



Relevance of Right Effort in Human Life

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Abstract

The Eightfold Path is considered as an invention of Gautam Buddha. Right Effort is the sixth part of The Eightfold Path. It means Right Endeavor or Right Diligence. It is divided into Four Great Efforts, which are known as the effort to avoid, the effort to overcome, the effort to develop, and the effort to maintain. Right Effort is the Dhamma, which is very useful to abandon bad habits, and to produce good merits in human life. It is universal truth that without the proper practice of Right Effort, one cannot do any kinds of good deeds in life. To practice all kinds of good deeds, Right Effort is an essential teaching of Buddha for the human welfare. One, who practices Right Effort properly in life, can achieve wisdom and the holy stage of Non-Returner in one's life.

Key Words

Dhamma, Vinaya, Dhammacakkapavattana-Sutta, Ariyasacca, Ariyo Aṭṭharīgiko Maggo, Pañña, Sīla, Samādhī, Sammā Viriya, Sammā Vāyāmo, Sammā Padhāna, Samyaka Prayatna, Samyaka Vyāyāma, Saṅkharappadhānaṁ, Pahānappadhānaṁ, Bhāvanappadhānaṁ, Anurakkhaṇappadhānaṁ, and Anāgāmi.

Introduction

Shakyamuni Gautam Buddha taught His Teachings in the form of *Dhamma & Vinaya*. *Dhamma* means moral quality, object of mind, quality, justice, characterstice, condition, function, nature, practice, idea, thing, and duty. *Vinaya* means rule and discipline. Without following moral rules (*Vinaya*), *Dhamma* cannot be practiced properly. In Buddhism, *Dhamma* is considered as way of life. He explained how to be happy and free from sufferings. Gautam Buddha explained real *Dhamma*, which leads to peace, happiness, joy, wisdom, and nirvana. Among the whole *Dhamma*, The Four Noble Truths can be called heart of Buddhism. He taught His first teaching in the form of *Dhammacakkapavattana-Sutta*. He gave to the five monks at the Deer Park at Sarnath. He has preached about the Four Noble Truths, which known as The Noble Truth of Suffering (*Dukkha Ariyasacca*), The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (*Dukkha-samudaya Ariyasacca*), The Noble Truth of

the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkha-nirodha Ariyasacca*), and The Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkha-nirodha-gāmini Paṭipadā Ariyasacca*).

The forth Noble Truth is considered as The Eightfold Path (*Ariyo Aṭṭharīgiko Maggo*), which is addressed as Middle Way (*Majjhimā Paṭipadā*). He says that this middle way understood by the Tathāgata produces vision, produces knowledge, and leads to calm, penetration, enlightenment, *Nibbāna*. This, monks is the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of ill; only this noble eightfold path namely, right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. The Noble Eightfold Path can be divided into three parts. Right View and Right Thought are considered as parts of *Pañña* (Wisdom or Insight). Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood are considered as parts of *Sīla* (Morality). In the same way, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration are



considered as parts of *Samādhi* (Meditation). Shakyamuni Gautam Buddha taught The Eightfold Path as a way to *Nibbāna* (salvation). There is no doubt that the Noble Eightfold Path is root of whole Buddhism. It teaches us to be free from suffering from life. The shelter of The Noble Eightfold Path can provide real happiness to all living beings of this world. It is source of happiness and spiritual development.

Meaning of *Sammā Vāyāmo* (Right Effort)

Sammā Vāyāmo is addressed as *Sammā Viriya* and *Sammā Padhāna*. *Sammā Padhāna* can be addressed as *Sammappadhāna*. *Sammā Vāyāmo* is made of two words. They are *Sammā* and *Vāyāmo*. Here *Sammā* means right, true, accurate, exact, precise, high, consummate, complete, best, perfect, correct, perfectly, and completely.¹ *Sammā* means fully, thoroughly, accurately, rightly, properly, well, really, truly.² *Sammā* means completely, wholly, truly, properly, duly, correctly, and clearly.³ But general, *Sammā* understood as right. *Vāyāmo* is addressed as *Ussāha*, *Uyyāma*, and *Viriya*.⁴ *Vāyāmo* means effort, exertion, attempt, try, strength, power, force, endeavor, energy, diligence, self-control, reign, and enthusiasm. The meaning of *Sammappadhāna* (*Sammā Vāyāmo*) is *Samyaka Prayatna*⁵ (*Samyaka Vyāyāma*) in Sanskrit and Hindi languages. *Sammā Vāyāmo* means Right Endeavor.⁶ It can also be translated as right diligence. In other words, it can be said that Right Effort is related to the development of the mind.

