

ISSN: 2278 – 2168

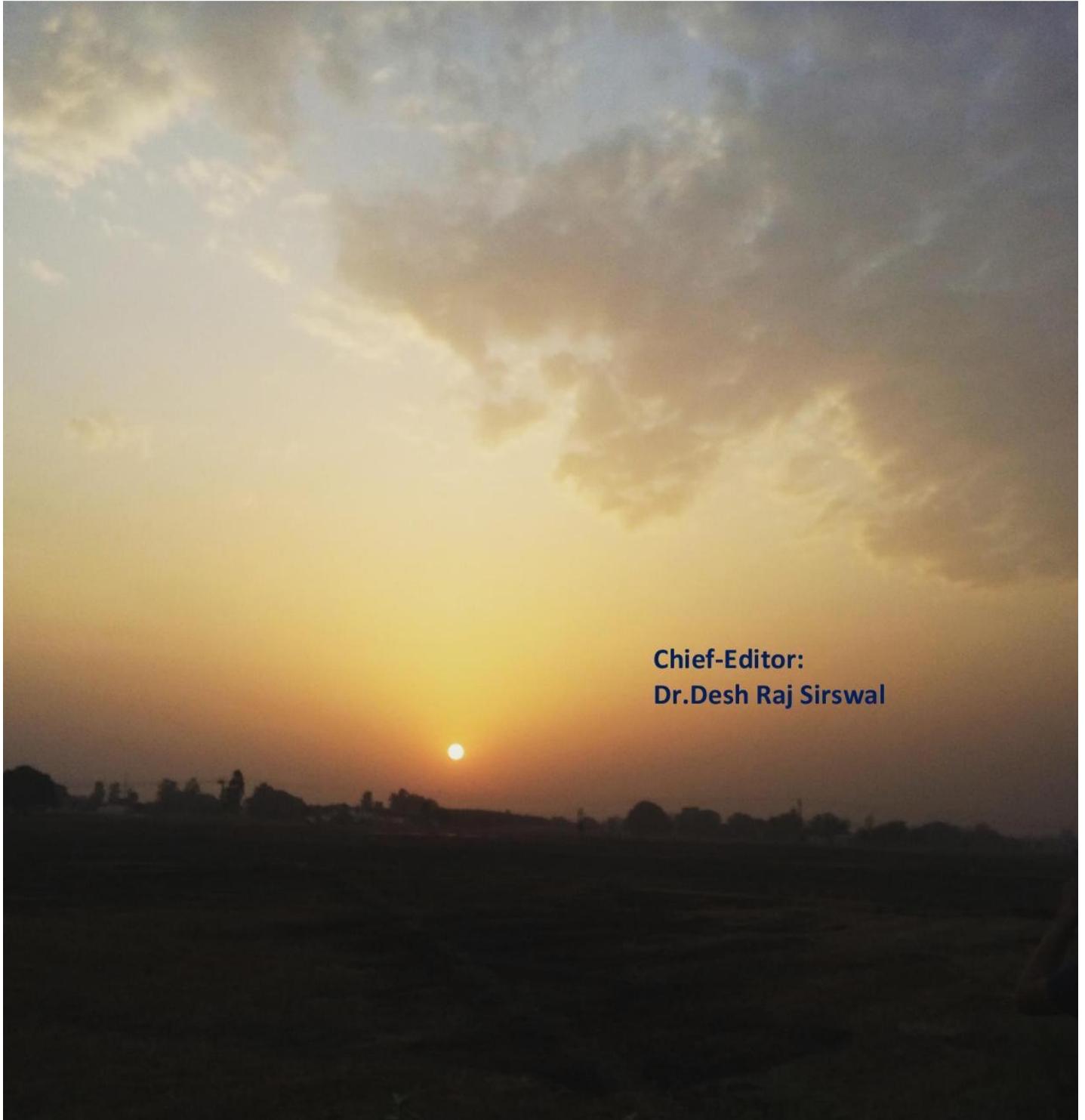
Milestone Education Review

(The Journal of Ideas on Educational & Social Transformation)

Year 10, No. 01 & 02 (October, 2019)



Chief-Editor:
Dr.Desh Raj Sirswal



In this issue.....

