

Blind Faith?

Venerable Sayadaws,

The Buddha said in the Kalama Sutta that there are 10 principles before following a particular teaching. In this regard, I understand Buddhism encourages critical thinking unlike other religions which rely on 'faith' in God and his words. But Saddha (faith/belief) is included in seven features of a Kalyana, and again, it is said that a person who practices Vipassana should have faith, good health, and so. So, the two statements are contradictory. Please explain to me.

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Definition of Saddha

Saddha is a Pali word. There is no English word equivalent to it. Nor Burmese but original Pali word is commonly used, becoming as a Burmese word. 'Faith' as it is understood outwardly, doesn't cover the original meaning though. In Saddha, there is no blind faith, i.e., no faith without logical reason in it. In fact, Saddha is a higher Buddhist philosophical term used in Abhidhamma. It is one of the beautiful mental states that is associated with wholesome consciousness. To understand that mental state exactly, there are four guide lines:

- 1) Saddha has the characteristic of faith or trusting;
- 2) Its function is to clarify mind as a water-cleaning gem causes muddy water to become clear;
- 3) It is manifested as resolution;

- 4) Its proximate cause is something to place faith in.

Qualities of Saddha

In Buddhist view, the quality of Saddha is the knowledge and belief that the Three Refuges are worthy of such acceptance. By this Saddha, the reality is received. The authority for the Dhamma (teachings) claims one's own personal experience. The authority is that the truth itself possesses. Such truth has great power. The miracles of Sacca, as shown in Jataka stories, is made of this power of Truth and Saddha. Can one arrive at his destination, if he

doesn't have confidence or trust in the Way he is walking? That is why Saddha plays a vital role for the Part when rowing a boat as if two hands.

Saddha followed by wisdom

Buddha says 'A noble disciple who possesses wisdom, the faith that follows from it becomes stabilized, the energy that follows from it becomes stabilized, the energy that follows from it becomes stabilized, mindfulness that follows from it becomes stabilized, the concentration that follows from it becomes stabilized.' (Sam 3, p. 195). So, in Buddhism, the blind faith which you come to believe being persuaded by the words "My friend, please come and believe in God is not Saddha." Real Saddha appears only when it is followed by knowledge and led by wisdom. Without knowledge and wisdom Saddha is not perfect. It is the meaning of Kalama Sutta that everything should be clearly weighed, examined and judged according to whether it is true or false in the light of one's own convictions so that one can get rid of obstacles caused by doubt.

In Buddhist philosophy, the difference between Saddha, which you see in Seven Gems for noble persons, Five Padhaniyanga Dhammas, and the teachings of Kalama Sutta is very clear. It is my sincere wish for you to try to continue to read more Buddhist writings. ☐