

**Tribhuvan University**

**Buddhism as a Thematic Motif in Herman Hesse's *Siddhartha***

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of Master of Arts in English**

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## **Abstract**

After realizing the Anitya, Siddhartha, protagonist of the Herman Hesse's novel *Siddhartha*, remains as a ferryman forever. Though he has tested the extreme level of material and sensual pleasure earlier, his lusty and greedy ego surrenders to the river, when he starts to hear its voice. To reach up to this level, Siddhartha, first, makes himself empty of parental love by renouncing his house for forever. Then, he leaves Govinda his intimate friend like his own shadow, then his Samanas gurus who teach him to control and transform the soul. Siddhartha also listens the awakened one-Gotama-but he decides to make himself empty of teachers and doctrines ahead. Though he learns the art of love from Kamala and business from Kamaswami but leave them behind as well.. At last, by the bank of the river, he gets wisdom, a vision of things from various perspectives. His wisdom is incommunicable because he acquires it through perception, not by teaching of the Samanas. By bracketing himself from the whole phenomenal world, he reaches to the state of “emptiness” and knows that everything is impermanence, a flux.

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## **I. Influence of Buddhism in Hesse's *Siddhartha***

Buddhist notion of emptiness is often misunderstood as nihilism. 19<sup>th</sup> century western philosophers have contributed much to this misconstruction, unfortunately. Meanwhile western scholars have acquired enough knowledge about Buddhism to realize that this is far from accurate. The only thing that nihilism and the teaching of emptiness can be said to have in common is a skeptical outset. While nihilism concludes that reality is unknowable, that nothing exists, that nothing meaningful, communicated about world, the Buddhist notion of emptiness arrives at just the opposite, namely that ultimate reality is knowable, that is a clear-cut ontological basis for phenomena, and that we can communicate and derived useful knowledge from it about the world. Emptiness must not be confused with nothingness. Emptiness is not non-existence and it is not non- reality.

Emptiness signifies that everything one encounters in life is empty of absolute identity, permanence, or an indwelling 'self'. This is because everything is inter-related and mutually dependent. All things are in a state of constant flux where energy and information are forever flowing. In the English language the word emptiness suggests the absence of spiritual meaning or a personal feeling alienation, but in Buddhism the realization of the emptiness of phenomena enables liberation from the limitations of form. In Buddha's spiritual teaching, insight into the emptiness of phenomena is an aspect of cultivation of insight that leads to wisdom and inner peace. Emptiness is a key concept in Buddhist philosophy, or more precisely, in the ontology of Mahayan Buddhism. The phrase "form is emptiness; emptiness is form" is perhaps the most celebrate paradox associated with Buddhist philosophy. It is the supreme mantra. The expression originates from the Prajna Pramita Hridaya Sutra, commonly known as Heart Sutra.

In the *Art of Living* the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama says:

As your insight into the ultimate nature of reality is deepened and enhance, you will develop a perception of reality from which you will perceive phenomena and events as sort of illusory, illusion –like, and this mode of perceiving mode of reality will permeate all your interaction to with reality [...]. Even emptiness itself, which is seen as the ultimate nature of reality is not absolute, nor does it exist independently. We cannot conceive of emptiness as independent of basis phenomena, because when we examine the mature of reality, we find that it is empty of inherent existence. Then if we are to talk that emptiness itself is an object and look for its essence, again we will find that it is empty of inherent existence. Therefore the Buddha taught the emptiness of emptiness. (13)

The Sanskrit text translated in its entirety by Edward Conze writes:

form is emptiness and the very emptiness is form, nor does form differs from emptiness, whatever is emptiness that is form. The same is true of feeling perceptions, impulses and consciousness. All dharmas are marked with emptiness, they are neither produced nor stopped, neither deficient nor complete. (171)

He further states:

One who is convinced of the emptiness of everything is not captivated by worldly dharmas, because he does not lean on them. When he is not rejoice, when he does not gain, he is not depressed. Fame does not make him proud, lake of fame does not depress him. Scorn does not cow him. One who is in such a way is not captivated by the worldly dharmas is said to be one who knows emptiness. So one who is convinced of the emptiness of everything has no likes or dislikes. For he knows that that which he might like is just empty

and he sees it as just empty. But one does not know emptiness if he likes or dislikes any dharams. Neither does one know it if he quarrels or disputes with anyone. For one would know that that also is just empty, and would see it as just empty. (173)

A book-seller and a mechanics at a clock tower factory in Calw later became the world famous Noble prize winning book writer- Hermann Hesse. Hesse was born in Calw, Germany on July 2, 1877. His father had been a missionary in India for a short time and his mother had spent several years of her youth in India and had done missionary work there. He was not much known until he received the Noble Prize for literature in 1946.

He settled in Switzerland in 1912. In 1923, he resigned German and acquired Swiss citizenship. Hesse was an anti-war activist who actively participated in anti-war activities during World War I. In his autobiography he writes:

Ever since my first shy protests against mass suggestion and violence I have been exposed to continuous attacks and floods of a abusive letters from Germany. The hatred of the official Germany, culminating under Hitler, was compensated for by the following. I won among he young generation that though in intentional and pacifist terms. (11)

The novel *Peter Camenzined* (1904) made Hesse's name. An attempt to overcome decadence by portraying the cure of a melancholic outsider by means of altruistic activity and a return to nature, *Peter Camenzind* presents an early, half-formed version of that life (Beneath the Wheel), a contribution to the then fashionable subgenera of "school novels." The book portrays the miseries and sad decline of a sensitive youth crushed by the intellectual demands and unfeeling attitudes encountered in school. In this novel Hesse divides his interests, as so often in his later work, between two characters, Hans Giebenrath who regresses and dies, and



Hermann Heilner who breaks out and lives, albeit by eventually finding a compromise with the bourgeois world.

Hesse himself had compromised by marrying and settling down in Gaienhofen on Lake Constance. He lived there until 1912, when he moved to Berne. He published a number of short stories and novellas: *Diesseits* (1907), *Nachbarn* (1908), and *Umwege* (1912) are collections of tales of small-town and country life, after the manner of Gottfried Keller. *Knulp*, three whimsical sketches of the vagabond existence, dates from this period, as do the full-length novels *Gertrude* (1910) and *Rosshalde* (1913). All these works show Hesse as a careful and talented writer, with a keen psychologist's eye and a supple style, but they rather mute the serious conflicts incipiently suggested by his first two novels. Hesse's journey to the Malayan archipelago in 1911 is, however, some indication of his inner restlessness. The interest in Oriental cultures which originated in his childhood now takes deeper root.

*Siddhartha* (1922; trans 1951) is about an Indian youth's difficult quest for the knowledge. In *Narziss and Goldmund* (1930, translated as *Death and the Lover*). Hesse tells the story of friendship between two medieval priests, one content with religion and the other still searching for peace. Hesse's novel *Masisetar Ludi* (1949, translated as *The Glass Bead Game*) which won for him prestigious Nobel Prize, is set in a utopian future and is generally regarded as the author in perfection. Hesse lived the last part of his life in seclusion in Switzerland where he died on August 9, 1962.