Sammā Vāyāmo and *Sammā Padhāna* explain same meaning. But *Sammā Vāyāmo* term is used as sixth part of The Eightfold Path. In the same way, *Sammā Padhāna* or *Sammappadhāna* term is used as a part of thirty seven elements for Enlightenment (*Bodhipakkhiya Dhammā*, which are considered as requisites of enlightenment. Here *Sammappadhāna* means Right Exertion.⁷

Shakyamuni Gautam Buddha has explained that there is the case where a monk

generates desire, endeavors, activates persistence, upholds and exerts his intent for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen. He generates desire, endeavors, activates persistence, upholds and exerts his intent for the sake of the abandonment of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen. He generates desire, endeavors, activates persistence, upholds and exerts his intent for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen. He generates desire, endeavors, activates persistence, upholds and exerts his intent for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development, and culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen: This, monks, is called right effort.

Energy the mental factor behind right effort can appear in either wholesome or unwholesome forms. The same factor fuels desire, aggression, violence, and ambition on the one hand, and generosity, self-discipline, kindness, concentration, and understanding on the other. The energy involved in right effort is a wholesome form of energy, but it is something more specific, namely, the energy in wholesome states of consciousness directed to liberation from suffering.

Effort in Buddhism implies mental energy and not physical strength. One should try to cultivate healthy thoughts. A follower of the Buddha should never give up hope or cease to make an effort, for even as a *Bodhisatta* the Buddha never ceased to strive courageously. He was the very picture of energy. Buddha has stressed the need for effort, for diligence, exertion, and unflagging perseverance. The reason why effort is so fundamental is that each person has to work out his or her own deliverance. The Buddha does what he can by pointing out the path to liberation; the rest involves putting the path into practice, a task that demands energy. This energy is to be applied to the cultivation of the mind, which forms the focus of the entire path.



Kinds of Sammā Vāyāmo (Right Effort)

In *Ariguttara-Nikāya*, Shakyamuni Gautam Buddha has preached about four kinds of Right Effort. He says: *Cattārimāni sammappadhānāni, bhikkhave! Sammappadhānāni seyyathidam, saṅvarappadhānaṃ, pahānappadhānaṃ, bhāvanappadhānaṃ,*

*anurakkhaṇappadhānaṃ - ayaṃ vuccati Sammā Vāyāmo.*⁸ It means that Right effort can be divided into four parts. There are Four Great Efforts, namely: the effort to avoid, the effort to overcome, the effort to develop, and the effort to maintain. He has spoken that *Cattāro sammappadhānā, uppannānaṃ pāpakānaṃ dhammānaṃ pahānāya vāyāmo, anuuppannānaṃ pāpakānaṃ dhammānaṃ anupādāya vāyāmo, anuuppannānaṃ kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ uppādāya vāyāmo, uppannānaṃ kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ bhīyobhāvāya vāyāmo.* In this factor, the practitioners should make a persisting effort to abandon all the wrong and harmful thoughts, words, and deeds. The practitioner should instead be persisting in giving rise to what would be good and useful to them and others in their thoughts, words, and deeds, without a thought for the difficulty or weariness involved. Finally Right Effort can be divided into four parts. They are known as *Saṅvarappadhānaṃ* (Effort to Prevent), *Pahānappadhānaṃ* (The Effort to Abandon), *Bhāvanappadhānaṃ* (Effort to Develop), and *Anurakkhaṇappadhānaṃ* (Effort to Maintain). They can be understood in the following ways:

Saṅvarappadhānaṃ (Effort to Prevent)

Herein a monk puts forth his will to prevent the arising of evil, of unwholesome thoughts that have not yet arisen. He attempts, develops energy and strengthens his mind (to this end). Herein, a monk, seeing a form, hearing a sound, smelling an odor, tasting a flavor, feeling some material thing or cognizing a mental object, apprehends neither signs nor particulars (that is, he is

not moved by their general features or by their details). In as much as coveting and dejection, evil and unwholesome thoughts break in upon one who dwells with senses unrestrained, he applies himself to such control, he guards over the senses, restrains the senses. This is called the effort to prevent.

