



On Philosophical Issues In Relation To Buddhism Part 2

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The Sannasa article on "Philosophical Issues In Relation To Buddhism" (Sannasa – February 2012) is very critical of Buddhism and complains that Buddhists criticize other religions. Criticizing other's religions is extremely immoral and should not happen in any civilized society. The Great Emperor Asoka of India has said, "Whosoever honours his own religion and condemns others' religions, does so indeed through devotion to his own religion thinking, 'I will glorify my own religion'. But on the contrary, in so doing he injures his own religion more gravely." In today's civilized societies Buddhists must refrain from criticizing or condemning others' religions and hurting others' feelings. The article has been written by a person who doesn't understand the basics of Buddhism and is full of errors and distortions. I fully agree with what the writer states about his own religion, but disagree with what he states about Buddhism. The purpose of this article is to correct any misconceptions about Buddhism resulting from that article.

Part 2

Through the subconscious mind, human beings can acquire knowledge by directly seeing the true and complete nature of all aspects of the universe without the aid of the sense organs. This stream of knowledge can be activated only by a person who has attained enlightenment. Through this stream one sees the true reality of nature without limitations and without thinking. Therefore the only people who have seen and understood the true reality of nature are those who have attained enlightenment and they are Lord Buddha and the arahants who followed his foot steps. They have seen the visualizable aspects (three dimensional aspects which can be perceived through the five sense organs) and the unvisualizable aspects (aspects which are beyond three dimensions and beyond the perception limits of the sense organs) of the universe. All others including scientists and thinkers have

acquired knowledge through the other stream where rational knowledge is acquired through the sense organs, conscious mind and thinking. This knowledge is subject to the limits of the five sense organs which can perceive only the visualizable aspects of the universe.

Some thinkers blindly extrapolated this conscious mind knowledge to unvisualizable dimensions. But, unfortunately, the knowledge of the visualizable aspects are not extrapolatable to the unvisualizable because their characteristics are very different. It is like the description of the beauty of a beautiful flower garden made by a totally blind person by extrapolating the knowledge he had acquired by touching and smelling. Quantum science uses advanced mathematical techniques to transcend the visualizable dimensions of the universe and examine some of its unvisualizable phenomena.

The stream of knowledge through the subconscious mind is extremely powerful and through it, those who can access it can see and understand all aspects of nature. Dr. Joseph Murphy describes it as, "Within your subconscious depths lie infinite wisdom, infinite powers and an infinite supply of all that is necessary. The infinite intelligence in your subconscious can give you access to wonderful new kinds of knowledge." Dr. Brian Weiss, a renowned Professor of Psychiatry in The USA, who has carried out research on the human mind describes the power of the subconscious mind as, "This is the part of our mind that lies beneath ordinary consciousness, beneath the constant bombardment of thoughts, feelings, outside stimuli and other assaults on our consciousness. The subconscious mind functions at a level deeper than our usual level of awareness. The subconscious mind is not limited by our imposed boundaries of logic, space and time. It can remember everything from any time. It can transcend the ordinary to touch upon a wisdom far beyond our everyday capabilities."

Buddhism and science teach knowledge acquired by human beings through these two streams of knowledge, science through the sense organs, conscious mind, and thinking, and Buddhism through the subconscious mind and seeing without thinking. Other knowledge systems,

Physicist Menas Kafatos and and Historian Robert Nadeau point out, "depends on the belief that the truths of spiritual reality can be known only through divine revelations or prompting." (The Nonlocal Universe by Menas Kafatos and Robert Nadeau, Oxford University Press) as the Sannasa writer has said. Therefore Buddhism is not based on belief or faith based assumptions as the writer of the Sannasa article claims. Lord Buddha is not a lateral thinker as he has mentioned, but an enlightened person who knew everything by seeing without thinking.

The Sannasa article says that there had been 24 Buddhas and questions if all of them preached the same Buddhism. Any individual human being has the capability to become a Buddha and reach the same status as the founder. There can be many Buddhas, all of them having the same hierarchical status, like in science where there can be many topmost scientists. All Buddhas look at the reality of nature through enlightened minds and teach the same knowledge about the reality of nature, particularly about the human mind, just in the same way that all scientists teach the same knowledge about the universe. There have been, in fact, 28 Buddhas and since the knowledge they teach represent the true reality of nature it is valid for all times and under all circumstances, it cannot be changed from time to time.

In the sixth century the Roman Emperor Constantine feared that if people believed in rebirth, they would try to achieve their own salvation and such people would be less obedient to the Emperor. That fear made him to ban the belief in rebirth. The religions in Rome at that time accommodated the Emperor's order not only by jettisoning the belief in rebirth, but also by going further and teaching that it is not true. (The Case For Reincarnation by Joe Fisher, Carol Publication Group, New York). It is not possible to change the teachings of Buddhism in this manner.

After attaining enlightenment, seeing the true reality of nature, understanding the main problems of human beings and remedies for them, Lord Buddha presented them in the celebrated form of four noble truths. It is a compact presentation of the suffering, cause of suffering, that suffering can be alleviated and the way to alleviate it, not unlike

the statement of a physician who first of all diagnoses the ailment, finds the cause for the ailment, affirms that the ailment can be cured and finally prescribes the remedy. Palitha Mapatuna in his book "Key Elements Of The Buddhist Teaching" says, "Understanding the four noble truths is also the understanding of the nature of existence". But the author of the Sannasa article says "four (noble) truths which are entirely based on faith and scientifically or materially they cannot be happened". A person with moderate intelligence can understand the above four step procedure which the physician follows and come out of the physician's surgery satisfied that the physician followed the right procedure. But I have met very illiterate people with low intelligence who do not understand the above four step procedure and whose visits to the physician are based entirely on faith that the physician can heal them. Buddhism says, "Pannavato ayandhammo nayan dhammo duppanassa" which means, what is taught in Buddhism is for intelligent people and not for idiots. It also says, "Paccattam vedithabbo vinnuhiti", which means that each one will understand it depending on each one's intelligence. A person who does not understand the physician's four step procedure is not competent to talk about medical procedures. In the same way, a person who is not capable of appreciating the four noble truths is not competent enough to talk about Buddhism.

It is not possible to convince a person who doesn't watch television, listen to the radio or read newspapers that there are countries other than his own in the world. He will boast that his country is the world. In the fourth century before Christ the Greek thinker Aristotle who thought that he knew everything about the universe, taught that the earth where he and the fellow human beings lived was the most important and therefore it is the centre of the universe, and all other objects in the universe, the sun, moon, planets and the stars revolved around the earth. People believed this story for over two millennia. When Galileo Galilei proved by scientific observation that that story was wrong the authorities at that time, instead of accepting what Galileo scientifically proved jailed him for life for contradicting what the religions in the west were teaching.

To be continued

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