*Siddhartha* is the story of young Brahmn's son who with his friend Govinda leave home and join the ascetic Samana. Living with Samana, Siddhartha and Govinda deny the body's senses and external world, yet Siddhartha fails to find the true path that he is seeking for. He renounces this life of ritual and asceticism and with Govinda to hear Gotama's sermons. Govinda decides to stay with Gotama, but Siddhartha detaches himself teaching and learning and goes to seek truth through living, not by preaching. Leaving Govinda and the

Buddha Siddhartha travels across the river to a city where he meets Kamala, a courtesan. Kamala introduces Siddhartha to a life of a wealth and pleasure. Siddhartha eventually realizes that “sensual lust is related to death, and that he must leave Kamala and the merchant way of life. He, then, returns to the river. There, in despair, he tries to commit suicide but he hears the holy Om emanating from his inner soul and gives continuity to his seeking with newer insight. Determined to stay by the river, *Siddhartha* lives with the ferryman Vasudeva. Years passed, Kamala on her way to dying Buddha, visits the river bringing the son fathered by Siddhartha, unfortunately Kamala dies on *Siddhartha*’s lap from snakebite. He cares for the boy and discovers that he loves his son desperately. But the child is spoiled and longs only to leave the two boatmen and return to city. Through his son’s departure, Siddhartha experiences first pain of love and then pure, unselfish devotion, eventually learning the lesson of the river. Vasudeva leaves, Siddhartha carries on the tradition and knowledge he has been taught by the ferryman and the river. When Govinda passes by the same river, he sees that Siddhartha, like Buddha, has achieved absolute peace and harmony.

### **Critics in *Siddhartha***

Psychoanalysis had come into the European intellectual scene in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and its investigation into the fundamental human behavior revolutionized our self-conceptions; the sovereignty of reason was crumbling as the Id emerged supreme. As a result, a new understanding of the whole human animal had to be worked out. The war in which technological inventions, monuments of the human reason and ingenuity were used to slaughter people in terrible ways. These two events, the emergence of psychoanalysis and World War I, set the intellectual and moral context in which *Siddhartha* was written. Mark Boulby, a critic, saw the blend of psychoanalysis and religious elements in *Siddhartha* and states:

In Hesse's work discrimination between the psychoanalysis and the religious element in his symbolic motifs and patterns is extremely difficult. *Siddhartha* is a hagiographic legend but it is also a very personal confession which reworks the psychological material of earlier novels in fresh garb; and the mystical confusion of *Siddhartha* proves on examination to be much Christian as Buddhist or Hindu. (65)

*Siddhartha* seems as if Hesse's own confession describing his own doubts and struggle. He, too, had rebelled against the pietistic orthodoxy of his parents and the strict school system in Germany that destroyed any attempt of independence in its people. So, he ran away to shape his own life which are portrayed in his works. In this remark Multhaner notes:

After years of hard struggle to win recognition and financial security but also many friends and home. But the war brought him a rather rude awakening out of his idyllic life on the shore of Lake Constance where he had lived rather happy and retired life. His apparently so secure and well ordered world came crashing down over his head. (105)

Though set in India, the concern of *Siddhartha* is universal, expressing Hesse's general interest in the conflict between mind, body and spirit. While people have contemplated this conflict since time immemorial, it took on a special urgency for Hesse. Writing in the same vein Eve J. Engel states:

We are led to see only is the search for self, a journey on which all mankind is engaged. As Hesse moves from *Demian* to *Siddhartha*, to *Morgenlandfahrt*, we encounter description of more and more highly differentiated aspects of the quest. The goal of the search is not the self but "Menschwerdung" (to develop into human being). (262)

Dan Scherider in his essay states, “As a writer, Hesse nowhere put this clearer than in his Indian legend “*Siddhartha*”, in which he tried to formulate the Indian-meditative ideal and the old Asian teachings of the divine unity of all creature for our time and in our language” (15). Hesse’s ability to universalize private agony and personal crises, as demonstrated in *Siddhartha*, has allowed Hesse to achieve an ongoing international popularity.

From the very beginning of the novel, Siddhartha has a fierce longing to probe beneath the surface of life and discover the deeper layer of the self. Consequently, he refuses to simply follow the paths established by various religious teachers and he says “I am continuing my travels, not to seek other better teachings. For I know there are none, but to depart from all teaching and all teachers and to reach my goal by myself or to die” (39).

Slowly and gradually he makes himself empty of his home, his shadows like friend Govinda, all religious dogmas and everything else that might cause him to compromise his intense personal vision. By abandoning all the worldly phenomena, he comes to understand the essential mysteries of the self. Bracketing the self is a primary means of discovering knowledge.

As Siddhartha explains to the Buddha after listening to his teaching, even if a person has experienced some vision of the essential nature of life, they cannot give someone else the experience through which they obtained their wisdom. They can talk about the ideas they have learned and the principles they believe, but they cannot communicate the personal experience, which are the most important part of wisdom. Siddhartha also finds the wisdom and he says to Govinda “I have felt knowledge in me, [. . .] which I have found; wisdom cannot be passed on. Wisdom which a wise man tries to pass on to someone always sounds like foolishness” (155). Siddhartha finds the wisdom in the state of empty mind, in the state of no-words. So anything that is found in state of emptiness is inexpressible. In general sense,

the notion of Buddhist emptiness is known as the enlightenment. In this regard, this thesis will study emptiness in Hermann Hesse's novel *Siddhartha*, in the light of Buddhism.

## II. Buddhism: A Way to Nirvana

Buddhism has its 2500 years of history. Though the vivid history of Buddhism starts from Siddhartha Gautam, different scholars have their distinct views on the number of Buddhas. For the history of Buddha is not only the life story of Siddhartha Gautam but of those all Buddhas who were came before Siddhartha Gautam. Dr. T.D. Bhutia in his work *Beyond Eternity Through Mysticism* writes the number of Buddha are seven. According to him Siddhartha Gautam was the 7<sup>th</sup> Buddha and he also mentioned the coming of 8<sup>th</sup> Buddha. In this regard Dr Bhutia mentions that there are seven officially recognized buddhas. They are:

Vipashu (Sngay Nampar sigh)

Shikhe (Sngay chuktra-chen)

Visva Bhey (Sngay Thamchey-ky-ob)

Karkha-Chhandha (Sgay Korw a –shig)

Kanako-muni (Sngay sher-thup)

Kashyapa (Sngay Hoi-Sung)

Sakyamuni (Sngay Sakya Thubpa). (44)

According to Dr Bhutia ‘Maitreya Buddha’ would be the successor of Sakyamuni. But whatever is the history of buddhas, the path they have walked and shown were the same. All the Buddhas have walked a path of salvation and taught that to their followers. Though there were other Buddhas prior to Siddhartha Gautam, the founder of the Buddhist religion and philosophy is supposed to be the *Siddhartha* Gautam. The written scriptures on Buddhist religion has been found only after the *Siddhartha* Gautam.

Woorward in his opinion of the Buddha writes “the range of Buddhism is enormous. In time it covers 2500 years” (134).Therefore, though the history of Buddhism is not of a

single Buddha, the found scripture of Buddhism till now makes it clear that the Siddhartha Gautam is supposed to be the founder of Buddhism.

### **Siddhartha Gautam and Buddhism**

In the year 563 BC when Mahayamaya was on her way to her parents house, on the full moon day of the month of May in Lunbini, Nepal, she gave birth to Siddhartha. P. V.

