Dhammā*. In this way, seventy five moral rules are divided into seven parts. The first two rules explain about the proper dressing of monks and nuns. The next twenty four rules suggest monks and nuns how to enter into towns, villages and houses. The next thirty rules instruct how to take meals. The next sixteen rules teach how to preach *Dhamma* to others. The last three rules are the instructions for the passing of urine and toilet. According to *Pācittiya-Pāli*, if a monk or nun breaks the rules of *Sekhiyā Dhammā*, he or she commits the offence of *Dukkaṭa*. This is why every monk or nun should follow these rules in every condition.

Based on necessity and situation, Gautam Buddha has given instructions to monks, nuns, and novices. Because of this reason *Sekhiyā Dhammā* is came to existence. He wants to teach appreciable discipline to His monks and nuns. *Sekhiyā Dhammā* is one kind of medium to understand the teachings of the Buddha. Without following these moral rules in daily life, no one can practice spirituality in life. He wants to teach lesson of morality, mental discipline and wisdom, which are considered like three chief stairs, which leads to The Holy City of *Nibbāna*.



Without practicing morality, one cannot attain mental discipline and wisdom. Gautam Buddha says:

*Sīle patitthāya naro sapañño citta bhāvayat
Ātāpī nipako bhikkhu so imat vijataye jatat
ti.*⁶

When a wise man, established well in virtue,
Develops consciousness and
understanding,

Then as a bhikkhu ardent and sagacious
He succeeds in disentangling this tangle.⁷

There are three hundred & eleven rules in *Theravada Bhikkhunī Pātimokkha*. Out of these rules, there are seventy five *Sekhiyā Dhammā*. Seventy five *Sekhiyā Dhammā* are equally preached for monks as well as nuns also. These were very simple, but very important for nuns at the period of Gautam Buddha. These rules are made for social & moral behavior. They are very essential to practice morality. They are very helpful for the development of spiritual life. These rules were very useful for the members of Buddhist Order and common people of society. In the same, these rules are very useful to maintain peace and harmony in modern society also. It should be followed by everyone in the current society. By practicing it, real happiness of life can be achieved by human beings. All these rules are made for maintaining good habits and regulating good behavior of Buddhist Order. It is one kind of conduct of monks and nuns. These rules of *Sekhiyā Dhammā* are to be cultivated and practiced to maintain good (blameless) and religious behavior. These rules are relevant for all common people of modern society.

Sekhiyā Dhammā can be called a measurement of civilized & developed society. It is very essential for every civilized person of society. It should not be understood as a minor thing. In real sense, it is mandatory to learn social values. It is very helpful for the socialization of human beings. It develops the personality of human beings. In the lack of *Sekhiyā Dhammā*, any bad

deed can take place in human life. Any bad deed should not be understood as minor or small. One should not think that it will not give bad result in life. In *Pāpa-Vaggo* of *The Dhammapda*, Gautam Buddha has said:

*Māvamaññetha pāpassa na mat tat
āgamissati.*

*Udabindu nipātena udakumbhopi pūrati.
Pūrati bālo pāpassa thokathokampi ācinat.*⁸

*Māvamaññetha puññassa na mat tat
āgamissati.*

*Udabindu nipātena udakumbhopi pūrati.
Pūrati dhīro puññassa thokathokampi
ācinat.*⁹

Do not think lightly of evil, saying: “It will not come to me.” Even a water-pot is filled by the falling of water drops. Likewise the fool, gathering it drop by drop, fills himself with evil.¹⁰ Do not think lightly of good, saying: “It will not come to me.” Even a water-pot is filled by the falling of water drops, so the wise man, gathering it drop by drop, fills himself with good.¹¹

The fifth and sixth *Sekhiyā Dhammās* explain that *Susañvuto antaraghare gamissāmīti sikkhā karaṇiyā ti.*¹² *Susatvuto antaraghare nisīdissāmīti sikkhā karaṇiyā ti.*¹³ It means that I shall go well restrained in inhabited areas: this is a rule to be kept. The sixth *Sekhiyā Dhammā* explains that I shall sit well restrained in inhabited areas: this is a rule to be kept.¹⁴ It means that the fifth and sixth *Sekhiyā Dhammā* teach that person should have control on his body and its bad actions. In spite of restrain of body, person should restrain on his speech and mind also. The control of body means that person should not do any bad actions by his body. In place of doing bad deeds by body, person should do all kinds of good and innocent deeds by body. There is no doubt that the control of body and its good actions are appreciated by whole society. This is the reason; Gautam Buddha has suggested to His disciples to develop their restrain on bodily actions. One, who does not kill any living beings by body, speech, and mind,



can be a compassionate one. One, who does not hurt anybody, can be a kind one. In *Kodha-Vagga* of *The Dhammapada*, Gautam Buddha says:

