

Tribhuvan University

Enlightenment: The Individual Experience in Hesse's *Siddhartha*

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the Degree of Master of Arts in English.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the research paper entitled
"Enlightenment: The Individual Experience in Hesse's *Siddhartha*"
is my own original work carried out as a Master's student at the Department of English at
Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus except to the extent that assistance from others
in the thesis paper's design and conception or in presentation
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acknowledged.

All sources used for the thesis have been fully and properly cited. It contains no material
which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of
any other degree at Tribhuvan University or any other educational
institutions, except where due acknowledgement is
made in the thesis.

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Latter of Approval

This thesis, entitled "Enlightenment: The Individual Experience in Hesse's *Siddhartha*" submitted to the Department of English, Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Shirshak Bhatta, has been approved by the under signed members of the Research Committee:

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Abstract

Siddhartha is an outstanding contribution in the vast world of literature. The nearest possible meaning of enlightenment, avocations of the various ways to self-realization, and the melodious, lyrical writing styles are some of its prominent features. Siddhartha, who was initially against Buddha and other religious masters, finally accepts Vasudeva, the Ferryman and the River as his teachers. He considers everyone including Buddha, Govinda, Kamala and many others, even a stone as in the form of God, as in the form of divine teachers in the course of his long and personal journey of life. Because of his complete detachment from the worldly affairs; and his individual efforts, he ultimately succeeds inhaling and exhaling the Oneness, experiencing enlightenment.

The researcher has gone through various religious beliefs and philosophical insights to support Siddhartha's experience of enlightenment as relevant and true. The story line has been divided into five different phases where the attempt has been made to describe the concept of nirvana as per religion, philosophy and views of enlightened souls. Siddhartha's enlightenment proves to the world that anyone who is passion free, who is devoted and who surrenders to the Lord, one day or another attains divine consciousness. It is the success story of Siddhartha as well as the success story of each pure devotee who is the unidentified Siddhartha, hidden Siddhartha in our own world, own country, own community, most importantly in our own surroundings.

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Enlightenment: The Individual Experience

Enlightenment in Hesse's *Siddartha*: Introduction

Various scholars, religions and religious teachers have defined enlightenment since time immemorial. They have reflected upon various questions that everybody should go through their lives and seek answers to. The topic of enlightenment has always got a highest consideration in every part of the world. Each individual has to go through the mysterious stages of life where one finds it necessary to know the real answers of questions, the indestructible questions like who am I? Where this universe came from? What is death? What is the true purpose of my life? And so on. The day, when search begins with strong determination, since that day onwards one attains intellect to perceive truth. And the same truth leads to immortality, the life beyond death and one gets enlightened, just like Buddha and all perfected souls. Swami Vivekananda defines the experience of enlightenment and several ways to attain it according to individual interest in one of his books *The Yoga of Knowledge*. He advocates oneness that pervades entire universe and says:

In this world of many he who sees the one, in this ever changing world he who sees him who never changes, as the soul of his own soul, as his own self, he is free, he is blessed, he has reached the goal. Therefore, know that thou art thee; thou art the God of this universe, '*Tat Tvam Asi*' (That thou art) (265).

The oneness Swami Vivekananda is talking about is the ultimate goal of every religion and seeker of divine wisdom. For him after enlightenment one knows the self as infinite, immortal Atman and not this body any more.

Eastern and western philosophers have their own opinions regarding enlightenment. If we analyze attentively they differ only at the surface level but deep inside they are one and same. In spite of many contradictions they accept one thing that the real nature of man is something beyond this matter, something mysterious and inexpressible. Brutt, the western Buddhist philosopher explains enigmatic nature of Nirvana like this “What neither is released, nor is it ever reached; what neither is annihilated, nor it is eternity; what never disappeared, nor has been created; this is Nirvana, It escapes precision” (172).

Nirvana has been described as that extraordinary state of clarity wherein all illusions or non-facts have entirely disappeared and can never again arise. The universal law of change applies to everything ranging from the minutest germ to highest being in the cosmos but this law is not applicable to nirvana.

Characterizing Nirvana, Narada proclaims it is a state where mundane experiences do not work and the significance of material attachment is meant to be worthless because he describes nirvana as:

Nibbana, a supra mundane state, realized by Buddha and *Arahantas*, is declared to be not conditioned by any cause. Hence it is not subject of any becoming, change and dissolution. It is birth less (*Ajata*), decay less (*Ajara*) and death less (*Amara*). Strictly

speaking, *Nibbana* is neither a cause nor an effect. Hence it is unique (*Kevala*)” (500).