Bapat on his book *2500 years of Buddhism* writes:

Old sages named Asita visited King Shuddhodana's palace and expressed a desire to see the new born child. On seeing the marks of greatness on its delicate limbs, Asita laughed and shed tears of sorrow. He laughed, he said, owing to his joy that a savior had come to the earth for the salvation of the people and shed tears because he would not have the good fortune to live long enough to see the achievements of the child. The child was named Siddhartha, or one whose purpose has been fulfilled. (Chapter 2 page 1)

But unfortunately Queen Mahamaya passed away seven days after the birth of Siddhartha. The Siddhartha was nurtured by his mother's sister, Mahaprajapati Gautami, who was also his step-mother. Shuddhodana, Siddhartha's father, tried his best to protect his son from worldly sufferings. When Siddhartha grew young, he was married to Yashodhara. Then he was given three palaces to suit the three seasons. The only purpose of luxury provided to him was to cast him away from the worldly sufferings. But one day when he had taken out his feet from the palace in a chariot through out the capital, his mind was triggered when he saw an old man, sick man, and a dead man. In this regard, Christmas Humphreys in his book *Buddhism* writes:

The story tells how, in spite of his father's efforts to keep all knowledge of world's woes from his eyes, the young prince, driving forth from the palace; saw an old man, then a sick man, then a dead man and at the sight of each

asked his charioteer the meaning of what he saw. ‘This comes to all man, said the charioteer, and the prince’s mind was troubled that such was the effort to birth, the common cause. Then he saw a recluse with shaven head and a tattered yellow robe. ‘What man is this?’ he asked, and was told it was one who had gone forth into the homeless life. Then follows on of the loveliest passages in the scripture. Then he returned to palace [...], bade farewell to his sleeping wife and babe [ . . .]. He exchanged his princely robes with those of a beggar, and went forth into the homeless life, alone. (31)

Then Siddhartha practiced rigid austerities and restored to different kinds of self torture. But self torture eluded him from real knowledge. He realized that the physical torturing is not the way to nirvana. Siddhartha did such kind of practices regularly for six years without any fruitful attempt. P. V. Bapat writes:

At the end of six years he realized that physical torture was not way to achieve enlightenment and decided to partake of food again. When on the day he was offered a bowl of milk by Sujata, a rich merchant’s daughter, who was devoted to him, he accepted it. At the same time he felt that in the course of that day he would become a Buddha, an awakened one by attaining ‘bodhi’ or supreme knowledge. (2)

After his attaining ‘bodhi’, he started to give sermons. And now a days the teaching and sermons that was given by *Siddhartha* Gautam after attaining ‘bodhi’ is known as Buddhism.

From it’s beginning, Buddhism spread around Eastern and Southeast Asia, where the majority of the world’s Buddhist still live. There are also Buddhist communities in other parts of Asia, and in the west. Though Buddhism has two main strands – Mahayana and Theravada, in the course of time other features also have developed.



Thervada branch of Buddhism is closest to the teachings of the Buddha himself. So, this school is supposed to be the oldest and regarded as the transmitter of Buddhism. Theravada Buddhist reveres the Buddha and do not worship other figures. They aim to the 'perfect saints' by following the eightfold path and tends to believe that people can reach the state of nirvana only through their own efforts. So they practice various modes of meditation for self-purification and self realization being strictly adherent to the sutras. The most common meditation practice in Hinayana is Vipassana which is based on sila Samadhi and prajna having entire exploration carried out within meditator's body. Vipassana leads to the understanding of the self being aware of the unification of mind and matter as nothing but a game which opens the eyes of wisdom.

In Mahayan school of Buddhism, a follower's first aim is to become a Bodhisattva, an enlightened being who does not pass into nirvana but remain in this world in order to help others to enlightenment. Mahayana Buddhists therefore place a high value on charity. Mahayana doctrine is comparatively tougher than Hinayana and is strongly devoted to the higher degree of compassion. So the basic attraction of Mahayana school lies in its orientation to accomplish the happiness and emancipation of all suffering beings. Mahayana meditation practice is partly a combination of Hinayama and Vahrayana tradition. It follows both yogic practices and sacred chant. It is very strange that meditator's biological urges including sex are gratified by mental visual-images imagined during meditation.

Likewise the term 'vajra' in Vajrayan means indivisible, indestructible which suggests the meaning of vajrayana as an ultimate and indispensable vehicle for liberation. It accepts sunyata as true nature of self, of Dhamma and of the universe. It is also a trantric vehicle that leads to mystic compartment of sunyata through constant practice of yoga and union of the ways and wisdom. Sunyata and Karuna (kindness) are two fundamental components to kill duality that lies between misery and enlightenment in the world. Similarly, it asserts the truth

of sunyata in every phenomenon where we can reach through physical mental processes by negating the ego. And the negation or sunyata combine with karuna is better experienced rather than described.

Zen Buddhism originated in China and spread to Japan in about 13<sup>th</sup> century. Zen Buddhist aim to live simple life, close to nature, using everyday actions as a means of meditation. Zen Buddhist meditates in a way that tries to see beyond logical patterns of thought and preconceived ideas.

Tibetan Buddhism is a form of Mahayana Buddhism. It is found in Tibet, China. In this school special value is placed in the Buddhist virtues of wisdom. Tibetan Buddhist has their own rituals, such as repeating sacred sayings, or mantras.

### **Buddhist Concept of Emptiness**

Buddhist emptiness is not a nihilistic emptiness that undermines our world but a “positive” emptiness which defines it. Nagarjuna, an Indian Buddhist scholar; one of the first detailed articulators of this idea, believed that the state of “neither existence nor non existence” described in this concept expressed the true nature of all things. This paradoxical nature of idea has helped to contribute a stereotype of Buddhist as a detached, mystical philosophy which sees the world as a grand illusion.

If we come out of this Buddhist philosophy and go to modern physics, the idea about the essence of matter will go very close to that of Nagarjuna. What the modern scientists have discovered is that there is no actual, easily identifiable “thing” at the basis of matter. So, the building block of the physical world that we inhabit, appear to oscillate between states of being and non-being. Nagarjuna says “to know the non-inherent existence of phenomena is to understand the reality of their emptiness. To know emptiness of phenomena is to overcome our ignorance about reality” (65). Emptiness is a mode of perception a way of looking at experience. It adds nothing and takes nothing away from the raw data of physical world. A

mediator looks at events in the mind and the senses with no thought. This mode is called emptiness because it's empty of the presuppositions we usually add to experience to make sense of it. To achieve emptiness is not an easy task; to master the emptiness mode of perception requires training in firm virtue, concentration and discernment. In *Siddhartha*, Hermann Hesse presents the protagonist as a true trainer of firm virtue. The protagonist Siddhartha goes through different stages of concentration and discernments. So without very hard practice, it is almost impossible to achieve emptiness. Without practice, the mind tends to stay in the mode that keeps creating stories and world views. And from the perspectives of that mode, the practice of emptiness sounds simply like another story.

The meaning of emptiness centers on practice and experiences rather than the idealistic and systematic theories. Choong Mun-Keat in his book *The Notion of Emptiness in Early Buddhism* writes:

the term sunna in sunnagara is at first used to refer to seclusion from worldliness, living in an empty place for practicing meditation; and this then leads to its being used symbolically to describe the resulting state of meditation as an emptiness-state. This usage of sunna “empty” (adjective) and sunnata “emptiness” (noun) to refer both to the empty place and to the state of meditation is the first stage in the extension of the common meaning of “emptiness” in early Buddhism (10).

The meaning of emptiness is a lack of any ontological solidity in persons or things. Emptiness functions as a meditative exercise that detaches one from every variety of clinging to delusory substantiality or fixed identity. Choong Mun-Keat further states that “meditative state of emptiness is a state of wisdom highly valued among meditations” (12). Meditative state of emptiness, as described in Buddhism is almost parallel to enlightenment.

