

# Happiness as Explained and Interpreted By The Philosophy of Integral Humanism

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### **Abstract**

Happiness is sought after by people everywhere, and every human being is seeking continuing and unlimited happiness. However, there are paradigmatic disparities as to the definitions or determinants of happiness. It appears that the understanding of what constitutes happiness is culturally and historically determined. Every nation seems to understand the concept of happiness in different ways. Indian perspectives of happiness are widely influenced by the Ancient Indian Philosophy especially the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. The ethos contained in these ancient scriptures have influenced several modern Indian thinkers like Mahatma Gandhi, Sri Radhakrishnan, Sri Aurobindo and Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay, to name a few. This paper attempts to present a paradigm of happiness as espoused by the theory of Integral Humanism of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay. Indian notions of well being show the way towards achieving transcendental and spiritual happiness by living a life of co-existence with all animate and inanimate entities existing in the universe.

**Keywords:** Happiness, Integrated Human Being, Self-realization, Purusharthas, Ekamta, Unity.

### **Introduction**

It has been the eternal quest of mankind to search for happiness. Happiness has been defined in many ways, but the most prominent definitions point out to the feeling of happiness as being a pleasant emotion, a good feeling, a balance of positive and negative feelings with the positive outweighing the negative and an overall satisfaction with how one's life has turned out. The fact that the positive feelings and satisfaction levels are self evaluated led happiness to be termed as subjective well-being (Diener, 1984) Some definitions ignore the feeling aspect in happiness and want to focus on the way one is leading one's life, and determine that a meaningful and purposeful life is one which produces happiness in the person leading that life (Ryff, 1989). Happiness as understood by the hedonic and eudaimonic theories mentioned is nevertheless still distinct from the concept of happiness explained by the Ancient Indian theories (Salagame, 2006). The western definitions focus on the mental and material paths to achieve happiness, while the Ancient Indian theories widely influenced by the centuries old wisdom contained in the Vedas, or by the teachings of the Buddha, speak of spiritual and transcendental determinants of happiness. Though understood in a variety of ways, one thing that is certain, is that the pursuit of happiness is a global phenomenon. The Philosophy of Integral Humanism (PIH), postulates a co-existential, interdependent, symbiotic and mutually enriching relationship between all animate and inanimate objects existing in the Universe, and mentions the common bond and relationship between each of the orders existing in nature. Happiness according to this theory can only exist when the relationship is understood, respected, recognized, and nurtured. From understanding the human being as an individual and happiness as a feeling of well-being deep within the individual being, the PIH expands the understanding of the human being as a part of the larger order of things in nature, and happiness as an ensuing result of man's relationship with each other and with the rest of the beings and objects existing in nature. The ultimate bliss is in understanding the ultimate reality, or God. The internal harmony within a self actualized human being is a microcosm of harmony within all of nature when the principle of *Ekamta* or viewing the sameness in all beings and objects is understood. The principle of *ekamta* belies the Philosophy of Integral Humanism and essentially is- oneness in all existence.

This philosophy was given by Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay and it believes that happiness is an important goal to pursue, and it is undoubtedly important for all human beings and central to our existence. The ideas expressed in the PIH are part of the thesis on the subject of 'Philosophy of Integral Humanism' at the All India Representative conference of Jan Sangh at Vijayawada in 1965. His thesis was adopted by the Jan Sangh as the blueprint of their program and formed the political ideology of the Jan Sangha (Hansen, 1999). It guided them to formulate policies on social, political and economic matters. Post independence India, according to Panditji was floundering due to lack of culture specific and indigenous guidance. The influence of western philosophers like Marx, Mill, Hegel, Adam Smith etc, hovered in the minds of policy makers even after the British left India. He felt that true freedom would only be achieved when the country would respect and preserve its own philosophy and ethos. The wisdom contained in Vedas, Puranas, Smritis, Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita needed to be delved into before deciding future programs and policies for the country.