The above mentioned statement speaks of enlightenment as something causeless, birth less, decay less and deathless. *Narada* is declaring thus profoundly about Nirvana taking Buddha’s and many other Sage’s experiences, their teachings and their views.

According to Lord Krishna our prime responsibility is to find the true meaning of existence, the origin of this mysterious universe and for that purpose it requires to attain the state of oneness with God. Suggesting *Arjuna*, Krishna proclaims in *Bhagavad Gita* the intuitive wisdom. He states “After many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all the causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare” (qtd. in Yogananda's *Bhagavad Gita* 7:19). There is another equally powerful *Sloka* in *Gita* where Krishna declares “He who perceives me everywhere and beholds everything in me, never loses sight of Me, nor do I ever lose sight of him” (qtd in Yogananda's *Bhagavad Gita* 6:30). Thus, the true journey of enlightenment starts from *Bhagavad Gita*, not only by mere reading but experimenting, implementing, applying the wisdom offered by Shree Krishna in our lives and by living the truth ourselves.

Every religion practiced in the world has held an ultimate goal of life in one way or another. In Islam, one of the major religions of the world, it is believed by Muslims that the final purpose of the existence is to surrender and

submit to Allah or only God. Muhammad Abdul-Rauf, a very well known Muslim scholar writes that the religion demands “worship and loyalty to the one True God, the Creator and Sustainer of all Mankind” (171), which lead to the attainment of salvation. They hold believe that salvation for them is achieved not through man’s effort but only through God’s Grace.

Thus, for attaining enlightenment one needs knowledge of the complete science of matter and spirit, perishable and imperishable, the material body with its five sense organs, five action organs, and five objects of senses, five elements of nature (*Prakriti*) such as water, air, fire, earth and ether; four other more subtle aspects of matter mind, ego, intellect and non-manifested three modes of nature. These twenty four elements are all materials of the nature (Maya), are just matters, without self consciousness. But the source of functioning and energizing all of them, the supreme intelligence is the Atman, God. The western philosopher Peter Della Santina has discussed about the reasons of reborn in his book *The Tree of Enlightenment*. He writes in this book:

There are three afflictions which cause us to be reborn again and again in the wilderness of cyclical existence- namely, attachment, aversion, and ignorance. These afflictions are eliminated by the correctives of renunciation, love and compassion, and wisdom, respectively. Through cultivating these three attitudes the practitioner is able to remove the afflictions and attain Enlightenment (23).

The basic purpose of having human life is to get rid of this cyclical existence where one gets born and develops attachment with sense objects through senses. For him these correctives lead one towards eternality of blissful life.

The peace and happiness to be found in Nirvana is superior to every sort of happiness given by sense pleasures. It is the peace achieved on the extinction of suffering. When the person reaches the state of oneness or attains enlightenment, he is free in the full sense of the world. He is liberated from all worldly affairs.

This research paper aims at portraying Siddhartha and his long journey, his life journey for the attainment of enlightenment. All the upheavals Siddhartha faces on the way, each and every attempts he has made to complete this journey a successful one, how his relationship with other characters facilitate him to realize oneness with them. What are the major issues, major phases and stages in the life of Siddhartha those pave the way for him, directly or indirectly, towards Nirvana?

In the first phase entitled "Siddhartha and His Spiritual Quest" introduction of Siddhartha and his spiritual quest, his relation with Govinda and the reason of his leaving home can be found. Most importantly Siddhartha leaves home by his own inner dwelling dissatisfaction, his own disguised self, unclear thinking spirit and deluded mind. Siddhartha doesn't seem to whether those *Samanas* have acquired the divine wisdom. But all of this results in nothing, no learning, no wisdom, no knowledge. At the end of this phase he disbelieves

Samanas and their teachings and only believes in himself, Siddhartha, who is hidden somewhere inside in secret.

In the second phase "Gautama: The God Man in the Eyes of Siddhartha" Siddhartha and Govinda's departure from *Samana*'s company, their unexpected meeting with Buddha, Siddhartha's talk with Buddha where he praises Buddha as God standing in front, at the same time criticizes his pious teachings and Siddhartha's leaving Buddha's place as well as Govinda, who becomes Buddha's disciple, forever has been included. Siddhartha gets deluded whether to choose the path of discipleship or path of self help. Finding him unable to come out of this delusive intellect he keeps walking. In this phase another major character Vasudeva is not fully introduced but mentioned as Ferryman who gives Siddhartha shelter for one night. At the end, this phase successfully captures Protagonist's failure of deciding exact direction towards nirvana and his aimless life ahead.