Two thousand years ago, the Buddha was able to realize 'emptiness'. By doing so he freed himself from suffering 'dukkha' or unsatisfactoriness. From the standpoint of enlightenment, emptiness is the reality of all worldly existence. It is the realization of prajna, in Buddhist terms the, Bodhi. From the standpoint of liberation, emptiness is the skillful means that disentangle oneself from defilement and unsatisfactoriness. The realization of emptiness leads one to no attachment and clinging. It is skillful means towards enlightenment and also the fruit of enlightenment.

According to Mahayana Buddhism there are two ways to understand the concept of emptiness. One way is to try to understand the explanation about its true nature. The other way is the realization through practice. Mahayana teaching has always considered that the understanding of emptiness is an attainment which is extremely difficult and extraordinary. Dradasanikaya Sastra composed by Nagarjuna in 408 A.D. says "the greatest wisdom is the so-called sunyata" (4). The only path of its realization is through the supreme wisdom of an impassionate and discriminating mind. It is beyond the common worldly understanding.

Emptiness and the state of nirvana, where there is no rising nor falling, are interpreted by most people as a state of non-existence. They fail to understand that quite the opposite, sunyata is of substantial and positive significance. To explain the significance of sunyata or emptiness, the word "great void" is often used in Mahayana. In general we understand the 'great void' as something that contains absolutely nothing. However from Buddhist perspective, the nature of 'great void' implies something which does not obstruct other thing, in which all matters perform their own functions. The 'great void' is not separated from the material world. We can state that the profound significance of sunyata and the nature of sunyata in Buddhism highlights the 'great void's' non-obstructive nature.

In Mahayana, sunyata is defined as the foundation of all phenomena –form and mind. Sunyata is the true nature of all phenomena, and it is the basic principle of all

existence. All existence exhibits void-nature and nirvana nature. These natures are the reality of all existence. To realize the truth, we have to contemplate and observe our worldly existence. We cannot realize the former without observing the latter. The Heart Sutra translated by the Tripitak Master Hsuen Tsang states “only when Avalokitesvara, Bodhiasttva practiced the deep course of wisdom of Pranja Paramita, he comes to realize that the five Skanadhas were void” (14). We cannot realize the truth by seeking something beyond the material and mental world. The Buddha, using his perfect wisdom, observed worldly existence from various implications and aspects, and came to understand all existences.

### **Enlightenment and Satori**

Enlightenment is always sudden. It is not a question of traveling anywhere or going anywhere, it is simply a question of awakening to our own self. Enlightenment is an individual revolution. Somebody can give us a challenge, somebody can provoke us to the search, somebody’s presence may infect us, but nobody can give us enlightenment. Enlightenment is not a material quantitative phenomenon; it is a subjective qualitative experience. Enlightenment is inner experience, so deep that nobody can define what it is.

An Indian philosopher Osho in his book *Zen and the Art of Meditation* writes:

in a single moment, in one stroke, you can become enlightened. It is not a gradual process, because enlightenment is not something that you have to discover. It is already there. It is not something that you have to manufacture. If you have to manufacture it, of course, it will take time; but it is already there. Close your eyes and see it there. Be silent and have a taste of it. Your very nature is what I call enlightenment. Enlightenment is not something alien, outside you. It is not something else in time and space. It is you, your very core. (12)

Enlightenment is a process of opening to our innermost being, and as a result to the entire universe. To go deeper into our own being is the right way towards the enlightenment. If we feel or we have an idea that we know it all, we become imprisoned in the ego's realm of illusion. But true mediator, a wise man will tear this illusion and move ahead.

In Hesse's *Siddhartha*, While living with samanas both Siddhartha and his fellow Govinda practice the loosing of the 'self' or the transformation of the soul: "A heron flew over the bamboo wood and Siddhartha took the heron into his soul, flew over forest and mountains, become a heron, ate fishes, suffered heron hunger, used heron language, died a heron's death" (15). When they did such kind of practices Govinda says to Siddhartha "we have learned much, Siddhartha" (18). By this statement it becomes vivid that Govinda is entangled by his ego, he is in illusion but Siddhartha is not. Siddhartha replies to Govinda "... but we will not attain nirvana, neither he nor we. Govinda, I believed that amongst all the samanas, probably not even one will attain Nirvana. We find consolations, we learn tricks with which we deceive ourselves, but the essential thing- the way – we do not find" (18). The conversation demonstrates Govinda's illusionary fact and Siddhartha's enlightened vision. Their vision leads them towards the end of the novel. Govinda cannot release himself from the 'self incurred tutelage', but ignoring to become the Buddha's disciple, Siddhartha goes away in search of Nirvana and finds it. To come out from the illusion or ego is not an ordinary task. One person in hundred thousand will find the true path to spiritual enlightenment; one in a million will walk it and become the '*Siddhartha*'. Seeking enlightenment is a lifetime commitment. In Buddhism, the concept of liberation and enlightenment is highlighted very much. Three kinds of liberating doors are described in Buddhism – the signless, the desireless and emptiness. According to it, if we understand impermanence (anicca ) fully, it is called signless liberation. If we understand suffering (dukkha), it is the desireless liberation. And if we understand no-self (anatta), then it is the

emptiness liberation. To be liberated means never to experience an unhappy moment again. It means we are no longer creating kamma. So, one who liberates himself/herself from kamma, becomes Buddha, or one who has awakened, or enlightened.

Satori roughly translates into individual enlightenment, or a flash of a sudden awareness. Satori is an intuitive experience as well. The feeling of satori is that of infinite space. A brief experience of enlightenment is sometimes called kensho. Semantically, kensho and satori have virtually the same meaning and are often used interchangeably. Satori is the spiritual goal of Zen Buddhism. It is a key concept in Zen. Whether it comes suddenly seemingly out of no where as found in the enlightenment process called *Aparka Marg*, or after an undermined passage of time centered around years of intense study and meditation.

Even though Satori is a key concept in Zen, it should be brought to our attention and its tradition does not have exclusive rights to the enlightenment experience. That which is called Satori in Zen is a term that is wrapped around a phenomenon that is and that is not owned by any group, religion, or sect. D. T. Suzuki in his book *An Introduction to Zen Buddhism* writes “Satori doesn’t consist in producing a certain premeditation condition by intensely thinking of it. It is the acquiring a new point of view for looking at things” (49). Religiously it is taken as a new birth; intellectually it is the acquiring of a new viewpoint. Satori is the sudden flashing into consciousness of a new truth which is not dreamed of till then. In Zen there must not be just Kensho, but satori. There must be a general mental upheaval which destroys the old accumulations of intellectual and lays down the foundation for new life. There must be the awakening of a new sense which will review the old things. Siddhartha, the protagonist of the novel is a seeker of wisdom, enlightenment. Siddhartha gets frustrated by informative education that he had received from Brahmin teachers and ascetic gurus. Siddhartha is not interested in information, he is interested in transformation.