*Ahitsakā ye munayo niccat kāyena satvutā.
Te yanti accutat thānat yattha gantvā n
socare.*¹⁵

*Kāyena satvutā dhīrā, aho vācāya satvutā.
Manasā satvutā dhīrā, te ye suparisatvutā.*¹⁶

Those sages who are harmless, and are ever restrained in body, go to the deathless state (*Nibbāna*), whither gone they never grieve.¹⁷ The wise are controlled indeed, they are controlled in speech, they are controlled in thought. Indeed, they are perfectly self-controlled.¹⁸

The seventh *Sekhiyā Dhammā* explains that *Okkhittacakkhu antaraghare gamissāmīti sikkhā karaṭṭiyā ti.*¹⁹ It means that with the eyes cast down will I go amidst the houses is a training to be observed. The eighth *Sekhiyā Dhammā* explains that *Okkhittacakkhu antaraghare nisidissāmīti sikkhā karaṭṭiyā ti.*²⁰ It means that with the eyes cast down will I sit down amidst the houses is a training to be observed. The ninth *Sekhiyā Dhammā* explains that not lifting up (the robes) will I go amidst the houses is a training to be observed. The tenth *Sekhiyā Dhammā* explains that not lifting up (the robes) will I sit down amidst the houses is a training to be observed. The ninth and the tenth *Sekhiyā Dhammā* teach us that one should enter into the houses or villages with ego. It means that person should not develop arrogance in his character. In place of developing pride, one should try to avoid it. One should develop the egoless-ness. Because of arrogance, person will not get benefits in his life. He has to lose many good advantages in life. Pride (*Māna*) is considered as an unwholesome deed among ten kinds of bad deeds in Buddhism. This is the reason; Buddha has suggested abandoning of arrogance. In *Kodha-Vagga* of *The Dhammapada*, Gautam Buddha says:

*Kodhat jahe vippajaheyya mānat,
saññojanat sabbamatikkameyya.
Tat nāma rūpasmit asajjamānat, akiñcanat
nānupatatni dukkhā.*²¹

Put away anger, abandon pride, overcome every attachment, cling not to Mind and Body and thus be free from sorrow.²²

The eleventh *Sekhiyā Dhammā* explains that *Na ujjagghikāya antaraghare gamissāmīti sikkhā karaṭṭiyā ti.*²³ It means that not with loud laughter will I go amidst the houses is a training to be observed. In the same way, the twelfth *Sekhiyā Dhammā* explains that *Na ujjagghikāya antaraghare nisidissāmīti sikkhā karaṭṭiyā ti.*²⁴ It means that not with loud laughter will I sit down amidst the houses is a training to be observed. The eleventh and the twelfth *Sekhiyā Dhammā* teach that one should not laugh on others or every talk. It means that one should not be external thinker. One should be very serious and spiritual in human life. One should be internal thinker. In place of laughing, one should think and try to understand the realities of the world and its nature. One should not laugh because everything is decaying in this world. No one is permanent in this world. In *Jarā-Vagga* of *The Dhammapada*, Gautam Buddha says:

*Ko nu hāso kimānando niccarā pajjalite sati.
Andhakārena onaddhā padīparā kena
gavessatha.*²⁵

What is laughter, what is joy, when the world is ever burning? Shrouded by darkness, would you not seek the light?²⁶

The eight *Sekhiyā Dhammā* (from thirteenth till twentieth rules) explain about the verbal and bodily activities. The thirteenth and fourteenth *Sekhiyā Dhammās* explain that *Appasaddo antaraghare gamissāmīti sikkhā karaṭṭiyā ti.*²⁷ *Appasaddo antaraghare nisidissāmīti sikkhā karaṭṭiyā ti.*²⁸ It means that I shall go quietly in inhabited areas: this is a rule to be kept. I shall sit quietly in inhabited areas: this is a rule to be kept.²⁹ In the same way, remaining six *Sekhiyā Dhammās* teach that not swaying the body will I go amidst the houses is a training to be observed. Not swaying the body will I sit down amidst the houses is a training to be observed. Not swaying the arms will I go



amidst the houses is a training to be observed. Not swaying the arms will I sit down amidst the houses is training be observed. Not swaying the head will I go amidst the houses is a training to be observed. Not swaying the head will I sit down amidst the houses is training be observed.

