

Philosophy and Critical Thinking
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Lecture 44: Buddhist Philosophy

Namaskar to all. Today, I am going to discuss about a Buddhist philosophy. In the last week, we were discussing Vedanta philosophy and which is a part of orthodox school of thought. So, when we have discussed this Indian philosophy, there is a two group. So, one group is orthodox school of thought and another group is Heterodox school of thought. Now, this division was based on the Ved. Ved in the sense what we have Ved. Ved in the sense the accepting the authority of Ved. The school of thought who accepted the authority of Ved it is a part of Orthodox school of thought. And the school of thought who rejected the authority of Ved is a part of Heterodox school of thought so it is called an *āstik* and *nāstik* right. So, *āstik* and *nāstik* is not based on the acceptance of God, but it is based on acceptance of authority of Ved, now authority of Ved, it only means that when you are accepting authority of Ved, whatever it is written you are not going against of this text So, for example, I said I have accepted authority of Ved. So, whatever it is written in the Ved, I will not be going against this Ved. I will not be questioning the Ved. So, there is a division and in division in Heterodox school of thought, there are three schools of thought, Buddhism, Jainism and Charvaka. So, all three, it is mentioned that they rejected the authority of Ved. So, today I am going to talk about Buddhist philosophy, a very important school of thought from Indian philosophy. Buddhist philosophy is very significant in many senses. First, what we have discussed in the last class about the idea of God, and we also have talked about the ontological reality and how the Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Madhvācharya, Vallabhacharya, Nimbārkacharya have talked about determinate God. Shankaracharya also talked about indeterminate God.

Now, we are going to talk about the Buddhist philosophy. So, this Buddhist philosophy is a school who do not believe in the concept of God. So, this school bringing in this course is an important so you will have an idea of the both sides. How they are talking about the ultimate reality and this reality. Without a reference of something which is eternal. So, in this week, I will be discussing Buddhist philosophy in basic level again. As in Vedanta philosophy, we have discussed many schools of thought. Similarly, Buddhist philosophy is not a single philosophy. So, Buddhist philosophy is Buddhist philosophies. So, there are many schools of thought in Buddhism. And again, a very interesting school of thought where we also will find a realist. Realist, and then we have discussed realist means who believes that this world is real. And then we also will find a school who argues that this world is real is idealist or this world is just an idea, idealism so this both kind of idea is in Buddhism and I will be discussing this school of thought in basic level so I will give you an idea about a different school of thought from Buddhist philosophy today I am going to

just introduce this what is Buddhist philosophy and also going to talk about the teaching of Buddha and this Gautam Buddha has talked about the four noble truths. And these four noble truths are accepted by all the school of thought. Now, the question arises that why we have a different school of thought in Buddhist philosophy. So, when Buddha was here in the 6th century BC, so, we do not have any information from that period. Information in the sense that there was no work on written form. So, what Buddha said, it was an oral tradition at that time. So, whatever we have this knowledge about the Buddhist philosophy, it is getting from oral tradition. Now, there are a different interpretation of the Buddha teaching and therefore we have a different school of thought. All school of thought has a very strong argument for their claim and therefore all school of thought is a very important and same time their argument is very sharp and very fine argument. Now, in the first few, on first two classes, I have planned to talk about the teaching of Gautam Buddha and these teachings are acceptable or accepted by all school of thought. Similarly, the Four Noble Truths is an important teaching of Gautam Buddha and this is accepted by all school of thought. So, we all are aware that Gautam Buddha was known as Siddhartha or also known as Gautam Buddha. He was born near Kapilvastu. Now, there are many stories about his life. But there is one saying that the sight of disease and old age and death, he renounced the world and left the palace for the forest in quest of truth. Now, it only means that Buddha or let us say Siddhartha was a prince. So, he born in a very good family or he was prince and there was a prophecy, some of the text or book argues that there was a prophecy that this kid, I mean, when Siddhartha was infant. So, there was a prophecy that either he will be a great king or a great sage. However, a father was a little worried about the second option, about the sage part. So, he decided that he will show his son a bright side of the world, the life. Because going to the forest, thinking, or looking for a truth is only when you are not happy with your life. So, this is what is the thought. And book, some of the book, there is an argument that all the city was, there was an announcement that if you are not well or there is an old person and he was close to death, they have to stay next to the city. Or let us say that Siddhartha was not going that side. However, this is how Siddhartha spent his life, and he was very happy. And again, he got married, he also had a son. One day, Siddhartha asked his, let us say, charioteer to take him beyond the city. And, the first time he saw a person he is not well, with disease. Then he asked about all about this. And the Charioteer explained in such a way that, that it touched his heart. Then he saw the first-time old age. First time he saw a death. Death in the sense, a dead person, and he was surprised to see all these things. And then he asked whether there is any solution of this problem. So, this is a problem. So, disease, then old age, and then death. So, is there any solution? Because this is true that all of us have to go through this process. So, today I am like this, tomorrow I will be facing this, old age and then death. Siddharth was curious that is there any way, or any path to escape? So, if ask me even like sometime many times even I think of like how to do that but that is not an easy. Anyway, so the Buddha or let us say Siddharth, he renounced the world and left the palace for forest in the quest of truth. He

