

The Anomalies between all Other Theistic Religions and the Teachings of Buddha

Jeet Baudh**Introduction**

Perusal through the history of India since the beginning of Buddhism i.e. more than two thousand five hundred years ago; that divulges the significance of the teachings of Tathāgata Buddha. The canonical literature of Buddhism known as '*Tipiṭaka*' translated into more than thirty languages and it has influenced most of the nations and cultures of the world. These teachings are revelations for the welfare of all human beings irrespective of their nation, language, caste, creed and colour; place of living and their socioeconomic status. These are relevant for all sentient beings. "The King Charles III of England" and also "the poorest of the poor" of world all are scan under these principles of Buddha on equal footing.

The complete teachings of Tathāgata Buddha are protected and preserved in its pristine pure form since the first congregation held shortly after the *Mahāpranibbāna* of the Enlightened Buddha in Rajgriha under the patronage of King *Ajātsattū* of Magadha and that was presided over by *Agrsāvaka Mahākassapa* in the leadership of *Thera Ānanda* and *Thera Upālī*; in three baskets known as *Tipiṭaka- Vinaya Piṭaka, Sutta Piṭaka* and *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. Thereafter *Thera Ānanda* and *Thera Upālī* both are known as first Mahādhammādhārā Ānanda and first Vinaya *Parmukha Upālī*. Continuing interest in Buddhism through the whole world has generated countless publications of the *Tipiṭaka* globally; its importance to edification at all levels is demonstrated by the ongoing efforts on the part of several thousand educators and intelligentsia to implement its principles in their field to expertise. The *Tipiṭaka* are quite voluminous consisting about eighty four thousand *suttas* and make them elude descriptions. The *Tipiṭakas* are subtle, profound and extensive teachings of Buddha. Buddhism reveals scholarly interest in the area of history, philosophy, psychology and religion.

A perusal of the personalities of the founders of the theistical religions which have moved the world in the history from past but also are still having a significant influence over the vast masses of the people and the poses they assumed in propagating and promoting their religions reveals certain basic points of anomalies between the Buddha and his teachings on the one hand and the rest on the other which are not without significance.

Anomalies

Perusal of the history, sociology, philosophy and religion of all the theistic religions and their scriptural as well as the gospel of Buddha; the following anomalies are observed:-

No.	Theistical Religions	The Teachings of Buddha
1.	The concept of Supreme Power or Un-definable Absolute God or God of Gods as omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, creator, law giver and controller of all deeds of the universe whom all adherents must fear, obey and supplicate is significant for all devotees and followers.	In Buddha's gospel, there is abnegation of such concept at ab-initio; the Authority of Supreme Power or Un-definable Absolute God or God of Gods as omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent, creator, law giver and controller of all the deeds of the universe and their followers are not presume to fear, obey and supplicate such authority.

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2.	<p>The realization on the scriptural foundations consisting of eternally valid rules and laws, admonitions, commands and comments is customary traditions and are to be accepted and obeyed by all devotees and followers. These all scriptural foundations are the words of God and cannot be questioned. They all are treated as “Apaurusheya” i.e. not created or written by man.</p> <p>They all claimed divinity for their religious teachings or divine origin for their religion and teachings.</p>	<p>The Buddha opens his all teachings to exploration and discovery without losing any of its depth, gravity or subtlety. The truth promulgated by the Tathāgata Buddha can be evidenced by anyone interested and though it is open to all for discussion, it has become widely accepted as rooted in common sense.</p> <p>The <i>Tathāgata</i> Buddha did not claim any divinity for his Dhamma. These were discovered by man for man. It was not a revelation.</p>
3.	<p>Some dogmas and principles are invariably contained in theistic religions’ doctrines which are though not understood by the followers; must nevertheless be accepted unquestioningly by all of them.</p>	<p>The Teachings of the Buddha are rational, understandable; his goal and intention is completely obvious and open. His aim is the Enlightenment. All the teachings of Buddha are merely expedient means to that end. Through vipassanā meditation one must seek true wisdom and rid of all defilements. The self-discipline meditation --<i>Sila</i>, <i>Samādhi</i> and <i>Paññā</i> is conducive to achieve wisdom. This approach typifies a broad and open mind absolutely free from dependence on external factors.</p>
4.	<p>All theistic religious traditions exercise control over their followers eliciting their obedience as a token of their faith. The adherents are held in check by a system of rewards and punishments such as Heaven or Hell. They worship one or several supreme powers or beings those are completely beyond their reach. Their systems are coercing the devotees through the power of authority.</p>	<p><i>Dhamma</i> invites a reasonable approach to its principles, its practices and its spiritual goals i.e. <i>Nibbāna</i>. In order to have a crystal clear, rational understanding of the truth, one must develop one’s capability to apply one’s own wisdom and no one or no thing can do it in one’s stead. The <i>Dhamma</i> fosters rational understanding on the part of its practitioners of the advantages benefiting one’s own self as well as all other through the practice of voluntary self discipline. It recognizes wisdom and self nature as qualities possessed by all human beings to achieve <i>Nibbāna</i>, the great enlightenment. Such kind of faith in one’s own self, self respect implies a full acceptance and recognition in one’s mind and self nature as a pristine pure. Buddhism promotes in its practitioners self-respect and self-reliance.</p>

