



## **ONE WHO SEEKS SOLACE IN ALCOHOL AGGREGATES ONE'S INNER EMPTINESS**

Most people consider alcohol as a form of pleasure. Also, there is a common belief that enjoyment is not possible without alcohol. Alcohol has become an essential commodity at special occasions.

Some drink alcohol as they are under pressure from their peers. Some people are under the impression that they would be without friends unless they drink.

A number of lives have perished due to alcohol. Similarly, a number of lives have healed as a result of avoidance of alcohol. If someone claims that he or she failed due to avoidance of alcohol, it is quite unacceptable. It is alcohol that brings one's downfall.

What happens is that a person who is addicted to alcohol covers up his addiction with unacceptable excuses.

One of the excuses given by an addict is, "I drink moderately." Some claim, "I am really not interested in drinking. However, I drink because my friends force me to do so." Others say, "I drink because I have to establish my background for business purposes." Whatever the reason may be, it seems that people who drink are addicted to alcohol and crave the pleasure of alcohol.

However, the addict intends to portray a different picture about him in the society; He is not an alcoholic; He is a moderate drinker.

You would have heard some people say, "It is true that I drink a little. That won't harm anyone else." Even some women do not mind their husbands drinking in moderation. They believe that men should drink in order to build their personalities. I have come to know such incidents.

Some husbands have told me that their wives had insisted on drinking alcohol. This happens due to a misconception of women who believe that drinking makes a person stand out in the society. So drinking prevails in a background based on such misconceptions.

I can cite one such example from Thailand. There is huge meditation centre by the name of *Dhammakaya*, which could accommodate around 300.000 people. There was a lady who was instrumental in building this centre. She was from a farming family. She was interested in meditation.

Her father used to harass the family members. He used come home drunk and assaulted her mother and her siblings. Despite these domestic problems, she continued her meditation practice. She made much progress in *Samatha* (calm abiding) meditation and developed clairvoyance to some extent. In the meantime, her father expired.

After her father's death, a scary thought used to creep in to her mind constantly, as she thought that her father would have been born in a ghost realm. She was very much moved by this thought, as she was certain about her father's rebirth in a ghost realm. She tried to find out her father's rebirth with the help of her psychic abilities. As a result of her continued attempt, she was able to see her father's rebirth in a location surrounded by burning flames.

She had accumulated a lot of merit. So she was able to travel to the ghost realm, where her father was born, with the help of her astral-body. She identified her father there. She asked her father, "Do you know me?" Father identified her too. She asked her father, "Why were you born here?" "Daughter, this is the consequence of my consuming alcohol," father said.

Then the daughter, after explaining important matters, set her father's mind on a meritorious state. This helped her father to get rid of his demerit gradually and accumulate merit. She returned home after completing her astral- body tour to the ghost realm.

She revealed this story to the society. Out of compassion, she wanted to depict her experience at the hell with paintings, where people were suffering as result of consuming and selling alcohol. So she decorated the walls of the above-mentioned mediation centre with paintings based on her first hand experience of the hell. Those paintings are present at this centre even today.

Her actions made some major liquor shops to be closed completely. One can see the photographs taken at the time of these shops being closed. Truck loads of liquor had been brought to dumping yards for disposal at that time. This way, these people were relieved of demerit.

This story shows how compassionate, knowledgeable people work towards leading others on the path to deliverance. However, others should be humble and receptive to accept the advice from these compassionate, knowledgeable ones.

Gautama Buddha taught very clearly that consuming alcoholic beverages would pave the way to births in ghost realms. Even after these people are reborn in human world, they

become mentally retarded. Despite the Gautama Buddha's clear message, people tend to drink alcohol and justify their actions with lame excuses.

The Gautama Buddha did not talk about the hell to frighten people. The Gautama Buddha intended to show the reality.

Are you indulging in alcohol? If so, you are aggravating your inner emptiness, while enjoying the pleasures of alcohol. This emptiness brings only unwholesome states. And this results in births in ghost realms without doubt.