There are the five hindrances, which are obstacles in the practice of effort to prevent. These hindrances are considered as mental defilements of Buddhist Meditation also. These five hindrances affect our activities of daily life. They are known as sensual desire (*Kāmacchanda Nīvaraṇa*), ill-will or anger (*Vyāpāda Nīvaraṇa*), dullness and drowsiness or sloth and torpor or laziness and inactivity (*Thīna-Middha Nīvaraṇa*), restlessness and worry or impatience and regret (*Uddhacca-Kukkucca Nīvaraṇa*), and doubt or skeptical doubts (*Vicikicchā Nīvaraṇa*).⁹ The destruction of these five hindrances is very essential for the practice of *Saṅvarappadhānaṃ*.

To practice of *Saṅvarappadhānaṃ*, it is very essential to develop the control of six senses. Generally, there are five senses, but in Buddhism there are six senses. They are considered as eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. One should try to control ones six senses and their desires. One should be very conscious, so that one may be free from involving bad activities in one's life. It is right that all kind bad deeds are taking place in the lack of proper restraint of six senses of human beings. To overcome from many suffering, Gautam Buddha has given more preference to the control of senses for monks, nuns, and lay devotees in their daily life. In *Bhikkhu-Vagga (The Bhikkhu or The Mendicant)*¹⁰ of *The Dhammapada*, The Buddha has preached the ways how to prevent in His teachings. He says that 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. 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. 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. 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.

Once Gautam Buddha has preached that o monks! I know not of any other single thing of such power to prevent the arising of sloth and torpor (laziness and inactivity), if not already arisen: or, if arisen, to cause its abandonment, as effort. In whom there is strenuous effort, sloth and torpor arises not; or, if arisen, is it abandoned.

The control of six senses is very required. One should try to prevent oneself from all kinds of bad deeds with the help of proper control of senses. By watching over and restraining his senses, e.g., by noting seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking, at the moment of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking. Gautam Buddha has mentioned five ways to control senses, like: restraint by the rules of the community, restraint by mindfulness, restraint by knowledge, restraint by patience, and restraint by energy. These five methods are related to the practice of virtue or morality. The control of six senses four kinds of virtue should be practiced. They are considered as *Pātimokkha-Sīla* (The Fundamental Moral Code), *Indriyasaṅvara-Sīla* (Morality pertaining to sense-restraint), *Ājīvaparissuddhi-Sīla* (Morality pertaining to purity of livelihood) and *Paccayasannissita-Sīla* (Morality pertaining to the use of requisites pertaining to life). In *Buddha-Vagga* (The Buddha)¹¹ of The

Dhammapada, The Buddha has preached to follow precepts. He says that forbearing patience is the highest austerity. *Nibbāna* is supreme, say the Buddhas. He, verily, is not a recluse, who harms another. Nor is he an ascetic, who oppresses others. Not insulting, not harming, restraint according to the Fundamental Moral Code, moderation in food, secluded abode, intent on higher thoughts, - this is the Teaching of the Buddhas.

The control of thoughts and senses is not easy. It is hard to remove the mind of unwholesome thoughts, to check evil inclinations and curb impulses, but one must do this difficult thing if one wish to ease the tension and the mental itch that is ever ready to sap the mind until man and mind are destroyed. If one wants mental progress, one must make the necessary effort to guard ones thoughts; for evil thoughts are ever ready to creep in and overwhelm the lazy man. Gautam Buddha has taught us to restrain senses. One should be energetic to control of senses. In *Yamaka-Vagga* (The Twin Verses)¹² of *The Dhammapada*, Gautam Buddha says that whoever lives contemplating pleasant things, with senses unrestrained, in food immoderate, indolent, inactive, him verily Māra overthrows as the wind (overthrows) a weak tree. Whoever lives contemplating the impurities, with senses restrained, in food moderate, full of faith, full of sustained energy, him Māra overthrows not, as the wind (does not overthrow) a rocky mountain.