| Sr. No. | Title and Author | Page No. |
|----------------|--|-----------------|
| 1. | ETHICS IN RELIGIOUS TEACHING: AN ANALYTICAL APPROACH Tariq Rafeeq Khan & Mudasir Ahmad Tantray | 04-09 |
| 2. | MAHATMA GANDHI AND NON-VIOLENT REVOLUTION Reyaz Ahmad Bhat & Tariq Rafeeq Khan | 10-16 |
| 3. | DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR: AN EXPONENT OF MODERN "SARVAMUKTIVĀDA" Surajit Das & Moumita Das | 17-23 |
| 4. | HAPPINESS IN BUDDHISM: AN EXPERIENTIAL APPROACH Desh Raj Sirswal | 24-30 |
| 5. | FRIEDRICH SCHLEIERMACHER : HERMENEUTICS IS THE ART OF UNDERSTANDING. Lighitha P. | 31-36 |
| 6. | TOLSTOY'S PURPOSE OF ART Suyasha Singh | 37-44 |
| 7. | ROLE OF WOMEN IN A MEDIEVAL INDIAN SOCIETY AS PORTRAYED IN THE BHAKTI LITERATURE OF MAHAPURUSA SRIMANTA SANKARDEVA: 'SITA GETS FAIR TREATMENT IN SANKARDEVA'S UTTARAKANDA RAMAYANA' Sunu Kalita & Archana Barua | 45-57 |
| 8. | VIVEKANANDA'S LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM BHAGAVADA GITA Sudhir Baweja | 58-66 |
| 9. | CONTRIBUTORS OF THIS ISSUE | 67 |

HAPPINESS IN BUDDHISM: AN EXPERIENTIAL APPROACH

Desh Raj Sirswal

Abstract

Indian philosophy is a term that refers to schools of philosophical thought that originated in the Indian continent. Buddhism is one of the important school of Indian philosophical thought. Happiness is much pursued by individuals and society in all cultures. Eastern and western cultures have understood well-being and evolved ways and means to promote well-being over the years. Buddhism pursues happiness by using knowledge and practice to achieve mental equanimity. In Buddhism, equanimity, or peace of mind, is achieved by detaching oneself from the cycle of craving that produces dukkha. So by achieving a mental state where you can detach from all the passions, needs and wants of life, you free yourself and achieve a state of transcendent bliss and well-being. The journey to attain a deeper form of happiness requires an unflinching look into the face of a reality where all life is seen as dukkha or mental dysfunction. Buddhism is a philosophy and practice that is extremely concerned with the mind and its various delusions, misunderstandings and cravings but, happily for us, sees a way out through higher consciousness and mindful practice. Perhaps it is because of this seemingly dim view of reality that happiness in Buddhism is so tremendously full; the ideas contained in Buddha's teachings point to a thorough engagement with lived reality. Ironically, it is through such an engagement with one's self, the world and reality that one is able to achieve a transcendent happiness. Equanimity, a deep sense of wellbeing and happiness, is attainable through proper knowledge and practice in everyday life. The objective of this paper is to the study the conception of happiness Buddhist philosophy. This paper is divided into four parts (i) meaning of Indian philosophy and its relation with Indian psychology, (ii) Buddhist philosophy, (iii) Buddhist conception of happiness and (iv) relevance of Buddhism in present day world.

Key-Words: Buddhism, Well-Being, Happiness, Four-noble truth, Mindfulness, Indian Philosophy.

I

Philosophy is an attempt to satisfy the rational nature of through the desire of knowledge regarding the life of man and his world. Philosophy in its widest etymological sense means “love of wisdom”. Indian Philosophy denotes the philosophical speculations of all thinkers. Ancient or modern, Hindus or non-Hindus, theists or atheists.¹ Indian philosophy has

basically nine systems of philosophy including three heterodox (nastika) including Charvaka, Jainism and Buddhism and six orthodox (astika) systems including Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Mimamsa and Vedanta. Those systems of consider Vedas as the final authority are considered as astika and those who rejected the authority of Vedas called as nastika. The central idea of Indian philosophy is that consciousness is the origin and base of manifestation. The ancient sages did not arrive at this knowledge by a strict mental reasoning and were not content with a mental idea. They discovered the foundations of their philosophical principles through a direct intuitive perception and inner experience. This is how, through –out ages Indian thinkers considered philosophy to be connected a practical spiritual discipline. The experiential methodology of the Indian philosophers has given rise to a very rich and detailed psychology. Indian psychology has its roots in Indian Philosophy and shares its emphasis on knowing by experience. A core characteristic of Indian psychology is that it address the complete human being-not only the body, heart and mind, but also the soul and spirit. Self-observation and self-enquiry are the main method of self-development and self-perfection is most of the systems of Indian psychology.² Now will have an outlook of Buddhist philosophy.

