

THE PHILOSOPHY OF BUDDHISM

Relevance of the topic. I chose this topic because everybody knows about Buddhism as a religion. But in fact, it has many philosophical aspects. It is very interesting to be involved into new culture. What is more, the philosophy of Buddhism can help many people to change their lives and to see the world from another viewpoint.

Purpose: to learn Buddhism as a philosophy of the Ancient India.

Tasks:

- to learn about Buddha and his life story;
- to discover The Four Noble Truths;
- to understand The Eightfold Path;
- to find philosophical thoughts that can be used in our lives.

Discourse of the topic. Buddhism is one of the oldest and used religion in the world. It has its long history. It is also something bigger than just an Eastern religion. It is a philosophical teaching that was originated in India in the middle of the 1st millennium BC.

Buddhism was founded in Northern India by the Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama. According to legend, he was born in an aristocratic family so he did not see the real India. He had everything he wanted, then he married a girl who he was in love with. But at the age of 29 he had 4 accidental meetings that changed his life. He met a sick person and found out about illnesses and sufferings from them. He met an old person and learnt about age and its sufferings. He saw a funeral and found out about death and its sufferings. And the last one, he met an ascetic person and discovered that he could escape from his destiny in an ascetic way. That is what he did. He left his family and everything he had to escape from sufferings. He studied Brahmanism, but ultimately rejected it. And then, after years of attempts, he reached the enlightenment and became Buddha. This means that he reached Nirvana.

I think that Buddhism is much more a philosophical teaching than a religion, because I noticed that people believe in Buddha's sayings than in him like Christians or Muslims do. Most Buddhists think of Buddha as not just a man. They believe in Buddhahood which is based on spiritual levels. Buddhahood is a spiritual state of being. This is why Buddhist scriptures speak of many Buddhas. They are trying to escape from sufferings with the help of Buddha, with his life experience and way to nirvana.

There are a lot of words that non-Buddhist cannot understand but The Four Noble Truths (siryasalya) has sense to be taught. There they are:

1. The existence is suffering.
2. The cause of suffering is desire.
3. The removal of suffering can only come from the removal of desire.
4. The desire can be abandoned by following The Noble Eightfold Path, which is basis of the disciplines of Buddhism.

So, I can't say that I agree with everything but I want to point at The Second Noble Truth. Buddha said that people don't understand what they really want and that is why our desires can bring some sufferings. But of course, you may want to develop yourself that will be good for you and then you won't face the suffering.

Buddhism is closely related to Indian philosophy at all. They have their own features from other world philosophies. For example, Indians believe in karma (a sum of your life experiences that determines person's destiny for the next life) and samsara (a wheel of rebirth that lasts until person escapes from desires and wills). They also want to reach nirvana – the freedom from desires and sufferings, the moment when you have no thoughts and you just exist. For people who are not Buddhists reaching nirvana can be an opportunity to discover themselves and to understand your real feelings and wills.

Buddha left for people The Eightfold Path to reach nirvana:

1. Right understanding – to start understanding what the world is without our expectations and imaginations;
2. Right thought – to start thinking more about global themes and to think clearly;
3. Right speech – to start talking only after you have thought about what you want to say;
4. Right action – to start doing only those things that can help to improve our world;
5. Right livelihood – to start working where you want, not harming anything;
6. Right effort – to start developing good habits and doing many positive moral acts in your daily life;
7. Right mindfulness – to do different practices like watching your body, actions, thoughts, feelings;
8. Right concentration – is a deep concentration, meditation or total focus, to become a person who can control your own mind.

These tips can help people to improve themselves as Human, as personality.

Conclusions. Buddhism is a real philosophy which thoughts can be used in our own life philosophy. One of the greatest thoughts is to see the real world, to improve yourself and to find peace between your mind and body.

Buddhism has its ontology (knowledge about nature of things) and gnoseology (knowledge about ways of cognition). So, I believe that Buddhism is a philosophical teaching that become a religion for people because they were ready to believe in Buddha's thoughts. The Four Noble Truths and The Eightfold Path are not only rules for people, they are a possibility to become free from sufferings and to understand your real desires.

To sum up, the philosophy of Buddhism is more about you, your soul, reaching nirvana and cognition. It is about your way to accepting the world as it is and finding a place for yourself in it.

Literature

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