

Buddhism

Philosophy or Religion?

II

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Gautama Buddha's position as philosopher has reference to the historical and metaphysical situation of the country at that time. If the traditional dogmata are presented and illustrated by the wrong practices of those who, as professionals, stand for the maintenance of the same, a reaction against the valuation and even substance of the dogmata is to be expected. If people claim a birth-right on the monopolic exposition of the Scriptures, or on the other hand, if the Scriptures themselves are regarded as a collection of sounds, represented by visible letters, carrying mere mundane reference, a protest against such corrupt views becomes necessary. The problem is a little complicated. We need not cast away the *baby* with the bathing-water. If the system in actual working is corrupt, the principles, i.e. the dogmata are Absolute truth, the representations in themselves relative, it is then our task to seek the Mercy of the Absolute Truth for being enabled to serve Him by our living practice. If mind in a speculative manner has been distorting the Truth and we – on relying on the whole as Truth – are disappointed in the long run, we are liable to react in an affected mood and darkened vision and to discard the usefulness of the substantive principle itself. We may then like to pose as autonomic free agents at liberty to try for a solution of the problems of life and after-life on our own hook – and to make a show of our meaningless independent position. Having no taste for the living service of the Absolute, we fail to accept the ideal of service offered by the Absolute Himself in the personality of Shree Gurudev and his devotees. By living conduct and serving attitude towards the Person who is given to the service of the Absolute we may have the only chance

¹ Svami Sadananda Dasa, see www.sadananda.com.

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of understanding the spirit of the Spirit of the dogmata which otherwise seem to be nothing but a collection of mundane miscellany. These books, however, require us to be ready to leave aside our previous opinions and preoccupations, and to surrender unconditionally to the Personality of the Divine Teacher for His service knowing ourselves to be quite unfit for this service. In this case the Truth Himself exerts His Own teaching Initiative and makes us know the transcendence of sounds covered by the mundane letter of traditional dogmata. If tradition is tradition of untruth, we shall be eager to throw it to the dogs, – if Tradition is really Tradition, i.e. Truth, we shall have to adopt the proper method of giving Him as such our unreserved *hearing*.

In case of the pseudo-religionists we are likely to be deceived by their apparent assurance that they keep to the Tradition proper and really want to point at the ontological problems. But Buddha is quite plain in telling us that his message is not to give elucidation of the ontological problem but to show the way to the psycho-logical elimination of the experience of sufferings on the psychological plane. It is an undeniable fact that this world is a place of infinite miseries without any permanent happiness, that we suffer as long as we continue to cherish our enjoying temperament, that the elimination of the enjoying temperament will mean the end of all sufferings. But as to the motive, path and method Vaishnavism differs from the psychological egoistic method Buddha was suggesting not as the remedy but as consummation of the disease at a special stage of the disposition of the people, which should not be unduly generalised as the curative method for all times. God has always made Truth known *fully* to all submissive seekers after Him. He has made Himself accessible to present-day mentality since the time of Buddha. Why should we screen our vision that we might use oil-lamps for groping in the immensity of the dark void, the psycho-analytical method, if we have got to walk in the self-effulgent light of the sun? We should view things in the proper light of our practical need which is supplied by real contact with the Absolute Person in the Eternal Role of the only Giver of His Own whole-time service. We don't deny that it is possible to benumb the enjoying temperament temporarily by the method of the eight-fold path – but we know also that the desire for mundane enjoyment which leads unto death is only sublimated and transformed into living death; desire after peace of mind is after

all again *desire* – and should logically and fortunately lead again to sufferings, as it does actually, as the relief is only temporary – though it may seem to be eternal for the time being. A temporary means and the eight-fold process of psychological training in time – can never lead to a really permanent and desirable state. But as long as we have neither knowledge of nor belief in the *objective*, i.e. substantive, non-relative existence of an ontological plane, we are unable to proceed in a supra-psychological way. All psychological congregates, processes and sankhara are anicca, dukkha and anatta. Any sober introspection should make us realise this fact. We arrive at the nihilistic conclusion. But are we allowed to carry it into the plane of ontological references? If “we” are really nothing but an agglomerate of non-substantive functions and processes – why are we then satisfied with that very state? Rejection and contradiction is possible only between limited, opposite categories. The very interest in the elimination and nullification of the present impermanent situation indicates that the agent proper has been dislocated from the proper plane and shifted to a relative plane of futile opposite characteristics. If we understand that such and such a thing or function cannot be the proper self and if we are getting tired of all their relatives, we are going to be liberated from the intoxicating influences. The world ceases to inflict upon us and we seem to be liberated. But the notion of freedom requires a settlement of the “from” and “for”. Can my desire in itself be uprooted only by the elimination of the objects of this world – while it continues as desire to be liberated? Though the paticcasamupadda is not quite intelligible to the writer and he can refer to the fact that the Buddhists from the time of Buddha disappearance till the present day have been differing greatly as to its proper meaning and have not been able to supply a satisfactory solution of its logical discrepancies – he is ready to accept the suggestion that it has to do with psychological factors which may be properly realised only in course of a respective psychological training. Taking the psychological truth for granted – the proposed process of the elimination of avidya promises only the elimination of the psychological attitude that this world offers us only impermanent, non-selfish and sorrowful objects, but we don’t get rid of the nescience about the existence or non-existence of the ontological plane and of our ontological, i.e. proper function. The mere elimination of the psychological process cannot mean the uprooting of any rebirth, for it is obviously the agent proper who decided against his inherent disposition and came, therefore, under the