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5.	The founders of theistic religions are claimed or secured honourable and good places for themselves such as prophet sent by God or son of God or God of Gods etc. Every one of them laid down certain conditions there was no salvation for a person unless and until he accepted him as the son of God or a prophet sent by God or God of Gods.	Buddha separates himself from the rest of other theistic founders that is his self abnegation. He never claimed any supernatural origin or supernatural power nor did He perform any revelation to prove his supernatural power. He claimed that he was the natural biological son of <i>Kapilvatthu</i> King, <i>Suddhōdana</i> and his Queen <i>Mahāmāyā</i> . He was born just as a man, lived a life as a man; preached his gospel as a man and also at the age of 80years He achieved <i>Mahāparinibbāna</i> (died) just as a man. He carved no place in Dhamma for himself by laying down conditions regarding salvation.
6.	The founders of theistic religions are described as revelations. A revealed religion is so called because it is the message of God to his creatures to worship their founder as representative or as God or prophet to save their souls. The obligation of the Prophet is to ensure salvation to the faithful devotee provided they obey God's commands and recognise the prophet as his messenger.	The Tathāgata Buddha did not promise to give <i>Nibbāna</i> or helping in achieving salvation i.e. <i>Nibbāna</i> . He was one who 'guide the path' but not the 'giver of salvation.' His Dhamma is not supposed to perform revelations. The Buddha, Enlightened one never claimed that he was a prophet or a messenger of God or Supreme Power of the universe. He always repudiated such kind of description. His Dhamma is the discovery in the sense that it is the result of several years meditation of inquiry and investigations into the conditions of human life on the globe and the understanding of the working of human instincts with which man is born.
7.	The theistic religions propagated and guarded their scriptures and defended those sacrificial rituals and techniques are the special crafts of their religious priests	Buddhism demonstrated its universal means and ways. Buddhism rejected sacrificial ritualism for performing religious rites and achieving religious goals. Buddhism is beneficial for all sentient beings and believes in protection of their lives.
8.	In Indian continent there is a caste system which discarded people from one caste to other and particularly Sudhras are made to live the life of extricated from the common man of their religion. Some country discriminated their citizens for their dark colour.	There is abnegation in Buddhism against such kind of discrimination in the society irrespective of caste, colour, creed, religion and sex. All human beings are equal. Buddha's teachings are equally beneficial for are mankind. Buddha preached for the welfare of all sentient beings.

Buddha and Dhamma

The literally meaning of the word Buddha is "The Awaken one" or "The Enlightened". The way to enlightenment is achieved by utilizing morality (*Sila*), meditation (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*) in three ways -*Pariyatti*, *Patipatti* and *Pativeda*. *Pariyatti* means the

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learning of theory of *Dhamma* as propounded by Buddha; *Pativeda* means putting the theory into practice as described in Buddhist canon and *Pativeda* stands for meditation of Dhamma penetratingly and piercingly through experience realisation of truth for the achievement of *Nibbāna*.

The Buddha the Enlightened or Awaken one; a man who is superior to all other beings both human & divine, by his wisdom of the truth, He declares himself to be neither a god (deva) nor a Yakṣa, nor a Gandharva nor a man. *Siddarṭha* Gautama achieved Buddhahood when he was seated in meditation under the *Asvattha tree* (*Ficus Religiosa* or Peepal Tree) which is commemorated as Bodhi Tree or Bo Tree.

The word Buddha is described as in Pāli canon:-

“*Iti’pi so Bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho vijjācaraṇasampanno sugato lokavidu ānuttaropurisadammasārathi satthādevamanussānaṃ Buddho Bhagavā’ ti.*”ⁱ

Thus the Buddha indeed is the bhagava who is free from lust and aversion and perfect in knowledge of ultimate truth and fully enlightened; embodiment of wisdom and morality, The exalted truth finder, having knowledge of all realms, incomparable in human beings, He is the supreme companion of men and gods; so is the Buddha the enlightened and the Lord.

The Dhamma generally define as the teachings or gospel of the Enlightened Buddha including all fundament principles and discourses. The Buddha’s teachings explain the method in order to get rid of suffering through meditation of the path penetratingly and piercingly.

The word *Dhamma* described as in Pāli canon:-

“*Svākkhāto Bhagavato Dhammo sandiṭṭhiko akaliko ehipassiko opanayiko paccattaṃ veditabbo viññūhīti.*”ⁱⁱ

The teachings are perfectly enunciated by the Enlightened, all are verifiable here and now, timelessness, True in the ancient, past, present and future; bears fruits immediately, invites all kinds of checking by themselves and leads the path onwards to *Nibbāna* that is experienced by the wise person for himself.