There is no doubt that person should have control on his speech. Person should try to speak very less. If it is required, one should speak, otherwise one should not speak. In place of speaking unnecessary, person should speak useful and religious talks. Gautam Buddha has preached about the *Dhamma Kathā* (religious talk). It means that one should speak about the *Dhamma*, otherwise one should keep silence. One should follow Right Speech. It means that one should be free from unwholesome verbal actions (speeches). They are known as verbal unwholesome actions (*Akusala-Vacī Kamma*). They are four actions, which are done by speech. They are considered as lying (*Musāvādā*), slandering (*Pisutāvācā*), harsh speech or rude speech (*Pharusāvācā*), and frivolous talk (*Samphappalāpā*). In place of doing four unwholesome verbal actions, one should do four wholesome actions, which are known as avoidance of lying (*Musāvādā viratī*), avoidance of slandering (*Pisutāvācā viratī*), avoidance of harsh speech or rude speech (*Pharusāvācā viratī*), and avoidance of frivolous talk (*Samphappalāpā viratī*). By controlling our verbal actions, person can avoid many unwholesome deeds in his life. He can do many good deeds for his personal development and for the welfare of others. This is the reason; Gautam Buddha has instructed to His disciples to have control on bodily, verbal, and mental bad actions. He says that guard against evil deeds, control your body. Giving up evil deeds, cultivate good deeds. Guard against evil speech, control your speech. Giving up evil speech, cultivate good speech. Guard

against evil thoughts, control your mind. Giving up evil thoughts, cultivate good thoughts. Gautam Buddha says that he who is controlled in hand, controlled in foot, controlled in speech, and possessing the highest control (of mind), delighted within composed, solitary and contented, him they call a bhikkhu.³⁰ The bhikkhu who is controlled in tongue, who speaks wisely with his mind composed, who is explains the meaning and the text, sweet, indeed, is his speech.³¹ The bhikkhu who is calm in body, calm in speech, calm in mind, who is well-composed, who has given up all worldly things, is called a peaceful one.³² In *Bhikkhu-Vagga* of *The Dhammapada*, Gautam Buddha says:

*Cakkhunā satvaro sādhu, sādhu sotena
satvaro,*

*Ghātena satvaro sādhu, sādhu jivhāya
satvaro.*

*Kāyena satvaro sādhu, sādhu vācāya
satvaro,*

*Manasā satvaro sādhu sādhu sabbattha
satvaro*

*Sabbattha satvuto bhikkhu sabbadukkhā
pamuccati.³³*

Good is restraint of the eye; good is restraint of the ear; good is restraint of the nose; good is restraint of the tongue. Good is restraint of the body. Good is restraint of the speech. Good is restraint of the mind. Restraint everywhere is good. The bhikkhu restrained every way is freed from all suffering.³⁴

The twentieth and twenty first rules of *Sekhiyā Dhammā* teach us about our attitude. These two rules explain that *Na khambhakato antaragare gamissāmīti sikkhā karāṭṭiyā ti. Na khambhakato antaragare nisīdissāmīti sikkhā karāṭṭiyā ti.*³⁵

It means that not swaying (waving) the head will I go amidst the houses is training be observed. Not swaying (waving) the head will I sit down amidst the houses is training be observed. One, who does not follow these rules, can be an arrogant person. In



place of showing pride, person should develop gentleness in his character. One should behave very politely with others. It will be appreciated by other people, and he may get good name & fame in society.

Conclusion

The practice of *Sekhiyā Dhammā* is required for the restrain of the senses. Having controlled the senses, anyone can be free from many sufferings and bad activities. One, who has controlled one's senses, may develop many good habits and qualities in life. It means that one can be able to develop moral values in one's personality. In this way, *Sekhiyā Dhammā* can be considered as an important part of ethical values and moral education. *Sekhiyā Dhammā* is very useful for the development of human values. *Sekhiyā Dhammā* teaches us for personal improvement and growth to achieve happiness and joy in life. In the same way, it emphasizes on the welfare of all livings of this universe. *Sekhiyā Dhammā* is full of many ethical values, which were very relevant at the time of Gautam Buddha. In the same way, *Sekhiyā Dhammā* is very applicable to modern society, and it will be relevant in future also. Because of *Sekhiyā Dhammā*, a good society with moral and human values can be established to spread happiness and humanity.

Having practiced *Sekhiyā Dhammā*, one can develop many good qualities in one's personality. With the help of *Sekhiyā Dhammā*, a lot of good qualities like: gratitude, love, calmness, veneration, pity, self-control, purity, generosity etc. can be developed. Because of these good habits, person can do many good & meritorious deeds in his life. By developing these good qualities, one will do all kinds of good deeds; one will not do any kinds of bad deeds. In this way, one can be able to concentrate mind for one's purification. Hence, it can be said that *Sekhiyā Dhammā* is very essential for the welfare of contemporary society.

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