
Research Papers



The Concept of Universal Brotherhood And Buddhism

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ABSTRACT

At the very outset, it is significant to explain the meaning of Universal Brotherhood as this concept has scientific origin and rational justification. In fact, the philosophy of Universal Brotherhood is the basic tenet of the philosophy of 'Theosophy' which holds and sees that the entire species of Homo Sapiens belong to one large family. Although, this one family is divided into different branches but ultimately, they are connected to one another as a tree of humanity. The essence of the philosophy of Theosophy or Universal Brotherhood is "kindness for all living beings".

Those, who adhere to the principle of Theosophy or Universal Brotherhood, they believe that religion is neither a word nor a doctrine. In reality, for them religion means self-realization. It is not hearing and accepting. It is rather being and becoming. They firmly believe that when after rational analysis, we start realizing and removing the clutter of our own mind and make a recess into our deep inwardness of heart then we explore that the key to true happiness, contentment and bliss lies within us. When the inauthentic layers of our heart like anger, greed, ego, jealousy, lust, hatred, dominance, quarrelsome attitude, etc., are replaced by universal love, compassion, kindness, politeness, respect for the opinions, then gradually, we cultivate the attitude and belief that 'all men are equal' and this is the essence of Universal Brotherhood or Theosophy.

Similarly in Buddhism too, we observe that when we start practicing the essential teachings of Buddha in our personal life then slowly and steadily, we start realizing that we all are chained in humanities and we belong to same one 'Ultimate Reality'. Buddhism also perfectly believes in cleansing of the mind from all the above discussed impurities of thought, speech, and deed. On account of its practical significance and characteristic, we can easily infer that the ethical teachings of Buddhism should be acceptable and applicable to all mankind. We also perceive that Buddhism mainly focuses on speaking the truth, practicing non-violence, high morality, control of the mind, speech though and living a transparent and honest life. These all factors happen to be the attributes of a man of perfect wisdom, dignity, humanity and kindness and when these ethical teachings of Buddhism are applied in one's personal life then it broadens our mental horizon and changes our set pattern of thinking and in this way, we have a feeling of Universal Brotherhood too.

In fact, Buddha never wasted time over dry philosophy or conceptual analysis rather he laid great emphasis on practical life of dedication and self-mortification. Historically at the time of Buddha, there were so much of inequality, repression and injustice prevailing in the society that out of reaction, this Buddhist's moral code came into existence and concerned individual started understanding that in reality, the real spark of divinity resides within him and just he has to purify himself. People also started realizing that for any freedom, want and creativity, there is no need of going to temples, mosques, churches or any holy places, rather the first requirement is selfless action, self-determination and self-purification. Buddha always taught that ignorance, man is the root cause of suffering a man is subjected to in this

world. Owing to ignorance, man is unable to distinguish between illusion and reality, right and wrong, good and bad and real and unreal. That is why, Buddha in stead of contemplating metaphysical questions, which were no longer relevant either ethically or intellectually and which he seldom accorded top priority I his agenda, rather he always tried to enlighten his disciples by asserting that 'lead your own light'. (Atma Dipo Bhawa. Be a light unto yourself and seek your salvation with diligence.) He also emphasized that. “Man” is supreme I this world and anyone who has taken birth on this earth has come for certain period so in the given length of time he should follow the was and means to achieve liberation and it can be only achieved by thoroughly cleansing the impurities of heart and mind as discussed earlier. He also meant by liberation superme peace,serenity and balanced state of mind even if facing adversities and dualities in one's life. Buddha was also of firm belief and opinion that any Seeker pf truth must also first xperiment himself these all truths in his personal life then only he should reveal his disciples this gospel of truth. One can only experience this blissful state of mind after a long period of struggle and purification of mind, body, action,and speech.

Buddha always laid emphasis that the highest aim of life is the attainment of Nibbana or libration or serenity of mind and to achieve this objective, he advised to perform selfless and disinterested action in this mortal world. Nibbana is also interpreted as “You are in the world and at the same time out of the world”. It can also be said to be a state of complete concntraction and meditation of mind .It is also defined as a state of permanent joy, equipoised,cool and desirlessness state of mind. When one reaches at this sorrows disappear at once forever and his heart becomes serene and his understanding and outlook also become scientific and Steadfast. Budda also dicussed that one who is found to be indisciplined and immoral, he cannot have permanent wisdom one- pointed concentration and complete peace of mind and when there is no peace then there never be everlasting joy too.