There is another group in the society who claims that alcohol is essential in order to be creative. According to them, alcohol is a stimulant which encourages creativity. Alcohol consumption is a commonplace among artists.

At the same time, there is another popular belief that nothing could be created with an artistic touch, nor could anything be enjoyed, without resorting to the stimulants of alcohol. Old timers who were involved in artistic work had popularized this idea. Most of the old masters were heavy drinkers and the younger generations followed suit. If the artistes were talented, then there was nothing wrong with their drinking. This type of thinking made them addicted to alcohol. What they did not understand was the anxiety they had to go through as a result of alcoholism, during their old stages. This phase of anxiety could not be seen by the outside world. The outside world admires only the artifacts created by these artists during their creative ages. However these artists go through anxiety and their lives come to an end after suffering for a long time. The outside world continues to be shrouded in blindness as it only sees the artist's creative period where he was able to enjoy his life fully while entertaining others.

In day to day life, when people organize social events such as musical shows, they resort to alcohol as a booster of morale. This is a manifestation of their weak personality.

It is a fact that one who resorts to alcohol has a weaker personality. The reason is that they are unable to establish mindfulness to build up a proper personality. One needs wisdom to build up one's personality. Weaker personalities result from the absence of wisdom. People may look at this situation differently. But this is the reality.

If some one claims that he could reap more benefits with the help of alcohol in respect of one's creative work, this implies that this particular person utilizes only alcohol to stay focussed. Could this be possible?

The world has clearly denied the abuse of artificial, extraneous alcoholic substances as sources of energy. This has become a taboo all over the world. Especially, this is obvious in the sports world. In sports, artificial or any other forms of stimulants are banned.

An individual should seek victory through enthusiasm and mindfulness. Proper mindfulness is important for a sports event such as a marathon, as well as for creative work. Take a look at our ancient artifacts! When king *Dutugemunu* got *Ruwanweli*

*dagaba* built, he sought the services of talented engineers who provided sensible contribution for the task. How many similar artifacts were created by these talented engineers?

King *Dutugemunu* had convened these engineers and discussed construction process individually. One of the engineers had filled water into a golden bowl and made it to gush with another stream of water. Thus, he created a crystal - like bubble and asked the king whether he could design a *dagoba* which would bear resemblance to that bubble.

When *Lowamahapaya* was built, king *Dutugemunu* convened a group of *Arahants* and requested to send a representative to the abode of gods to bring down an architectural design for the construction. The king wanted to have a heavenly design of architecture on the human world. These are the attributes of a great personality.

The *arahants* , who were present , agreed upon to dispatch eight *arahants* to the heaven. When the *arahants* arrived in the heaven, they saw the magnificent abode of the angel, *Bharani*. She was accompanied by thousand assistants. The *arahants* met the angel, *Bharani* here and admired her heavenly abode, “Your abode is magnificent; it is nine – storied; it has thousand living areas; this is really marvellous”

Then the *arahants* inquired as to how she got such a magnificent abode. In reply to this, *Bharani* said, “ When I was on the human world, I was a maid. I was serving a Brahmin named *Asoka* during the *Kashyapa* Buddha’s time. I cooked for this Brahmin. This Brahmin took refuge in triple gems. He offered food to *arahants* regularly.

“He built a dining hall at his home to facilitate alms-giving. Every day, I prepared meals with a composed mind. As he was happy with my work, he assigned the total responsibility of preparing food for offering to *sanga*. This is the outcome of my wholesome work”

Then, the *arahants* copied the floor plan of her abode on a piece of cloth. *Lowamahapaya* was built according to this blue print. Even this task was accomplished by members of a society who practiced five precepts. (*Pancha Seela*)

This is the real personality. Can anyone bring about such a personality with alcohol? Can the present society achieve the least of what the members of the ancient society achieved?



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