Siddhartha wants the transformation of the 'self' from ignorant to enlightenment. So being knowledgeable about information and transformation, Siddhartha says to Buddha:

O Illustrious One, that nobody finds salvation through teachings. To nobody, O illustrious One, can you communicate in words and teaching what happened to you in the hour of your enlightenment. The teaching of the enlightened Buddha embraces much, they teach much-how to live righteously, how to avoid evil. But there is one thing that this clear, worthy instruction does not contain; it does not contain the secret of what the Illustrious One himself experienced – he alone among hundreds of thousands. That is what I thought and realized when I heard your teachings. That is why I am going on my way-not to seek another and better doctrine; for I knew there is none, but to leave all doctrine and all teachers and to reach my goal alone or die. (34)

Siddhartha realizes that the pool of the wisdom is within him where he wants to swim, so he says “meaning and reality were not hidden somewhere behind things, they were in them” (40). He understands the difference between illusion and reality. Though, later, Siddhartha engages in sensual pleasure and wealth. Attachment with worldly desires frustrated Siddhartha tries to do suicide by drowning himself in the river. Excess frustration of the material world forced him to take such a devastating decision. The material luxuries by which he was surrounded, couldn't give him the inner peace that he is searching for. Fortunately death doesn't invite him, rather he hears the holy *Om* emanating from his inner soul. In this regard Hesse writes:

He bent, with closed eyes-towards death. Then from a remote part of his soul, from the past of his tired life, he heard a sound. It was one word, one syllable, which without thinking he spoke indistinctly, the ancient beginning and



ending of all Brahmin prayers, the holy Om, which had the meaning of “the perfect one” or “perfection” (89)

The hearing of *Om* is a flash, it is like the satori in Zen Buddhism. Then Siddhartha pronounced *Om* inwardly and he becomes conscious of the Brahman; the perfect one. After this flash his way towards enlightenment moves ahead, though he is not an enlightened till then.

As said earlier, emptiness is a mode of perception, a way looking at experience, a different kind of perception develops on Siddhartha. His sense of looking at anything is virtually different from the common human being. He sees the Buddha in a stone. He realizes the impermanence of every thing, he understands the potentiality of being Buddha in everything, after achieving the ‘Bodhi’ on his own effort. So, at last by casting away from all the worldly entanglements, he achieves the emptiness; a new insight to look at a thing and experience with detachment.

### III. Siddhartha's Journey to Emptiness

In Buddhism, to achieve emptiness is a lifelong practice. In general sense the notion of Buddhist emptiness is understood as enlightenment or nirvana. So, very similarly in *Siddhartha*, the gradual spiritual development which at last leads him to the emptiness. As Choong Mun-Keat writes:

two uses and meanings of “emptiness” have been noted (1) In the teaching of “emptiness” means “empty of craving or of desire, hatred, and delusion”. The meditative state of emptiness is a state of wisdom, highly valued among meditations. Also this is the ultimate meaning of emptiness in early Buddhism, since it is connected with the meaning of nirvana. (2) In the teaching of sunnaloka “empty world “emptiness” means “not-self”. The notion of not-self is “A is empty of, but A is not empty”. Also this is a basic meaning of emptiness in early Buddhism, because seeing about the fading away of craving or of desire, hatred, and delusion. To see the world as empty is to get rid of the self-view and the self-view is the root cause of craving (or desire, hatred, and delusion). (16)

For the ultimate goal, for the achievement of emptiness, he is strongly determined from the beginning. He is very famous among the Brahmins' sons and daughters. Everybody in his locality loves him and among all, his shadows like friend Govinda loves him much:

He loved the way he walked, his complete grace of movement; he loved everything that Siddhartha did and said, and above all he loved his intellect, his fine ardent thoughts, his will, high vocation [ . . . ] that was how everybody loved Siddhartha. He delighted and made everybody happy. (4-5)

Siddhartha is not satisfied with the old Brahmins continuous recitation of the verses of the *Rig-Veda*. Siddhartha is seeking some extra ordinary sense of wisdom from within. He knows

that his father's way of life will become obstacle in his way of seeking wisdom, and then he makes strong determination to renounce his house to join the world of Samanas. He noticed something precious there. Siddhartha asks for permission to leave house to his father. First his father tries to stop him but when finds him unmoved and says:

Siddhartha, he said, "why are you waiting?"

"you know why"

"Will you go on standing and waiting until it is day, noon, evening?"

"I will stand and wait"

"You will grow tired, Siddhartha."

"I will grow tired."

"You will fall asleep, Siddhartha."

"I will not fall asleep."

"You will die, Siddhartha."

"I will die."

"And would you rather die than obey your father?"

"Siddhartha has always obeyed his father."

"So you will give up your project?"

"Siddhartha will do what his father tells him." (10-11)

Siddhartha is haunted by only one thing that is wisdom. It might be his unconscious that tells him to leave his parental love for forever because he is unaware of entanglement that is created by his 'lovely' surrounding. Siddhartha only knows that he has to renounce his home for his goal, and he has only one goal- to become empty. Hesse writes:

Siddhartha had one single goal- to become empty, to become empty of thirst, desire, dreams, pleasure and sorrow- to let he Self die. No longer to be self, to

experience the peace of an emptied heart, to experience the pure thought –that was his goal. (14)

So his renunciation of house is his first step towards the emptiness. He makes himself empty of family love which is the important and very hard obstacle to overcome for the spiritual seeker like *Siddhartha*. He and his fellow Govinda join the samanas' world.

Remaining with the Samanas, Siddhartha learns the wonderful practice of patience, fast, and meditation. There he learns that the true emptiness or enlightenment comes when the self is destroyed. Samanas world doubled Siddhartha's determination towards his goal. He learned a great deal from the Samanas. He learned to overpower his desire, his soul, thirst, and hunger. Hesse writes:

He waited with the new thirst like a hunter at a chasm where the life ends, where there is an end to causes, where painless eternity begins. He killed his senses, he killed his memory, he slipped out of his Self in a thousand different forms. He was animal, carcass, stone, wood, water and each time he was reawakened. The sun or moon shone, he was again Self, swung into his life cycle, felt thirst. (15)

Siddhartha conquered the physical thirst but his spiritual thirst has been doubled. He learns little to overpower his Self and he also knows that only to overpower the self is not his ultimate goal, overpowering of soul only gives way towards emptiness.

The achievement that Siddhartha and Govinda got from Samanas is very great to common human being. Govinda says "we have learned much, Siddhartha" (18). But Siddhartha takes that all as an illusionary fact to satisfy oneself, and says "It does not appear so to me, my friend. What I have so far learned from the Samanas, I could have learned more quickly and easily in every inn in a prostitute's quarter, amongst the carriers and dice player" (16). He is not satisfied with what he has gained, he only learns things that suggested him to

take another way to get the goal. He also learns that enlightenment can not come from teachers but must be realized within. Siddhartha already learned Hinduism of his origin and felt that that would not pave him way to enlightenment. But unknowingly he is going forward towards his goal. Siddhartha has shown his great deal of understanding power which could lead him to emptiness. Whatever the Samana teachers were learning from their childhood, he learns within very short span of time. When Siddhartha understood that the Samanas' world could not help him to go further towards his goal, he asks for permission to leave. But the Samana teachers, as his father did, do not permit him to leave. Siddhartha, then with the power of magic that he learns from his Samanas gurus, makes them spellbound and compel them to give farewell with blessings. Hesse writes:

“He stood near the Samana, his mind intent; he looked into the old man's eye and held him with his look, hypnotized him, made him mute, conquered his will, commanded him silently to do as he wished. The old man became silent, his eyes glazed, his will crippled; his arms hung down, he was powerless under Siddhartha's spell. Siddhartha's thoughts conquered those of the Samana' he had to perform what they commanded” (23).