wanted a solution of this problem. He wanted a path for the ultimate reality, to see the ultimate truth. And after many years, he got the knowledge. Again, he came back. He realized this everything and talked about the first noble truth or let us say the four noble truth. So, first noble truth is he said, *sarvam dukkham*. There is suffering. And the text explains this *sarvam dukkham* or *duḥkha* in detail. How the Buddha argues that everything is *duḥkha*. Suppose, for example, you love someone, loved one, maybe your grandparents, your mother, maybe your father, your sibling, and you are going to meet this person. Now, what that text argues that even this feeling when you are going to meet, so you feel you are very pleased, you are experiencing pleasure. But this is not pure pleasure. This is a mix with the suffering because you are also afraid of losing this person. So, the idea is that everything is this *duḥkha*. So, this is what his Buddha argues that *sarvam dukkham*. And he said that everything is full of suffering. This world is full of suffering. If you collect all the tears, it will be a bigger than, larger than the ocean. Now, you may think that this is how Buddha is talking about or taking this world differently. But I see it differently. Gautam Buddha is basically telling you the reality or the pragmatic approach that says that this is the world, this is the suffering and then you have to go for the something else. Now, what is the something else? We will discuss that. But basically Buddha, Gautama Buddha wanted to tell in the first noble truth, this world is full of suffering. Now, he, in second noble truth, he said, there is a cause of suffering. So, this is suffering. This world is full of sorrow, and there is a cause. It is not without any cause, so that is called *dukkha-samudaya*. So, there is a cause of the suffering. And then he gave a detailed explanation of this cause of the suffering, and he talked about the causal wheel of dependent origination. Now, dependent origination is also called *Pratityasamutpāda*. And he argued that there are twelve chains. So first one is ignorance. Second one is impression of the karmic force, then initial consciousness, and then psychophysical organ, then six sense organ including mind, then sense object and contact, then sense experience, then thirst for sense enjoyment, then clinging to this enjoyment, Will to be born, birth and rebirth, and old age and death. So, Buddha basically gave these twelve chains and said that look this is the situation. Situation in the sense that first is ignorance. Ignorance is Avidya. Now, this Avidya, Buddha means that not right knowledge. So, if you do not have the right knowledge, what we are doing, you are performing a wrong set of actions. And this set of action is going to lead us where? The cycle of birth and rebirth. Buddha believes in the law of karma, because law of karma is very strong. Strong in the sense that if you have performed any set of action or irrespective of good and bad, you have to face the impression of this karma. So, if you are performing set of action with the wrong information or wrong notion, you will be always performing a wrong set of action. So, due to avidya what we are doing, we are performing wrong set of action. And that action is leading where, to the cycle of birth and rebirth. So, first is an ignorance. And because of this ignorance, we are performing set of action. And that set of action is an impression of karmic force. Karmic force plays a very important role in a life. So, I will be telling you once and after this slide. The karmic force in Buddhist

