

Philosophy and Critical Thinking
Prof. Gyan Prakash
Department of Humanities & Social Sciences
IIT (ISM), Dhanbad
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Lecture 48: Buddhist Philosophy

Namaskar to all. Today, I am going to discuss the Buddhist philosophy. And last four lectures, we have discussed Buddhist philosophy, where we have discussed this very basic philosophy. We also have discussed this early Buddhist philosophy, where we have discussed how the world is real for Buddhism, especially from the Sarvastivada point of view. And then we also discussed that Yogachara idealism, that how the world is an unreal and a projection of the mind. So, for them, consciousness is the only reality. So, these are the philosophical parts which we have discussed just to give an idea about the Buddhist philosophy. As I have said, the Buddhist philosophy is very important and it is very vast. So, there are so many texts and there are also different schools which talk about different concepts. So, what we have done is in a very basic course, philosophy of critical thinking. And what we are doing is just discussing this school of thought in a very basic level. So you will have an idea of this school of thought. However, for the advanced level knowledge or I mean, you need you have to go through the book and then research paper side. Also, if in future it possible, I will come up with the advanced level course where we will be discussing this school of thought in well in detail. However, this course does not allow us to discuss in detail because I suppose to complete one school of thought within a week. So, today I am just also would like to discuss the Buddhist ethics that is in a very important part while discussing this ethics in western world we have discussed that what are the type of ethics, and we have discussed that how the ethics is can be in talk about the two different ways in the sense that one is an action and one is then a personality it is called virtue ethics, and this is it is other side is teleological or consequentialist. So, one side is what they are doing is recommending set of actions right. So, what set of action is right and what set of action is not right. So, recommending the set of actions is that to society that saying that look this is set of action you should always perform and these are the action which is recommended. Now, the virtue ethics is another side who talks about the character traits and argues that recommending the character traits is important, not the action. In Indian system if you see the for example what we have discussed the Vedanta philosophy. Vedanta philosophy also will talk about the action because they believe that the ultimate goal of this life is to achieve the state or to realize yourself. So, realizing yourself and realizing the ultimate reality, that is the primary goal. That is the goal of the life. Now, to achieve this goal of life, you have to perform set of actions or you have to perform an action in such a way that you can go towards the final goal, the result. So, they are like targeted, they have one target and then this is what we have to perform set of actions accordingly. However,

in detail, they have talked about, in Bhagavad Gita, talked about the three paths of liberation. There is a Jnānayoga, Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. And in Buddhist philosophy, it stands very different from this Advaita Vedanta philosophy or Vedanta, let us say Vedanta philosophy. Because Buddhist philosophy, first, they do not believe in God. They reject the idea of God, as I have said, while discussing Buddhist philosophy. Buddhist philosophy belongs to a other group or second group which is a heterodox school of thought, who rejects the authority of faith. In addition to Buddhist philosophy, I have also discussed that how Buddhism or Buddha has argued that nothing is permanent. So, nothing is permanent means everything is momentary or everything momentary it only means that they are rejecting the idea of Eternalism, the Sāsvatvāda. So, he is rejecting that there is nothing called Upanishadic self or God. So, the Eternalism where the Sāsvatvāda has argued, Buddha has rejected this idea, and he has given a detail that taking something as an eternal is in a wrong view. So again, if it is so, then Buddha is again is not going to talk about the ultimate goal to achieve in Brahman. But again, this Buddha in the Four Noble Truths he has argued about the problem that the *sarvam duḥkham* and then there is a solution, and, then he talked about the solution. So, he said that there is a problem and then it is a solution. So, all of this school of thought, not only the Buddhist philosophy, if you take Shankaracharya philosophy, Buddhist philosophy, we will be discussing in next week, Sāṃkhya philosophy or Jain philosophy. So, all these philosophers argued about the problem that what we are facing this samsara and they also have talked about the solution of this problem that how we can achieve this this final solution. So, there in the path is a different, their recommendation is a different similarly Buddhist philosophy again is not going to talk about the set of action because Buddha, you always have argued for the, what we said in western philosophy is virtue ethics. So, if you see this category and put this, we have one teleological argument or teleological ethics, let us say, or consequentialist this. So, this will, the Vedanta philosophy will fall in this category, and then we have the virtue ethics. So, Buddhist philosophy will fall in this category that is in a virtue ethics because Buddhist philosophy talks about the character traits, and we also have discussed in this philosophy that is deontology. So, deontology will fall this Bhagavad Gita will fall in the deontological category. So, Bhagavad Gita talks about the duty, for the duty's sake, which we have discussed in this class. So, that the concept of *niskama karma*, which argued about that duty for the duty's sake, how the duty is an important, doing duty and forgetting result. So, not giving importance to a result and doing a duty, that is a very important part, as Kant has argued and as Bhagavad Gita has said. Buddhist philosophy is as I said it will fall in virtue ethics category. So this is a virtue ethics which talks about the character traits. So, Buddha believed that the character traits are important and if you have this kind of traits, that is going to help you to perform right set of actions. So, today I will be discussing the Buddhist ethics and will be discussing about what are the things Buddha has recommended. But at the same time Buddhist ethics will be a very basic level. We will not be going into detail.