The third phase entitled "Siddhartha's Excessive Materialistic Obsession Leads to his Self-Annihilation" introduces Siddhartha as an adult who has recently crossed teenage. Probably, due to his newly arising sexual impulses or ardent physical and psychological transformations he decides to go in the company of people, in the *Sansara*. In this phase initially Siddhartha sees a dream which implicitly indicates his fascination for lustful life. This phase also advocates his excessive attention towards opposite sex, his meeting with Kamala and Kamaswami. Symbolically, Kamala represents his indulgence in sexual pleasures and Kamaswami represents his excessive desire to earn money and live

a wealthy life. Siddhartha with both of them knows the bitter truth that desires are never satisfied by fulfillment of desires. This phase ends with Siddhartha's realization of his self annihilation, his leaving the life of *Sansara* and returning back to his own self.

In the fourth phase "God Incarnates as Vasudeva" Siddhartha's power of determination, his ability to renounce the pleasures of the worldly life has been presented. And it is shown that only because of his devotion for enlightenment and detachment from sense pleasures makes him eligible to attain God in the form of Vasudeva. Despite having abandoned everything, he could not restore clear thinking spirit and feel Atman. For this reason he attempts suicide but the sacred OM stops him and bestows all his lost achievements, all his divine consciousness. At the end of this phase Vasudeva accepts him as his true counterpart who is going to stay together, going to assist him as ferryman, learn from the river and experience enlightenment.

In the fifth and the final phase entitled "Siddhartha Enlightens Govinda" the protagonist Siddhartha has been passing through final wound given by his son. Siddhartha's tremendous attachment with his son can be known when he commits hundreds of foolish acts to please him. After realizing his weakness and being cured by Vasudeva Siddhartha approaches near enlightenment. When he experiences enlightenment his feeling of supremacy over others, feeling of separation with the world disappeared. At the closing part of this phase Siddhartha expresses to Govinda his thoughts about Nirvana.

Siddhartha's Enlightenment: Different Phases

In this segment the researcher is going to explain and explore major issues, directly or indirectly, encompassing Siddhartha's life since childhood, his priorities in life, his relationship with family, friends and everyone on the way of life journey, and most importantly his deep rooted quest for spiritual enlightenment. The attempt has been made to go through each phase primarily focusing the concept of enlightenment, what different religions, religious authorities, enlightened souls and philosophers have to say about nirvana and how Siddhartha attains it. The role of other characters, the importance of each event and how they inspire Siddhartha to achieve nirvana at last are duly included within this chapter.

Siddhartha and His Spiritual Quest

Siddhartha's thinking and the way he perceives meaningful purpose of life even in earlier age make him different among other characters. More profoundly, his incomparable knowledge regarding the core idea of religion, his unwavering faith and love for divinity latent within him and others and his generous attempts to realize self overcoming all sorts of sensual desires characterize Siddhartha and introduce his spiritual quest. Since childhood he prefers to practice meditation, even knows to pronounce OM while exhaling and inhaling. Moreover, Siddhartha is conscious enough to choose people around with whom he could prosper spiritually; that is the reason he never indulges in mere playing and forgetting oneself in childish impulses. His friendship starts and ends with Govinda who

also selflessly loves and trusts his best friend. Hesse says more than all the others he was loved by Govinda, his friend, the son of Brahman. He loved Siddhartha's eye and sweet voice; he loved his walk and the perfect decency of his movement. Govinda knew he would not become a common Brahman, not a lazy official in charge of offering, not a mean, deceitful priest. He wanted to follow Siddhartha. And in days to come, when Siddhartha would join the glorious, then Govinda wanted to follow him as his friend, his companion, his servant, his spear-carrier, his shadow (8-9).

Such selfless is their friendship where doubt, jealousy and the feeling of superiority stay no more. To fulfill his spiritual quest Siddhartha finds it quite difficult to remain around the people of community and members of family. So he decides to leave home in search of truth behind this vast and mysterious universe, not alone but Govinda together. They reach soon unknown *Samana's* place into the forest nearby.