Thus, Nibbana can be interpreted as the extinction of excessive lust, lamentation, sorrow, grief and despair. Nibbana or Nirvana is a combination of two words Ni and vana. Ni has a negative connotation and Vanna means lusting of craving and thus it signifies depature from craving or lusting. This utterance of Buddha is very much significant and in reality, if leads to annihilation of suffering and on account of it, one becomes fully liberated from worldly affairs and sorrow and becomes emancipated even in the physical world.

About the Nibbana, Which is above wordly entanglement and affairs, Budda also explained Nibbana as 'Atakkavacara' I e. it is beyond logical speculations and is absolutely a matter os self-realization. No words can adequately express its meaning because it is a state of inner feeling. He also explained that Niabana is neither a state of mere nothiningness nor a state of mere annihilation bus it is eternal [Dhruva], desirable [Subha], and it is pure happiness[Sukha]. The Buddha said “ Nibbandm Paramam Sukham” blissful state of positive relief from the ills of the worldly life. The best way to understand Nibbana is to try to realize it with our intuitive knowledge To know and understand this truth, Buddha advaocated the of “Middle Path” which avoids the extreme of self – mortification that weakens the intellect and laso the extreme of self-indulgence that retards moral progress. This “Middel Path” is a central theme of Buddha's ethical teachings and consists of following eight wings of a lively mind. These are right understanding right thoughts, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right efforts, right mindfulness and right concentration. Out of eight paths, the last are classified as wisdom (panna) anoher three morality (sila) and the last there is concentration (Cittasamadhi)

An important and striking aspect of this “ Middel Path” is non – identification of self with any object. If identification becomes our pattern Thus, this identification proves to be mechanical syndrome in life and one develops rigidity in thought, speech and deed and then one fails to see another point of view and variables in life. Buddha always advocated to remove this negativity in life and stressed that unless we transform our mechanical centre of mind into a magnetic and receiving centre, then the negative pattern of thought will continue in life and ultimately, it would prove to be disastrous and hindrance for a harmonious life. That is why, he said and exphasized that this “ Middel Path” Should be first applied in one's

Personal life then only it can enhance one's state of being. Therefore, he insisted and advised to his disciples that first understand the deeper meaning of this “ Middle Path” and by applying its meaning in life and consequently, inner awakening and real happiness would automatically be bestowed to you in the process. So he insisited that watch your thought first. Become more conscious of your thought because mere conceptual knowledge dose not help. This is the unique character of the “ Middle Path” of

Buddha. By cultivating the habit of good thought, good speech and good deed, it leads towards permanent happiness and peace of mind. This “Middle Path of Buddha can be summarized in this way.”

“To refrain from all evil,
to do what is good,
To cleanse one's mind,
This is the advice of all Buddhas”

Thus, this Middle Path of Buddha if followed and practised in its true sense then it leads to perfect morality, universal love, compassion and kindness towards all, even to the tiniest creature that crawls at one's feet and this is also the hallmark of the philosophy of Theosophy or Universal Brotherhood. The similarity between Buddha's gospel and Universal Brotherhood is also implicit in following quote:

“Just as a mother would protect her only child
At the risk of her own life, even so let everyone
Cultivate a boundless heart towards everything and all”

Now, after all the above discussions, we are in position to assert that the philosophy of Buddhism has universal appeal,

charm and scientific base and it is also really worth noting that factors like ego, untruthfulness, dishonesty, lack of vision, destructive instinct and harshness in approach, etc., can ruin individual and can also thwart any peace processes taking place among family friends, relatives, society, and nation. By following the principles of Buddhism, we find that it ultimately trains our mind towards universal brotherhood, unity, understanding and coherence. On the basis of its universal charm and character, Buddhism has been justly accepted by the maximum number of rationalists and scientific people of the developed and developing world too and an account of its practical significance, it has almost become the largest accepted religion in the world. We also observe that owing to the misunderstanding of the meaning of religion, various types of ethnic violence, crusades, terrorism, disastrous fightings are taking place in this tiny world in the name of religion, and it can be only prevented when we understand the true meaning of religion, the concept of universal brotherhood and follow the essentials of Buddha's ethical teachings and thus life on this earth can be made worth living.