philosophy plays a very significant role. And, this is basically cause of this cycle of birth and rebirth. So, because of this karmic force, we are in this problem, where, in suffering. So, we are suffering because of this karmic force. Now, because of this karmic force, there is an initial consciousness. I mean there is Gandharva and all, but let us say the initial consciousness. And this initial consciousness is the cause of this psycho-physical. And now after this, all this twelve chain is an originating, depends on the previous one. So, because of ignorance, there is an impression of karmic force. Because of that, there is an initial consciousness. And after that, there is a psycho physical. Now there is a sixth sense organ. Now this is an effect is what? The sixth sense organ including mind. Now after this complete body, We are coming in this world and then we have senses and then we are object in the world. So obviously the senses is coming in contact with the object, and because of this contact we are experiencing. So, for example we are in this world, we are experiencing this world, a different object in the world. And this experience is producing what? Either a pleasure or pain. For example, I have been giving an example of any sweet item, suppose. The first time you experienced, I offered you. So, you ate and you experienced. So, it will give you either a pleasure or pain. Maybe you will like it or you will not like it, or sometime neutral, indifferent. So, if you are going to get it a pleasure, then you want one more time. This is thirst for sense enjoyment. So, you saw something, you experienced something, some object, and you really liked it. I have given an example, like going for a conference in a different place. For example, in school or in college, there was a plan from the college that will go for a picnic or maybe has asked to present a paper in different place. Now you are going for that to present a paper or for a visit. Now, you like that place a lot so what you liked means you want one more time, you want to enjoy that object again and again So this thirst, this is what it is very important. Now, you want again this enjoyment. And this inclination is worth, because of this, again you want to be a bond, means you need one more birth. Because all the inclination, it is not possible to exhaust in one life. So, this one life, it is not enough to exhaust all the inclinations. We are getting even a small, small, many inclinations. We are earning everyday inclinations, many inclinations, and this all the inclinations, we have to exhaust if you want to achieve the state, Nirvana. And if you want to achieve the state or you want to exhaust all the inclinations, one life, one body is not enough. Therefore, you need another body. And it is how we are getting another body. So, birth and rebirth and then old age and the death. So, this is how he has argued that about the twelve chains of this causal will of dependent origination. Now, two things, it is important here. First is, if you see, this is a past life, this is the present and here we find the future. Again, the second one is this Chain, he talked about birth and rebirth without reference of any eternal entity. So, in Vedanta philosophy, what we have discussed, suppose there is a birth one, for example, and birth two. Body one, body two. So, this is Jiva, this is Jiva. So, when we are dying, so the soul is what is leaving this body, time of death and entering in this body. This is called transmigration of soul in one life to another life, one body to another body. So, this is what we call birth and

rebirth. So, that is what we have sometimes argued, oh this is his next birth. So next birth is the soul is what, ātman does appear in a form with the other component. It is living where, in this one birth to another birth. Transmigration of soul. Gautam Buddha argued about birth and rebirth without any reference of the soul. So, in Buddhism or Buddhist philosophy, Rebirth is not based on the transmigration of soul. Now, the question arises that if there is no transmigration of soul, then how we can talk about birth and rebirth? Then what is death is? And what is new bodies? How we are going to get a new body? Gautam Buddha argues you have to take it as a cause and effect. So, there is a cause, and there is an effect. So, whatever you have done, you have set of inclination, set of creation of your karmas that is going to produce the life in the next body. So, there is one cause and one effect. So, Gautam Buddha explained this birth and rebirth in terms of cause and effect, not transmigration of soul. So, the set of inclination and set of this impression of karma, it is going to decide the next life of your next birth, the body of next birth, the next life, the future. So, this is how Gautam Buddha has talked about the birth and rebirth.

Now, there is again a very important concept about the death. He says that in Shankaracharya philosophy or Vedanta philosophy, we have discussed or if you apply this Shankaracharya philosophy, death is what when your soul is leaving your body. Now, Buddha is talking about that karmic force or the transmigration of soul, he is not talking about the transmigration of soul. He says that this is a cause and effect. Now, the question is, what is unnatural death, for example? So, if someone is dying in very early years, how are you going to explain this? So, before that, we have to understand how we are coming in this world and growing and then we are achieving, attaining the old life, the old age. Buddha said that, give an example of like roti or chapati. So, how we are preparing, making a chapati. You are putting this chapati ware in this hot plate and there is a fire. Because of this fire, this chapati is getting ready. But if you are not going to change on time, then that is to be burned. Similarly, this karmic force is basically important and due to karmic force, we are living this miserable life and then growing and finally attaining old age. Now, unnatural death or let us say death in young age, Buddha argues that suppose you fired an arrow. And there is a strong gust of wind coming from the opposite side. That is enough to bring down this arrow. So, the strong bad karma or impression of bad karma is enough to stop their life. So, this is how there is a text called Abhidhammath-Sangaho and there is an argument about this one. Basically, intention is to tell you that how Buddha has talked about this world and this birth and rebirth without any reference of soul. Now, third noble truth, he talked about the sorrow, the *duḥkha* and then he also argued that there is a cause of sorrow and then he said that there is a solution. So, there is a cessation of the suffering. So, we can get rid of this problem. So, this is a problem and we can nirodha. So, there is a *duḥkha-nirodha*. So, we can also get rid of this problem. And then he talked about the path of this, leading of cessation of Suffering. So, there is a way to leading to this cessation of Suffering, *duḥkha-norodha-gamini pratipat*, and he talked about the Ashtang Marg, and also called the Noble Eightfold Path. So first one is, the Right Faith. The Right Faith is