Here, Siddhartha helplessly chooses the life of *Samana* because he has no option. He considers them as realized masters but very soon after following their instruction of killing the desire, numbing all senses, avoid hunger and thirst for several days and trying to stay calm makes Siddhartha rebellious, frustrated and very far from his goal. As a result, Siddhartha realizes that he has missed the way with *Samanas* and gets a glimpse of Buddha's concept of Middle way to simply achieve Buddha-Nature. Regarding the Middle way concept Peter Della Santina has talked more or less in his philosophical writings. Santina prefers avoidance of

both extremes, namely attachment and renunciation. For this he has taken example of Buddha's life where he explains:

Before his renunciation of the life of a house holder, Siddhartha enjoyed the life of a luxury and sensual pleasure. Later, when he had become an ascetic in search of the truth, he spent six years practicing all manners of deprivation and self-mortification. Eventually he understood the futility of such practices as well as the meaninglessness of his former life of indulgence, and discovering the Middle way that avoids all both extremes (28).

Siddhartha understands bitter truth of life and realizes that by meditation alone one cannot penetrate the darkness of ignorance. He gets the wisdom that seeing into the real nature of existence one needs to be perfectly balanced in each endeavor he/she performs. This conception of Middle way can be illustrated as the attitude of wisdom in the life of Buddha.

After spending several days with *Samanas*, Siddhartha realizes that his decision to become *Samana* has turned him into a suspicious man who starts hating everything associated with learning. The foundation of Siddhartha's belief in spiritual practices and in learning the art of self mastery becomes weak and starts shaking. Consequently, he expresses Govinda his painful condition. He says to him that he is suffering a thirst, and on the long path of a *Samana*, the thirst has remained as strong as ever. He has always thirsted for knowledge; always been full of questions. There is indeed no such thing as, he believes, as what is referred

as learning. For Siddhartha, there is just a single knowledge which is everywhere, this is Atman, this is within every creature, and so he starts to believe that this knowledge has no worse enemy than the desire to know it, than learning (24-25).

These opinions arise after Siddhartha decides to leave the path of *Samanas* and go to find his self by his own undertakings. He firmly makes his mind to attain nirvana without teachers, without teachings, without any kind of guidance and support from anyone, even from the scriptures. But Govinda, who is very sensitive, shy, fearful by nature could not perceive, believe and digest his friend's attitudes. Having loved Siddhartha more than anything else Govinda could not reject his proposal to leave *Samanas* and convinces Siddhartha to go to meet Gautama Buddha.

In this phase Siddhartha learns many new facts regarding how difficult it is to believe someone as a teacher on the way to enlightenment and how easier it is to be misguided. There is a great impact of this learning in his further life. Great is his renunciation of the world and his relatives behind, greater his devotion for *Samana's* teachings and greatest his attempts to annihilate thoughts, feelings, emotions and most of all his own self. But all of this results in nothing; now he disbelieves learning and only believes in himself, Siddhartha.

Gautama: The God Man in the Eyes of Siddhartha

Siddhartha has not remained as positive as earlier while he comes across spiritual masters. The same attitude of him can be seen in his first meeting with Buddha; Siddhartha seems to contradict with the ideal teachings of him. Although

acknowledging Buddha as enlightened person and loving his teachings at the same time, Siddhartha never completely surrenders unto him like Govinda. He clearly knows that Buddha, the *Sakya muni*, has attained freedom from the suffering of the world; has raised himself above the constantly moving cycle of birth, growth, decay and death and has incarnated for grief-stricken humanity, among ignorant, deluded mankind. Hesse has defined the fair personality of Buddha beautifully. He portrays Buddha on his way, humbly, deep in thought, his calm face neither happy nor sad. He seems to smile quietly and inwardly. With a hidden smile, resembling that of a healthy child, the Buddha walked, wearing the robe and placing his feet just as all of his monks did, according to a precise rule. But his face and his walk, his quietly lowered glance, his quietly dangling hand and even every finger expressed peace, expressed perfection, did not search, did not imitate (33-34).

Meanwhile Siddhartha prioritizes the idea of talking to Buddha and conveys the doubts regarding his teachings. So he first asks forgiveness and claims that Gautama's teachings lack very significant aspect and that is the exact experience of enlightenment. Here, Siddhartha believes that Buddha cannot grant the inexpressible to others, he can only tell and show the way to walk and possibly pre-inform the hardships and difficulties one might face on the way but he cannot walk for us. It is the self that has to walk and bear fruits, sweet or bitter. The self alone has to endure the pain or pleasure of walking on this path to achieve perfection, to get enlightenment, to experience oneness.

