

## Ethics and Philosophy in Buddha's Teachings

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### ABSTRACT

Buddhist philosophy not only explains its epistemology, metaphysics, logic etc., but Buddhist ethics also analyzes the supreme practice of life's ultimate goal. Buddha gave the first universal religion in the world and at the same time, a humanistic philosophy that was for human beings only. Lord Buddha and his philosophy are acceptable and useful to all common people. Without any external dependence or eternal power, it can lead on the best moral path. Hence, Buddha and Buddhist religion- philosophy are practical, all- round humanistic.

**KEYWORDS:** Buddha, Buddhism, philosophical thought, Buddhist philosophy, Indian philosophy.

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Date of Submission: 09-10-2023

Date of acceptance: 23-10-2023

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### I. INTRODUCTION

India is such a vast country where all religions and cultures originated. Almost all religions originated here. Great philosophical thinking tradition is the unique heritage of the land of India. It has left out no such aspect of life in the world, which has not been seriously considered. How subtle is life, how wide is the world, yet the biggest and the smallest aspects of them have been explained and examined, whether one agrees or not. Indian history is replete with sagas of religions, philosophies and cultures. But there definitely remained a strong tendency to refute each other's views. Religious and philosophical ideologies of revolution and counter-revolution continued to emerge. As a result, many philosophies emerged from the dialectical method, from the style of criticism against criticism. In the long, wide and glorious history of various philosophies, Buddha and Buddhism have an important place.

### Philosophy of Buddhism

The original ideas and teachings of Buddha have a unique place in the field of Indian philosophical thought, but in the philosophy of Buddhism, those many principles and ideals that were given to us by Buddhist scholars, seekers and philosophers after Buddha are of utmost importance.<sup>1</sup> Buddhist philosophy not only explains its epistemology, metaphysics, logic etc., but Buddhist ethics also analyzes the supreme practice of life's ultimate goal.<sup>2</sup> Buddhist religion- philosophy, apart from the tradition of Indian ethical thought, considers wisdom and modesty to be very beneficial. Buddhist religion- philosophy accepts the paramount of wisdom and modesty without getting entangled in metaphysical confusions. It saves life from distraction and disorientation. The person, who is wise, virtuous and well absorbed, crosses the vast flood of life. That is why *Tathāgata* Buddha has taught that the meritorious, the wise, should protect modesty, "*Sīlan rakkheyya medhāvī*".<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the philosophy of Buddhism is ethical in life and believes that modesty is beneficial and incomparable in the world, in human beings.<sup>4</sup>

The word '*Tathāgata*' has been used for Buddha. The one who has known the ultimate truth, the one who has uplifted the entire life of the world, is called *Tathāgata*. *Tathāgata* is the name of Buddha who attained Nirvana. Buddha gave importance to only those questions, which were in the interest of present day life. He considered the questions that his predecessors tried to solve, such as the origin and end of the world and

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Sakhare Malti, *Understanding Dhamma*, p. 21

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Bodele-Sakhare Malti, *Sulekh Sanghaho*, p.34

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Jatav D. R., *Buddha aur Bouddha Dharma-Darshan*, p.1

<sup>4</sup> www.library.brown.edu/buddhism2

the existence of the soul, very unimportant. Buddha has called such questions, which are not capable of analysis, 'immature'.<sup>5</sup> He addressed only those questions, which were relevant to human welfare, social upliftment, purification of mind, personal excellence and nirvana. Undoubtedly, what kind of religion- philosophy of such a Buddha should be, it can be easily guessed. It cannot be different from the upliftment of man and society, 'Bahujan Hitāya, Bahujan Sukhāya', no matter what countless commentators have said.

Buddha gave the first universal religion in the world and at the same time, a humanistic philosophy that was for human beings only. He preached man to live a simple, straightforward life based on discretion, compassion and friendship, moving away from all kinds of hypocrisy and superstitions.<sup>6</sup> Buddha did not use the esoteric and confusing language of philosophers and pundits. He spoke in the language of the common man and his speech became a pilgrimage for everyone, educated- illiterate, rich- poor, Śūdra- untouchable, king- lay. The roots of Vedas, Yagya and Brahmin all three were shaken, due to this equality given by the Buddha. He started a new philosophy of religion, gave birth to a new culture and set new goals for life.<sup>7</sup> That's why Buddha and Buddhist philosophy became the symbol of philosophical revolution in India.<sup>8</sup> It is in this context that this religion has been composed which is very thoughtful and meaningful.

