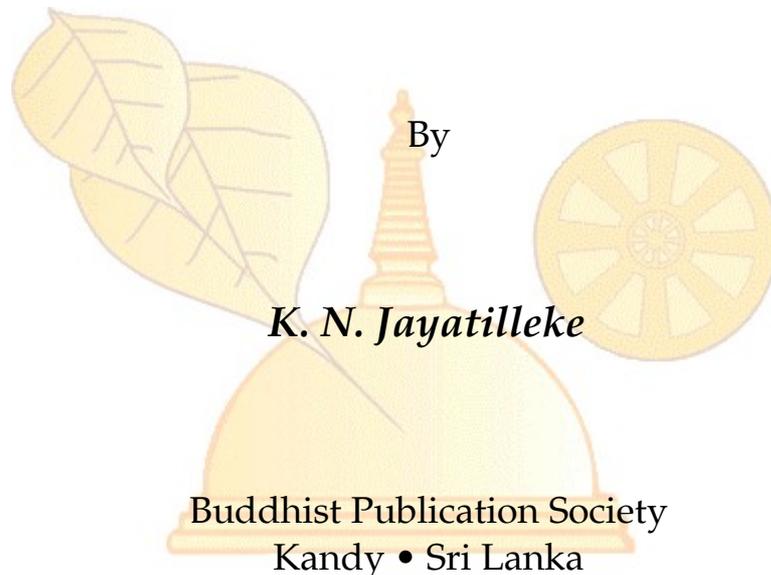


The Buddhist Attitude to Other Religions



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The Buddhist Attitude to Other Religions

The Buddhist attitude to other religions has from its very inception been one of critical tolerance. But what is significant is that it was able to combine a missionary zeal with this tolerant outlook. Not a drop of blood has been shed throughout the ages in the propagation and dissemination of Buddhism in the many lands to which it spread; religious wars either between the schools of Buddhism or against other religions have been unheard of. Very rare instances of the persecution of heretical opinions are not lacking, but they have been exceptional and atypical. Buddhism has also shown a remarkable degree of adaptability in the course of its historical expansion.

A student of Buddhism, a professor of philosophy, who made a special study of this aspect of Buddhism, has observed: "I refer to its remarkable elasticity and adaptability. Wherever Buddhism has gone it has manifested this characteristic, and manifested it in a superlative and unique degree. I do not think there is another religion that possesses so much of it. Buddhism has been emphatically a missionary religion. Its transplanting to new lands has been accomplished never through conquest or through migration but solely by the spread of ideas. Yet almost everywhere it has gone it has so completely adapted itself to the new people and the new land as to become practically a national religion. This has been partly due to the tolerance and liberality of its thought, to which I have already referred, a tolerance which it has exhibited both within and without. With the most extremely rare exceptions, Buddhism has held no heresy trials and has carried on no persecutions. With a daring catholicity that approaches foolhardiness it has recognised every form of rival as a possessor of some degree of truth."¹

Speaking of the relevance for modern times of Buddhism and the cultural milieu in which it arose, namely Hinduism, Professor Arnold J. Toynbee says: "Co-existence is mankind's only alternative to mass-suicide in the Atomic Age; and mankind means to save itself from committing mass-suicide if it can find a way. One open way is the Indian way; and it might therefore seem probable that, in the Atomic Age, the spirit of Indian religion and philosophy will receive a welcome in the Western half of the world."² In one of his earlier works, Toynbee speaks of the religions of Southern and Eastern Asia as "Buddhaic religions" in contrast to the Judaic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. He says: "There are three Buddhaic religions; the Hīnayāna Buddhism of Ceylon and South-East Asia; the Mahāyāna Buddhism of East Asia, Tibet and Mongolia; and the post-Buddhaic Hinduism of India."³

Perhaps what Toynbee had in mind in calling post-Buddhist Hinduism a "Buddhaic religion" is the fact that Hinduism was deeply influenced by Buddhism, so much so that Hindus have claimed to have absorbed Buddhism rather than to have discarded it. Vaishṇavite Hindus have deified the Buddha and consider him the last (ninth) Avatar (Incarnation) of Vishnu. Sankara, one of the greatest philosophers of Hindu Vedanta, was so profoundly affected by Buddhist thought that he has been called a "concealed Buddhist" (*pracchanna-bauddha*), and the influence of Buddhism on recent Indian leaders like Mahātmā Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru has been no less profound. Besides, millions of the so-called depressed classes, following their late leader Ambedkar, have consciously embraced Buddhism, attracted by its doctrine of social and spiritual equality. It is therefore worthwhile to examine the nature as well as the basis of the tolerant attitude of Buddhism towards other religions, despite its missionary zeal.

¹ J. B. Pratt, *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1928), 719.

² Arnold J. Toynbee, *America and the World Revolution* (New York & London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 49.

³ Arnold J. Toynbee, *An Historian's Approach to Religion* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), 272.

If we go into the historical origins of Buddhism we note that Buddhism arose at a time when there was an interminable number of mutually conflicting theories about the nature and destiny of man in the universe. Some of them first arose as a result of the free speculations among the Brahmins of the Āraṇyaka period, just prior to about 800 B.C., when knowledge came to be highly valued. Later, speculation on these and other matters spread in non-Brahminical circles as well. It was from about this time that “dialectics” (*vākovākya*) became a separate branch of study among the Brahmins and the habit of debating religious and metaphysical topics in public became a recognised institution.

These theories are recorded or referred to in the Upaniṣadic and Jain texts. The Buddha summarises the main views of his predecessors and contemporaries in the *Brahmajāla Sutta*, one of the oldest and most authentic of suttas in the Pali Canon. It is one of the few suttas to which the Buddha has given a title at the end and the only one for which several such titles are given. The Buddha says: “You may remember this exposition as the ‘net of aims,’ the ‘net of doctrines,’ the ‘supreme net,’ the ‘net of religio-philosophic theories,’ and ‘the glorious victory in the war (of ideologies).’” (*Dīgha Nikāya*, I, 46). The sutta and the doctrines contained in it are referred to elsewhere in the early portion of the Canon, the Nikāyas themselves (e.g. *Samyutta Nikāya*, II, 227, 228; *Suttanipāta*, 538), and a brief account of the circumstances in which it was preached is given in the proceedings of the First Council, reported in the *Vinaya Piṭaka*. The *Brahmajāla Sutta* is found in the Chinese Āgamas as well and may be presumed to belong to the common core of early doctrine.

