

Your reflection on the *Documentary video* by *Michael Woods* (BBC):

Lesson 15

Siddhartha Gautama Buddha

NAME: _____
DATE: _____
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BUDDHA TEACHING / PREACHING

1. Buddha came to get the people away from rituals which had become extremely important due to the Brahman becoming very powerful. They found it to their advantage to let them remain so. They were in charge of keeping the people away from greed and materialism and had taken the place of the *rishis* and *munnis*.

2. They were supposed to guide the society into proper channels but they themselves got involved in enriching themselves from the people by stressing the need for long and protracted rituals in *Sanskrit* which the common man did not understand and took a lot of wealth for it rather than the teachings of correct thought and behavior.

3. The Brahmans found that becoming *rigid* and sowing the seeds of *superstition* they could control the kings and the ordinary people. Therefore they made the *caste system* very rigid indeed, and great grand rituals for prayers in homes and temples became the order of the day.

4. The Brahmans became the mainstay of society and they took full advantage of it to enrich themselves and live a life of ease, vice and comfort. The true *dharma* of the mind and soul was lost in fright of not doing the prolonged rituals as prescribed by the *Pandits*, who were the only ones that read the Vedas, etc., in Sanskrit and did not encourage anyone to go into deep study of the various *Purans*, etc. Truth became a haze.

5. So was born *Siddartha* to the *Sakya* Kings of *Kapilavastu*. *Mahamaya* his mother wanted the birth to take place in her own father's kingdom at *Devadaha*. The queen had a dream of a *white elephant* with *six tusks* entering her body before she became aware of this child in her body.

6. The astrologers predicted that this child would be a *great prophet* or *emperor* and the king in great joy made all arrangements to send his pregnant wife to her father's house where she wanted to have the baby. The road between Kapilavastu and Devadaha was made smooth and water vessels and banners and banana leaves put at different intervals.

Review Questions:

Write the answers in your notebook.

1. List few problems Buddha found in Hindu society during his time which led him to search for something better.
2. List in order the four disturbing scenes that Gautama saw which made him to leave his family to search for the truth.
3. How was Gautama able to receive enlightenment? List few steps.
4. Can you permanently solve a problem if you didn't know how or where or when the problem started?
5. Why do the Buddhist monks wear a saffron or bright yellow color cloth?
6. What was Buddha's main message or gospel that he wanted everyone to know?
7. Why Buddhism died out in India/Nepal where it first originated and became more popular outside India?



29. Still Buddhism holds a great attraction for the Hindus and Buddha has thus become the ninth incarnation of Vishnu **according to the Hindus**. Buddha is accepted as a Hindu although **his teachings became known as Buddhism**. He founded many *Sanghs* which spread his teachings.

30. India has always thrown up a person required to balance the sea saw of life and accepts life as it is, tilting the balance to the required level of that time.

31. They say that perhaps idols of the other Hindu gods were made after Buddha whose disciples cut beautiful figures and heads of him which the Hindus followed in relation to their own gods.

32. Buddha left behind a lot of *Sangha*, and great and beautiful monasteries and universities were built for learning and concentration like *Nalanda* at Bihar and great scholars from abroad came to study there.

33. They have left a lot of description of the great influence, Buddhism had a great influence on the kings that came after *Gautam Buddha* —like *Ashoka* who embraced Buddhism after the great battle and killings in Kalinga, what is now known as Orissa. Then *Kaniska* and *Harsh* all propagated this religion far and wide.

34. Buddha was a man of strong will and a great debater and put his opponent on the defensive. The teachings he taught were known as *Hineyanism* (Theravada) and later a lot of branches took off from these — like it happens in all religions and today Buddhism practiced in different spheres differs to quite an extent from each other.

35. Buddha died at the age of **80** at *Kushinagar* in 543 BCE.



7. She went in a palanquin, but on the way at the *Lumbini grove* she gave birth to a son, they say a *spring* appeared on its own and the child was bathed in it. But *Mahamaya died seven days later* and the child was brought up by his stepmother and an aunt named *Mahapriyapati Gotami* who fed him milk from her own breast. He is said to have been **born in 623 BCE**.

8. *Siddartha* was brought upon great luxury and was married off at the age of **sixteen** to *Yasodhara* also known as *Gopa* or *Bimba*. A son was born to them when Siddartha was **20** years old and was named *Rahul*. But family life was not for Siddartha who also became known as *Gautam*.

