



THE ROLE OF EDUCATION FOR QUALITY OF LIFE: BUDDHA'S PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

It is true that, Quality of life is the main concerns of education. In this paper will true to analyze the concerns of Buddha for quality of life in terms of Education.

INTRODUCTION

The Buddhist concept of the good life consisted of observing discipline, namely, abstaining from stealing, from doing wrong which related to sensual desires, from lying, slandering, bitter speech and idle babbling. According to Buddhist philosophy, the concept of education was to train the student in religion, morality, wisdom and meditation and to equip him with intellectual and spiritual powers. It also incorporated certain ingredients such as regard for the subject of learning simple living and high thinking, love for manual work, self-help, community life, maintaining sincerity and discipline, humility, respect to elders and veneration to teacher. The aims of Buddhist education as they emerged were to tenable the pupils to realize the ultimate truth, that is nirvana or moksha, to make them aware about the realities of life, to enable them to eliminate ignorance and acquire knowledge and wisdom, to make them understand the law of karma, to make them sharpen their faculties of intellect, discrimination and decision-making, to help them develop good moral character, to cultivate a scientific attitude in learning and living, to develop their ability for logical reasoning, argumentation and dialectics, to inculcate universal ideals of love, compassion, brotherhood, friendship, welfare and peace.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY ARE :

To study the philosophical beliefs pertaining to metaphysical, epistemological and axiological realms of the Buddhist philosophy and their relevance to education
To study the different educational ideals as advocated by the Buddha
To derive educational aims from the Buddhist metaphysics epistemology and axiology.

The ultimate aim of education according to Buddhism is quality of Life. It is to be achieved by the eradication of tendencies that generate passions and involve 'Chittavritti- nirodha'. Chittavritti nirodha is to be achieved by the eightfold path of dhukha-nirodha-marga. The path then provided the basis on the curriculum in Buddhist Education. Goutama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism is too well known to require recounting her. He lived in the sixth century B.C.

The Tripitakas- Vinayapitaka, Suddapitaka and Abhidhammapitaka, are records of the Buddha's views as reported by his intimate disciples. They are the basic source material on the Buddha's teachings. Vinayapitaka deals mainly with the rules of conduct (quality of life) for the Buddhist Sangha. The Buddha was, however concerned mainly with the cessation of suffering and discouraged metaphysical speculation.

We begin a systematic discussion on the epistemology, metaphysics and ethics of Buddhist Education. As we are confining our discussion to the central teaching of Buddhism our admiration of the

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epistemology and metaphysics of Buddhism must be taken with a pinch of salt.

EPISTEMOLOGY:

Buddhist education recognizes only two pramanas as valid. They are pratyaksa and anumana. The Buddha was 'pragmatic' in his conception of truth whatever was useful in overcoming evil and suffering that the Buddha considered to be true. Of course, the Buddha resembles the modern pragmatist in prescribing utility as the criterion or test of truth. But he differs from the modern pragmatist in his conception of utility itself. Unlike in modern pragmatism, the Buddha's conception of utility has a transcendental as against a mundane reference. By utility the Buddha meant whatever is useful in overcoming the evil and sorrow inherent in existence. Again, Buddhism explicitly emphasizes reason and excludes whatever is not positively that is, perceptually known. Accordingly, the Buddha rejected the authority of Vedic tradition, especially as regards ritual. Vedic rituals were prima facie neither perceptually significant nor in accord with reason.

METAPHYSICS:

Buddhism recognizes common sense distinction between the soul and its material environment. Thus Buddhism is, in a sense, dualistic and realistic. But Buddhism denies the common sense assumption of unchanging substance behind the kaleidoscopic qualities of the objects of our senses. You may recall here that Jains in contrast to the Buddhist subscribe to the notion of such an enduring substance. At the ultimate metaphysical level, Buddhism recognizes neither the self nor the world. And between the self and its material environment, Buddhism deems the self to be less substantial and more shadowy than its material environment. Both are eventually analyzed away into the transient flux of experience.