I think that one of the reasons why Buddhism adopted a non-dogmatic attitude was that at its very inception it had to face a plurality of contending religio-philosophic theories about the nature and destiny of man. As a result, scepticism was rampant and the Buddha could not assume the truth of any particular religious philosophy in addressing the intellectual elite (*viññū purisa*) of his age. A claim to authority would not have been seriously considered or accepted.

A Jain commentator, Silāṅka of the ninth century, speaks in the following vein of the reasons for the growth of the sceptical schools of thought during the time of Mahāvīra, who was the senior contemporary of the Buddha: “The Sceptics say that those who claim knowledge cannot be making factual claims since their statements are mutually contradictory, for even with regard to the category of the soul, some assert that the soul is omnipresent and others that it is not omnipresent, some say it is of the size of a digit, others that it is of the size of a kernel of a grain of millet, some say it both has form and is formless, some that it resides in the heart and others that it is located in the forehead, etc. In respect of every category there is no uniformity in their assertions; there is no one with an outstanding intellect whose statements may be regarded as authoritative; even if such a person existed, he cannot be discovered by one with a limited vision according to the maxim that ‘one who is not omniscient does not know everything,’ for it is said ‘how can one desiring to know that a certain person is omniscient at a certain time do so if he is devoid of that person’s intellect, his knowledge and his consciousness.’”⁴

The very presence of such a variety of religio-philosophic theories at that time is a tribute to the tolerance of Hinduism in this period. The Vedic tradition at this time stressed the importance of knowledge (*jñāna*) whatever the form it may take, whether it be empirical, rational or intuitive, as the key to power or salvation. This was, no doubt, opposed by those who stressed the claims of social action and ritual (*karma mārga*) as the way to salvation, but so long as the *jñāna-vādins* gave a nominal allegiance to the Vedic tradition they were not suppressed. The Āraṇyakas for the first time proclaimed that what was important was not the actual

⁴ See K. N. Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1963).

performance of the various Vedic sacrifices but the understanding of their meaning and symbolism, which came to be interpreted to mean the understanding of the meaning of life.

Eventually, in the *Upaniṣads* it is shown that there is no greater 'sacrifice' (*yajña*) than that of understanding the meaning of life and living accordingly. The *Chandogya Upaniṣad* says: "Now, what people call sacrifice (*yajña*) is really the religious life (*brahmacarya*), for only through the religious life does one who is a knower find that world" (8.5.1). We may recall that when the Brahmin Kūṭadanta comes to the Buddha and wants to be instructed by him as to how to perform a really valuable sacrifice (Pali *yañña*, Skr. *yajña*), the Buddha explains that it would be a waste of valuable resources and a needless destruction of animals to perform a ritualistic sacrifice; he points out that the true 'sacrifice' consists in leading the Buddhist way of life and adds: "There is no sacrifice that man can celebrate, O brahmin, higher and sweeter than this." (*Dīgha Nikāya*, I. 147)⁵

The thinkers of the Āraṇyakas and the *Upaniṣads* were not propounding one theory but a multiplicity of mutually contradictory theories about the nature and destiny of man in the universe. According to the independent attestation of the Buddhist scriptures, the Brahmins during this period were cultivating a "skill in metaphysics and logic," a branch of study which was known as *lokāyata*, a word which at this time meant "theories pertaining to the cosmos" but which later came to mean "materialist theories." Among these cosmological theories, which were being put forward by these Brahmins, according to the Buddhist texts, were the following:

- (1) that everything exists (*sabbaṃ atthi*);
- (2) that nothing exists (*sabbaṃ natthi*);
- (3) that the world is a unity (*sabbaṃ ekattaṃ*); and
- (4) that the world is a plurality (*sabbaṃ puthuttaṃ*).

Saṃyutta Nikāya, II. 77

The fact that they were putting forward and debating mutually contradictory views based on reasoning did not seem to have bothered orthodoxy at the time. Of the above theories, the first and the third are generally in keeping with Vedic assumptions, whereas the second and the fourth are characterised as materialist theories in the Buddhist commentarial tradition and would appear to contradict these assumptions. But it was agreed that evolving such diverse theories and living in accordance with them constituted worship of Brahman and complete intellectual freedom was thus allowed.

The above evidence is from Buddhist sources but it is confirmed from what we find in the Vedic tradition. The *Bhagavadgītā* speaks of "some who worship with offerings of knowledge, with (theories) of unity as well as of plurality" (*jaña-yajñena ca'pyanye ... upāsate ekatvena prthaktvena*, 9.15). As far as the Vedic scriptural tradition went, an idealistic monistic theory was apparently considered to be on the same footing as a materialist pluralistic theory.

We referred to the theory that "nothing exists" as a materialist theory. In the Buddhist canonical texts too one of the several materialist schools is said to hold that "neither this world existed nor the world beyond (*natthi ayani loko, natthi paro loko*)." (*Dīgha Nikāya*, L. 55) It should appear strange that a materialist school of thought should deny the reality of this world, though it is understandable that it should deny the reality of the world beyond. The publication in 1940 of a work by Jayarāsi Bhaṭṭa called the *Tattvopaplavasīmha*⁶ has now settled our doubts. It is the only extant text of a materialist school hitherto discovered. It argues that even sense-perception

⁵ See "Kūṭandanta Sutta" (*Wheel* No. 120).

⁶ Eds. S. Sanghavi and E. C. Parikh, *Gaekwad Oriental Series* No.87, Baroda, 1940.

(which was accepted by most materialist schools as the only valid means of knowledge) cannot be trusted, but that out of purely pragmatic considerations we must act on the assumption that there are only material things and values, though in actual fact even the reality of this world cannot be proved. This remarkable breadth of outlook on the part of the pre-Buddhistic Vedic traditionalists, who permitted the widest degree of speculation within its fold, did not, however, last very long. Such absolute and untrammelled freedom of thought and expression was considered to be somewhat dangerous for orthodoxy; soon curbs and restrictions were believed to be necessary. Soon after the impact of Buddhism the *Maitrī Upaniṣad* states: “There are those who love to distract the believers in the Veda by the jugglery of false arguments, comparisons and paralogsms: with these one should not associate ... The world, bewildered by a doctrine that denies the self (*nairātmya-vāda*), by false comparisons and proofs, does not discern the difference between the wisdom of the Vedas and the rest of knowledge ... They say that there should be attention to a (new) Dharma, which is destructive of the teaching of the Vedas and the other scriptures ... Therefore what is set forth in the Vedas, that is the truth. On what is said in the Vedas, on that wise men live their life. Therefore a Brahmin should not study what is not of the Veda”. (7–8–10)

The *Lokāyata* speculations, likewise, led to the propagation of materialist theories of man and the universe in Brahmin circles and these were considered to undermine the Vedic tradition. The *Manusmṛti* therefore lays down the rule: “The Brahmin who despises the roots of the Vedic tradition because of his dependence on the science of reasoning should be expelled by the good Brahmins as a nihilist, who scorns the Vedas.” (II.11) After this, *Lokāyata* as a branch of study was taboo to Brahmin orthodoxy and the word survived to denote the materialist theories, which were once nurtured within the orthodox fold itself.