Siddhartha goes on to the gradual spiritual development but with the unsatisfied heart.

### **Siddhartha's Release from Tutelage**

Siddhartha being unsatisfied with the teaching of Samanas, met Buddha- the enlightened one. Though he already knew by his own conscience that the teacher and teaching cannot take him to his goal, he was half-heartedly optimistic about some precious instructions and ways to wisdom from the awakened one. But when he listens to Gotama's teaching, he becomes pretty clear that no teacher and no teaching can make a person enlightened. Gotama teaches how to live righteously, how to avoid evil. He teaches causes of

suffering and the elimination of suffering. He teaches four noble paths. But he never teaches what the Gotama himself experienced. He only talks about the things that he knew post to enlightenment but not how he became enlightened. He then understands what he has to do. He promises not to follow any teacher and doctrine anymore in future and says to Buddha:

O Illustrious One, that nobody finds salvation through teachings. To nobody, O Illustrious One, can you communicate in words and teachings what happened to you in the hour of our enlightenment. The teachings of the enlightened Buddha embrace much, they teach much-how to live righteously, how to avoid evil. But there is one thing that this clear, worthy instruction does not contain; it does not contain the secret of what the Illustrious One himself experienced-he alone among hundreds of thousands. That is what I thought and realized when I heard your teachings. That is why I am going on my way-not to seek another doctrine, for I know there is none, but to leave all doctrines and all teachers and to reach my goal alone-or die. But I will often remember this day, O Illustrious One, and this hour when my eyes beheld a holy man. (34)

Releasing himself from all kinds of doctrine and teacher, Siddhartha starts to judge himself; he starts to believe in himself. Hitting hard to his mind and continuous questioning to himself to find what he is searching for lead Siddhartha to deep thinking. Hesse writes “slowly the thinker went on his way and asked himself: what is it that you wanted to learn from teachings and teachers, and although they taught you much, what was it they could not teach you?”(38). The dissatisfaction of religion and teaching push him ahead to seek more. This dissatisfaction and frustration lead him to sexual passion and wealth. His life with Kamala and Kamaswami is his return to the life once he had abandoned due to undeveloped wisdom.

Siddhartha now is a wise man though he is not an enlightened one. His involvement with kamala could be taken as a struggle between passion and wisdom where passion temporarily wins. The excess of frustration and passion again shows him the way to wisdom, later.

### **Liberation of Self from Matter and Lust**

In Buddhism, nirvana is the absolute state of bliss achieved by destroying one's self. The highest level of nirvana is reached only by at death; although Siddhartha and Buddha both have reached such state of bliss after understanding Om and the interrelation of every thing in the world. After destroying his selfish ego, Siddhartha finds Atman within and comes very close to nirvana by listening to the river. He wishes to discover his innermost essence, Atman, which exists beneath his individual identity as Siddhartha. It is this essence of humanity that is in every person beneath their individual identities, and it is this identity that Siddhartha seeks to understand.

The Samana teach Siddhartha how to deny the desire of his body, thinking that by ignoring his body's needs by fasting, resisting cold weather and heat and controlling his heartbeat, one denies his self. Govinda has surrendered his self, his individual identity and chooses to listen to the desires and beliefs of Buddha. Rather than finding knowledge for himself, he clings to another's understanding of the world. Siddhartha adopting what he perceived to be the same goal as the Buddha offers us an alternative way to this same end but by a way not bound by the discipline of the Buddhist concept. In contrast to the way showed by the Buddha, he lives deeply enmeshed in commercial enterprise and sensuality, though a life which nonetheless brings even deeper insights than that gained by his friend Govinda in his forty years as a Buddhist monk. After he departed from Govinda, Siddhartha is consumed at first with loneliness, begins to listen more to the voice within him. It drives him to continue

walking, although he is uncertain of his destination. He becomes more in touch with the voice of his self and obeys it rather than ignoring it as he had always done before.

Siddhartha knows the distinction between body and self. He is aware of his bodily need. His 'Self' complains that it is unhappy with his life, focused on satisfying the desires of his body. This reveals that his self is not the same as his body because the two forces disagree. Siddhartha remains in Samsara because he enjoys lovemaking as well as his life as a merchant. His arrogance increases, and his self is ignored again. Gambling, drinking, greed and lust consume Siddhartha and overpower his self, which had told him to leave Samsara. The voice is quiet and his selfishness increases, becoming as arrogant as Kamaswami himself:

The years passed by. Enveloped by comfortable circumstances, Siddhartha hardly noticed their passing. He had become rich. He had long possessed a house of his own and his own servants, and a garden at the outskirts of the town, by the river. People liked him; they came to him if they wanted money or advice. However, with the exception of Kamala, he had no close friends.  
(75-76)

Siddhartha's self still exists within, deeper than his body. It is only that he is ashamed of the sinful life he had led in Samsara, consumed by materialism and lust. After so many years, Siddhartha hears his self speak to him again, and he is happy again. He goes back to his life and sees the present Siddhartha:

The glorious, exalted awakening which he had once experienced in his youth, in the days after Gotama's preaching, after parting from Govinda, that alert expectations, that pride of standing alone without teachers and doctrines, that eager readiness to hear the divine voice within his own heart had gradually become a memory, had passed. The only fountainhead which had once been



near and which had once sung loudly within him now murmured softly in distance. However, many things which he had learned from the Samanas, which he had learned from Gotama, from his father, from the Brahmins, he still retained for a long time: a moderate life, pleasure in thinking, hours of meditation, secret knowledge of Self, of the eternal Self, that was neither body nor consciousness. (76)

Siddhartha, then, finally destroys his ego and realizes how petty his worries are. He finds no difference between him and every people of the world. Siddhartha liberates himself from the wealth of Kamaswami and his own and also from the erotic passion of Kamala for forever. After this understanding, he finally feels Om and understands it. His inner self, Atman, becomes one with cycle and with all that exists in the world.

### **Conflicts, Pursuit and Enlightenment in *Siddhartha***

From the beginning Siddhartha continues to search for the true meaning of life. He sacrifices everything, almost to the point of self-destruction, before finding what he is really looking for. The conflicts help Siddhartha to lead himself to the turning point that is Siddhartha's own discovery. He faces conflicts with his colleagues, his religion, and himself.

Despite Govinda's love and adoration, Siddhartha knows that he must tell him to move on. He also meets kamala, who lessens his character by teaching him to gamble and lust. Siddhartha also encounters Vasudeva, the ferryman, who teaches him to listen to the river's voice. Siddhartha also struggles from a religious conflict. He begins his life as a Brahmin, but because of his dissatisfaction, left the religion in hope of finding something more. As a result he becomes a Samana, though later realizing that spirit alone cannot bring complete fulfillment. Finally, he escapes from structured religion, discovering his fulfillment and happiness. His final conflict remains as internal struggle. Dissatisfied and determined, he searches to fill his spiritual void. Despite his many failed attempts, he refuses to give up.

Nothing seems to completely fulfill him until meeting Vasudeva and listening to the river. Though this internal conflict continues, Siddhartha finally finds a solution.

Siddhartha has distrusted teaching and learning and that he has little faith in words that comes from teachers. Siddhartha experienced this when he was with Samanas, still seeking for peace of the inner soul. He distrusted to attain peace; he must learn everything from himself. However, along his journey, he was indebted by a beautiful courtesan, a monk, a rich merchant, a dice player, a Buddhist monk, and Vasudeva for they had influenced him and he gained great knowledge from each of them.