A person without ardor, without concern, is incapable of self-awakening, incapable of Unbinding, incapable of attaining the unexcelled security from bondage. A person ardent & concerned is capable of self-awakening, capable of Unbinding, capable of attaining the unexcelled security from bondage. In *Itivuttaka*, Gautam Buddha has said:

Without ardor, without concern, lazy, with
weak persistence,



Full of sloth & drowsiness, shameless,
without respect:

This sort of monk is incapable of touching
the supreme self-awakening.

But whoever is mindful & wise, absorbed in
jhāna,

Ardent, concerned, & heedful, cutting the
fetter of birth & aging,

Touches right here & now the unexcelled
self-awakening.¹³

Mind should be very alert & conscious every moments of life. Laziness of mind should not be taken place. One should be very careful in life. Otherwise carelessness will destroy whole life. The Buddha warns against this carelessness of character. He says that who fails to strive when it he should strive, who, though young and strong, is given to idleness, who is loose in purpose and thoughts, and who is lazy that idler never finds the way to wisdom.

Pahānappadhānaṃ (The Effort to Abandon)

Herein a monk puts forth his will to abandon the evil, unwholesome thoughts that have already arisen. He strives, develops energy and strengthens his mind (to this end). Herein a monk does not admit sense desires that have arisen, but abandons, discards and repels them, makes an end of them and causes them to disappear. So also with regard to thought of ill-will and of harm that have arisen. This is called the effort to abandon.

The Effort to Abandon is second part of Right Effort. One should put effort to abandon bad activities or deeds from life. One should try to be free from unwholesome states of mind that have already arisen. One should try to abandon all kinds of bad deeds and thoughts from mind. In *Pāpa-Vagga (Evil)*¹⁴ of *The Dhammapada*, Gautam Buddha says that should a person commit evil, he should not do it again and again; he should not pleasure therein; painful is the accumulation of evil. Should a person perform meritorious action, he should do it again and again; he should find pleasure

therein; blissful is the accumulation of merit. 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. 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.

To practice Right Effort, one should not keep any thought of sensual lust, ill-will or grief, or any other evil and unwholesome states that may have arisen; he abandons them, dispels them, destroys them, and causes them to disappear. To abandon the all kinds of bad thoughts and activities, the practice of moral shame (*Hiri*) and moral dread (*Otappa*) are required in daily life.

Gautam Buddha has preached about the five methods to throw out the evil thoughts from mind. If, whilst regarding a certain object, there arise in the disciple, on account of it, evil and unwholesome thoughts connected with greed, hatred and delusion, then the disciple (1) should, by means of this object, gain another and wholesome object. (2) Or, he should reflect on the misery of these thoughts; Unwholesome, truly, are these thoughts! Blamable are these thoughts! Of painful result are these thoughts! (3) Or he should pay no attention to these thoughts. (4) Or, he should consider the compound nature of these thoughts. (5) Or, with teeth clenched and tongue pressed against the gums, he should with his mind restrain, suppress and root out these thoughts; and in doing so these evil and unwholesome thoughts of greed, hatred and delusion will dissolve and disappear; and the mind will inwardly become settled and calm, composed and concentrated.¹⁵

One, who tries to destroy arisen bad ideas, called The Effort to Abandon. One, who works hard to be free from evil ideas from mind, is called The Effort to Abandon. One, who tries to get rid of bad ideas of sexual misconduct, killing, and anger, is called The



Effort to Abandon. Gautam Buddha has instructed to human beings to be free from these three mental bad factors. One should try to remove thought of sexual misconduct by controlling *Kāmacchanda* (sensuous desire, sense desire, sensuality, and lustful desire). According to Buddhism, one, who wants to get spiritual progress in life, or wants to get salvation in life, should try to remove craving of sensual pleasure. Gautam Buddha has suggested to His disciples to remove sensual desire from mind. Person should not involve in the bad activities of sexual misconduct. He should try to be free from these kinds of harmful actions. He should not help others, who are doing unlawful sexual intercourse. In the same way, he should not appreciate also to such persons. It means that person should not do unlawful sexual intercourse as well as he should not promote this unwholesome deed in society. One, who does this bad deed, is called mean person. It is an important cause of one's downfall. In *Parābhava-Sutta*¹⁶ of *Sutta-Nipāta*, Gautam Buddha says that the man who is a womanizer, a drunkard, a gambler, and one who squanders whatever he possesses - this is the cause of one's downfall. By thinking the bad results of sexual misconduct in human life, person should not involve in rape and unlawful sexual relationships. Person has to face many problems in his life. Such person is rewarded because of his bad activities in life. In *Mala-Vagga (Impurities or Taints)* of *The Dhammapada*, Gautam Buddha says that he, who destroys life, tells lies, takes what is not given, commits adultery, and is addicted to intoxicating drinks, digs in his own roots even in this very life.¹⁷