The free atmosphere for speculation and controversy generated by the pre-Buddhistic Vedic tradition, however, had caused a hundred flowers to bloom both within as well as without the Brahmin intellectual circles. The variety of religio-philosophic views, which included several sceptical theories, as well as the unbounded freedom of thought and expression permitted at the time, no doubt left their mark on Buddhism.

This does not mean that the dawn of the Buddhistic era was not without its dogmatists. In the welter of mutually contending theories, there were bound to be those who tried to peddle their own wares with dogmatic insistence. The *Suttanipāta* refers to “all those people who tenaciously cling to their respective religio-philosophical theories and argue, ‘Here alone is the truth!’ (ye *kec’ime diṭṭhi paribassānā, ’idam eva saccaṇ’ ti vivādayanti*).” (896) There is also a reference to people who claimed to dispense salvation: “‘Here alone is salvation’—thus do they proclaim; they do not grant salvation in the religions of others (*Idh’eva suddhi’ iti vādiyanti, nāññesu dhammesu visuddhim āhu*).” (824)

The question of survival is central to religion, for unless there is some concept of survival after death the concept of salvation would be meaningless and we might as well dispense with religion. It would therefore be pertinent to illustrate the variety of views held on topics pertaining to religion by reference to the several solutions put forward at this time regarding this question. It will show the difference of the Buddhist point of view, with which some of these discarded theories are even today identified. Logically there are four possible points of view that we can adopt with regard to this question. We may say, (a) that we survive death in the form of discarnate spirits, i.e. a single after-life theory; (b) that we come back to subsequent earth-lives or lives on other similar planets, i.e. a rebirth theory; (c) that we are annihilated with death, i.e. a materialist theory; and (d) that we are unable to discover a satisfactory answer to this question or there is no satisfactory answer, i.e. a sceptical, agnostic or positivist theory.

The Buddhist texts record several variants of each of the above types. The *Brahmajāla Sutta* classifies the single after-life theories as follows:

It says that there are religious teachers, who assert that the soul after death is (a) conscious (*saññī*), (b) unconscious (*asaññī*) or (c) superconscious, lit. neither conscious nor unconscious (*nevasaññīnāsaññī*). There are sixteen variants of the conscious-theory and eight each of the other two. The following are the sixteen:

I. Variations regarding the form of the soul:

- (i) has a subtle material form;
- (ii) has no such form;
- (iii) has a subtle material form for some time and then has no such form;
- (iv) intrinsically has no such form but has the power of manifesting such a form.

II. Variations regarding the duration of the soul:

- (i) comes to an end, e.g. the theory of “second death” in the Brāhmaṇas;
- (ii) is of eternal duration;
- (iii) changes its state after some time and becomes eternal;
- (iv) does not exist in time.

III. Variations regarding the nature and extent of consciousness:

- (i) conscious of unity;
- (ii) consciousness of diversity;
- (iii) of limited consciousness;
- (iv) of unlimited consciousness.

IV. Variations regarding the hedonic tone of experiences:

- (i) extremely happy;
- (ii) extremely unhappy;
- (iii) both happy and unhappy;
- (iv) not experiencing happiness or unhappiness.

Only variations I (i)-(iv) and II (i)-(iv) are considered applicable to those who held that the soul was (b) unconscious or (c) superconscious after death.

It would not be difficult to find instances of the above theories of survival put forward by religious teachers and philosophical thinkers of East and West. On first glance the above list looks artificial, but the fact that many of these theories can be traced to the pre-Buddhist literature proves that it is not. Thus Prajāpati held on the basis of rational and metaphysical speculation that the soul was “conscious and having its own form after death.” (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 8.12), i.e. (a)(I)(i).

Uddālaka held that the soul was “unconscious and without form” after death, i.e. (b)(I)(ii). The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* asserts that the soul has a subtle material form for some time and then ceases to have such a material form (3. 10. 5), i.e. (a) (I)(iii). Yājñavalkya tries to show that the soul is “neither conscious nor unconscious after death” and has no form, i.e. (c)(I)(ii). Just as much as there are several single after-life theories, there are several rebirth theories in the pre-Buddhist traditions of the Upaniṣads, the Ājīvikas and Jains. They range from those who assert

that the soul is reborn even as “herbs and trees” (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 5.10.6) to those who hold that the soul better its status at each successive stage of rebirth, taking on “another newer and more beautiful form.” (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 4.4.4.)

On the other hand the several schools of Materialists denied survival altogether. Seven such schools are referred to in the *Brahmajāla Sutta*. One of them, the most extreme, held that there is no mind or soul apart from the body, which is entirely a hereditary product of one’s parents. What we call “mind” is the patterns of movement in our bodies. Another school held that the mind is an emergent product, which has a material basis, and its condition is determined by the food we eat. They argued that just as much as when we mix up certain chemicals in certain proportions there emerges the intoxicating power of liquor, even so the material particles of the body and the food we eat go to form the mind, which is an emergent by-product. This would be similar to a Marxist materialist conception of the mind. This emergent mind, however, was deemed to disintegrate on the dissolution of the body at death. There were also schools of mystic materialists, who believed in the possibilities of the expansion of consciousness but argued that since such forms of consciousness are dependent on the condition of the body, there is no survival after death.

The dialectical opposition between the soul-theorists, who asserted survival, and the various schools of materialists, who denied it, led to scepticism with regard to the question of survival and other such matters as well. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* says: “This doubt there is with regard to a man deceased – ‘he exists’ say some; ‘he exists not’ say others” (I.20). The Sceptics adopted scepticism on the basis of various intellectual or pragmatic grounds or both. Some held that our experiences are subjective since they are based on our own individual perspective and that no objectivity in knowledge was possible since we cannot have any insight into the minds of others. Others held that on these matters one is led by one’s prejudices for (*chanda*, *rāga*) or against (*dosa*, *paṭigha*) and that we are therefore unjustified in coming to definite conclusions. Yet others were of the opinion that in dogmatically accepting a theory of survival or denying it, we get involved with the theory and that such “involvement” is a source of mental unrest. Others found that we could argue rationally for or against survival and that therefore we are none the wiser. Sañjaya appears to have been of the view that the question of survival and similar questions are beyond verification and it is immaterial as to what we believe.