9. Once while going out with his charioteer *Chhanna* and touring the city he saw an (1) **old man** having been abandoned by his kith and kin. He saw another old man suffering from the (2) **agony of a disease** and was told by Chhanna that that was the fate of all in the end.

10. Then he saw a (3) **dead man** being carried by his weeping relatives and the fourth incident that affected him was a (4) **mendicant** who had given up the world and was searching for the Truth! All this rankled in the mind of Gautama and even when a child was born to him he felt that he could not lead a life of luxury.

11. They say that he left his wife and child sleeping and went with his charioteer but it is also mentioned in the *Majjhema Nikaya* that he renounced the world in front of his weeping mother and father and went into a world of the homeless.

12. He sat at the feet of *Alara* and *Uderaka* at *Rajagriha* now in *Bihar* and learnt the art of **concentration of mind**: neither consciousness nor non-consciousness. From there he went to *Urvela*

and practiced extreme penance and was reduced to a mere skeleton but in spite of his **great suffering he gained no enlightenment**.



13. He then started to keep away from sensual desire and food but to no avail. Thereafter he started to take food. One day he sat under a ***pipal tree*** at ***Gaya*** again in Bihar and vowed not to get up from there until he got that peace of mind for which he had been trying all his life.

14. Although he had to face a lot of hardships he did not budge from his meditation. Ultimately after **19** years Gautama suddenly got his ***enlightenment*** and came to be known as the ***Buddha***, the ***enlightened one***. This happened when he was **35** years of age after which he just wanted to teach the people the true way to ***Nirvana*** or ***complete happiness***.

15. After realizing that ***Ahimsa*** was the chief aspect for attaining peace he decided to preach what he had learnt after years of meditation. He travelled all over the country. He gave his ***first sermon*** at ***Somnath*** at ***Banaras***. This was the ***Dharma Chakra, Pravartana*** or the ***turning of the wheel of law***.

16. He travelled to his native land and his own ***son*** also ***became a monk***. His teaching embraced all sects and castes and that there was ***no one high or low***.

17. He spoke in ***Pali*** which was easily understood by the common people who were fed up by the arrogant Brahmins who used to conduct their everlasting rituals in Sanskrit which were hardly understood by the common man and as was the case of ***Purushram*** who killed the ***Kshatriyas*** because of their high-handed behavior Buddha overcame the tyranny of the Brahmins.

18. But his teachings were all taken from the ***Hindu system and he lived and died as Hindu*** with a great thrust towards diminishing the rituals or prolonged worship of the many facets of the Hindu gods.

19. All was in the mind and in the words of wisdom that one thought and translated into action to all living beings. This then was the message taught by the Buddha who laid down the rules of behavior.

20. His favorite sutra was the following ***Four Noble Truths*** —which emphasized the fact that life was full of pain & suffering due to desire; the removal of which would bring tranquility and peace.

1. **Life means suffering**
2. **The origin of suffering is attachment**
3. **The cessation of suffering is attainable**
4. **The path to the cessation of suffering is by eight-fold path**

22. Buddha taught the ***eight-fold path*** namely: (1) right views, (2) right intentions, (3) right speech, (4) right action, (5) right living, (6) right effort, (7) right mindfulness, and (8) right concentration.

23. His guide on right living was:

1. **Let not one kill any living being**
2. **Let one not take what is not given to him**
3. **Let one not speak falsely**
4. **Let one not drink intoxicating drinks**
5. **Let one not be unchaste**



24. According to Buddha a man should overcome anger by kindness, evil by good. Victory breeds hatred for the conquered who are unhappy. Never in the world hatred ceases by hatred; hatred ceases with love.

25. He discouraged questions as to ***what*** and ***wherefrom*** and ***where*** for — the world had come and good humouredly told a disciple that even Brahma would not know as to where he would go and from whence he came. A person should pay attention to this life and try to live a life of compassion —truth and renunciation.

26. He and his ***Bhikshu*** went each alone from house to house with their bowls and took what was given as food and never did ask for alms. They wore just one orange or yellow cloth and kept themselves submerged in study.

27. Buddha taught that saintliness and contentment were to be found not in the knowledge of the Universe or in God but in ***selfless and virtuous labor***. He sent his disciples to all the lands to preach this gospel. Telling them that the rich and the high are all one and that all castes unite in this religion as the rivers in the sea.

28. Buddhism spread outside the shores of India in the Southeast Asia, China, Indonesia, Myanmar, Tibet and Thailand but slowly lost its hold in its parent country where the original teachings of the ***Vedas*** and ***Puranas*** and the ***Upnishads*** came back.