influence of the non-proper relative psychological obstructions. As long as this positive nescience continues, real cessation of the enjoying temper is not to be supposed, and any change – as radical and extreme as it may be – on the psychological plane can have no reaction on the position of the ontological agent. Psychological nescience of the mind is different from the ontological nescience of the absolute infinitesimal soul proper who does not belong to the psychological plane. The law of Karma cannot be abolished by extinguishing the psychological principle of action; the law of Karma acts on the psychological plane only. It does not affect the spiritual soul if she is free from wrong misidentifications with the agencies of the mental and physical plane. The Buddhistic method consists in inciting the thirst for elimination of thirst, obviously a contradictory process. Karma is effective as long as there is any movement on the psychological plane it may be in satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the stay on it. The cessation of any form of perception means only the end of perception and infertilisation of the psychological plane, but it does not at all include the removal of the ontological agent from that plane. It is only a process of negative exclusion of consciousness of the fact by making the fact super-conscious.

We quite agree that any attachment and love for anything in this world is entangling us only in the miserable experiences of the unreliability of any relation. But it does not mean that attainment and love on the ontological plane are as well unwholesome. We rather hear through the living channel of the living tradition of Truth Absolute that the very existence of the unwholesomeness here hints at the superexcellence of perfect wholesomeness there just as shadow indicates the existence of light; and the intensity of the shadow corresponds to the intensity of light. So we rightly cultivate right attachment to everything by actual reference to the now-to-us transcendental but the only real position till we are enabled by the Grace of responsive acquaintance, penetrating through psychological nescience, see through the mundane symbols to their true substantive nature, which have reserved the right of incompatibility with the psychological plane. That ontological plane is the plane of permanence and bliss as it is the plane of service and the source of the longing of the real soul for the gradual elimination of any enjoying disposition. All other so-called permanence is a temporary relative

permanence, called so for the reason that it is contrasting to the primary restlessness of unsublimated thirsts and passions.

Buddha himself did never deny the existence of a transcendental super-world. He wanted to keep his adherents away from all mental speculations about that plane. Later “followers” misunderstood him and established the system of sunyavad or relative nihilism. What Buddha thought really is a question of controversy amongst his followers, many of whom took the bold step to deify him to be the Supreme Lord. The body of the Buddhist scriptures seems to suffer from serious interpolations by those who managed to make Buddha support their heterogeneous views. But if we take it for granted that Buddha used really the parable of Majjh. 63. in the way in which it seems now, so we shall like to say that the parable fails to present the real fact. We are not keen on getting cured of our mental diseases but our spiritual disease of misidentifying our soul with body and mind as result of our wrong choice to go out for our own unnatural enjoyment instead of serving the Supreme Lord in loving attitude as we are meant for is to be cured. And we require a doctor who is living on the spiritual plane. He alone can make the soul awake from the intoxicated state. Opinions and views of the metaphysical problems we should really discourage, for they are simply misleading us. And all so-called small “m” masters we should abandon. We shall like to take shelter at the Blessed Feet of Him, Who is the Giver of the full conscious realisation of the ontological relations. We should like to associate ourselves with those who as His disciples devote themselves whole timely to the spiritual service of the Absolute Persons. The Divine Preceptor is the Spiritual Absolute Person in His Own Eternal form of Whole-Time Service to the Supreme Lord Sree Krishna. He alone can supply the proper method of coming out of miseries not for the vain purpose of negative coming out but for the purpose of attaining absolute spiritual service. Liberation and salvation are psychological errors fostered by the enjoying temper, they have no value for the devotee, who is told by the most reliable source, i.e. the ontological representative himself – that he is in his proper nature not an enjoying *he* – but a serving *she*, that the function to attain all psychological manipulations means but an irreparable loss of time. To submit to any psychological method is simply suicidal. It is better to die from psychological pains and to persevere in praying to God to make us find out the

Transcendental Preceptor and His disciples and in longing for the unconditional loving service of the Absolute. It is better than to listen a second even to the wrong doctrines derived from no other authorities than the same psychological apparatus we ourselves possess and the incompetence of which is open to every sane human non-speculative, non-intoxicated brain – for we can be assured that God will never forsake those who really seek for the service of His Own. Buddhism is a philosophy, unable and unwilling to give any hint at the Absolute Transcendental Subject God, the Infinite Absolute, the serving subjects, i.e. the infinitesimal absolutes and the connecting link between them, i.e. unconditional loving serving attitude. Buddhism, therefore, in its present incomplete state, has no right to be called “Religion”, which word is derived from the verb ‘re-ligare’, i.e. to re-bind, sc. the dislocated subjects to the proper Subject. Historical Buddhism is probably the perfection of mundane psychological philosophy. The higher mundane category is fit to enlighten the lower. Amongst the blind the one-sighted may be called king. But what of the full-sighted? Buddhism can be understood and interpreted properly not by the liberalistic attempts, but only in the highest category of religion, nay as *the* Religion. Listen, who has ears to listen, to the proper message the Harmonist as one of the loudspeakers of true Vaishnavism is broadcasting.