

SIDDHARTHA: PHILOSOPHY OF NIRVANA IN SANSARA

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Abstract:

Siddhartha, the Goutam Buddha, since centuries not only in India, but in world is a question, a challenge, an answer and a God. The saga of a man achieving divinity at one side makes one dumbstruck. But his waking up during night and abandoning young wife and the child on bed and going on his mission to search the truth has made the feminists raise question.

The novella Siddhartha by Hermann Hesse presents a parallel hero Siddhartha. And presents a different philosophy. He grows as a soul-mate of Kamala, as a son, as a father and as a spiritual person the character makes the reader think again. One gets salvation under the Bodhivruksha. The other in the complete experience of life with his soul mate and with a ferryman and at last with his son learns the lessons of life and realizes the ultimate truth of life.

The two stories of Siddhartha stand face to face in this novella; as a question and as an answer. Siddhartha's steps in his life are driven by the questions arose in him. His search for his own self leads to his relations with several people in his life. Every relation helps him explore his own self. Buddha becomes Buddha under Bodhi tree. Siddhartha becomes childlike through the life lead under the grove. In his questions there was a fear of not attaining Nirvana. In his question there was a fear of losing his son.

Key words: Siddhartha, Buddha, abandoning, lessons of life, Bodhivruksha, boatman.

Introduction:

Those who revere Goutam Buddha often question one's own self. How to become Buddha? What is becoming Buddha? The answer implied is, becoming Buddha is not an easy task. It is the story of sacrifice and perseverance. Buddha is a question to those who strive to move on the way of soul. To those who are worried about the plight of Yashodhare write with feministic perspective.

Let continue your lesson of non-violence

To your persistence to become Buddha

I am the first scapegoat

Your procession is proceeded upon

The spread cloth of the corpse of Yashodhara

Buddham□ Sharanam□ Gachchami□

(Chandru Turavihal. “Kapilavastuvige Ninnade Kanavarike”)

At one side the people from whole world have revered Buddhism. At another side feminists and others from all corners of the world have questioned the truthfulness of the truth which Buddha went in search of, leaving his family far away. Life is to live it. Relations are to live with. Numerous poems and articles have discussed this issue. Poet Siddalingayya gives higher regards to Shudra than Buddha in his poem “Shudra”. But the present research paper focuses on a different question. Was the way of Goutam Buddha the only way to search truth of life? The novella *Siddhartha* by Hermann Hesse presents a parallel character Siddhartha. Siddhartha also finds truth in his journey. But he gets the different experience of life; of sex and of parenting. He finds truth in his relation with Kamala, with his son and in his spiritual relation with boatman and river.

The Novel of Difference:

His dislike for Christianity and his parents narrow mindedness made him look for deeper and more personal spirituality. Attempted to visit the holy texts of India with new approach. He deconstructed the ideologies, images and themes in this novel. This novel by Hesse is known as wisdom book. The novel has two parts. The first part has four chapters, the last one being the Awakening. In the beginning itself the novel poses some different opinions.

Did the sacrifices give a happy fortune? And what about the gods? Was it really Prajapati who had created the world? Was it not the Atman, He, the only one, the singular one? Were the gods not creations, created like me and you, subject to time, mortal? Was it therefore good, was it right, was it meaningful and the highest occupation to make offerings to be made, who else was to be

worshipped but Him, the only one, the Atman? And where was Atman to be found, where did He reside, where did his eternal heart beat, where else but in one's own self, (..) (Siddhartha 9)

Sama Veda also said, 'Your soul is the whole world. And that, a man in his sleep, in his deep sleep, would meet with his innermost part and would reside in the Atman. (..) (Siddhartha 10)

In the story of Goutama Buddha Gotama leaves home during night. Here Siddhartha leaves the still quiet town in the first light of day. Goutama Buddha had left a sleeping baby and his wife on bed. Here Siddhartha is not yet married. He left his father and mother.

Here Siddhartha is not alone on his way. A shadow from near the last hut rose and joined the pilgrim Govinda.'