very important. If you do not have the Right Faith, then always you will be performing a wrong set of action. So, what Buddha argues that the right faith, or *samyakgdrsti* is important. If you do not have the *samyakgdrsti*, as we have discussed in the *pratityasamutpāda* or twelve chain of this dependent origination, the first is ignorance. So, if the ignorance is what is the main cause of the problem. So, if you do not have the right faith or *samyakgdrsti*, so always you will be performing a wrong set of action. Performing wrong set of action means it is leading to always the cycle of birth and rebirth. So, the first one is *samyakgdrsti*, and that is very important. If you have this *samyakgdrsti*, *samyagsaṅkalpa* is also required. So, without this right resolve, the *samyagsaṅkalpa* may not be able to go further. Now, if you have the right speech or *samyagvāk*, that is important. You have to be very careful about your *vāk*, your speech. So, it should be a Samyak speech, *samyagvāk*. The fourth one is right action. The right action is very significant in this Buddhist philosophy because this is how he has talked about even dependent origination based on the karmic force. So, if you are going to perform a right set of action, so this set of action is going to help you to achieve the liberation. So, right set of actions, we also have talked about different set of action, what kind of action is to perform, what kind of action should not perform. We will be discussing in ethics of Gautam Buddha. Like he talked about the Pañcasila, where he has said what kind of action we are supposed to perform. Buddha has talked this in an ethical part well in detail. And it is very, very important and significant for the person who wanted to achieve the Nirvana. The fifth one is the *samyagājīva*. So, right living is again important for that, Right effort. So, whenever the *samyagvyāyāma* is an important, whenever we are doing that Samyak, you have to be, make sure that it is in a right effort. Then right thought again is very important. Thought is, as I said, that has been very powerful, and if there is not right smṛti, the *samyagsmṛti*, then you will not be able to perform the right set of action, and that will lead to wrong cycle of birth and rebirth. And then finally, if you have all these things, the *samyagsamādhi* is very important. So, having all these things, after that, the right concentration is important. So, the *samyagasamādhi* will lead to the Nirvana. So, this is what novel Eightfold Path by Gautam Buddha and he has talked about the five. he talked about the four arya-satya or noble truth. And, he said that this is an important noble truth in the sense that if you see the first and then last. So, he is starting with the *duḥkha* and then finally also giving solution of this problem. One thing I would like to mention here that Gautam Buddha when he argued about the *duḥkha*, he is not going to talk about the nature of things, nature of this dukkha. In the sense that he is not going to talk about the metaphysical entity. There is an argument, a text argues that Buddha just argues that Gautam Buddha always looking for the solution of the problem. So, he gave an example. Let me put this example from my side, in my word. Suppose like I am walking with my friend. And then I heard a very big gunshot sound. Then, I realized that someone has shot my friend. Now, what is my urgent work? If I am going to think that what is the nature of bullet? Who shot this person? What kind of gun he used? Buddha will argue this is your foolish. Your urgent work is to take

this person to the hospital. So, Buddha said that this is a suffering. So, let us not talk about this side. Let us talk about the solution of this problem. And this is how he said, the solution of the problem. Now, there is an argument that when Buddha was here, one person approached and asked a metaphysical question. But he maintained a silence about the metaphysical question. Now, he never said that there is an Atma, there is no Atma. We will be discussing in the next class about Gautam Buddha, the teaching. So, thank you. This talk was based on this Indian philosophy, Jadunath Sinha, and then the Introduction of Indian philosophy. These are the very basic book. And in basic level, you can read these books here. So, thank you so much. Thank you very much for your kind attention. Thank you.