



# Buddhism:

## Is it possible for everyone to be happy?

### Topic Overview

- The Buddha realised that there are lots of things in life that hurt people or cause them not to be happy like illness.
- He also realised that having lots of money and riches may not make someone happy.
- One of the most important things the Buddha discovered was that trying to lead a good life which helps others and does not hurt people or animals would help someone be happy.
- The Buddha realised that neither a lavish life of luxury nor a life of self-denial and starvation brought him happiness.
- Instead, the Buddha taught 'The Middle Way' - a life between luxury and self-denial.
- The Middle Way (also known as the eight-fold path) is a code of practice or way of life that leads to true happiness.
- Buddhists believe that if they follow the 'Middle Way,' they are on the way to less suffering and more happiness.
- Buddhists believe that happiness is a state of mind. The real source of happiness must lie within the mind.
- If our mind is pure and peaceful we shall be happy, but if it is impure and hostile, we can never be truly happy - no matter how hard we try to change our external lives.
- Buddhists believe the more you want, the more unhappy life is.
- Getting what you want does not guarantee happiness.

### The Story of the Buddha

Siddharta Guatama was born into a royal family. His advantaged life protected him from the sufferings of life like sickness and death. When he saw these sufferings, Siddharta wanted to escape the sufferings he had seen by giving up his kingdom and becoming a holy man. He wanted to find a way to be happy and to not suffer. One day, Siddharta sat beneath a Bodhi tree and began to meditate. He realised that being happy was all about how people think about things that helps them to be happy. He had achieved enlightenment. The Buddha travelled throughout India teaching the truth he had discovered to others.

### Links with other religions

- Every religion has its own beliefs about human suffering, for example:
  - **Islam:** Many Muslims believe that suffering can be caused by the selfishness and evil of human beings which leads to bad decisions. They can overcome suffering in their own lives and help to ease the suffering of others by following Allah's (God's) path.
  - **Sikhism:** Suffering is valued because Sikhs believe that suffering can draw a person closer to God as people tend to forget God when times are good and turn to God in bad times.
  - **Judaism:** God created everything, so God must have created suffering. Jews believe suffering is part of God's plan for humanity.
  - **Hinduism:** Hindus believe in karma. Most Hindus believe that their suffering is a result of their own actions.
    - Different religions also have different beliefs about happiness, for example:
      - **Sikhism:** Sikhs believe they should be content (satisfied) with the life that they have been given by Waheguru (God). They believe that contentment leads to happiness.
      - **Hinduism:** According to Hinduism, happiness comes mainly from one's own actions, past life karma, actions of gods and others, and the grace of God. Hindus believe they have a better chance of being happy and enjoying life if they follow the four main aims of Hinduism (purusharthas).

Key Vocabulary	Definition
Buddha	The Buddha was a human being (not a god or prophet) who became "enlightened."
Eight-Fold Path	The Buddha's practical instructions to reach the end of suffering and find happiness.
Luxury	A state of great comfort, especially when involving great expense.
Self-denial	The refusal of one's own interests and needs.
State of mind	A person's thoughts and feelings.
Hostile	Showing or feeling opposition or dislike; unfriendly.
External Lives	Every need and possibility outside our minds.
Guarantee	A promise that something will be or will happen.

### The Noble Eightfold Path

