

# WHAT IS BUDDHISM?

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**Abstract:** Buddhism is the world of Buddha, just a Christianity is the work of Jesus, and Islam that of Mohammed. Followers of Buddhism don't acknowledge a supreme god or deity. They instead focus on achieving enlightenment –a state of inner peace and wisdom. When followers reach this spiritual echelon, they are said to have experienced nirvana.

## INTRODUCTION

Buddhism has marched through the ages, almost unaffected by various onslaughts. The more one pries into the study of Buddhism, more one is struck by its mammoth dimensions, excellence and enduring character of Buddhist traditions. It is the inborn truths and intrinsic merit of Buddhism that has preserved its pristine glory from the ravages of time and misfortunes. It is the second grandest religion that was born in India. Now we will discuss about "WHAT IS BUDDHISM"??

The all-merciful Buddha has passed away, but the sublime Dharma which He unreservedly bequeathed to humanity still exists in its pristine purity.

Immediately after the final passing away of the Buddha 500 distinguished Adamants held convocation to rehearse the Doctrine taught by the Buddha.

The Tipitaka was compiled and arranged in its present form by those Arahants of old. As the word itself implies the Tipitaka consists of 3 Baskets. They are the Basket of Discipline (vinaya pitaka), the Basket of Discourses (sutta pitaka) and the Basket of ultimate Doctrine (Abhidhamma pitaka).

Buddhism is not a religion in the sense in which that word is commonly understood, for it is not "a system of faith and worship". Buddha who shows us the path of Deliverance. It is He who holds the light of truth to us benighted travelers.

In Buddhism there is no one almighty creator god whom Buddhists should obey and fear, there are no dogmas that we must believe. There are no creeds that we must accept on faith. There are no priests to act as mediators. There are no special rites and ceremonies to become a Buddhist, no prayers and sacrifices to be offered, no

penance and repentance to be made to gain one's salvation.

Buddhism, no doubt, contains an excellent moral code which is adaptable to all climes and

Ages, but it is much more than an ordinary moral teaching.

The chief features of Buddhism are the Four Noble Truths which the Buddha Himself discovered and revealed to the world.

They are the Noble Truth of Suffering, (the *raison d'être* of Buddhism); the Noble Truth of the cause of suffering, ie. craving; the Noble Truth of the Annihilation of suffering, ie. Nibbana, (the summum bonum of Buddhism), and the path leading to the Annihilation of suffering.

All are subject to birth, and consequently to disease, old age, and death. No one is exempt from these four causes of suffering.

The Buddha, on the other hand does not expect His followers to be constantly brooding over this fact of suffering and lead miserable unhappy life. He exhorts them to be always happy, for joy (Piti) is one of the factors of Enlightenment.

Although the Disciples of the Buddha constantly meditate on transiency and sorrow, yet they are always happy and serene.

Both suffering and craving can only be eradicated by treading the Noble Eightfold path and attaining the supreme Bliss of Nibbana. The Noble Eightfold path consists of Right understanding, Right thoughts, Right speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Endeavour, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.

The Buddha-Dhamma is not based on the fear of the unknown, but is founded on the bed-rock of these facts which could be verified by experience and tested by ourselves. Buddhism is, therefore, rational and practical.

There is nothing in the Dhamma that is impractical or impracticable. The Buddha practiced what He taught; He taught what He practiced. Practice is the foundation of His teaching.

Such a rational and practical system cannot contain any mysticism or esoteric doctrines. Buddhism is saturated with this spirit of free inquiry and complete tolerance. It is the teaching of the open mind and the sympathetic

heart which, lighting and warming the whole universe with its twin rays of wisdom and compassion, sheds its genial glow on every being struggling in the ocean of birth and death.

Buddhism is not confined to any country or any particular nation. It is universal. It is not nationalism, which, in other words, is another form of caste system founded on a wider basis. Buddhism, if it be permitted to say so, is super nationalism.

To the Buddhist there is no far or near, no enemy or foreigner, no renegade or untouchable since universal love, realized through understanding, has established the brotherhood of all living beings. A real Buddhist is a citizen of the world.

Buddhism is, therefore, unique, mainly owing to its rationality, practicability, efficacy, and universality. It is the noblest of all unifying influences and the only lever that can uplift the world.

## CONCLUSION

Though Buddhism expanded overseas, but in India, land of its birth it was, till very recent times, non-existent. It quickly gained momentum after independence, when Dr.B.R Ambedkar decided to adopt Buddhism. Numerous scheduled castes followed Dr.Ambedkar and adopted Buddhism. They nowadays constitute an overwhelming portion of Buddhists in India. But they don't form part of the two conventional sects of Buddhism namely ;( Mahayana and Hinayana) and are commonly termed as Neo-Buddhists (Nava-Buddha).The history of Buddhism in India begins with that of its founder Gautama Buddha in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.

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