



On Philosophical Issues In Relation To Buddhism

Part 3

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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 3 (Final)

The writer of the Sannasa article states that the concepts of rebirth, karma, heaven, hell and nirvana are all based on faith and cannot be scientifically tested or proved. The fact is that he writes these without reading the relevant literature. The concept of rebirth had been scientifically proved more than a decade ago. On karma, heaven and hell preliminary scientific investigations have shown that they are true. Nirvana is a concept too deep to be understood by unenlightened people. One has to learn what is meant by 'shunyata' in Buddhism and 'quantum vacuum' in quantum science before making statements on nirvana. A person with moderate intelligence can do this and appreciate the concept of nirvana.

Most modern science discoveries have confirmed that how Lord Buddha described the reality of nature is very accurate. For example 15 years ago in 1997 modern scientist Nicolu Gisin of Geneva University conclusively proved that the basic nature of the universe is non-local. Scientists believe that this discovery is the greatest discovery in the whole history of science. Henry Straps describes Gisin's discovery as 'the most profound discovery in all science'. The discovery of non-locality has revolutionized the way scientists look at the reality of nature. However, when looking for examples to illustrate the non-local nature of the universe scientists hit a blank. There is nothing in the western world that can be used to illustrate Gisin's discovery. Therefore they use the Surangama Sutra in Buddhism to illustrate the non-local nature of the universe. Non-locality indicates a universal interconnectedness all throughout the universe. Surangama Sutra is the answer given by Lord Buddha to a question posed by Venerable Ananda on the nature of reality.

Modern science discoveries have made many eminent scientists who had earlier shunned religions including their own to look seriously at Buddhism and be satisfied that what is taught in Buddhism accurately represent the true reality of nature. Buddhism has now become a guiding light for modern science.

The renowned scientist, Albert Einstein has said, "The religion of the future will be a cosmic religion. It should transcend a personal God and avoid dogmas and theology. Covering both the natural and the spiritual, it should be based on a religious sense arising from the experience of all things natural and spiritual, as a meaningful unity. Buddhism answers this description."

The renowned modern physicist and Nobel Prize Winner, Robert Oppenheimer who discovered the atom bomb in The USA learned Buddhism after the bomb he made killed thousands of people in Japan and said, "The general notions about human understanding which are illustrated by dis-

coveries in atomic physics are not in the nature of things wholly unfamiliar, wholly unheard of, or new. Even in our own culture they have a history and in Buddhist thought a more considerable and central place. What we shall find is an exemplification, an encouragement, and a refinement of old wisdom."

The eminent Nobel Prize winning physicist and a founder of modern science Neils Bohr said, "For a parallel to the lessons of atomic theory, we must turn, to those kinds of epistemological problems with which already the Buddha has been confronted, when trying to harmonize our position as spectators and actors in the great drama of existence."

The former Priminister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru has said, "In this world of storm and strife, hatred and violence, the message of the Buddha shines like a radiant sun. Perhaps at no time was that message more needed than in the world of the atomic and hydrogen bombs. Two thousand five hundred years have only added to the vitality and truth of that message." Primeminister Nehru has also said, "If we follow the principles enunciated by the Buddha, we will ultimately win peace and tranquility for the world."

The well known British Philosopher

Bertrand Russell has said, "Of the great religions of history I prefer Buddhism because it has had the smallest element of persecution."

It is commonly accepted that conscious mind knowledge leads one to the atom bomb and the subconscious mind knowledge leads one to the Buddha and world peace. Subconscious mind knowledge is available only in Buddhism.

The subconscious mind's stream of knowledge gets activated when one quietsens the thinking mind and this is done by meditation. Dr. Fritjof Capra describes this as, "The basic aim of this technique (meditation) is to silence the thinking mind and shift the awareness from the rational to the intuitive mode of consciousness. In many modes of meditation, this silencing of the rational mind is achieved by concentrating one's attention on a single item, like one's breathing, the sound of a mantra, or the visual image of a mandala."

Therefore those who practice meditation are on the right path towards emancipation and alleviation of suffering.

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