It would divert us from our task to give a detailed account of the Buddhist theory of survival and the grounds on which it is based. Suffice it to say, as it would appear to be evident from the above, that the Buddhist theory of survival was taught by the Buddha after examining all the alternative possible theories with regard to the question of survival. According to the information of the earliest texts, he did so after he was convinced of it on the basis of his capacity to recall his past lives and also to read by means of his clairvoyance the past lives of others. He trained several of his disciples to acquire these faculties and realise the truth of his discoveries for themselves.

It is a belief of many people today that religious dogmas cannot be empirically verified but have to be accepted on the basis of faith. It is therefore necessary to add that rebirth, which forms part of the Buddhist theory of re-becoming (*punabbhava*), is no longer in the realm of superstition and religious dogma. It is one thing which distinguishes Buddhism from other religions with the possible exception of certain forms of Hinduism. Rebirth has become philosophically respectable even to a modern logical analyst, who has expressly come out in favour of a concept of rebirth without a soul, which is exactly the Buddhist form of the doctrine. This professor of philosophy, A.J. Ayer, from the University of Oxford, states his position as follows in one of his recent works: “I think that it would be open to us to admit the logical possibility of reincarnation merely by laying down the rule that if a person who is physically

identified as living at a later time does have the extensible memories and character of a person who is physically identified as living at an earlier time, they are to be counted as one person and not two.”⁷

There are three sorts of empirical evidence for rebirth: the evidence from age-regression experiments conducted with subjects who allegedly recall minute historical details of experiences in prior lives without having obtained such information in this life, the evidence from authentic instances of the spontaneous cases of recall mostly on the part of children even from countries in which they are not predisposed to believe in rebirth, and finally evidential clairvoyance.

A psychologist refers to some of the case records of a psychiatrist, Dr. Blanche Baker, PhD., MD., in one of which the subject was regressed “through a total of forty-seven lives (twenty-three as a man and twenty-four as a woman)” and says, “literally hundreds of details of these lives have been verified in historical reference books. ‘Coincidence’ is the stock explanation offered by sceptics for these occurrences, but the explanation is at best inadequate in view of the frequency with which they occur.”⁸ Dr. Ian Stevenson, MD., Professor and Head of the Department of Neurology and Psychiatry, University of Virginia, selected forty-four cases in which there have been “apparent recollections of specific people, places and events in the life of a definitely identified other person, who died prior to the birth of the subject.” He states his conclusion as follows after trying to account for the data in terms of several alternative normal and paranormal hypotheses: “I will say, therefore, that I think reincarnation the most plausible hypothesis for understanding cases of this series”⁹ The best attested case of evidential clairvoyance is that of Edgar Cayce, who gave detailed and accurate medical diagnoses of the illnesses of patients, some of whom he had not even seen. Later, when questions were put to him about the nature and destiny of man in the universe, he claimed to see and read the prior lives of himself as well as of others.¹⁰

Rebirth is not a well-established scientific hypothesis universally accepted by psychologists as yet, but it is significant that it should be considered by at least some psychologists as “the most plausible hypothesis” to account for the empirical data.¹¹ I have digressed from my main theme in order to show that the Buddhist theory of rebirth can today be subjected to experimental investigation, and it would therefore be incorrect to say that it is a doctrine which has to be either accepted or rejected on mere faith.

To get back to my subject, I took this question of survival after death merely to illustrate the diversity of views regarding it prevalent at the time of the Buddha. Had I taken any other problem pertinent to religion, such as the problem of free will vs. determinism, moral responsibility vs. amoralism, theism vs. atheism, it would have been possible to illustrate a similar diversity of views prevalent at the time. At no other time in human history, unless it be in the present, was such a variety of views on matters pertaining to religion present together in the same epoch. No wonder that the Buddha referred to them as a “thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a tangle of views (diṭṭhi-gaṇaṃ, diṭṭhi-kantāraṃ, diṭṭhi-visūkaṃ).” Majjhima Nikāya, I. 8) The opening verse of the Visuddhimagga, quoted from the Pali Canon, gives a beautiful and apt description of the plight of thinking men in that age:

⁷ A. J. Ayer, *The Concept of a Person* (London: 1963), 127.

⁸ Cina Cerminara, *The World Within* (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1957), 28–29.

⁹ *The Evidence for Survival from Claimed Memories of Former Incarnations* (Essex: Thamesmouth Printing Co. Ltd., 1964), 84.

¹⁰ Thomas Sugrue, *There Is A River* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1943), and Gina Cerminara, *Many Mansions* (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1960).

¹¹ For a careful analysis of the evidence, see C. J. Ducasse, *A Critical Examination of the Belief in a Life after Death* (Springfield, Illinois, 1961), 207–307.

Tangle within, without, lo! in the toils
Entangled is the race of sentient beings.
Hence would I ask thee, Gotama, of this:
Who is't can from this tangle disembroil?

Kindred Sayings, I. 20

To have adopted a dogmatic attitude and to have accepted one or more of these views uncritically from one of the prevailing Vedic or non-Vedic traditions would have been self-defeating. So with those who were bewildered by the variety of religio-philosophical theories offered them during this age, the Buddha advocated a critical outlook, recommending that they test the validity of any particular religion or philosophy that appeals to them in the light of their personal experience. The Sceptics had already taught that a man may be led by his prejudices for (chanda) or against (dosa) accepting or rejecting a theory. The Buddha showed them how one should examine things dispassionately without being led by attachment (chanda), hatred (dosa), ignorance (moha) or fear (bhaya). (Dīgha Nikāya, II. L 133) The following oft-quoted passage, which is not always accurately translated, contains the essence of the attitude recommended by the Buddha in choosing between conflicting ideologies as a basis for living:

“There are certain religious teachers, who come to Kesaputta. They speak very highly of their own theories, but oppose, condemn and ridicule the theories of others. At the same time there are yet other religious teachers who come to Kesaputta and in turn speak highly of their own theories, opposing, condemning and ridiculing the theories of these others. We are now in a state of doubt and perplexity as to who out of these venerable recluses spoke the truth and who spoke falsehood.”