II

Buddhism is one of the three heterodox systems of Indian philosophy. This system was developed through the teachings of Gautama Buddha (560-480 B.C.) previously known as Siddhartha. He was deeply influenced by the Upanishadic and the non-Vedic (especially materialist) philosophies, propounded a philosophy based upon his own empirical and meditational experiences³. Buddhist literature consists of short collections containing speeches, saying, poems, tales or rules of conduct, which are combined into longer collections, called pitika or basket. There were three such pitilas, called the Tri-pitakas written in Pali language:

1. Vinaya-pitika or the basket of discipline: It supplies the regulations for the management of the order (the samgha or the community of monks) and for the conduct of the daily life of monks and nuns.
2. The Sutta-pitik: This is the best source for dharma or religion of the Budhha and his earliest disciplines. It consists, in prose and verse, the most important products of budhist literature , grouped in five minor collections called nikayas.

3. The Abhidhamma-pitika or basket of higher religion: It treat the same subjects as the Sutta-pitika, through in a more scholastic manner

All these were considered to be canonical. There were also non-canonical works in Pali like the Milinda-panha, recording a dialogue supposed to have taken place between a Buddhist teacher Nagasena and the Greek king Menander (Milinda) who ruled over north-west Indian about 125-95 B.C. Later on several other literatures came to existence in Sanskrit and mixed Sanskrit literature.⁴

III

Happiness is much pursued by individuals and society in all cultures .Measuring human well-being is important in determining whether people's lives improve or worsen over time. Today many countries focus on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a basis to measure economic well-being, but focus on economic growth fails to capture the overall well-being of the people. The researchers showed that increasing incomes are not accompanied by increasing happiness. The Buddha discovered this 2500 years ago. He did not reject outright the idea of possessing wealth but recognized that for the layperson a certain degree of wealth is essential to live a happy life. He did stress, however, that living an ethical and Under the Influence of Buddhism moral life more so than wealth but would bring genuine happiness. He rejected greed in accumulating wealth, being enslaved to materialism, and treating wealth as the ultimate goal⁵.(Wijeyawansa 2009)⁵ For Buddha, the path to happiness starts from an understanding of the root causes of suffering. He discussed the Four Noble Truths in his philosophy:

- The truth of suffering (dukkha)
- The truth of the cause of suffering (samudaya)
- The truth of the end of suffering (nirhodha)
- The truth of the path that frees us from suffering (magga)

The Buddha's teachings of wisdom and compassion known as Dharma. In the teachings of Buddha :“All that we are is the result of what we have thought. It is founded on our thoughts. It is made up of our thoughts. If one speaks or acts with an evil thought,, pain follows one,, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the wagon.

All that we are is the result of what we have thought. It is founded on our thoughts. It is made up of our thoughts. If one speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows one, like a shadow that never leaves(Dhammapada 11--2 // Müller & Maguirre, 2002.)”⁶

The Buddhist understanding of well-being has two parts:1. The Imperfect Well-Being 2. The Perfect Well-Being. The imperfect wellbeing of unenlightened persons consists of some measure of ordinary goods, the more the better, but it is imperfect because suffering is always present. By contrast, the perfect well-being of enlightened persons precludes suffering and consists of joyful tranquility, wisdom and virtue. In Buddhism, Suffering is a state of mind: the dissatisfaction that comes with craving. The joyful tranquility aspect of enlightenment is also a state of mind: the contentment that comes with not craving. In fact, all aspects of enlightenment, including wisdom and virtue, are states of mind.

In our daily practice of refraining from thoughts, words, and actions that cause suffering, we can find support in adopting a commitment to core values that nurture and deepen our sense of internal and physical well-being. Here are ten values I find particularly beneficial to developing an enduring sense of well-being.

1. Be truthful in what you say (wise speech) and speak with wise compassion.
2. Be genuine and authentic. We so often protect the “false pride” of the ego or else “package ourselves” for acceptance, approval, or popularity and this is not a winning strategy for well-being.
3. Be kind in all that you do and say.
4. Be compassionate to those who are in pain and/or experiencing difficulty. Compassion is contingent on what’s happening.
5. Act and make choices in terms of relatedness. Know that you are part of something larger.
6. Honor your own creativity. Pay attention to what you care about and align your outer priorities accordingly.
7. Maintain a personalized life balance such that you primarily spend time on areas you care about. This requires that you know what matters to you and that be absolutely honest as to how you are spending your time and life energy.

8. Continue to learn and grow (personally and/or professionally) at every stage of life.
9. Be present in your life moment to moment.
10. Take responsibility for your body and make choices that support your body's health and well-being. This includes choices in the areas of diet, exercise, sleep, relaxation, play, and health maintenance.⁷

IV

RESENT RELEVANCE OF BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY

A central tenet of Buddhism is that we are not helpless victims of unchangeable emotions. In the words of Buddha himself, "We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts we make the world."