He says to Gautama that his teachings are excellent, no one is able to deny their powerful message, and everyone has to bow down before them. But again says Siddhartha they lack one important thing, the one that is must to get salvation which Buddha has not mentioned, and even cannot mention, cannot utter by the help of words. That is the experience in the hour of enlightenment, in that moment what happened and how the world transformed, this is the true treasure of Buddha which he cannot simply pass on. Acknowledging the difficulty of describing *Nibbana* in words, in *The Buddha and His Teachings*, Narada writes:

However clearly and descriptively one may write on this profound subject, however glowing may be the terms in which one may attempts to describes its utter serenity. *Nibbana* is not a subject to be grasped by intellect alone: it is a supra mundane state (*Lokottara Dhamma*) to be realized only by intuitive wisdom (490).

Narada also believes that the experience of nirvana being out of the world by nature, being above the capacity of body, mind and intellect is not only challenging to attain but also to express by the help of words.

After listening Siddhartha, Gautama expresses his veneration towards this true seeker of spirituality. He comes to know that Siddhartha possesses the capability to achieve nirvana; he loves Siddhartha's way of talking politely, his way of commenting on teachings, his attitude of showing zeal and thirst for true

knowledge. At the same time Gautama sees this devout man has wisdom and if this wisdom would be misused his life will be ruined, torn out, devastated like never coming back to the right track. So, Buddha, with the intention of remaining always fresh in the heart of Siddhartha utters these words as warning for the attainment of perfection: "You are wise, O *Samana*", the venerable one spoke "You know how to talk wisely, my friend. Beware of too much wisdom!" (42)

With these words of warning and advice Siddhartha leaves *Jetavan* groove, leaves his shadow like friend Govinda, and goes in search of God all by himself alone. Having received a new Siddhartha, not youth but mature man, the awakened one who finds everything beautiful around, accepts himself as his only teacher.

This phase of Siddhartha's life has taught him many knowledge-oriented lessons under the sonorous shelter of Gautama's wisdom. In the entire novel up to the hour when Siddhartha attains enlightenment; the great impression of Gautama, his teachings, his sight, his best wishes help him. Gautama's fair and simple personality Siddhartha wants to adopt and finally attains, the Buddha-Nature.

Siddhartha's Materialistic Obsession Leads to His Self-Annihilation

This phase starts with the complete transformation of Siddhartha's personality. Since, he has accumulated several experiences regarding spiritual aspect of man as well as of intellectual aspect which consist knowledge of self. At the time of leaving Gautama, Siddhartha realizes a kind of transformation in his thinking pattern; he celebrates the arrival of his adulthood and gets an awakening

feeling of joy, though momentary. Siddhartha knows that for finding divine we must be able to love ourselves and take care of our body and feelings, we must try to see the divinity latent within everything in creation. He starts thinking that avoidance of reality by which we are always surrounded results in nothing. So, one must try to find divinity in and through all possible means whether physical, mental, intellectual or spiritual.

Siddhartha holding his own hand and following inner voice reaches near a river where a small hut of a ferryman stands. The fortunate *Samana* finds shelter to spend night with the helpful and generous ferryman, Vasudeva. Now it would be considerable to discuss about his dream while sleeping in the hut. Surprisingly, dream world places him before Govinda who was very sad for letting him walk alone in the path of salvation. Govinda was standing in front of him, dressed in the yellow robe of an ascetic. Sad was how Govinda looked, sadly he asked: why have you forsaken me? At this, he embraced Govinda, wrapped his arms around him, and he pulled him close to his chest and kissed him, it was not Govinda anymore, but a woman, and a full breast popped out of the woman's dress, at which Siddhartha lay and drank. It tasted of woman and man, of sun and forest, of every fruit, of every joyful desire (54-55).

In the above mentioned passage, it is necessary to pinpoint the word 'desire'. As Siddhartha turns into adolescent period the desires spring forth from his subconscious faculty of mind which he might had suppressed, mocked and considered them of no use. He used to think these desires won't be able to obstruct his way towards enlightenment. But in contrary, Siddhartha's strong desire to be

with *Sansara* attracts him towards material pleasures which the dream symbolizes. Because of his deceptive ego Siddhartha becomes the victim amidst the trap of *Sansara*. Siddhartha seems to miss the right track which could lead him to God. Because of his uncontrolled desires and lack of spiritual guidance he becomes his own enemy. In the *Bhagavad Gita* Lord Krishna states: "Let man uplift the self (ego) by the self; let the self not be self-degraded (cast down). Indeed, the self is its own friend; and the self is its own enemy" (qtd in Yogananda's *Bhagavad Gita* 6:5).