“O Kālāmas, you have a right to doubt or feel uncertain, for you have raised a doubt in a situation in which you ought to suspend your judgment. Come now, Kālāmas, do not accept anything on the grounds of revelation, tradition or report or because it is a product of mere reasoning or because it is true from a standpoint or because of a superficial assessment of the facts or because it conforms with one’s preconceived notions or because it is authoritative or because of the prestige of your teacher. When you, Kālāmas, realise for yourselves that these doctrines are evil and unjustified, that they are condemned by the wise, and that when they are accepted and lived by they conduce to ill and sorrow, then you should reject them...” Aṅguttara Nikāya, I. 189

This critical attitude should be focused on Buddhism itself:

“If anyone were to speak ill of me, my doctrine or my Order, do not bear any ill will towards him, be upset or perturbed at heart; for if you were to do so, it would only cause you harm. If, on the other hand, anyone were to speak well of me, my doctrine and my Order, do not be overjoyed, thrilled or elated at heart; for if you were to do so, it would only be an obstacle in the way of forming a realistic judgment as to whether the qualities praised in us are real and actually found in us.”

Dīgha, Nikāya, I. 3

The later tradition often underlines this attitude. The following verse attributed to the Buddha is to be found in a Sanskrit Buddhist text called the *Tattvasaṃgraha* and a Tibetan work called the *Jñānasamuccayasāra*:

“Just as the experts test gold by burning it, cutting it, and applying it on a touchstone, my statements should be accepted only after critical examination and not out of respect for me.”

This does not, however, mean that faith is no requirement at all in Buddhism. Far from it. One cannot test a theory unless one accepts it at least tentatively as one's basis of life. The Buddhist accepts the "right philosophy of life" (*sammā-diṭṭhi*) as the basis of his living because he finds it reasonable and in fact more reasonable than any other way of life. Such faith which eventually culminates in knowledge is called a "rational faith" (*ākaravati saddhā*) as opposed to a blind or "baseless faith" (*amūlikā saddhā*).

Going along with this critical outlook is the causal conception of nature, which is conceived of as a causal system in which there operate physical laws (*utu-niyāma*), biological laws (*bījanīyāma*), psychological laws (*citta-niyāma*) as well as moral and spiritual laws (*kamma-dhammanīyāma*). These laws are said to operate whether a Buddha comes into existence or not, and all that the Buddha does is to discover them and reveal to us those which are of relevance to the moral and spiritual life, which is both possible and desirable in the universe in which we live. It is said:

"Whether Tathāgatas arise or not, this order exists, namely, the fixed nature of phenomena, the regular pattern of phenomena or conditionality. This the Tathāgata discovers and comprehends; having discovered and comprehended it, he points it out, teaches it, lays it down, establishes, reveals, analyses, clarifies it and says, 'Look.'"

(*Samyutta Nikāya*, II. 25)

This dispassionate and impartial but critical outlook (the causal conception of the universe and the conception of the Buddha as a being who discovers the operation of certain moral and spiritual laws and reveals them to us) may be said to be the first plank on which Buddhist tolerance rests. A scientist does not ask a fellow-scientist to accept a theory on faith, though his fellow-scientist must have enough faith in the theory on his preliminary examination of it before he thinks of testing it out. In the same way, the Buddha shows us the way but we have to do the hard work of treading it before we can get anywhere—*tumhe hi kiccaṃ ātappaṃ akkhātāro tathāgata*. The Dhamma is well-proclaimed (*svākkhāto*), produces results without delay in this very life (*sandiṭṭhiko akāliko*), it invites anyone to verify it for himself (*ehi-passiko*), it leads to the desired goal (*opanayiko*), and it is to be realised by the wise, each person for himself (*paccattaṃ veditabbaṃ viññūhi*). It looks as if the Buddha was addressing a modern mind of the twentieth century, for the outlook that the Buddha recommends is what we today call the scientific outlook, except for the fact that it does not make a dogma of materialism.

The concept of the Buddha as one who discovers the truth rather than as one who has a monopoly of the truth is clearly a source of tolerance. It leaves open the possibility for others to discover aspects of the truth or even the whole truth for themselves. The Buddhist acceptance of Pacceka-Buddhas, who discover the truth for themselves, is a clear admission of this fact. Referring to certain sages (*munayo*), who had comprehended the nature of their desires and had eliminated them, crossing over the waves of saṃsāric existence, the Buddha says: "I do not declare that all these religious men are sunk in repeated birth and decay (*nāhaṃ bhikkhave sabbe samaṇa brahmaṇāse jātijarāya nivutā ti brūmi*)." (*Suttanipāta*, 1082) Yet, as it is pointed out, the Dhamma is to be preached to all beings though all beings may not profit by it, just as much as all sick people are to be treated although some may get well or succumb to their illnesses despite the medicines given. (*Ānguttara Nikāya*, I 120–21) This is because there are beings who would profit only from the Dhamma.

This assertion of the possibility of salvation or spiritual growth outside Buddhism does not mean that Buddhism values all religions alike and considers them equally true. It would be desirable to determine the Buddhist use of the word for religion before examining this question. In early Buddhism, a religious doctrine was denoted by the word *dhamma*. *Diṭṭhi* was a "religio-

philosophical theory” and for it the word *darsana* was later used in Indian thought. But for “religion,” which includes both beliefs as well as practises, the word used was *dhamma-vinaya*, which literally means “doctrine and discipline.” But the term which was common to the Vedic tradition as well was *brahma-carya*, which literally means the “religious life.” It was used in a very wide sense, because of the intellectual tolerance of the Vedic tradition at this time, to denote any “ideal life.” It could be interpreted to mean any way of life that was considered to be the ideal as a result of one accepting a certain view of life concerning the nature and destiny of man in the universe. In this sense, the way of life of a materialist is also an ideal life from his point of view.

Indian thought has been accused of failing to divorce religion from philosophy. The accusation is unjustified. For what happened in the history of Indian thought is that the theoretical aspect of each religion was considered its philosophy, whereas its practical aspect was the religion. Every philosophy including materialism thus had both a view of life as well as a way of life, and consistency was demanded not only in each sphere (i.e. within each “view of life” and within each “way of life”), but also between both. A materialist philosopher who did not live in accordance with material values was thus considered inconsistent. The Buddha claimed that there was consistency between his theory and practise (*yathāvādi tathākāri*). Western classical metaphysics on the other hand latterly came to be divorced from living. It was for this reason that existentialism had to come in to fill the void. In Indian thought, however, every philosophical system had its theory as well as its practise and a philosophy was not entertained in isolation from its practical bearing on life. Today we call those non-theistic philosophies (which have a practical bearing on life and often claim the sole allegiance of an individual) religion-surrogates since they take the place of traditional religions and act as substitutes for religion. Humanism, certain forms of existentialism not related to traditional religions, and certain materialist philosophies like Marxism, which have a practical bearing on life, may be considered such religion-surrogates. Buddhism considers some of those religion-surrogates on the same footing as practical religions (*brahmacariyavāsa*) in stating its attitude to various types of religion. In the *Sandaka Sutta* Ānanda, reporting the ideas of the Buddha, says that there are four pseudo-religions (*abrahmacariya-vāsā*) or false religions in the world and four religions which are unsatisfactory (lit. *anassāsikaṃ*, unconsoling) but not necessarily false.