ETHICS:

Buddhism accepts the inexorable law of karma. Though the world is a transient process and the self has no unity but only continuity, the continuity of a series entails and sustains the law of Karma. Thus each individual is responsible unto himself.

The Buddha propounded 'Four Noble Truths about suffering'. They are dhukha-dhukha samudaya, dhukhanirodha, and dhukha-nirodha marga. Suffering, the cause of suffering, possibility of the eradication of suffering and the path of liberation from suffering. Dhukha-nirodha marga, the path of liberation from suffering in turn consists of Astangika-marga (an eight fold noble path). The 'Four Noble Truths' and Eightfold noble Path' comprise the quintessence of Buddha Ethics.

The Noble truth about suffering is that life itself is suffering. The Buddha conceived life as a brief transit through this sorry world".

Though all the schools accept the fact of suffering they are not unanimous in the diagnosis of its cause. The Buddha's diagnosis of the origin of suffering is based on his special conception of natural causation which is known as Pratityasamutpada. This is the key to the Second Noble Truth about suffering. According to this conception everything has a cause and human suffering can be subsumed under this universal law of causation. As per this conception Buddhism traces the cause of suffering through a chain of twelve links. Suffering is due to birth which in turn is the result of the will to be born; this will to be born is due to our mental clinging to objects; this clinging is caused by our thirst or desire for object; this thirst is engendered by sense-experience which arises due to sense object contact the six organs of cognition are the loci of sense-object contact; these organs are dependent on the embryonic organism, consisting of the mind and the body; the organism could not have developed without some initial consciousness, this initial consciousness derives from the impression of the experience of past life which are eventually traceable to ignorance of truth. Thus the Buddha traces the ultimate root of suffering within the organism and not to the matter and forces outside it—its environment.

The Third Noble Truth is about the cessation of suffering. If misery and suffering is due to certain causes, then the removal of the causes would ensure the cessation of their effects. Buddhism, like Advaita Vedanta declares that liberation is possible here and now, on this side of the grave. Nirvana or liberation does not mean cessation of life itself: it means only cessation of suffering. And the state of nirvana cannot be captured into words and communicated. It can only be reached and enjoyed.

The Fourth Noble Truth about the path to Liberation is that there is a path to liberation and that it consists of eight steps

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EIGHT STEPS :

Right Views or knowledge of the Four Noble Truths

Right Resolve-to change one's way of life in accordance with the Truth

Right Speech or control of speech

Right Conduct which includes the pancha-sila the five vows about desisting from killing stealing, lying, drinking intoxicating and sensuality

Right Livelihood which implies renouncing bad speech and bad action and earning one's livelihood by fair means

Right Effort, right Mindfulness- constant vigilance against lapse into egoism and attachment and Right Concentration.

Right Concentration in turn consists of four distinct stages. The first stage involves reasoning and investigation regarding the truths. It gives rise to the joy of pure thinking.

Success in the first stage leads to belief in the fourfold truth, dispelling of doubts and makes reasoning and investigation unnecessary and superfluous. Joy and tranquility engendered by unruffled contemplation and a consciousness second order awareness of this state of mind mark the maturation of the second stage of concentration.

In the third stage the second order of awareness is sought to be crystallized into a self-sufficient state of non-attachment. The efforts in the third stage result in a deeper stage of concentration wherein one experience perfect 'equanimity coupled with an experience of bodily ease'. There persists a residuary self-awareness as well as body awareness.

In the last stage even these residues of awareness and feelings are sought to be transcended. It is characterized by "perfect equanimity, indifference and self possession".

The eighth step of right Concentration can be attained only after all the previous steps that pertain to knowledge and conduct have been duly fulfilled.

How can we be habituated and practiced these eighth steps? (Noble Eight Fold Path) when these morals taught in the curriculum as well as in the private life, the people may practice them and there will be a possibility of attaining 'Nirvana' the 'desire less state' or at least we may be accustomed to practice quality of life.

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