To control sexual desires, person should practice *Kāyagatāsati*¹⁸ (Recollection of Body). It is eighth medium to concentrate mind. It is an important part of Buddhist Meditation. One should think that human body is made of thirty two impurities. It is a heap of dirties. There is nothing, which can

be considered as a beautiful thing. It is said that in this body there is: hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, muscle, tendons, bones, bone marrow, spleen, heart, liver, membranes, kidneys, lungs, large intestines, small intestines, gorge, feces, gall, phlegm, lymph, blood, sweat, fat, tears, oil, saliva, mucus, oil in the joints, urine, and brain.

To control sexual desires, person should think about *Kāyānupassanā* (Contemplation on the Body¹⁹), and *Asubha Bhāvanā* (Contemplation of loathsomeness). By seeing ten kinds of dead bodies, person can reduce his sexual desires. By thinking about the impurities and impermanency in human body, person can develop non-attachment towards his sexual desires. This is the reason; Gautam Buddha has suggested going near the cremation place to meditate on the ten kinds of dead bodies. They are called ten impurities, which are considered as *Das Asubha*.²⁰ They are known as Swollen corpse or the bloated (*Uddhumātaka*), Discolored corpse or the livid (*Vinīlaka*), Festering corpse (*Vipubbaka*), Dissected corpse or the cut up (*Vicchiddaka*), Gnawed corpse (*Vikhāyitaka*), Scattered corpse (*Vikkhittaka*), Mutilated & Scattered corpse or the hacked & scattered (*Hata-Vikkhittaka*), Bleeding corpse (*Lohitaka*), Worm-eaten corpse or the worm infested (*Pulavaka*), and Skeleton (*Aṭṭhika*).

One should try to remove thought of killing other living beings by practicing loving kindness towards all. *Mettā Brahma-Vihāra Bhāvanā* should be practiced towards every creature. Loving kindness embraces all beings of the world. He who seeks his own happiness by harming others who also desires to have happiness will not find happiness hereafter. He who seeks his own happiness by harming others who also desires to have happiness will find happiness hereafter. One should try to remove thought of anger by practicing *Vyāpāda* or *Byāpāda* (anger, ill-will, hate,



and hatred). Gautam Buddha says that conquer anger by love, conquer evil by good; conquer miser with liberality; and the liar with truth. Put away anger, abandon pride, overcome every attachment, cling not to Mind and Body and thus be free from sorrow. To reduce anger, ill-will, hate, and hatred, the practice of loving kindness is the best and solid solution for the modern society. In *Yamaka-Vagga (The Twin Verses)*²¹, Gautam Buddha says:

*Nahi verena verāni sammantīdha
kudācanaṃ.*

*Averena ca sammanti esa dhammo
sanantano.*

Hatreds never cease through hatred in this world; through love alone do they cease. This is an eternal law.

Everyone wants to live with happiness and peace in one's life. Everyone loves oneself very much. Everyone wants to live with respect and safely. In the same way, one should have same feelings for other living beings also. Gautam Buddha says that all tremble at the rod (punishment). All fear death. Comparing others with oneself, one should neither strike nor cause to strike. All tremble at the rod (punishment). Life is dear to all. Comparing others with oneself, one should neither strike nor cause to strike.