The core teachings of all Buddhas:-

“*Sabbapāpassa akaraṃ Kusalassa upasampadā, Sacitta pariyodapaṃ, Etaṃ Buddhānasānaṃ.*”ⁱⁱⁱ

Avoidance of all kind of evils, gathering of all kind of merits, accomplishing and purifying one’s own mind is the teachings of all Buddhas (of past, present and future).

Liberation from sufferings is the goal of Buddha’s gospel for all human beings irrespective of their socioeconomic status. He taught prolifically about suffering and rid of suffering and discovered the path to rid of suffering”. For that He taught Four Noble Truths i.e. suffering, cause of suffering, cessation of suffering and the path leading to cessation of suffering. His ultimate goal is to achieve *Nibbāna*, the sufferingless life.

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The Buddha discovered that mind and matter play their role in all deeds - vocal, physical and mental, of human beings. To make life sufferingless one might make mind free from all kinds of defilements since defilements are occurred in mind only. Buddha discovered Vipassanā meditation; the technique to get rid of suffering. Vipassanā meditation requires practice for both mind and matter. The practice can be developed only when one understands the fundamental nature of mindfulness (*Sati*), concentration (*Samādhi*) and Energy (*Viriya*). They all are related to mind and matter phenomena; one must know how they work in align to each other. One needs to be aware of presence and disappearance of defilements in the mind if one would like to get rid of suffering or attain liberation.

Mental phenomena proceeded by mind, mind is all in all, as a master; mind is best overall. Whether one speaks or acts with malice mind, then suffering follows him as the wheel follows the feet of ox, the puller of wheels. Similarly if one speaks or acts with a virtuous mind then happiness follows him just like the shadow consistently.^{iv}

The practise of Mindfulness of the mind is in sixteen ways. Out of which eight are of ordinary category states of mind and rest are higher states of categories of mind. Meditation is the awareness in each case that his mind is so reflecting. These are as under:-

A	Ordinary States of Mind	B	Higher States of Mind
1.	Lustful (<i>Sarāga</i>)	9.	Great <i>jhānic</i> Mind (<i>Mahāggata</i>)
2.	Without Lust (<i>Vitarāga</i>)	10.	Mind without <i>Jhāna</i> (<i>amahāggata</i>)
3.	Angry (<i>Sadosa</i>)	11.	Immaterial <i>Jhāna</i> (<i>anuttara</i>)
4.	Without Anger (<i>Vitadosa</i>)	12.	Material <i>Jhāna</i> (<i>sa-uttra</i>)
5.	Deluded (<i>Samoha</i>)	13.	Concentrated Mind (<i>samāhita</i>)
6.	Without delusion (<i>Vitamoha</i>)	14.	Without concentration or <i>samādhi</i> (<i>asamāhita</i>)
7.	Sloth and Torpor (<i>Saṅkhitta</i>)	15.	Liberated (<i>Vimutta</i>)
8.	Distracted (<i>Vikkhitta</i>)	16.	Without Liberating (<i>avimutta</i>) ^v

Vipassanā meditation is awareness in each and every case in mind and matter that the mind is so reflecting; My mind is now lustful, my mind is now without lust; and so on.... with being ardently (*ātāpi*), knowing clearly all(*sampajana*) and being mindful (*stimā*) free from lust and discontent.

Our tendencies to be blind to our folly are subtle and pervasive because we are pleasure seeking beings armed with conscience and intellect. So no doubt acknowledging our propensity to suffer is an important first step but there is much more to Buddhism than just suffering.

He said that every individual can achieved *Nibbāna* by practicing *Dhamma* properly. The famous quote of Buddha is “*Atta dwipo bhava*” means ‘do your efforts yourself for what you want to achieve i.e. *Nibbāna*.

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Conclusion

The Buddha teaches that in the world every man is his own master and controls his own destiny and no man or no thing or no supernatural power is controlling him from inside or outside. According to Buddha men's instantaneous problem is his own suffering and his own deeds. He rid of suffering from cycle of birth and death. Human beings in Buddhism are the subjects of an extensive commentarial literature that examine the quality and nature of human life from the point of view of humans' ability to achieve *Nibbāna*, the enlightenment. In Buddhism human beings are of just one kind of sentient beings that is a being with mind stream.

In Buddhism it is never claimed that this world, life on the earth or in universe, moon and sun, stars and galaxy, days and night, month and years, winds and water were created by a superpower God or supreme of God or God of Gods.

ⁱ Buddharakkhita Achariya,(2020); Comprehensive Course on Buddhism, Mahabodhi Society , Bangalore

ⁱⁱ Ibid

ⁱⁱⁱ Dhammapada,Buddha Vaggo (Sutta 183)

^{iv} Dhammapada, Yamak Vaggo; (Sutta 1 and 2)

^v Majjhima Nikāya , Sattipatthana Sutta (M.N.10)

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