Now, the first is the Buddhist morality is an altruistic. Altruistic is more about the other's pleasure, right? So, if you remember, we have discussed that the two types, the egoism and altruism. So, there is a concept of hedonism and the hedonists believe that the pleasure is only value. Now, they believe that our action, if you take about the ethical hedonist, so our ethical hedonist argues that our action should be always, our obligation is to always protect, enhance our pleasure. And psychological hedonists will argue that our construction is like that, that we always want to enhance the pleasure. Now, if this, then the question arises that to whom pleasure. So, their own pleasure and others' pleasure. So, own pleasure, if you're going to talk, then this is an egoism where we talk about to enhancing or maximizing our own pleasure, and altruism which is argues that in maximizing others pleasure is important. So, Buddhist morality if see that you will find this is an always about an altruistic recommends the altruistic behavior where the person is in a towards the others pleasure. Now, the first one is Brahmavihara, and in Buddhist texts, they talked about Brahmavihāra, this is an important ethical concept. So first one is called Maitrī, it is love. So, this is very important in the sense that Buddha recommend that you have to love, this is called selfless love. So, it says, you are going to maintain the relation with all the sentient beings. So, this friendliness, this maitrī, this friendliness is a relation where, is a state where you are loving other without any self-interest. So, we have discussed that how in, while discussing the Kantian philosophy that using one as a means. So, means and then there is an end. So, there is one action is always talking about the end, and there is an action who talks about the means, that means is important now Buddha will never support the argument that if you are going to use anyone for something else. So, Buddha argued that you have to love everyone as in a selfless. Selfless love means there is a no do not want anything in return so you are not using anyone as a means So that is a very important part. Second is the Compassion. Compassion is again is a very important part of the Buddhist ethics. And in the last class, while discussing the Arhat and Bodhisattva, concept of Bodhisattva, we have discussed this, that there is an argument that when through meditation, when you achieve a state where and then you are looking for the choosing the option of the birth and rebirth. in order to help others, in order to serve others. Because there are many sentient beings are suffering. So, compassion is a very important part in Buddhism, and they believe that you have to help others, you have to be compassionate. So, compassion is a very important part. There are examples in Buddhist texts where the Sakyamuni has performed an action out of compassion and helping others, not only the human being, even in the non-human being. So, sentient beings, the idea of sentient beings, this is a very broad word and I believe that it includes even the animal and other things. So, compassion is a very important and this is one of the Brahm vihara. Third one is Joy, that Muditā. Muditā is again the third one and it is a very important concept where this joy is is the sympathetic joy. So, your joy is not your joy this other joy so you are a person who is happy with the other happiness. So, you are the person who is not thinking of yourself. The question is about in Buddhism it all about the thought and while discussing this Buddhist Ethics, I will be mentioning that how

Buddha has given significant importance to the Karma. Even in last class while discussing these twelve chains of causal dependent origination, we have discussed this how the karma, and karmic force plays a very significant role in birth and rebirth. So, the action is very important but when you are performing an action, the idea, the set of inclination you have in mind, that plays an important role. So when you are saying this is mine, this is I, and you are performing a set of actions that will take you to this, where, in the samsara, then cycle of birth and rebirth. So, the idea is that when you are performing an action, you have to be careful with an action. I will be discussing in the next slide that how Buddha has argued for the right set of actions. Now, joy, coming back to this joy, joy is this happiness or this sympathetic happiness when you are looking for your happiness from other happiness, and that is a very important action when you are within this world. And then finally, the fourth Brahma vihara is Equanimity, is an Upekṣa. Upekṣa is a state where your mind is in a balanced state. So, sometimes what happens like when we are getting some good news or bad news, we are very much affected with this idea. So, we are very affected with this pleasure and the pain. Now, if in that case, we will not be able to perform a set of right set of action, let us say, and therefore, this state and achieving the state is then a very important. So, Buddhist argument goes like this, that this state is something which is in a balanced. So, it says nothing is going to disturb this balance. And then, yeah, this person is in a performing state of action, that is the right set of actions. So, when you are free from this problem, this disturbance, then you will be able to perform right set of actions. So not only in Buddhism, while discussing even the orthodox school of thought, when we are discussing about the Yoga, introduction to philosophy, where we have argued that how Yoga also, I talked about the *vritti* removing of these afflictions and also the mind will be in the balanced state and without that it will be difficult to perform any set of actions. So, if let us take an example of love or compassion and joy, all the three actions all the three things is important but the same time, upekṣa is also is going to be a condition, and if you are going to have this mental state, you will be able to perform a right set of actions. So, Brahma vihara is an important in Buddhist ethics.