After three years of learning among monks Siddhartha feels that nothing can be achieved as being Samanas. He observed that even at the age of sixty the Samanas are not able to attain Nirvana. He loses faith and turns away from Samanas. Siddhartha stands as a parallel hero of the novel. He says, (..) He won't and we won't. O Govinda, I believe all the Samanas out there, perhaps not a single one, not a single one, will reach nirvana. We find comfort, we find numbness, we learn feats to deceive others. But the most important thing, the path of paths, we will not find. (2) In his article 'Asceticism is false sciolism' Basavaraj Sadar quotes a vachana where the sharana Veerasangayya has mentioned of three types of asceticism: Shastra Vairagya, Prasuti Vyragya and Smashana Vairagya. These feelings are temporary.

After three days of defilement blissful coition

For a momentary corpse how much this sorrow ?

(Lines from the Vachana by Veerasangayya)

He writes that this type of people without understanding the structure of relation between body and mind and the natural human instincts at the end reach a shameless condition. And this reality is rationally propagated by Sharana Veerasangayya in his vachana.

In the novella Siddhartha learns from Samanas for a period of time; but was not contented. And one day (..) the most holy one, Buddha, he had left him, had to part with him, was not able to accept his teachings'. (36) He gets ready to leave the place.

On the way, Govinda said, O Siddhartha, you have learned more from the Samanas than I knew. () Truly, if you had stayed there, you would soon have learned to walk on water. The immediate answer to Govinda was, I do not seek to walk on water, Let old Samanas be content with such feats! (25). Siddhartha had realized what he wanted and what he did not.

Instead Siddhartha moves in search of the truth of life; the reality of life. He searches for spirituality in a common life. I want to learn from myself, want to be my student, want to get to know myself, the secret of Siddhartha. (37) Siddhartha sets ready to learn the truth of life amidst people. Not in forest.

In the 4th chapter of first part of the novella Siddhartha realizes, I called the visible world a deception, called my eyes and my tongue coincidental and worthless forms without substance. No, this is over, I have awakened, I have indeed awakened and have not been born before this very day. (38) These words come out of Siddhartha as if it was his enlightenment. And it was his first enlightenment. In a common person's life enlightenment occurs several times. And this enlightenment is not with the life of detachment, but in engrossing the life. The second part of the novel focuses on his material growth and ultimately at the end his spiritual growth. Away from teachings he learns from life and people. Archana Kumari quotes Eugene Timpe that, The wrings of Hermann Hesse, the German writer, have a deep and firm root in the Vedas, the Upanishads and in the Buddhism. An independent chapter is on the word "Om" and meditation in *Siddhartha*. For Buddha it was Bodhi tree and for Siddhartha it was Mango tree.

Kamala, the courtesan:

In the hut of ferryman he spent night. He dreamt of Govinda, as in sad mood for Siddhartha's departure. Both hug. The next moment he was not Govinda, but a woman. He drank milk from her breast and it intoxicated him. By the time he woke up it was morning. In the novel *Samskara* written by U. R. Ananthmurthy also Praneshacharya goes through the same experience. As much the man tries to run away from the natural instincts and human desires he gets drowned into them. After crossing the river and forest Siddhartha reaches a beautifully fenced grove. He experiences the rejection in the eyes of the servants moving there. He realizes he cannot enter the grove as Samana. He moves further and enters city. Next day visits Kamala in a fresh attire and shaved chin. Begs her to be his teacher.

Kamala tells him, “You need a lot of money, if you want to be Kamala’s friend”. The next day she arranges for a job with Kamaswami, the richest merchant of the city. She also offers fruits and bread to him. “I am opening one door after another for you. How come? Do you have a spell?”. Siddhartha uses the knowledge and strength of thinking, waiting and fasting to cast charm on Kamala. He wins Kamaswami also. He becomes rich day by day. He rejects the path of Samanas. But uses the art learnt by Samanas to win Kamala. He tells Kamala that, “Everyone can perform magic, everyone can reach his goals, if he is able to think, if he is able to wait, if he is able to fast. Here, his leaving Buddha and Samanas contradicted with his use of fasting and waiting skill.

In little later stage Kamala declares him “the best lover”. She also told him that when she will be older, she would like to bear his child. She also aware that he yet “remained Samana”, and yet he does not love her, he loves nobody. In turn Siddhartha accepts what Kamala told him. “I am like you. You also do not love – how else could you practice love as a craft? Perhaps people of our kind can’t love. The childlike people can; that’s their secret”.