From this moment of dream onwards his life changed. He even considers himself no *Samana* anymore, no priest anymore, no forest dweller, no fruit eater, no self cheater anymore. Instead he hovers around the thinking of going and becoming one of the worldly and lustful people. Right after entering the city a beautiful courtesan Kamala and a renowned merchant Kamaswami were waiting to welcome. To take him for the long and dreary ride of *Sansara* and to motivate him sink into the world of sex, wine, gambling, frustration, hatred and tenacious attachment.

No matter how much Siddhartha puts effort to save him from the entanglement of this life but with his constantly growing age he could not cheat himself. While standing in front of the mirror, listening to Kamaswami's regretful talks and he sees Kamala's beautiful face turning ugly and old; Siddhartha feels tremendous regret and suffers. Experiencing his self annihilation and true nature of *Sansara*, he leaves everything behind and again aimlessly goes into the forest, goes in search of relief, in search of oneness. Swami Vivekananda has elaborated

how someone becomes aware of divinity after realizing bitter truth of sensual pleasures and his expressions come out:

There comes a time when the mind awakes from this long and dreary dream-the child gives up its play and wants to go back to its mother. It finds the truth of this statement, desire is not satisfied by the enjoyments of desires, it only increases the more, as fire when butter is poured upon it (65).

The above quote justifies Siddhartha's reason of disappointment, sense of meaninglessness and the cause of suffering while he was living the life of *Sansara*.

This phase of Siddhartha's life has several ups and downs, has various lessons which teach him the transitory and ephemeral nature of sensual pleasures. After this phase Siddhartha gets real spiritual maturity which facilitates him to be detached with the world completely.

God Incarnates as Vasudeva

In this phase, initially Siddhartha seems to be puzzled who has not yet decided where to go and with whom to meet. He is almost in his forties now when he approaches the same river, once he crossed while coming to the city on the way. Since, the pot of his life has now been filled by various sins and misdeeds that he starts nourishing taboo thoughts, thoughts of shameful defeat in the long battle with time. Meanwhile, he puts his weapons down, the spiritual powers within; and prepares to be killed by fierce attack of enemies, the demonic powers

within. He cannot help reoccurring the past in the screen of his mental theatre which he wants to switch off but alas! It is not a mere television screen but the screen of his consciousness. No better option he finds to switch of this drama of life than to take breathes out of his flesh. There was nothing left for him, except to annihilate himself. This was the great vomiting he had longed for: death. With a distorted face, he stared into the water, saw the reflection of his face and spat at it. In deep tiredness, he took his arm away from the trunk of the tree and turned a bit, in order to let himself fall straight down, in order to finally drown. With his eyes closed, he slipped towards death (95).

Suddenly, what happens is something miraculous, as if he has been wounded by the divine arrow once again. He has been bestowed self consciousness, has been gifted all his Godly characteristics and has been reminded all his glorious memories when he hears the sacred sound OM, vibrating in and through his self.

Hermann Hesse puts much effort to describe this syllable OM many times. The author is in true sense of the word religious, no matter which religious institution he belongs to, what his nationality, culture and upbringing is but only one thing is certain that he has lived perfect life of peace and satisfaction. Appreciating the importance of OM, authenticating its relevance not only in Hindu tradition but also in Christianity, the Indian scholar E.D. Viswanathan says:

Sage Patanjali who wrote Yoga Sutra speaks of God as "AUM". In the Christian Bible, AUM is mentioned as the word. "In the

beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God". The exact parallel line in the Rig Veda reads "In the beginning was Brahman, with whom was the word (AUM) and the word was truly Supreme Brahman". The word AUM and Mohammedan 'Amen' all represent one and the same (157).

The above mentioned paragraph is an excerpt which proves that the entire mass of people, who think their religion is the only authentic and valid religion, are wrong. Because just like Viswanathan has found the similarity, there can be more places for anyone who attempts to find it out.

The power of inner divinity OM forbids Siddhartha committing such a trivial act, suicide. After deep sleep he finds himself as in the mental strength that he had felt long ago, probably while leaving home and while talking to Buddha. Regaining previous divine consciousness, Siddhartha makes firm resolution that he is not going to leave this river soon. He starts learning many secrets of life from this river. The friendly Vasudeva accepts him as his true counterpart who is going to stay together and experience the enlightening wisdom. Hesse writes "This was among the ferryman's virtues one of the greatest: Like only a few, he knew how to listen. Without him having spoken a word, the speaker sensed how Vasudeva let his words enter his mind, quite, open, waiting, how he did not lose a single one, was just listening" (112).