An unconscious material appetite forced Siddhartha to leave Gotama and to enter into the life of a common human being. When he reaches the Kamala's dwelling, his unconscious appetite comes to materialize. The desire to amalgam his self with the opposite sex abruptly emerged, then that shows him way to bodily pleasure and wealth. But unknowingly, by fulfilling his desire, he is continuing his journey towards the peace. Though his conscience struck his wit to leave the world of mater later, his involvements with all these gradually unchained him from the worldly desires. Siddhartha meets a beautiful courtesan named Kamala and asked her to teach him the art of love. Kamala said anyone who came to see her must be wealthy and therefore, she wouldn't teach Siddhartha for he was just a ragged Samana. She introduced him to a rich merchant named Kamaswami and from this man he learns to trade and became rich. As he becomes wealthier everyday, he has stopped being a Samana in his heart, he begins to play dice for money and jewel for he feels the excitement, pleasure, happiness through each game.

Siddhartha then, suddenly realizes that he is leading strange path and feels he is not above than ordinary human beings. Now he is in transition to divine from worldly phenomenon. Again he is back to his previous goal to attain inner peace that is enlightenment; that is nirvana; that is emptiness. Hesse mentions:

he would become annoyed and impatient when kamaswami bored him with his worries. He would laugh too loudly when he lost at dice. His face was still more clever and intellectual than other people's, but he rarely laughed, and gradually his face assumed the expression which are so often found among rich people- the expression of discontent, of sickliness, of displeasure, of idleness, of lovelessness. Slowly the soul sickness of rich crept over him. (78)

Siddhartha has learned that asceticism is a dead end in his search for enlightenment, and he now learns that the same holds true sensory indulgence. Both of them inevitably results in enslavement. Siddhartha has mastered everything he has attempted to do. He was a model son of a Brahmin and skilled ascetic among Samana, and he is now mastering the art of love and desire. However, perfection leaves little room for spontaneity, and he discovers that he has become a slave to everything that he has mastered. The more Siddhartha masters the material world, the more he becomes a part of it. He becomes almost equal to Kamaswami in business, and he becomes the greatest lover Kamala has ever had. In both cases, he becomes as good as his teachers. He is no longer a thin, and loin clothed Samana but a wealthy, well clothed, and well fed merchant. The only aspects of his spiritual roots that remains isolated within his mind. As he gains material power, his spiritual power declines, until Siddhartha can no longer hear his inner voice. Love and the material world have dragged Siddhartha away from the spiritual enlightenment he seeks. Siddhartha's dream about the dead songbird suggests what could happen if Siddhartha continues on his current path, and it helps Siddhartha to decide to leave the city. Kamala's actual release of the songbird upon Siddhartha's departure suggests that Siddhartha has experienced an awakening. After leaving town, Siddhartha returns to the river where he meets the ferryman. Disillusioned with himself and the world, he contemplates suicide, Hesse writes:

Siddhartha reached the long river in the wood, the same river across which a ferryman had once taken him when he was still a young man and had come from Gotama's town. He stopped at this rivet and stood hesitatingly on the bank. Fatigue and hunger had weakened him. Why should he go any further, where, and for what purpose? There was no more purposr; there was nothing more than a deep, painful longing t shake off this whole confused derma, to spit out this stale wine, to make an end of this bitter, painful life. (88)

Before he surrenders to death, Siddhartha hears the sound *Om* emanating from within him. Although he stops his self-destruction, his life has been. The appearance of *Om* signals the return of his spiritual self and the beginning of the final path that will lead him to enlightenment. *Om* conveys the very essence of life, and each time it appears in him, it brings Siddhartha back in touch with his pure and primal self. When he rejects his suicidal impulse, *Om* awakens him to a higher self, reminding him of the knowledge and divinity he has experienced throughout his search. On the first chapter, *Om* appears as a central, foundational teaching of the Brahmins. In this appearance, it saves his life and leads to awakening. It appears in the voice of the river as Siddhartha finally succeeds in attaining an enlightened state. His deep sleep and his awakening after hearing *Om* bring understanding. Now, having failed to reach enlightenment through the extremes of self-denial and self-gratification, Siddhartha prepares to find a balance between the two, as Siddhartha says "I had to experience despair, I had to sink to the greatest mental depths, to thoughts of suicide in order to experience grace, to hear *Om* again and to awaken refreshed again"(97). He had to let Brahmin, the Samana, the pleasure monger, and the man of property all to die in order to find the self that hides beneath these all identities.

Siddhartha has spent many years in search of enlightenment and his experiences have shown that enlightenment cannot be taught. However, in Vasudeva, Siddhartha finds the ideal

teacher in a sense, a teacher who doesn't teach. But Vasudeva is disagree with his teachings and says "if I could talk and teach, I would perhaps be a teacher, but as it is I am only a ferryman" (105). Vasudeva listens to Siddhartha and encourages him to listens to the river. These two to listen to the river. These two grow together as Siddhartha begins to learn from the river. Among his wisdoms, unreality of time, which he expresses by analogy to reincarnation, as he says, "Siddhartha's previous lives were also not in the past, and his death and his return to Brahma are not in the future. Nothing was, nothing will be, everything has reality and presence" (107). Awakened Siddhartha once again intrigued by love when Kamala leaves their son to him. He keeps his son with him by the river. The boy, though, refuses to accept Siddhartha as his father and does nothing he is told, as Hesse writes:

he had considered himself rich and happy when the boy had come to him, but as time passed and the boy remained unfriendly and sulky, when he proved arrogant and defiant, when he would do no work, when he showed no respect to the old people and robbed Vasudeva's fruit trees, Siddhartha began to realize that no happiness and peace had come to him with his son, only sorrow and trouble. (118)

Siddhartha begins to fill that this experience with his son had awakened new emotions in him. Eventually the young Siddhartha runs away and Siddhartha feels that everyone must follow his own voice to enlightenment. However, Siddhartha tries to prescribe his son's life just as his father had once tried to prescribe his, and attempts to impose his views on his son. Now he has learned for himself that no one can teach enlightenment, and that enlightenment must be found within. Siddhartha has gone through the full circle, just as he ran away from his own father, his own son runs away in search of his own path. Although his road to enlightenment led him through the material world of Kama, he has tested himself only against materialism, not against love, and the appearance of his son forces him to undertake this challenge.

Although Siddhartha has attained peace as a ferryman, he is fallible because he has not confronted love itself. Many compelling reasons exist for him to allow his son to return to the city, but blinded by love, he forgets that enlightenment must come from within and tries to impose his views on his son. Since leaving the followers of Gotama, Siddhartha has maintained that a journey toward peace and enlightenment must come from within, and Vasudeva points out his contradiction of his own beliefs.