The pseudo-religions are: first, materialism, which asserts the reality of the material world alone and denies survival; second, a religious philosophy which recommends an amoral ethic; third, one which denies free will and moral causation and asserts that beings are either miraculously saved or doomed; and fourth, deterministic evolutionism, which asserts the inevitability of eventual salvation for all. (*Majjhima Nikāya*, I 515–518)

The four unsatisfactory but not necessarily false religions are presumably those which in some sense recognise the necessity for a concept of survival, moral values, freedom and responsibility, and the non-inevitability of salvation. The first is one in which omniscience is claimed for its founder in all his conscious and unconscious periods of existence. The second is a religion based on revelation or tradition, the third a religion founded on logical and metaphysical speculation, and the fourth is one which is merely pragmatic and is based on sceptical or agnostic foundations.

We note here that the relativist valuation of religion in early Buddhism does not presuppose or imply the truth of all religions or religion-surrogates. Some types of religion are clearly condemned as false and undesirable, while others are satisfactory to the extent to which they contain the essential core of beliefs and values central to religion, whatever their epistemic foundations may be. Those based on claims to omniscience on the part of the founder, revelation

or tradition, metaphysical speculation or pragmatic scepticism, are unsatisfactory in so far as they are based on uncertain foundations.

Revelations and revelational traditions contradict each other and it is said that they may contain propositions which may be true or false. In the case of religions based on metaphysical arguments and speculations, “the reasoning may be valid or invalid and the conclusions true or false (sutakkitaṃ pi hoti duttakkitaṃ pi hoti tathā pi hoti aññatha pi hoti).” (Majjhima Nikāya, I 520) Buddhism is, therefore, by implication a religion which asserts survival, moral values, freedom and responsibility, and the non-inevitability of salvation. It is also verifiably true.

I do not propose here to examine any of the specific doctrines of another religion and compare or contrast them with Buddhism, but it will be observed that the definition of the Buddhist “right view of life” (*sammā-diṭṭhi*) comprehends the basic beliefs and values of the higher religions. The definition reads as follows: “There is value in alms, sacrifices and oblations; there is survival and recompense for good and evil deeds; there are moral obligations, and there are religious teachers who have led a good life and who have proclaimed with their superior insight and personal understanding the nature of this world and the world beyond.” (Majjhima Nikāya, III. 72) This “right view of life” (*sammā-diṭṭhi*) is said to be of two sorts: (a) one of which is mixed up with the inflowing impulses (*sāsava*), and (b) the other not so mixed up. These impulses are the desire for sensuous gratification (*kāmāsava*), the desire for self-centred pursuits and for continued existence in whatsoever form (*bhavāsava*), and illusions (*avijjāsava*). Thus a right view of life mixed up with a desire for personal immortality in heaven or a belief in sensuous heavens would be a *sāsava-sammādiṭṭhi*.

The above summary of the right philosophy of life, it may be observed, is comprehensive enough to contain, recognise and respect the basic truths of all higher religions. All these religions believe in a Transcendent, characterised as Nirvāna which is beyond time, space and causation in Buddhism, as an impersonal monistic principle such as Brahman or Tao in some religions, and as a personal God in others. They all assert survival, moral recompense and responsibility. They all preach a “good life,” which has much in common and whose culmination is communion or union with or the attainment of this Transcendent. The early Buddhist conception of the nature and destiny of man in the universe is, therefore, not in basic conflict with the beliefs and values of the founders of the great religions so long as they assert some sort of survival, moral values, freedom and responsibility and the non-inevitability of salvation. But at the same time it is not possible to say that in all their phases of development, and in all their several strands of belief in varying social contexts, they have stood for this central core of beliefs and values. This applies to Buddhism as well, particularly when we consider some of the developments in Tantric Buddhism.

One of the last questions put to the Buddha was by the wandering ascetic Subhadda. He wanted to know whether the leading philosophies and religions proclaimed in his day by the six outstanding teachers, who had a large following each, were all true, all false or whether some were true and some false. The Buddha did not give a specific answer to this question since he generally avoided making specific criticisms of particular religions unless he was invited or challenged to do so. He says, however, that any religion is true to the extent to which it would incorporate the Noble Eightfold Path: “In whatever religion the Noble Eightfold Path is not found, that religion would not have a first saint, the second, the third, and the fourth; in whatever religion the Noble Eightfold Path is found, that religion would have the first, second, third and fourth saints. Void are these other religions of true saints. If these monks were to live righteously, the world would never be devoid of saints.” (*Dīgha Nikāya*, II 151) The first saint¹² is the person who has given up preconceptions about a soul to be identified with or located within

¹² The stream-enterer (*sotāpanna*).

aspects or the whole of his psycho-physical personality, is convinced that no permanent and secure existence is possible within the cosmos of becoming (i.e. has given up *sakkāya diṭṭhi*),¹³ has by study and understanding cleared his doubts about the Buddha, Dhamma and the saintly Sangha (i.e. has got rid of *vicikicchā*), has given up obsessional attachments to religious rites and rituals (i.e. has discarded *sīlabbata parāmāsa*), and leads a pure moral life. As such he is not likely to fall below the level of human existence in any of his future births (*avinipāta-dhammo*) and is assured of final realisation. The third saint¹⁴ is the person, who in addition to the above, tends to act out of selfless charity (*cāga*) compassion (*mettā*) and understanding (*vijjā*) rather than out of greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*) and ignorance (*moha*). Ignorance comprises all the erroneous beliefs and illusions we entertain about the nature and destiny of man in the universe. Hatred is the source of our aggressive (*vibhava-taṇhā*) tendencies and greed includes the desire for sensuous gratification (*kāma-taṇhā*) as well as the desire for self-centred pursuits (*bhava-taṇhā*), such as the desire for power, fame, etc. The fourth saint is the person who attains final realisation in this life itself.¹⁵

Leaving out Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta, the founder of Jainism, the other five out of the six outstanding teachers in the day of the Buddha represent standard types of philosophies or religions. In Sañjaya, we have the sceptic or agnostic or positivist, who argued that questions pertaining to survival, moral responsibility and values, spiritual beings and transcendent existence were beyond verification. Ajita Kesakambali was a materialist, who denied any value in religious activities, denied survival, moral recompense, and moral obligations, and denied that there were any religious teachers who had led a good life and who have proclaimed with their superior insight and understanding the nature of this world and the world beyond. His view was that the fools and the wise alike were annihilated at death. Makkhali Gosāla has been called a theist (*issara-kāraṇa-vādi*); as a theist who believed in God he seemed to have argued that salvation is eventually predestined for all. Everything is preplanned and takes place in accordance with the fiat of God; it is like the unravelling of a ball of thread thrown on the ground. Fools and wise alike evolve in various forms of existence, high and low, in the course of which they gather experience under the impact of diverse forces, living in accordance with the sixty-two philosophies of life in different lives. Man himself has no will of his own since everything is predetermined by the divine will, which guarantees final salvation for all.