### **Philosophical Thoughts in Buddha's teachings**

Also, if seen analytically, almost all the aspects of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar's philosophy - social, political, moral, sociological, economic, religious and legal - in detail in dozens of his books, which include in-situ discussion of Buddha and Buddhism and philosophy.<sup>9</sup> He has produced equally popular and simple texts on Lord Buddha and his philosophy, which are acceptable and useful to all common people.<sup>10</sup> The creations of his books were inspired by majorly the Philosophical Thoughts in Buddha's teachings.

Secondly, Buddhism and philosophy are also associated with Dr. Ambedkar, who has been a pillar of inspiration for most of the Indians. His books served as a presentation in the series of Dr. Babasaheb's thoughts, in which the religious, moral and philosophical thoughts of Buddha and Babasaheb are included. In the present era, Babasaheb has played the bugle of Buddhist revolution, which is contemporary and welfare.<sup>11</sup> The religious and philosophical ideology of Buddha as the Indians later received by Babasaheb was popular amongst the masses and meaningful. Nevertheless, it is expected from the followers that to understand the concepts and principles of Buddhist philosophy, it will be beneficial for them to have general knowledge of Indian philosophy.<sup>12</sup>

Without any external dependence or eternal power, it can lead people on the best moral path. *Tathāgata* established man on the peak of wisdom and friendship.<sup>13</sup> His religious philosophy lays more emphasis on keeping the eyes open. Accepts the importance of using modesty and wisdom.<sup>14</sup> Hence Buddha and Buddhist religion- philosophy are practical, all- round humanistic. In comparison, he is the architect of a unique revolution.<sup>15</sup> The journey to such a destination is definitely useful, just and beneficial for all.<sup>16</sup> Which sensible man would not want to be a traveler of that right path?

## **II. CONCLUSION**

It is certainly difficult to travel the path of Buddha, but its main goal is so broad and practical that to deviate from it is, in a way, to neglect human interests. Siddhartha Gautama, a prince, lived a luxurious life.

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<sup>5</sup> Dr. Jatav D. R., *Buddha aur Bouddha Dharma-Darshan*, p.3

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Jatav D. R., *Buddha aur Bouddha Dharma-Darshan*, p.3

<sup>7</sup> Metha Arun, *History of Ancient India*, p.44

<sup>8</sup> Bhattacharya Bela, *Buddhayāna (Speeches on Buddhism and its relevance today)*, p.102

<sup>9</sup> Dr. Sakhare Malti, *Understanding Dhamma*, 40

<sup>10</sup> [www.britannica.com/topic/Buddhism](http://www.britannica.com/topic/Buddhism)

<sup>11</sup> Dr. Bodele-Sakhare Malti, *Sulekh Sanghaho*, p.33

<sup>12</sup> Dr. Jatav D. R., *Buddha aur Bouddha Dharma-Darshan*, p.4

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* p.5

<sup>14</sup> Dr. Sakhare Malti, *Understanding Dhamma*, p.41

<sup>15</sup> Dr. Jatav D. R., *Buddha aur Bouddha Dharma-Darshan*, p.2

<sup>16</sup> Sharma Manan, *Universality of Buddha*, p.63

There was no need; he would have left such a resourceful home and family. But social and mental problems led him to serious thinking. He himself tested the popular routes and religious philosophies of his time, but nothing came of his hand, which would have made human welfare possible in the present situation. That's why in his own way, he investigated proof- of- concepts, philosophy and policy- science and became enlightened with the attainment of enlightenment. *Bodhi* means the knowledge of the salvation of man and the being (*sattva*) who strives for it is the *Bodhisattva*. Basically, the goal of Buddhist religion- philosophy is '*Bahujan Hitāya, Bahujan Sukhāya*'. How such a majestic Buddhism, such a right philosophy, has disappeared in its motherland India is a very strange and surprising thing. But the time comes, circumstances change, so it is the duty of the worshipers and monks to prosper on such beneficial Buddha's path and make it promoted and cheerful in the general public.

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