Lovemaking becomes a craft and lust becomes priority. The childlike pure love is not possible for Siddhartha and Kamala. Siddhartha wants to learn from Kamala. Kamala wants money from him. She also got attracted by his skills. But as the novella comes to an end Kamala could only love and still later Siddhartha also.

One more contradiction is in his dream he saw courtesan Kamala’s attraction towards Buddha. While listening to Siddhartha about Samanas and Buddha she declares that, “One day, perhaps soon, I’ll also follow that Buddha. I’ll give him my pleasure garden for a gift and take my refuge in his teachings.” (70) In his forties he locates gray hair among his black hair. Just as in Jaina purana locating a white hair among his black hair the king resigns and becomes a Teerthankara. Siddhartha leaves Kamala, with “the soul full of reluctance, and full of concealed anxiety” he bids farewell to her. He also dreamt the other day that he just threw the dead bird into street which used to sing and later became mute and now dead. After this he feels his own self is dead. He sat under the mango tree thinking of his father, Govinda and Gotama. He bid farewell to all his material richness. Dead was the bird in him. He moves away from Sansara and paves the path towards the river. One dream brought him to Kamala and another dream took him away from her. His dreams drove him from stage to stage of life.

She is inspired by the teaching of Buddha through Siddhartha who had rejected the path of Samanas. And at the end Siddhartha comes to know that Kamala has actually given that property to the monks of Gotama. With the pilgrims she went to see the dying Buddha together with Siddhartha her son. The boy Siddhartha was against mother's will. A black snake bit her and near the ferry Kamala collapsed. The son rejected Siddhartha. Thinking that city will be right place for his son he takes him to city. And finds monks in the garden where he had seen Kamala first time. When Vasudeva talks of building funeral of Kamala on the hill where his wife's funeral was also done long ago, it is a hint that both had reached their enlightenment through these women in their life. She is not Maya here. But a teacher.

Vasudev: Navigator of Life

In the novella Vasudeva appears twice. Once when Siddhartha moves from his father's house and crosses the river in search of enlightenment. The second time after spending a part of life with Kamala and impregnating her Siddhartha leaves her and on his way out he meets Vasudeva and stays with him on the bank of the river.

Here, the second slot of learning from the boat man deepens the sensibility of Siddhartha. First time when he had crossed the river the boat man had asked him to listen to the river. The river is Time. The river symbolizes the history of whole mankind. The boatman was able to converse with river and learn from the river all his life. The boatman Vasudev asks Siddhartha, "You've heard it laugh, but you haven't heard everything. Let's listen, you'll hear more." They listened. Softly sounded the river, singing in many voices. Siddhartha looked into the water, and images appeared to him in the moving water: his father appeared, lonely, mourning for his son; he himself appeared, lonely; he also being tied with the bondage of yearning to his distant son; his son appeared, lonely as well, the boy, greedily rushing along the burning course of his young wishes, each one heading for his goal. (114) At this stage Siddhartha is so different from Goutama Buddha. Though he left his unborn child and moved to forest he is not able to do away with his attachment to relations. Vasudev who had buried his loving wife's dead body on the hill decides to bury the dead body of Kamala on the same hill.

Govinda and son Siddhartha:

The lessons of life make Siddhartha quiet. Now Siddhartha listened. He was now nothing but a listener. He started to distrust teachers and teachings and to turn his back on them. He says, "I have had many teachers since then. A beautiful courtesan has been my teacher for a long time, and a rich merchant was my teacher, and some gamblers with dice. Once, even a follower of Buddha, travelling on foot, has been my teacher. He sat with me when I had fallen asleep in the forest, on the pilgrimage. I've also learned from him, I'm also grateful to him, very grateful. But most of all, I have learned here from this river and from my predecessor, the ferryman Vasudeva. He was no thinker, but he knew what is necessary, just as well as Gotama. He was perfect man, a saint.

(120) Siddhartha achieved his sainthood from his life experience. The lessons he learnt were from not sages but from the common persons.

His journey starts with Govinda and ends with Govinda. He with Govinda remembers his past journey. "A person or an act is never entirely Sansara or entirely Nirvana, a person is never entirely holy or entirely sinful. () I see whatever exists as good, everything is perfect, and everything is Brahman. Therefore, I see whatever exists as good, death to me like life, sin like holiness, wisdom like foolishness, everything has to be as it is, everything only requires my consent, only my willingness, my loving agreement, to be good for me, (122) This is true psychologically. Nobody can be completely good or bad. And the definition of good and bad also gets redefined in each one's case contextually.

