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Buddhism-Its Philosophy and Feature of Education

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Abstract

It is known through the Tripitak books that in Buddha's time and before him, the discussion on self, world, other world, sins and libration etc. were very common. Politically, the country was divided into different small states whose inhabitants used languages. The philosophical systems did not assume a systematic form so far. The Vedas were considered to be sacred in the spiritual field. Most of the time was wasted in useless discussions. Thus philosophy became a verbal jugglery. In the religious field, there was more emphasis on miracles rather than communion with God. The ethics was based on religion and religion depended on God. Hence the efforts importance of human efforts and the sense of responsibility was disappearing. Everywhere one could find superstitions, useless discussions and irresponsible behavior.

Keywords: Philosophy, Feature, Education

1. Introduction

Every philosophical system reflects the contemporary tendencies found in society. Hence to understand a system of philosophy, it is necessary to keep on eye on the contemporary circumstances, thoughts and their actions and re-actions. It is known through the Tripitak books that in Buddha's time and before him, the discussion on self, world, other world, sins and libration etc. were very common. Politically, the country was divided into different small states whose inhabitants used languages. The philosophical systems did not assume a systematic form so far. The Vedas were considered to be sacred in the spiritual field. Most of the time was wasted in useless discussions. Thus philosophy became a verbal jugglery. In the religious field, there was more emphasis on miracles rather than communion with God. The ethics was based on religion and religion depended on God. Hence the efforts importance of human efforts and the sense of responsibility was disappearing. Everywhere one could find superstitions, useless discussions and irresponsible behavior.

Gautam Buddha revolted these contemporary tendencies and presented rational religion, practical ethics and simple principles of life. The important characteristics of Buddhist philosophy can be discussed as under:

2. Aversion from discussion

Though Buddha had always tried to explain his principles intellectually, but he usually avoided long discussions. Towards superstitions, he had the approach of a modern scientist. Seeing the degeneration of faith, he emphasized experience and efforts. Buddha's religion and ethics are based on faith. The teachings of Buddha are more grounded in deep analysis and wide experience rather than intellectual discussions. These intellectual discussions were to be about liberation from miseries.

Buddha explained the hollowness of prevalent philosophical system and emphasized the importance of the problem of liberation from miseries.

Buddha considered it useless to search for the solution of the philosophical questions listed below which were called Avyaktani which are as follows:

- a) Is the world extern?
- b) Is it non-external?
- c) Is it finite?

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- d) Is it infinite?
- e) Is the body and self the same?
- f) Is the self-different from body?
- g) Was the Tatha-gat reborn after death?
- h) Was he not born after death?
- i) Is their rebirth or not?

According to Buddhist is approach, the answer to these questions are useless and from the philosophical standpoint, no final solution can be secured. Hence Buddha did not discuss them.

3. Pessimism

Another main characteristic of Buddha's philosophy is pessimism. Buddha has taken the world as full of miseries. Man's duty is to attain liberation from this painful world. It is folly to hope for pleasure in this world. In this sense, teachings of Buddha can be said to be pessimistic. But then, he suggested the remedies of these miseries and indicated the path of liberation. Thus Buddha's philosophy, though begins in pessimism, culminates into optimism.

4. Realism

Buddha has vehemently criticized blind faith in the traditional scriptures like Vedas etc. Due to faith in the doctrine of karma, he has not admitted the existence of God. In his teaching, he has emphasized the real experience of life. He does not admit anything beyond the limits of efforts and understanding.

5. Pragmatism

Buddha's teachings are most pragmatic. It is due to their pragmatic importance that Buddha has discussed the four great truths:

- World is full of sufferings.
- There is a cause of sufferings.
- It is possible to get rid of these sufferings.
- There is a way is get rid of these sufferings.

He said, it is by such a discussion that one gets some gain, it is these which are closely related with the basic principles of religion. It is through these that detachment, distraction of passions, the end of miseries, mental peace, knowledge, wisdom and nirvana may be possible'.

Buddha was not an agnostic otherwise he should not called himself 'Buddha'.

Educational Implications:

Teachings of Buddha were mainly oral. He wrote no book. The education was in reality, a reaction to the education of the post-vedic period and the Brahman period. It is imparted in Sanghas or collective groups. It had many notable features:

1) Abilities of the students

In the Buddhist period, every class in society, except the handles, had the right education. It was denied only to the ill, the handicapped, the dishonored and those punished for crimes. Education used to begin at the age of 8. Till the age of 12, student remained in a state of Shramana. After attains the age of 20, he was qualified to become a monk. Education was imparted through the medium of Pali.

2) Pabbaja Ritual

Before a student could enter a monastery for receiving education, he had to perform the Pabbaja ritual, in which, the

student had his head shaved of all hair, dressed himself in yellow clothes, placed his head at the feet of the monks living in the monastery and sat cross legged on the floor to repeat the following words thrice:

He was then ordained to obey ten rules which included abstaining from theft, killing of any living being, impure conduct, partaking of food at prohibited times, use of intoxicating things, use of cosmetics, taking things without being offered, accepting objects of gold and silver in alms, watching dances and listening to music etc. After the performing of this ritual the student was called 'Sharmana'.

Buddham Sharanam Gachhami
Dhammam Sharanam Gachhami
Sangham Sharanam Gachhami

3) Upasampada Ritual

After attaining the age of 20 years, the student had to adopt 'Upsampada'. On this occasion, the presence of ten monks was essential. After this ritual, the male monks were called Bhikshu and the female monks 'Bhikshuni'. Even at this stage, monks were required to eat in their begging bowl, wearing clothes begged from others and drinking the urine of a cow as a medicine etc.

4) New Education Centers

With the arrival of Buddhist era, great international centers of education were opened. The prominent centers were: Nalanda, Takshila, vikramasila etc. Dr. Altekar, in this context, says, "Buddhism gave an impetus so strong that India became the international seat of learning.

5) Democratic in nature

Buddhist institutions were democratic in nature. The attitude of the teacher was also democratic. Even in the matter of promotions, the final decision was in the hands of majority of teachers. In totality, Buddhist system of education, though practical in its approach, did not flourish in India.

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