It's an idea that's in line with current thinking in psychology. In fact, this simple philosophy – that changing the way we think can change the way we feel – underpins the very practice of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), an approach widely used in clinical psychology and counselling, as well as stress management programs.

CBT emerged in the 1970s, and according to the University of Technology Sydney's Dr Sarah Edelman, who wrote a book on the subject entitled *Change Your Thinking*, it was originally developed to help people recover from problems such as depression, anxiety disorders, anger and self-sabotaging behaviours.

"But its principles are just as relevant for managing the upsetting emotions that arise and disrupt everyday life," says Edelman.

However, while psychologists stress actively challenging negative thoughts and replacing them with more optimistic ones, Buddhists focus more on detaching yourself from all thoughts to create a state of stillness conducive to ultimate self-understanding, or enlightenment.

For Buddhists, the key method of achieving this is meditation – which usually involves fixing our attention on a body part, the breath, a mantra or an inspirational picture – to arrive at a state where we are not distracted by our thoughts.

And psychologists agree that quite aside from any spiritual connotations, meditation is a powerful tool. Research has shown that practising meditation regularly – and being more 'mindful', that is, focused on the present moment – has beneficial effects for a range of conditions. These include stress, anxiety, depression, poor sleep and coping with chronic pain. It also has other health benefits like reduced inflammation, improved immunity and lower blood pressure.

Lungtok describes meditation as "a method to make the mind relaxed and peaceful. Tranquility gives rise to clarity from which understanding and wisdom grow."

While psychotherapy seems to be in need of integration, psychotherapists increasingly employ Buddhist meditation. Research has shown that this has proven to be effective in treating certain aberrant conditions and in promotion of well-being. In the wake of this development it is safe to assume that Buddhism might be a rich source of inspiration to cater individual development.

Buddhists and psychologists alike believe that emotions strongly influence people's thoughts, words, and actions and that, at times, they help people in their pursuit of transient pleasures and satisfaction. From a Buddhist perspective, how-ever, some emotions are conducive to genuine and enduring happiness and others are not. The ideal here is not simply to achieve one's own individual happiness in isolation from others, but to incorporate the recognition of one's deep kinship with all beings, who share the same yearning to be free of suffering and to find a lasting state of well-being.⁸ "Buddhist conceptions and practices that deal with emotional life make three very distinct contributions to psychology. Conceptually, they raise issues that have been ignored by many psychologists, calling on the field to make more finely nuanced distinctions in thinking about emotional experience. Methodologically, they offer practices that could help individuals report on their own internal experiences, and such practices might thereby provide crucial data that is much more detailed and comprehensive than that gathered by the techniques psychologists now use to study subjective emotional experience. Finally, Buddhist practices themselves offer a therapy, not just for the disturbed, but for all who seek to improve the quality of their lives. We hope what we have reported will serve to spark the interest of psychologists to learn more about this tradition."⁹

In the conclusion, we can say that Buddhism offer a highly relevant knowledge concerning to human life, which has its roots in ancient tradition and application in modern times.

References:

1. Dutta & Chattejee, *Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, Motilal Banarasidass Publications, New Delhi, p.4
2. Neeltje Huppes, *Indian Psychology - an experiential approach*, Indian Psychology Institute, Puducherry, 2017, pp. 1-10.
3. K.Satchidananda Murty, *Philosophy in India: traditions, teachings & research*, Motilal Banarasidass & ICPR, Delhi, 1991, p.18
4. Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, *Indian Philosophy: A Popular Introduction*, People's Publishing House, Delhi, 2007, pp.122-123
5. Paul Ekman et all., "Buddhist and Psychological Perspectives on Emotions and Well-Being" in *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, Volume 14—Number 2, 2005, pp. 56-57, Cited on February, 2019, Link: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/250b/1ca53dc06dc15b40f2a982253c5f85228fd5.pdf>
6. *The Pursuit of Happiness*, Cited on February 2, 2019, Link: <https://www.pursuit-of-happiness.org>
7. Phillip Moffitt , "Ten Values Associated With Well-Being", *DharmaVision*, Cited on February 2, 2019, Link: <http://dharmawisdom.org/teachings/articles/ten-values-associated-well-being>
8. Paul Ekman et all., "Buddhist and Psychological Perspectives on Emotions and Well-Being" pp.59-60.
9. Ibid, p.62.