

## BUDDHIST TEACHING

Buddha only claimed to be nothing other than a human being who achieved the truth by human effort without the help of any deity or God (page 1, What the Buddha Taught).

Buddha encouraged total freedom of thought because self-effort and finding things out for yourself was the only way to find the truth (page 2).

Buddha advised doubt and said it was a good thing (page 2). He was not interested in being an authority who must be believed and obeyed (page 3). He taught that doubt was a good thing only if it led to greater certainty for doubt could hinder one from attaining salvation or Nirvana.

Buddhism has never led to persecution or bloodshed (page 5).

Buddhism rejects the Buddhism label because nobody or no group has a monopoly on truth (page 5).

Buddhism stresses seeing not faith (page 8). The word saddha is often taken to mean faith but it means confidence that comes out of conviction or seeing. Questions such as is the universe eternal or not or is the soul the same as the body or separate from it and is the soul immortal are regarded as a waste of time in Buddhism (page 13, 14).

The Buddha said that a man with a poisoned arrow in him is wasting time if he refuses to let the arrow be taken out until he knows who fired the arrow and what kind of poison is in it and so on (page 13, 14). For Buddha you get on with living a good life.

Buddhism is neither pessimistic or optimistic for it takes a realistic view of life (page 17). Buddha denied that the faith he taught had any esoteric doctrines (page 2).

Manas, mind, in Buddhist thought does not mean mind as in spirit opposed to matter (page 21). Mind is a sense faculty (page 22) like the eye. Volition and karma are one and the same thing in Buddhist thought (page 22). Examples of volition are attention and will and love and hate. "According to Buddhist philosophy there is no permanent, unchanging spirit which can be considered 'Self' or 'Ego', as opposed to matter, and that consciousness (vinnana) should not be taken as 'spirit' in opposition to matter" (page 23). "Buddha declared in unequivocal terms that consciousness depends on matter, sensation, perception and mental formations, and that it cannot exist independently of them" (page 25). There is no such thing as individuality or anything that can be called I (page 26). There is no thinker behind the thought because none of the five things that compose you can be called I. You are not your body. You are not your consciousness. What you call I is simply a collection of five impermanent things. None of them can be you. They change all the time so they cannot be you. Your experience of yourself as being a person is false. It is just like how each thing that makes up a toy is not the toy itself. Realising that there is no you is the secret of happiness. This is enlightenment and makes you a Buddha.

Buddha argued that impatience with suffering only makes suffering worse and does nothing to alleviate it (page 28). The way to deal with suffering is to understand how it comes about and how to get rid of it (page 28).

In Buddhism, karma is not a law that punishes you for doing wrong and blesses you for doing right. It is not about justice. It is just a theory of cause and effect where bad results in more bad results for you (page 32). It is a naturalistic law not a magical or supernatural one. Buddhism teaches that it is not thinkers that think but thoughts that think and each thought has a reaction good or bad (page 42).

The person who realises the supreme truth is the happiest person in the world for he is free from the illusion of self (page 43).

Buddhism denies that you really exist and the next minute instead of you there will be a being that only thinks it was you and the same person as you. It rejects the idea of a soul that goes back to God at death or that is reincarnated many times for purification (page 51). It argues that the concept of self the belief in I is the reason we are so selfish and unhappy and capable of hate and harm (page 51). Man creates God to be his protector. Man invents an immortal soul in the hope that he will live forever. These beliefs arise from the evil illusion of self which implies that self-preservation and self-protection drive man to these beliefs. If there is no self then there can be no God for God can't have self either and must need enlightenment. Needing enlightenment would mean he is not a God at all but a travesty.

My comment is that these two beliefs must be the ultimate in evil. If the idea of self is bad then there is nothing worse than wanting to believe that a God will keep you alive forever.

Page 55-59 refutes the lies of scholars that Buddha didn't exclude the idea of a spiritual soul being your true self. These scholars mistranslate the Buddha to promote their lie.

Buddhism teaches that you should not believe, "I have self" or "I have no self". Just experience that you have no real self (page 66). Buddhism is not a philosophy of faith but experience.

Buddhism is not promoting anything negative or annihilistic by saying there is no self (page 66). On the contrary you feel happier than ever when you realise the truth that I is an illusion caused by the feeling I am that you have. After all there is nothing to annihilate. It is belief in the self that is negative and despairing not the realisation that there is no self. You can be a Buddha when alive and know that there is no you and life still goes on and you enjoy it beyond belief.

Buddhism denies the concept of a free will that is absolutely independent and holds that freedom is relative and conditioned (page 54). Catholics claim to believe in that kind of free will but they do not and they plot to control it. There would be no such thing as influencing others if free will were that independent. Free will only works in a framework. The person in a rabid Catholic culture will be conditioned to refrain from sex outside marriage. He is not free to commit that sin. He can commit others but not that one.

The chapter on meditation says the meditation you must engage in to obtain enlightenment can be done while working so Buddhism does not require you to sit meditating and ignoring the poor at your door.

