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The Buddhist Philosophy: A brief Study

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Abstract: The History is well-known to Lord Buddha as Gautama Buddha, Buddha Śākyamuni, Sidhārtha Gautama, and who was born in Lumbini in the Nepalese region of the near Indian border. He was the man of Asian thinkers and was a religious master of all time. His vast contributions to the field of Philosophy, metaphysics, and epistemology highlight Indian history and spiritual paths more and more. In ethics, He explains the threefold understandings of karmas mental, verbal, and physical. In metaphysics Buddha describes the criticism of souls and the real causes of rebirth. He says the ultimate stage of a liberated soul is called 'Nirvāṇa'. The stage of Nirvāṇa is a very well-known term in Buddhist Philosophy. Buddha explains the many stages of human life and which impressed him extremely. The present paper describes, in brief, the life history of Buddha, his moral teachings to mankind, and the wise expressions of Śrīla Prabhupāda on Buddhist Philosophy, etc.

Keywords- Gautama Buddha, Vedas, Prabhupada, Buddhist Philosophy, Buddhism.

Introduction

Buddhism possesses Indian thoughts and the real qualities of life. Indian society has different Vedic thoughts. Indian society is dependent upon the Vedas. The Vedas are regarded as the ancient Indian literature in this World. The Vedas have also said the origin of the plants like Yoga, Sāmkhya, Nyāya, etc. The Upaniṣads are also known as the sprouts of those seeds. All the Upaniṣads reflect the real mystery of Brahman or the supreme soul which is the main aim of all creatures, and especially of human beings. Man has both good and bad habits but who wants to gain knowledge about the supreme soul or Brahman. He should abandon the bad habits and impurities of the mind, and then be able to achieve the place of that supreme power.

Gautama Buddha is known as the founder of Buddhism. He established Buddhism after getting Bodhi. He had taken birth in a kṣatriya family and achieved complete knowledge of the Upaniṣads. Although Gautama Buddha did not emphasize the Vedas and Upaniṣads still his teachings have not existed without the knowledge of Hindu Scriptures and thoughts also.¹

Suddhodana was the father of Gautama Buddha, and His father tried to bind him in marriage life and also offered many luxuries. But on the other hand, Gautama accepted ascetic life at the age of twenty-nine years. But Buddha spent a life prolonged for forty-five years and above and traveled from one place to another for dispersing the knowledge of Buddhism.²

It is very interesting to say that Gautama Buddha has not established the Buddhist canon himself. That was established by the followers of Buddha. And Tripitaka was written at the end of the first council. The Tripitaka and its related texts mostly reflect on moral conduct. Gautama Buddha said about eight paths means aṣṭāṅgamarga to get relieved from sufferings of the human life. Buddhism targets the liberation of human life. Gautama Buddha supported five precepts pañcasila. These five principles of Gautama Buddha and these are described as follows:

1. The principle is to forgo slaughtering.
2. The principle to forgo kidnapping.
3. The principle is to forgo cheating.
4. The principle is to abandon intoxicants and gambling.
5. The principle is to forgo telling lies.

There are another three additional principles in Buddhism known like this.

1. The principle of abandonment of taking food at odd times.
2. The principle is to abandon amusement like dancing, singing, and other entertainment programs, and also abstain from beautification of anyone.
3. The principle is to give up the luxurious things for sleeping.³

Karma as per Buddhism

Karma is normally meant for action or work. But Buddhism takes impermanent dharma in its place. It is given stress on effort and endeavor. Will is the real action of the man. According to the views of Gautama Buddha, the person should have a very pure will. Buddhism has given stress on the liberty of wantings, moral works, power, and good deeds. Buddha says we are the lord of our fortune. The present stage of the man who has made himself. The future action is the determination of present acts. Man is the builder of self-fortune, and character. The happiness and sorrow of beings are the only results of our past deeds. Karma is known as the connecting link of someone.⁴

Whatever the man performs through his own body, thoughts, and talking these are known as self acts and are not left him even after his death like a shadow. So action or karma of the man is said as a connecting link between the present life of a person to further birth.⁵

Transmigration as per the views of Buddha

Our action leads to further birth and there is no transmigration of the permanent soul from the body of one person to another. The last conscious doings leave and another conscious act starts in a new organism, and that is known as rebirth. In rebirth, there is also transmigration of nature in the talks of Rhys Davids. And the ends of the conscious act in someone's life to the first conscious deeds in his further life. Moral consciousness links to the same services. Buddha says about the transmigration process by taking the example of a burning flame of a lamp. The lamp burns the whole night. But the light of the flame does not stand the same as the whole. There is a continuous change in the flame, there are no signs of flame but continuity in the various flames of the light. Like this, the last acts of a person reflect in his next life. Buddha says the transmigration process by taking another example like various changes in the milk. Milk modifies into curds and curds are changed into butter and butter is modified into melted butter. The same series exists but it looks changing.⁶