A mother protects the life of her only son. The love of a mother towards her single kid is limitless. In the same way, everyone should develop loving kindness towards all living beings in this world. The Buddha says that everyone should spread boundless loving kindness to every corner of the world; above, below and across, unhindered without any obstruction, without any hatred, without any enmity. In *Karaṇīyametta-Sutta*²², Gautam Buddha says:

*Mātā yathā niyaṃ puttamāyusā
ekaputtamanurakkhe.*

*Evam pi sabbabhūtesu mānaṣaṃ
bhāvaye aparimāṇaṃ.*

*Mettaṃ ca sabba-lokasmim
mānaṣaṃ bhāvaye aparimāṇaṃ*

*Uddhaṃ adho ca tiriyaṃ ca
asambādhaṃ averaṃ asapattaṃ.*

As a mother protects her own (only) child even at the risk of her life, similarly let him (also) cultivate an unbounded mind (good will) towards all (creatures). Let him cultivate this unbounded mind (good will) towards (the beings of) all the worlds (existing), upward, downward, and across, unobstructed, with no malice or foe.

In spite of abandoning greed, ill-will, and delusion, one should get rid of ten kinds of bad deeds in one's life. They are related to body, speech, and mind. These ten bad deeds can be divided into three parts like; mental, verbal, and bodily deeds. Collectively, it is can be called *Kamma-patha* (course of action). The tenfold unwholesome courses of action (*Akusala-kamma-patha*): three bodily actions: killing, stealing, unlawful sexual intercourse; four verbal actions: lying, slandering, rude speech, foolish babble; and three mental actions: greed, ill-will, evil views. Gautam Buddha has taught us not to do any evil, to cultivate good, to purify one's mind. In spite of this thing, one does not keep any thought of greed, ill-will, delusion or any other unwholesome states. According to *Vibhaṅga-Mūlaṅkā*, it is said that there are three unwholesome roots. They are responsible for all evil deeds. They are greed, ill-will, and delusion. One, who wants to be free from bad deeds in life, should try to abandon and destroy them completely.

Bhāvanāppadhānaṃ = Effort to Develop

Herein a monk puts forth his will to produce and develop wholesome thoughts that have not yet arisen. He strives, develops energy and strengthens his mind (to this end). Herein a monk develops the Factors of Enlightenment based on seclusion, on dispassion, on cessation that ends in deliverance, namely: Mindfulness, Investigation of the *Dhamma*, Energy, Rapturous Joy, Calm, Concentration and Equanimity. This is called the effort to develop.



To practice *Bhāvanāppadhānaṃ*, first one should follow *Sarīvarappadhānaṃ* and *Pahānappadhānaṃ*. Without following these two efforts, it will be impossible to follow *Bhāvanāppadhānaṃ* in life. It is clear that one should not do any evil and should cultivate good deeds in life. The meaning of *Bhāvanāppadhānaṃ* is to develop good *Dhammas*. To get spiritual development, it is an essential *Dhamma* for all human beings. According to Theravada Buddhism, there are thirty seven *Bodhipakkhiya-Dhammā* which leads to get enlightenment. They are called as requisites of enlightenment. They are base of the entire doctrines of the Buddha. They are considered as *Cattāro Satipaṭṭhāna* (The four foundations of mindfulness), *Cattāro Sammappadhāna* (The four right efforts), *Cattāro Iddhipāda* (The four bases for spiritual power), *Pañcendriya* (The five faculties), *Pañcabala* (The five powers), *Satta Bojjhaṅga* (The seven enlightenment factors), and *Ariya Aṭṭharīgiko Maggo* (The Noble Eightfold Path).

One should try to put effort and control one's mind. One should try to develop seven factors of Enlightenment, which is called *Satta Sambojjhaṅga* in Theravada Buddhism. One who has an idea to practice these seven factors, it means that one has the *Bhāvanāppadhānaṃ* in one's mind. They are considered as *Sati-Sambojjhaṅga* (Mindfulness, awareness with clear comprehension),

Dhammavicayasambojjhaṅga (Investigation and research, investigation of states, *Dhamma* inquiry), *Viriyasambojjhaṅga* (Energy, right effort), *Pītisambojjhaṅga* (Joy, delight, rapture, bliss, enthused interest), *Passaddhisambojjhaṅga* (Tranquility), *Samadhisambojjhaṅga* (Concentration), and *Upekkhasambojjhaṅga* (Equanimity).