The theism of Makkhali is severely criticised since it gave a false sense of security to people and encouraged complacency by denying free will, the value of human effort and ensuring eventual salvation. The Buddha says that he knows of no other person than Makkhali born to the detriment and disadvantage of so many people, comparing him to a fisherman casting his net at the mouth of a river for the destruction of many fish. (*Aṅguttara Nikāya*, I. 33)

There are two arguments against belief in such a personal God (*īsvara*) mentioned in the Buddhist scriptures. The first is that the truth of theism entails a lack of man's final responsibility for his actions: "If God designs the life of the entire world—the glory and the misery, the good and the evil acts—man is but an instrument of his will and God is responsible." (*Jātaka*, V. 238) The other is that some evils are inexplicable if we grant the truth of such a theism: "If God is the lord of the whole world and creator of the multitude of beings, then why has he ordained misfortune in the world without making the whole world happy? For

¹³ Personality-belief. 14. 15.

¹⁴ The non-returner to the world of sensuality (*anāgāmi*). He has fully eliminated the fetters of sensuous desire and ill-will, which are still present, though weakened, in the second saint (once-returner), who is not mentioned in this text. (Editor).

¹⁵ The arahat. He has fully eliminated all the remaining five fetters: desire for fine-material and immaterial existence, conceit, restlessness and ignorance. (Editor).

what purpose has he made a world that has injustice, deceit, falsehood and conceit? The lord of the world is unrighteous in ordaining injustice where there could have been justice.” (*Jātaka*, VI. 208)

The fact that such a theistic philosophy is severely criticised does not mean that all forms of theism are condemned. A theistic religion and philosophy which, 1) stresses the importance of human freedom, responsibility and effort, 2) encourages the cultivation of moral and spiritual values and the attainment of moral perfection, and 3) offers the hope of fellowship with God (*Brahmā*), who is represented as a perfect moral being (wise and powerful but not omniscient or omnipotent) is to be commended on pragmatic grounds. Addressing some personal theists among the Brahmins, the Buddha describes the path to fellowship (*sahavyatā*, lit. companionship) with God (*Brahmā*) and speaks of the necessity of cultivating selflessness, compassion, freedom from malice, purity of mind, and self-mastery for this purpose:

“Then you say, too, Vāseṭṭha, that the Brahmins bear anger and malice in their hearts and are impure in heart and uncontrolled, whilst God is free from anger and malice, pure in heart and has self-mastery. Now can there be concord and harmony between the Brahmins and God?”

“Certainly not, Gotama!”

“Very good, Vāseṭṭha. That those Brahmins versed in the Vedas and yet bearing anger and malice in their hearts, sinful and uncontrolled, should after death, when the body is dissolved, attain fellowship with God, who is free from anger and malice, pure in heart and has self-mastery—such a state of things can in no way be.”

(Tevijja Sutta, *Dīgha Nikāya*, I. 247–8)

Whatever the basis of the theistic myth they believed in, so long as these Brahmins could be persuaded to cultivate these virtues grounded in their faith in God, it was a step in the right direction. Thus on pragmatic grounds the belief in a personal God is not discouraged in so far as it is not a hindrance but an incentive for moral and spiritual development. At the same time we must not forget that even according to the Buddhist conception of the cosmos, such a heaven had a place in the scheme of things, though the God who ruled in it, worshipped as the Almighty, was only very wise, powerful and morally perfect though not omniscient and omnipotent.

It will be worthwhile drawing attention to this conception of the cosmos in order to clarify this statement. The early Buddhist description of the cosmos, as far as the observable universe goes, is claimed to be based on extrasensory clairvoyant perception. It is remarkably close to the modern conception of the universe:

As far as these suns and moons revolve shedding their light in space, so far extends the thousand-fold universe. In it there are thousands of suns (*sahassasaṃ suriyānaṃ*), thousands of moons, thousands of inhabited worlds of varying sorts ... thousands of heavenly worlds of varying grades. This is the thousand-fold minor world system (*cūlaṇikā lokadhātu*). Thousands of times the size of the thousand-fold minor world system is the twice-a-thousand middling world system (*majjhimika lokadhātu*). Thousands of times the size of the middling world system is the thrice-a-thousand great cosmos (*mahā lokadhātu*).

(*Āṅguttara Nikāya*, I. 227, 228)

This conception of the universe as consisting of hundreds of thousands of clusters of galactic systems containing thousands of suns, moons and inhabited worlds is not to be found in the Hindu or Jain scriptures and was much in advance of the age in which it appears. In later

Theravāda it gets embedded in and confused with mythical notions about the universe. In the Mahāyāna, the conception is magnified and there are references to the “unlimited and infinite number of galactic systems (*lokadhātu*) in the ten quarters” (*Sukhāvati-vyūha*, I), but the original conception of a “sphere of million millions of galactic systems” (*Vajracchedikā*, XXX) survives. Brahma occupies a place in the highest of heavens, and although he is morally perfect, he is still within the cosmic scheme of things and his knowledge does not extend as far as that of a Buddha.

In the *Brahmajāla Sutta*, the Buddha points out that the origins of some forms of theistic religion and philosophy are to be traced to the religious teachings of beings from this heaven, who are born on earth and leading a homeless life preach a doctrine which leads to fellowship with Brahma. It is said that in the ages past Sunetta (Fair-Eyed) and five other such teachers taught the path to heaven and fellowship with God. (*Āṅguttara Nikāya*, III. 371) Such teachings are commended since they help man in bettering his condition.