The next is the five precepts and we have discussed these five precepts in one another form you will find in all the Indian school of thought so while discussing this indian school of philosophy, we have discussed a little bit about this the ethical aspect so first is called ahimsa, so one has to like abstain from for this violence. So, one should not go for it, one should not kill others. So, the Ahimsa is a very much part of Buddhism and not only Buddhism, all other school of thought where we have argued that killing others is not right action. So, and therefore, we should not go for the violence. The second one, taking what has not been given. If it is not for you, then you should not take it. Restricting yourself is a very important part, and these are the precepts which is observation of this precept is very important, because it is going to help you in many senses in your personal and professional life. Now, third one is sexual misconduct which is again a part of Buddhist ethics which we also have discussed in discussing well Yoga philosophy that how they have talked about

the Brahmacharya and they have argued that different from this kind of action. Buddha also argued that the sexual misconduct is one of the important parts as in the five precepts. Now, telling lies, false statement is not the right set of actions, so we should not perform this set of actions. And while discussing the other philosophy, we also have discussed telling lies, where this is the same argument that we should not make any false statement. So telling lies is, again, we have to abstain from making any false statement. Taking intoxicants again, is an appropriate way in this Buddhist philosophy and they argued that this is not right way of action so one should abstain from doing it.

Now, the next is the eight precepts and if you read this eighth one. So, one, two, three, four and five are the same and they are going to add three more in this eight precepts. So, sixth one is then eating and at the wrong time. Again, it is one should abstain from this set of actions. Again, Buddha has argued that dancing, singing, music, garlands, perfumes, cosmetics, and personal ornaments were prohibited in their monastic life. So, this is again one of the precepts for the Buddhist monks and nuns. And the eighth one is the using the high seats or bed. So, this was prohibited for the Buddhists. Now the ten good path of action it is mentioned, and the first one is this abstention of taking life that Ahimsa as I said and argued that how Ahimsa is a very important part and not only Buddha, any other school of thought and even the Jainism which we will be discussing which is part of this course they also have argued for the Ahimsa in very detail. So, that non-violence is an important part in this Buddhist philosophy, where we have argued that, Buddha has argued that how the violence is not a good idea. Killing other, taking lives of other is not a good idea. So, this set of actions we should not perform. Again, this after some form, taking what has not been given. So, if it is not, then we should not like wish for that, we should not take it. This again abstain from this sexual misconduct. The third point. The fourth point is asteya, that is an abstention from lying. So, not make a false statement. Now again, the slanderous speech should not be used any harsh words, harsh sentences. So, there is an argument about the truth, what is truth. So, sometimes there is an argument that even the truth is in a way harsh, we are not supposed to say it. So, I have given an example while discussing about this truth that suppose there is a commotion in a village, where people are like moving here and there, running from one place to another place. Now, because there is a wild animal and that is the reason that people are running here and there. Now, there is a very old lady and or old person or let us say that old member of the society approached you and saying that why people are like running. Now, you are aware that if I am going to tell her that there is a wild animal near his house, then she may lose her life because she is not in that condition to take this truth. Now, if there is an argument that you should not make a false statement, now, in that condition, are you going to say that, that, okay, there is a wild animal near your house? So, there are like, when Buddha says that you should not use the harsh speech. That is a very important slanderous and then harsh speech. Then also he has talked about the idle talk, where it is not supposed to do that. Non-covetousness, this greediness, it is, again, it is said that it is not supposed to do. Malevolence, that is, again, it is, one