In the same way, one should try to do ten kinds of good deeds in one's life. The doing of good deeds can be called *Bhāvanāppadhānaṃ* (the Effort to Develop).

These ten good deeds can be divided into three parts like; mental, verbal, and bodily deeds. Collectively, it is called *Kamma-patha*. In place of involving in tenfold unwholesome like: killing, stealing, unlawful sexual intercourse, lying, slandering, rude speech, foolish babble, greed, ill-will, and evil views, one should follow ten kinds of good deeds in life. The tenfold wholesome course of action (*Kusalakamma-patha*): three bodily actions: avoidance of killing, stealing & unlawful sexual intercourse; four verbal actions: avoidance of lying, slandering, rude speech & foolish babble; i.e. true, conciliatory, mild & wise speech; and three mental actions: unselfishness, good-will & right views. It is correct that the three conditions or roots of unwholesome actions are greed, hatred, delusion; those of wholesome karma are: unselfishness, hatelessness, undeludedness. Person should involve himself in good deeds. To do all kinds of wholesome deeds, person should cultivate good and purify his mind.

There is no doubt; for the cultivation of good deeds, firm determination and alertness are very essential things. Without these things, no one can maintain his good qualities in his character. Thus, for example, he keeps firmly in his mind a favorable object of concentration that has arisen, such as the mental image of a skeleton, of a corpse infested by worms, of a corpse blue-black in color, of a festering corpse, of a corpse riddled with holes, of a corpse swollen up.

Truly, for a disciple who is possessed of faith and has penetrated the Teaching of the master, it is fit to think: 'Though skin sinews and bones wither away, though flesh and blood of my body dry up, I shall not give up my efforts till I have attained whatever is attainable by manly perseverance, energy and endeavor.'²³

Anurakkhaṇappadhānaṃ = Effort to Maintain

Herein, a monk maintains a favorable object of concentration (meditation). This is called the effort to maintain. The first side of right



effort aims at overcoming unwholesome states, states of mind tainted by defilements. Without right effort the hindrances (*Kāmacchanda*, *byāpāda*, *thīna-middha*, *uddhacca-kukkucca*, *vicikicchā* or sensual desire, ill will, dullness & drowsiness, restlessness & worry, and doubt) to mental progress cannot be overcome. Right effort removes the evil and unhealthy thoughts that act as a barrier to the calm of absorption, and promotes and maintains the healthy mental factors that aid the development of concentration.

To practice of *Anurakkhaṇappadhānaṃ*, it is very essential the continuity of good deeds in life. This is the reason, Buddha has emphasized on the practice of morality in daily life for the welfare of the whole world. He has suggested that bodily, verbal, and mental actions should be good deeds. In *BuddhaVagga (The Buddha)*²⁴ of *The Dhammapada*, He says:

*Sabba pāpassa akaraṇaṃ kusalassa
upasampadā.*

*Sacittapariyodapanam etaṃ
buddhāsāsanam.*

Not to do any evil, to cultivate good, to purify one's mind, this is the Teaching of the Buddhas.

Here one rouses the will to maintain the wholesome states of mind that have already arisen and not allow them to disappear, but develop them to full maturity. He makes effort, stirs up his energy, exerts his mind and strives. By applying the mind firmly on the object of concentration either in Tranquility or Insight Meditation, one can maintain good qualities and *Dhamma*.

Because of good mind and good mental factors (*Kusala Cetasika*), the continuity of good deeds can be maintained. Good mind is like a good friend. Like a real friend, good mind will be helpful for us. Gautam Buddha has more preferences to a good mind. In *Citta-Vagga (Mind)*²⁵ of *The Dhammapada*, Gautam Buddha says that what neither mother, nor father, nor any other relative can do, a well-directed mind does and thereby

elevates one. In the same way, bad mind is like an enemy. Bad mind will be more dangerous than an enemy. Whatever (harm) a foe may do to a foe, or a hater to a hater, an ill-directed mind can do one far greater (harm).