On the other hand, when the Buddha addressed materialists, sceptics, determinists or indeterminists, who denied survival, freedom and responsibility, he does not presuppose the truth of these latter concepts but uses a “wager argument” reminiscent of Pascal. This shows that on pragmatic grounds it is better to base one’s life on the assumptions of survival, freedom and responsibility; for, otherwise, whatever happens, we stand to lose whereas on the other alternative we stand to gain. (*Apaṇṇaka Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya* 60)

It would be possible for scholars and students of Buddhism to take these texts in isolation and ignoring the rest of the material in the Canon, argue that either the Buddha was a theist or an agnostic, a sceptic or a materialist, as the case may be. There seem to be even “Buddhists” who, on the basis of the erroneous belief that the doctrine of *anattā* (no-soul) precludes any possibility of a belief in survival, argue that the Buddha could not have entertained any belief in survival. This would make Buddhism a form of materialism, perhaps a dialectical materialism with the emphasis on the doctrine of impermanence (*anicca*) or a scepticism, doctrines from which Buddhism has been clearly distinguished in all its phases of expansion. It has even been said that rebirth is not taught in the First Sermon, which no one dared tamper with, whereas even this sermon quite clearly refers to “the desires which tend to bring about rebirth or re-becoming” (*taṇhā ponobhavikā*). So does the last sermon to Subhadda emphasise the Noble Eightfold Path, whose first member is “the right view of life,” which underlines the reality of this world as well as the world beyond (*atthi ayaṃ loko, atthi paro loko*).

Likewise, on the question of theism, we find that a scholar like Mrs. Rhys Davids latterly believed that Buddhism was no different in principle from a theistic religion, making the Buddha a personal theist. Radhakrishnan saw in the Buddha an impersonal theist or implicit monist. For Keith, the Buddha was an agnostic and for Stcherbatsky an atheist. In actual fact none of these labels are adequate to describe Buddhism, which transcends them all. It is important to distinguish Buddhism from all of them, for the Buddhist attitude to other religions would depend on the view we take of Buddhism itself.

It is important to distinguish Buddhism on the one hand from personal theism and on the other hand from atheistic materialism, although Buddhism has common ground with both. The Buddha was quite emphatic about this. He referred to the former as *bhava-ditṭhi*, “the personal immortality view,” and the latter as *vibhava-ditṭhi*, “the annihilation view.” Distinguishing Buddhism from both these views, which he says are found in the world and are mutually opposed to each other, the Buddha states: “These religious teachers who do not see how these two views arise and cease to be, their good points and their defects and how one transcends them in accordance with the truth, are under the grip of greed, hate and ignorance ... and will not attain final redemption from suffering.” (*Majjhima Nikāya*, I. 65)

We have already talked about the common ground that Buddhism has with some forms of theism in urging the validity of moral and spiritual values and of a transcendent reality. It will be worthwhile summarising the common ground that Buddhism has with some forms of materialism. The Buddha refused to preach to a hungry man. What Buddhism requires of man in society is the pursuit of one's material as well as spiritual well-being (such a quest being practicable) where one's wealth is righteously earned and spent for one's good and that of others, without squandering or hoarding it. The man who is valued is the person who "possesses the capacity to acquire wealth that he could not acquire before and also to increase it and at the same time possesses that insight which makes it possible for him to distinguish good and evil." (*Puggalapaññatti*, III) Buddhism upholds the reality of this world as well as the next, and the Buddha speaks of the happiness of the average man as deriving from economic security (*atthi sukha*), the enjoyment of one's wealth (*bhoga-sukha*), freedom from debt (*anana-sukha*), and a blameless moral and spiritual life (*anavajja-sukha*). All forms of asceticism that mortify the flesh are condemned even for monks since a strong and healthy body was necessary for both material and spiritual endeavours.

The Buddha was the first to proclaim the equality of man in the fullest sense of the term. There are differences of species, points out the Buddha, among plants and animals, but despite differences in the colour of the skin, the shape of the nose or the form of the hair, mankind is biologically one species. (*Vāsetṭha Sutta*, *Suttanipāta*). There was absolute spiritual equality as well for man, for anyone could aspire to become a Brahma or a Buddha; there are no chosen castes, chosen churches or chosen individuals.

The Buddha gives a dynamic conception of society and holds that the economic factor is one of the main determinants of social change. Social disintegration and the division of the world into the haves and the have-nots, resulting in tensions, the loss of moral values in human society and destructive wars originate from the misdistribution of goods: "As a result of goods not accruing to those bereft of goods, poverty becomes rampant; poverty becoming rampant, stealing becomes rampant ..." (*Dīgha Nikāya*, III. 65) Tracing the cause of this poverty, which leads to such dire consequences, it is said that the mistake that the kings made was to consider that their task was merely to preserve law and order without developing the economy; the king "provided for the righteous protection and security of his subjects but neglected the economy (*dhammikaṃ rakkhāvaraṇaguttiṃ saṃvidahi, no ca kho adhanānaṃ dhanam anuppadāsi*". (*Dīgha Nikāya*, III. 65) The ideal state was one in which there was both freedom as well as economic security. This freedom embraces the recognition of human rights, the freedom to propagate any political or religious doctrine, as well as freedom for "birds and beasts" (*migapakkhīsu*) to live without being wantonly attacked by humans.

In advising a king, the Buddha says that the best way to ensure peace and prosperity in one's kingdom is not by wasting the country's resources in performing religious sacrifices but by ensuring full employment and thereby developing the economy. (*Dīgha Nikāya*, I. 135) The emperor Asoka, who was imbued with these ideals, has been credited with being the first king in history to conceive of a welfare state. Imbued with these same ideals Sinhalese kings set up tremendous irrigation works for the welfare of man. It was King Parākramabāhu who said: "Truly in such a country not even a little water that comes from the rain must flow into the ocean without being made useful to man ... for a life of enjoyment of what one possesses, without having cared for the welfare of the people, in no wise befits one like myself." ¹⁶

I think these few observations would suffice to show how strongly Buddhism stresses the importance of the material realities of life and how practical the advice has been. Both freedom

¹⁶ See Wilhelm Geiger, *The Cūḷavaṃsa* (Colombo, 1953) p. 277.

as well as economic security are necessary ingredients for man's material and spiritual advancement. And freedom includes the freedom to criticise each others' political or religious philosophies without rancour or hatred in our hearts.

I said earlier that the dispassionate and impartial quest for truth, the causal conception of the universe, and the conception of the Buddha as a discoverer and proclaimer of truth were some of the planks of Buddhist tolerance. Another has been compassion. We cannot force the truth on others. All we can do is to help them to discover it, and the greatest help we can give others especially in imparting spiritual truth is to try not to speak out of greed, hatred and ignorance but out of unselfishness, compassion and wisdom.

Saccaṃ ve amatā-vacā—esa dhammo sanantano.

Truth is immortal speech—this is the eternal law.

Na hi verena verāni—sammantīdha kudācanaṃ

Averena ca sammanti—esa dhammo sanantano

Hatred does not cease by hatred—Hatred ceases by love.

This is the eternal law.

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