Vasudeva is a man of supreme qualities; the most significant is his ability to listen without single word of comment, distrust and frustration. Vasudeva and

the river both are teaching Siddhartha in the way he wanted to learn; silently, secretly, politely, without the help of words, without reason and logic, unknowingly.

Thus, God materializes himself as ferryman for his sincere devotee. God has descended in the form of the river, as in the form of illiterate Vasudeva. Vasudeva does not know to speak wisely, who does not have even seen a single word of religious scriptures and then also he is perfect, always peaceful, always smiling. In *Bhagavad Gita* Lord Krishna says "If a man gives up all material and religious activities and surrenders his will to me, then I will save him from all Karmic debts and so called sins" (qtd. in Yogananda's *Bhagavad Gita* 18:66).

At last, in this phase Siddhartha is saved by God, who was since the years of childhood striving to attain Him, know Him and understand Him. Under the benevolence of Vasudeva's shelter, who is the personification of river, Siddhartha finds true peace, approaches very near to his goal.

Siddhartha Enlightens Govinda

In this phase Siddhartha is learning the true meaning of life as a shadow of Vasudeva. It seems that he has not yet become successful, has not gained the divine quality of non-attachment and has not understood himself totally separate from body, mind and intellect. Because of his heavy attachment with his son Siddhartha fails to live in this world like Lotus leaf remains untouched, unattached and unaffected by the drops of water. Such a strong attachment of Siddhartha can be known when he commits hundreds of foolish acts to impress

his son. The son being moody boy grown in the habits of wealthy people does not consider Siddhartha as his father. But Siddhartha, though having final wound, has become such childlike, such a tenaciously attached with his son. Peter Della Santina, who is well known western philosopher, presents in a simple language what actually the cause of attachment and ignorance:

It is said that while one may sever the branches of a tree and even cut down its trunk, if the root is not removed, the tree will grow again. In a similar way, although one may remove attachment by means of renunciation and aversion by means of love and compassion, as long as ignorance is not removed by means of wisdom, attachment and aversion are liable to arise again (26).

Santina primarily focuses upon the idea of ignorance which is more powerful than attachment and aversion. Sometimes we happen to find ourselves completely detached and full of love with the whole world as oneself, especially after some catastrophic moments in life. Because completely the ignorance has not gone, again very soon we fall into the trap of *Sansara*.

In the case of Siddhartha similar incident has happened. Here the root cause of his downfall is ignorance not attachment and aversion. Even after spending whole life in search of the meaning of spirituality, he is unable to give up body attachment, whether his own or of his son. He is unable to identify Atman which is beyond life, beyond death and cannot be limited by time, space and matter.

The blissful moment of Siddhartha's life and long awaited day of his dream has now been alerting him to be ready to experience it. He approaches near enlightenment, feels universal oneness and successfully breaks the long lasting cycle of birth and death. Siddhartha realizes that his son came to him for making him pay the debt of his father whom he had once given the same suffering and pain just like he is now feeling for his son. Slowly blossomed, slowly ripened in Siddhartha the realization, the knowledge, what wisdom actually was, what the goal of his long search was. It was nothing but a readiness of the soul, ability, a secret art, to think every moment, while living his life, the thought of oneness, to be able to feel and inhale the oneness. Slowly this blossomed in him, was shining back at him from Vasudeva's old, childlike face: harmony, knowledge of the eternal perfection of the world, smiling, oneness (139).

Thus, Enlightenment is attained by Siddhartha only because of his selfless love and complete surrender before Vasudeva. He realizes highest wisdom that we identify ourselves as this mortal body just in the same delusive way, a wave in the ocean finds it lonely and constantly transforming from one form to another. The wave, sometimes going higher and sometimes lower, sometimes the biggest among other little waves and sometimes smallest among other huge ones. Each wave whatever it might think itself to be but in reality it is nothing but water, nothing but ocean, nothing but oneness.

Siddhartha gets such a highest wisdom when Vasudeva out of veneration and love directly expresses himself as God to remove Siddhartha's wave like identity. While Siddhartha was still speaking, still admitting and confessing, he

felt more and more that this was no longer Vasudeva, no longer a human being, who was listening to him, that this motionless listener was absorbing his confession into himself like a tree absorbs the rain, that this motionless man was the river itself, that he was God himself, that he was the eternal itself (141-142).