Relevance of Right Effort in Human Life

Right Effort is the *Dhamma*, which is very useful to abandon bad habits, and to produce good merits in human life. It is universal truth that without the proper practice of Right Effort, one cannot do any good deeds in life. To practice Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration, Right Effort is a mandatory *Dhamma*. The Buddha has said that one, who is practicing these four kinds of Right Effort in one's life, can be free from suffering, and attain the stage of *Nibbāna*. In *Vibhaṅga*, Gautam Buddha has said:

*Sarīvaro ca pahānaṃ ca bhāvanā
anurakkhaṇā.*

*Ete padhānā cattāro,
desitādiccābandhunā.*

*Ye hi bhikkhu idhātāpī, khayaṃ
dukkhassa pāpuṇoti.*²⁶

To prevent, abandon, develop and maintain

These are the four efforts that he taught,

The Kinsman of the Sun. Herein a monk

With strenuous effort reaches suffering's end.²⁷

The unwholesome thoughts referred to here are the three root causes of all evil, namely: thoughts of lust (craving), hate and delusion. All other passions gather round these root causes, while wholesome thoughts are their opposites. The sole purpose of this fourfold effort is success in meditation. The four right efforts are the requisites for concentration. Right effort is interrelated and interdependent. It functions together and simultaneously with the other two factors of the group, namely right mindfulness and right concentration. Without right effort the



hindrances to mental progress cannot be overcome. Right effort removes the evil and unhealthy thoughts that act as a barrier to the calm of absorption, and promotes and maintains the healthy mental factors that aid the development of concentration. Mind culture through these four great efforts is not something that can be gained overnight. It needs time and the regular practice of mental exercises. To refrain from greed, anger, jealousy and a host of other evil thoughts to which people are subject, we need strength of mind, strenuous effort and vigilance.

Since worldly progress, gain and profit depend largely on our own efforts, surely we should strive even harder to train our minds and so develop the best that is in us. Since mental training requires the greatest effort, strive on now. Do not let your days pass away like the shadow of a cloud which leaves behind it no trace for remembrance. It is not only during an hour of serious meditation that we need this all-important quality of right effort. It should be cultivated always wherever possible. In all our speech, actions and behavior, in our daily life, we need right effort to perform our duties wholeheartedly and successfully. If we lack this quality of zealous effort, and give in to sloth and indolence we cannot proceed with any degree of confidence in the work we have undertaken.

Right Effort is very relevant in every moment of life. Without practicing it properly in human life, nobody can practice the teachings of Gautam Buddha. In the presence of Right Effort, one can understand and practice *Pañña* (Wisdom or Insight), *Sīla* (Morality), and *Samādhi* (Meditation) in life. Right Effort plays an important role in our daily life. Without having Right Effort, person cannot achieve small happiness also. How one can imagine about the spiritual achievements in the absence of Right Effort? To get religious and spiritual progress in human life, the practice of Right Effort is mandatory. Without the

proper practice and understanding of Right Effort, person can never practice other parts of The Noble Eightfold Path and other all kinds of wholesome deeds. Right Effort is like a positive support and energy. Energy is required for the concentration of mind. In the same way, support is provided by Right Effort to Right Mindfulness.

One, who practices Right Effort properly in life, will get true knowledge (Wisdom). In spite of it, he will achieve the holy stage of Non-Returner (*Anāgāmi*). He will be capable to destroy the five lower fetters, which are known as *Kāmarāga* (Sense-desire, sensual lust, greed, craving), and *Paṭigha* (Hatred, anger, ill-will, hate, aversion) including *Sakkāya-diṭṭhi* (belief in a self, self-illusion, and personality belief), *Vicikicchā* (doubt, skeptical doubt), and *Sīlabbata-parāmāso* (attachment to wrongful rites and rituals or ceremonies) from his mind. Through the path of Non-return (*anāgāmi magga*) one becomes fully free from the five lower fetters.

Without practicing Right Effort, *Bodhisatta* cannot practice *Adhiṭṭhāna Pāramitā* (Determination or resolution), *Viriya Pāramitā* (Energy, diligence, vigor, effort), and *Nekkhamma Pāramitā* (Renunciation). Right Effort is an essential step to reach right mindfulness and right concentration. Without practicing Right Effort, *Bodhisatta* cannot achieve Buddha-hood, which is considered as the final goal of his life. Without Right Effort, monks and nuns cannot practice the teachings of Gautam Buddha in their daily life. It can be said that it plays a unique role for the achievement of worldly life as well as spiritual life.

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