By deconstructing the text, the readers get a beautiful courtesan who is attracting Siddhartha and is able to hold him; Siddhartha leaves father's house to reach nirvana but turns to amass wealth to get Kamala. He leaves father, he leaves Kamala, he leaves Buddha. Ultimately he learns from Kamala, a courtesan, from Vasudev, the boatman, from son and from the river. Buddha is a passing character in the novella. In his last visit to grove Siddhartha remembers the words of Kamala:

You can not love . The childlike love was not possible for Siddhartha. Kamala had compared Siddhartha to the star unreachable. And Siddhartha had compared childlike love to falling leaves. During his last days of life Siddhartha feels that he is a falling leaf. There are contradictions between Buddha and Siddhartha. He is not learning from seeing, but from real, full experience.

His son's rejection reminds him of his own negligence of his father. He finds his own image in his son. He realizes his fault. Siddhartha craves for the love of his son like a falling leaf. To seek his love he takes him to city. Siddhartha saw that, "So many, so many thousands possess this sweetest of good fortunes – why don't I? Even bad people, even thieves and robbers have children and love them, and are being loved by them, all except me." (110) He became childlike. And in child lies divinity.

Govinda, his friend helps him to open his own self in front of. "This is a stone, and will, after a certain time, perhaps turn into soil, and will turn from soil into a plant or animal or human being. In the past I would have said: This stone is just a stone, it is worthless, it belongs to the world of the Maya; but because it might be able to become also a human being and a spirit in the cycle of transformations, therefore I also grant it importance." (123) "I can love stone, Govinda, and also a tree or a piece of bark. These are things, and things can be loved. But I cannot love words. Kamala's love, love for his son teaches him loving. His love for stone, soil, plant and animals is due to his realization that the same atoms live in each creature on earth. The same *panchabhootas* have created all the creatures and each aspect of nature. He was accepted throughout his life. It was only rejection by his son which made him crave for love. The rejection taught him love which was not possible by Kamala's surrender. He is ascetic in the life of *sansara*. His journey is inward without his knowledge. He leaves ascetics, but becomes an ascetic after all *sansaric* experience.

Conclusion:

Hermann Hesse's Siddhartha attains Nirvana in true sense as he accepts the whole life in its entirety. At each stage of his life he is posing question to himself and finding answer to himself. He follows what he leaves. And at the end gets the truth of life. In his son he finds himself. In himself he finds his father. Nothing is left. Everything is followed. In the sound and flow of river he listens to his father, Samanas, Kamaswami, Kamala, son and Vasudev. He locates his own face in the flow of time; as a boy, as a Samana, as a man in search of exploring his own self, as a successful merchant, as a disciple of Vasudev. The novella deconstructs the old myth. It also encourages psychoanalysis. The novella *Siddhartha* takes several turns; from worldly to spiritual, from spiritual to philosophic, from philosophic to materialistic, from materialistic to resignedness, from

resignedness to relational and philosophic. Several questions and answers contradict and come into conflict in *Siddhartha*.

The novella is full of binary oppositions. Buddha appears miraculous. Siddhartha very humane and natural. Siddhartha appears to be an antithesis to Buddha. His first goal was to become empty. He at the end is full of love. Love for the whole universe. True Nirvana or it may be called true asceticism. P. Lal writes in his *Lessons* You can't live life without knowing what life is all about, you must have the itinerary before you start the journey, must even intuit the answers before you ask the questions. (Lal 15) Siddhartha when speaks to Kamala first time, he knew the possible response of her in advance. He could intuit. But more than intuition in his whole life he was in search of answer to the question what life is? . Intuition and ignorance both converse in his case. He was able to understand his father and the sorrows of a father only after becoming father. Living life at its fullest itself is worship. And the vachana philosophy says work is Kailasa , means work is worship. Living life with all its up and downs is every creatures' duty. That is the beauty of life. Siddhartha becomes selfless and service oriented living the life on the river bank as a ferryman where he finds solace and divinity. He becomes one with the Nature.

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