should not even think of the harming other, that is very important. In the Visuddhimagga, as well, it is written that how even someone has harmed you right and the text goes on saying that if someone has cut your limbs even and even in that case you are not supposed to allow any thought against the person. So, this is because if you are going to do that it means you have not understood the Buddha teaching. So therefore, they are very, I mean, they are like instructed to be very careful about their thought. So, thought is a very powerful event. So even Buddhist philosophy, if you find, even they have talked a lot about the thought process, where we are not supposed to think. And, then right views, that is very important because if you are performing any set of actions with the wrong views, then that will lead to a samsara. So, these are the ten good paths for actions. The noble eightfold path that is called Ashtanga Marg, which is the part of the Four Noble Truth, also comes in a part of the Buddhist Ethics, where Buddha has argued that how and what kind of action we should perform, how to achieve the Nirvāna, how to get rid of this problem. So, through this Ashtanga Marg, he has argued about the solution of the problem. So, we have discussed, but when we have done with this Buddhist philosophy, now we are in very clear position to understand this Noble Eight-fold Path, ashtanga marg. So, first one is the right faith. If you have the *samyagdṛṣṭi*, if you know the Noble Truth, then it will be easy to perform on the right side of actions. So, if faith is different, then you'll be performing always the wrong set of actions. I will give you an example. Suppose you have a faith of like the doer. So, there is an agent who is performing an action and then agent is eternal, the Sāsvatvāda. And if you are performing an action with this faith, this thing, then that will lead to this samsara, the cycle of birth and rebirth. And therefore, Buddha has warned the monks that, okay, you have to always go for the right faith. So, right faith is a very important part, and because of this, as even the last slide we have talked about the right view, if you do not have that, you will be always, the problem always will be performing a wrong set of actions. Not only in Buddhism, even if you see the Shankaracharya philosophy, how Shankara has argued that we are identifying self with not-self and performing actions. So, identifying the self with not-self is always causing a problem. All cause led to the samsara, lead to this cycle of birth and rebirth. So, right faith is important. So, Buddha argued that the right faith is important and with the right faith, you have to move ahead that is in the right. So, the *samyagsaṅkalp* again is the second path of this Noble Eightfold Path. Now, the right speech, as I have said in discussing in the last slide about the false statement or other kind of speech, harsh, splendid and idle talk, chit-chat, those things are prohibited. Those should not be performed by the Buddhist. And Buddha has argued that you should not do that. The right action is again important. When you are performing an action, you have to perform an action, right action. So, if you are going to perform a wrong set of actions, that will lead to, again, the cycle of this birth and rebirth. The right living, *samyagājīva*, is important because for living, you need to do something. But Buddha has argued that you have to make sure that you are using the right livings, right means for that. For this course of action, there is an always should be a right effort, right,

samyagvyāyāma, and that is important. Right thought is important. If you do not have the right thought that I have said in the, argue in the last slide that how thoughts are important in the Buddhist philosophy. And then they argue that if you do not have the right thought, you may not be able to perform the right set of actions. So, you have to be very careful about the thought. And then, finally, if you have everything, again, the right concentration is important. If having all these things, if you are not doing this part, the concentration, it will be difficult to achieve the Nirvana. So, Buddha argued that we have to go for the concentration. You have to go for the meditation. So, meditation will lead to where, to the Nirvana, to solve this problem. So, if you see this Eight Noble Path, this is kind of where they talked about the mental purification and the same time when you are performing an action, you have to also purify things. So, if your mind is purified, or you are purifying your mind, so you have to be very careful about the thought and the action. So, thought and action is very important. So you have always go for the right thought and you will always go for the right action. So, those things are very important and that is going to help you in many things. So, even if you see, when we were discussing about the Yoga, and we have discussed how the Yoga has argued about the mental purification and that is going to help you in this *Isvarpranidhana*, that is meditation. So, your mental purification, your action, your physical fitness is help you in where, in this meditation. So, this Buddhist ethics has talked about this idea that you have to be very careful about the thought and Buddha has always warned others, monks that you should not allow the bad thoughts in your mind. Bad thoughts in terms of like five precepts where we have discussed. So, this is the very basic level we have discussed of Buddhist ethics and for detail you can go for this book where this is Nature of Buddhist Ethics. It is an important book and many things from today lecture we have taken from this book. The Indian philosophy, Jadunath Sinha, as I have discussed that this book is very basic level for the all school of thought and again an Introduction of Indian philosophy which is basic book for this course. So, this is for the Buddhist ethics and we will be discussing the next school of thought in the next class. So thank you so much for your kind attention. Thank you.