The existence of a wheel (Bhavacakra)

Buddha explains that the person who knows origination is able to know dharma, and those who know dharma, can know dependent origination. The five things of earthly body or form like feeling, disposition, perception, and consciousness of one's mind creates their own causes and conditions. The mind-body unity is created by ailments, and ailment is created by desire. Desire is caused by the five senses of organs and the mind. These are caused by the body and mind. And they are created by consciousness. consciousness caused by dispositions. Dispositions are created by ignorance. Twelve links are linked in the chain of creation: ignorance, dispositions, consciousness, the unity of mind and body, six senses of organs, contact,

feeling, longing, wanting for much money, becoming, birth, old age, and death.

Ignorance is the main cause of suffering. It gives birth and death. It causes dispositions. Consciousness creates the further unity of mind and body. If consciousness does not enter the womb then the mind and body unit cannot exist in the womb. So the man gets relieved by driving away from this ignorance or avidyā. These twelve links are the cause of present, past, and future.⁷

The views of Śrīla Prabhupāda on Buddhism

Śrīla Prabhupāda whose real name was Abhaya charan De had taken birth in Kolkata in the year 1896. His spiritual advisor was Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Sarasvatī Thākura. He was a renowned religious guru and was the founder of sixty-four Maṭhas. He accepted Prabhupāda as his disciple. He said Prabhupāda to spread the Vedic knowledge in the English language. After following him Prabhupāda wrote a book with commentary on Bhagavad-gītā. In the year 1947, He was entitled Bhaktivedānta from the society named Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava for his devotional attitudes and Philosophical knowledge. He established ISKCON, which means International Society for Krishna Consciousness, in 1966. He founded more than one hundred ashramas and spread Vedic knowledge through it in many countries of the World. Śrīla Prabhupāda left his mortal body on November 14, 1977. Prabhupāda has mentioned Buddhist Philosophy in his many lectures and books. In his Gītā, Prabhupāda said that Lord Buddha was the real incarnation of Lord Krishna.

Prabhupāda also describes the Bhāgavata and where it is mentioned that, At the beginning of the Kali era, Buddha who is the son of Anjana will be born in Kikata for destroying enemies of deities (Bhāgavata. 1.3.24).

Prabhupāda says about the life of Buddha that the Lord Buddha was seen in India roughly 2600 years ago in the Kṣatriya royal family and abandoned his luxurious life at a very young age, and on the other hand, He accepted a Yogic

life. He dedicated his whole life to meditation and to the moral development of all human beings. People of this Kali era followed the moral ideology of Lord Buddha not only in India but also all over the World.

The Philosophy of Lord Buddha is well-known as atheistic (nāstika). So there is no acceptance of God as supreme and the authority of the Veda. But Prabhupāda describes here that Lord Buddha is the incarnation of God. So, He is the only real propounder of the knowledge of all the Vedas. As per the Buddhist philosophy, there is the conclusion of I and you. Further Prabhupāda says there is no argument if there is individuality. So the dualism of individual soul and supreme soul should be admitted which is accepted by the Bhagavad Gītā. (Gītā.2.12).

Buddhism describes the transmigration Philosophy and there is seen rebirth and death. But they do not mention the process of birth and death. There is no clear description of the future birth of a person, and it is not sure that every person can take the human birth after his death.⁸

Prabhupāda takes a very beautiful point of Buddhist Philosophy. According to the Buddhists, there is no existence of the soul and God. But there are seen number of temples of Lord Buddha in the country like China, Japan, and Burma where they worship with candles to the God, in the same way as worshipping.⁹

Conclusion

From the above discussions, it is concluded that the Buddhist Philosophy is the only Philosophy of human beings where the real feelings of human birth and death and the sorrows of human lives are clearly described by Lord Buddha. And as per the Holy Scriptures, Lord Buddha was not an ordinary man, He was the real incarnation of God. He had taken birth for the fulfillment of a certain mission. In Gītā, Lord Krishna also says that He will be born in this World when righteousness declines and unrighteousness increases.

Hence, Lord Buddha was the same incarnation of Lord Krishna and there is no doubt at all.

Notes

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