After Siddhartha's realization Vasudeva merges in oneness of the forest, becomes one with Siddhartha and returns to infinity. He puts an end to this drama of life after completion of his purpose of incarnation, the sacred purpose of Siddhartha's enlightenment. The Buddha said that the potentiality to attain enlightenment or to become Buddha which is called Buddha-Nature is inherited in every human being but man's delusion, ignorance and attachment stops it to come out. In *Mayflower II* C. T. Shen presents Buddha's opinions regarding Buddha-Nature and writes:

Records show that Buddha discovered that every man has the same basic ability and infinite universe just as Buddha experienced it. Only man's ignorance and tenacious attachment to wrong views resulting from incomplete and distorted information prevent his basic ability (Buddha-Nature) from unfolding fully. However, at Enlightenment, ignorance and tenacious attachment to wrong views disappear, enabling man to discover the complete universe (23).

According to Shen Buddha-Nature lies within everyone, that means everyone is already very near of nirvana. Going anywhere to search for it is just mere illusion

and like having journey with no destination. The only thing can be done is to get rid of ignorance and attachment and discover the complete universe within.

After the experience of enlightenment Siddhartha's feeling of supremacy over others, feeling of separation with the world disappears. The world vanishes Siddhartha remains, Siddhartha vanishes the world remains. Being more specific the world and Siddhartha everything, everyone vanishes and what remains alone is OM, the blessed lord, the eternal existence, bliss and knowledge. The undefeatable strength Mahatma Gandhi gained from nowhere else but from the realization of same oneness. In his autobiographical work *My Experiments with Truth* he reveals the experience of enlightenment:

To see the universal and all pervading spirit of truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. God can never be realized by one who is not pure of heart. Self-Purification therefore must mean purification in all the walks of life. But the path of Self-Purification is hard and steep. To attain perfect purity one has to become absolutely passion free in thought, speech and action (268).

As per Gandhi's thought regarding salvation, Siddhartha has ultimately succeeded getting the right path. Siddhartha has now become successful seeing and loving the meanest of creation as himself. His heart is completely purified and he has become passion free in thought, speech and action.

At the closing part of the novel Siddhartha expresses his divine universal form to Govinda. Listening Govinda's confession, who is still deluded in the web of thoughts and words and still continuing his long search, Siddhartha out of pure love reveals his limitless and universal form. Govinda saw the face of a fish, the face of a dying fish, with fading eyes-he saw the face of a new born child, red and full of wrinkles, distorted from crying, he saw the face of a murderer, he saw, in the same second, this criminal in bondage, he saw the bodies of men and women, naked in positions and cramps of frenzied love-he saw the heads of animals, of birds-he saw Gods, saw Krishna, saw Agni (159).

Siddhartha expresses to Govinda his thoughts about nirvana, life and death, knowledge and ignorance. Enlightening him Siddhartha stresses upon oneness of the whole creation whether animate or inanimate, visible or invisible, sinfulness and holiness, they are all flowing like a river. Hundreds of thousands of rivers are rushing towards a certain goal, Ocean, where they will get peace, they will be silenced, and they will become one. Their so many different voices will merge in one word, the sacred word OM which represents Brahman.

This is the final phase of this research paper where after many upheavals Siddhartha gets enlightenment. In this phase it is shown that Siddhartha is very determinate man whose spirit is much powerful than matter, though he became helpless servant of matter many times in life, but he as a divine spirit ultimately manages to break the prison house of matter.

Conclusion: The Enlightened Siddhartha

This research work is an attempt to deal with the idea of enlightenment in a simple manner. Although, the topic of enlightenment is very complex and steep by nature but the researcher only tries to touch it slightly by taking help of the scriptures, philosophers and authors. As the topic of this thesis goes, for Siddhartha the experience of enlightenment is purely individual. Throughout the life his wish is to see in the eyes of reality which is not visible to ordinary human eyes. Since the early days of childhood Siddhartha starts paving the way for nirvana and for that he doesn't follow the hard and fast rules of anyone or any system of the world. Following his own inner conscience he ultimately attains enlightenment. The lord proves to the world, descending as Vasudeva, that anyone can reach to him by making his or her own kind of way.

Siddhartha has taught the world that perfection, happiness and even enlightenment is in our own hands, own belief and consent. He proves that all human beings possess the capacity to attain enlightenment. The soul is already enlightened, out of egoistic attachment, delusion and ignorance it happens to forget its real and pure nature. Humans consider themselves as mortal beings sometimes having divine experience, but in reality they are divine beings sometimes having human experience.

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