In order to achieve enlightenment, Siddhartha must give up what he loves. Siddhartha's difficulty with giving up his son suggests that love is the toughest challenge. He is actually no different than anyone who has experienced love. Losing his son is difficult for Siddhartha, but what he experiences now as a father is the same as what he experienced years before as a son. When he sees a reflection of himself in the river, a reflection of his father is superimposed upon his, as though his father is subject to the same trial he is presently undergoing. The pain of losing his son is long lasting for Siddhartha. However, it enables him to identify with ordinary people more than ever before. Siddhartha reasons:

with the exception of one small thing, one tiny little thing, they lacked nothing that the sage and thinker had, and that was the consciousness of the unity of all life. And many a time he even doubted whether this knowledge, this thought, was of such a great value, whether it was not also perhaps the children self-flattering of thinking who were perhaps only thinking children.(145)

Suffering acts as a humanizing force for Siddhartha. Though he suffers, Siddhartha finds unity among his roles as father, traveler, and son, as well as unity between the past and future. In the past, Siddhartha has looked scornfully at people in the mortal world, but at this moment his sufferings allow him to see his unity with the world. He no longer stands above and is no better than anyone else; his suffering has shown him that he is like them, and only in

realizing his similarities with the rest of the world can he achieve the compassion necessary for true enlightenment. Vasudeva and Siddhartha have both experienced human suffering, and just as Vasudeva returns to the divine, so too will Siddhartha one day. Both of them have overcome their suffering in order to achieve enlightenments; Hesse mentions:

from that hour Siddhartha ceased to fight against his destiny. There shone in his face the serenity of knowledge, of one who is no longer confronted with conflict of desires, who has found salvation, who is in harmony with the stream of events, with the stream of life, full of sympathy and compassion, surrendering himself to the stream, belonging to the unity of all things. (136)

Still restless and unsatisfied after all his years of searching, Govinda goes to speak to the ferryman. The ferryman, Siddhartha, recognizes Govinda immediately, though Govinda does not recognize him. Govinda tells Siddhartha about his inability to find what he is searching for. *Siddhartha* tells Govinda that he does not find because he pays too much attention to the search. And Siddhartha says:

when someone is seeking, said Siddhartha, "It happens quite easily that he only sees the thing that he is seeking; that he is unable to find anything, unable to absorb anything, because he is only thinking of the thing he is seeking, because he has a goal, because he is obsessed with his goal. Seeking means: to have a goal; but means: to be free, to be receptive, and to have no goal. You, O worthy one, are perhaps indeed a seeker, for in striving towards your goal, you do not see many things that are under your nose. (140)

As a ferryman, Siddhartha will pass back and forth between two worlds that the river symbolically divides, which suggests that the polarities of life will always exist. Like Vasudeva, Siddhartha will be of service to those who cross over the water and will give his passengers the opportunity to listen to the river's message, though few will hear it.

Siddhartha will guide those who need guidance, but he will not force his wisdom on those who do not wish to hear it. Govinda comes to Siddhartha in search of a concrete explanation of how to achieve enlightenment, and when his word fails, he becomes able to communicate his knowledge through a kiss. When Govinda kisses Siddhartha's forehead, he has an experience same to that of Siddhartha had at the river. At this point Hesse writes:

He no longer saw the face of his friend Siddhartha. Instead he saw other faces, many faces, a long series, a continuous stream of faces- hundred, thousand, which all came and disappeared and yet all seem to be there at the same time, which all continually changed and renewed themselves and which were yet all Siddhartha. He saw the face of a fish, of a carp, with tremendous painfully opened mouth, a dying fish with dimmed eyes. He saw face of a newly born child, red and full of wrinkles, ready to cry. He saw the face of a murderer, saw him plunge a knife into the body of a man; at the same moment he saw this criminal kneeling down, bound and his head cut off by an executioner.

(150)

Govinda now see the diversity of the world represented as a great unity in Siddhartha's face.

### **Siddhartha's Realization of Anitya: Impermanence**

The term Anitya expresses the Buddhist notion that all things and experiences are inconstant, unsteady, and impermanent. Everything we can experience is dependent an external conditions. Everything is in constant flux, and the thing itself is constantly changing. Things are constantly coming into being, and ceasing, nothing lasts. According to the impermanence doctrine, human life embodies this flux in the aging process, the cycle of rebirth. The doctrine further asserts that because things are impermanent, attachment to them is futile and leads to suffering.



Siddhartha after too many upheavals in his life comes to realize the impermanence of every-thing. His deep concentration and his liberation from material world give him the newer insight to see the world. What he sees in a stone sounds very abnormal to layman and vice-versa. Awakened Siddhartha knows unreality of time and says to Govinda:

time is not real Govinda. I have realized this repeatedly. And if time is not real, then the dividing that seems to lie between this world and eternity, between suffering and bliss, between good and evil, is also an illusion. (143)

The vision about the philosopher king that Plato mentions in his essay. The Allegory of the Cave and Siddhartha awakened insight is almost the same. In Allegory of the Cave Plato says:

you must not wonder that these who attain to this beatific vision are unwilling to descend to human affairs; for their souls are ever hastening into the upper world where they desire to dwell; which desire of theirs is very natural, if our allegory may be trusted. (5)

Siddhartha becomes the philosopher king, for he unchains himself from the cave and tasted the elixir of the light of the sun. He does not have any desire return to the mundane world; the earlier life that he has lived was only the illusion.

Siddhartha sees and knows that the stone too has life. He sees the hundred of thousands of year's life cycle in a stone. He sees Buddha in a stone and says to Govinda:

“This”, he said, handling it, “is a stone, and within a certain length of time it will perhaps be soil and from the soil it will become plant, animal or man”. Previously I should have said: This stone is just a stone; it has no value, it belongs to the world of Maya, but perhaps because within the cycle of change it can also become man and spirit, it is also of importance. That is what I

should have thought. But now I think: This stone is stone; it is also animal,  
God and Buddha. (145)

Siddhartha sees the potentiality of becoming Buddha in a stone. A man who has achieved Bodhi can only see and realize such things. A man who is liberated from the world of sufferings can love a nonliving thing with such fashion and passion:

After realizing Anitya, Siddhartha finds a sinner and Brahma both in him and in others' as well. He mentions to Govinda that everything in the universe can achieve Bodhi one day. Everyone has the potentiality to become Buddha, only thing that everything needs is the very strong determination. Siddhartha says to Govinda "Listen my friend! I am a sinner and you are a sinner, but someday the sinner will be Brahma again, will someday attain Nirvana, will someday become a Buddha." (143)

Siddhartha also knows the truth of polarities and says to Govinda:

there is one thought I have had, Govinda, which you will again think is a jest or folly: that is, in every truth the opposite is equally true. For example, a truth can only be expressed in words if it is one sided. Everything that is thought and expressed in words is one-sided, only half the truth; it all lacks totality, completeness, unity. (143)

There is a truth, so there is a illusion, there is a Samsara, so there is a Nirvana. Though these polarities exist, it moves on a circular way. Illusion of time makes everyone to fell that everything will die and decay. If a stone deserve the potentiality to become Buddha, it becomes futile to say anything die and decay. In the course of time Siddhartha could become a stone and again Siddhartha. So to come out from this illusionary world, one should realize the impermanence, the constant circular flux of everything.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

In Hesse's attempt to explain enlightenment points out a fundamental difference in how various groups and teachers try to perceive Nirvana. Teachers such as Gotama and the Samanas insists that Nirvana is a state that can be obtained one day by listening the teacher and following his path. But Nirvana is actually going on all around us. All men can be sinner, all can be saints, but regardless, all things contain the potential for Nirvana or the perfection. The mind of a mediator should be triggered at the right time, then he could walk on the path towards the enlightenment. A sinner may also be on the path of becoming the saint. A gambler may also evolve to one day into a Buddha.

Therefore, all people are sacred. Siddhartha also implies that sacredness exists in all things, even a stone has potentiality to become Buddha one day. The enlightenment that is perceived by Siddhartha is incommunicable. Enlightenment is not the thing that is acquired by teaching, it is acquired through perception. So, anything that is acquired by perception cannot be told in words.

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