#### **Objective of the Study**

Happiness is a widely researched topic in academia today. However, despite all efforts, it is still not clear regarding proper definitions or determinants of happiness. Western concepts of life satisfaction and subjective well-being dominate the understanding of the word happiness globally today. The purpose of the study was to search for a definition of happiness which encompassed the western concepts and also included the Indian ethos and philosophy which is now gaining acceptance the world over

#### **The Central Idea of PIH**

The main thought behind this philosophy is that all the entities, living and non-living has endless diversity and all things have atma or soul within it and the diversity is shallow. Here, he shares the views of Indian thinkers like Radhakrishnan and Sri Aurobindo who believed that an individual is much more than a physical entity. In the words of Radhakrishnan, "man is more than matter, life or mind or all these put together" (Schilpp). Panditji looked at the notion of happiness as existing at 4 different levels. According to the PIH, man is a complex being comprising of physical body, mind, intellect and the soul and happiness is differently experienced at all levels. Panditji said, Body, mind, intelligence and soul- these 4 make up an individual. He elaborated further, "We have set the aim of developing body, mind, intellect and soul in a balanced way to bring out a complete human being, an integrated individual" (Upadhyay, 1965). The first and lowest level is that of sensory pleasure, one which the body receives through its sense organs. According to Panditji, the worldly materialistic pleasures attract most human beings and most human beings pursue these pleasures throughout their lives. Money, power, status, possessions, all give only limited and short lived happiness. In his words, pleasures which cater to senses are short lived and he referred to them as *Rajsukh*. Sensory happiness is enjoyed by both

humans and animals, and so to distinguish man from animal, a higher purpose or aim in life is required. He also said that since material or sensory pleasure is limited, and desires are unlimited, man gets frustrated and cannot realize happiness. Hence, happiness has to be realized through other ways and means. The second level is the mind's own happiness, the happiness derived from activities done for the satisfaction of the mind even if bodily hardships are endured. Next he mentions intellectual happiness, or happiness derived out of solving some complex problem in which some deep thought and intellect have been applied. According to Panditji, man has intellect, the power to think and the power to distinguish, which has its own joy. In animals, brain and the capacity to think is not much developed and their needs are related to only food, sleep, fear and sex. In contrast, a human being has a complex brain which allows him the freedom to think about not only present needs, but the past as well as future. He can recall experiences, analyze facts and figures, and accomplish myriad activities using his brain. It is also the intellect which allows him to understand what is short lived worldly happiness, and eternal long lasting happiness. Lastly, drawing into the wisdom of the Vedas and Bhagavad Gita, Panditji puts forth the notion of ultimate bliss or happiness of the soul, as the highest level of happiness, and the loftiest and noblest aspiration of man. Panditji then goes to explain the concept of soul, as being something within a human which is neither seen nor perceived, but only experienced by a purified mind. In Panditji's words "None of body, mind or intellect constitute the real 'I', but the soul beyond all these three is my real 'self'. This knowledge and its experience is the true happiness of the soul". So we can see in the PIH, there is a constant progression of understanding the human being from gross to the subtle. The pleasures of the mind, intellect and soul are not based on materialistic or worldly amenities. They are also more lasting than bodily or sensory pleasures. The dilemma in society exists today as man craves sensory and materialistic pleasures, despite knowing they will make him further dissatisfied and unhappy. According to Panditji, sacrifice and self-restraint provide a more sublime and long-lasting happiness.

#### **Evolution of Man**

The philosophy of PIH delves into ancient Indian thought, to distinguish the different instincts in man. Those instincts which satisfy survival needs and bodily needs and which are common amongst human and animals alike, are the base needs of man. As one goes higher on the plane, into the different needs of the human being he points out that gross needs are moving towards the subtle, namely the needs of the mind, intellect and soul. Also, as one evolves, the consciousness of man changes from animal consciousness to human consciousness and then finally the God state or union with the cosmic powers. Human being is capable of an extremely high level of functioning, and even able to experience oneness with God, only if we continually work towards rising beyond our primordial desires, and realizing the divinity within ourself. Man is imperfect now but can

gain perfection by following his true nature. That man is an evolutionary being, is according to C.P. Aggarwal, the most significant precept of Deen Dayal Upadhyay's philosophy (C.P. Aggarwal, 1991). Even for enjoyment of bodily pleasures he states that man must be guided by the laws of *dhama*, which are principles of moral duty and divine law. Like Buddhist and Indian ancient wisdom, the Philosophy of Integrated Humanism believes that individual happiness must lead to collective happiness and similarly happiness in society at the collective level will lead to happiness in the individual. Hence, both must be achieved complementarily. He believed that mutual cooperation is an indication of progress and development whereas disagreements and clash is a sign of degradation (D.D. Upadhyay).

#### **Individual- Four Purusharthas**

The path to achieving both individual happiness and social progress is according to him based on the four objectives called *purusharthas* in life. They are *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha*. As per him, "Purusharthas refers to efforts which benefit a man. The longings for Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha are inborn in man and satisfaction of these give him joy". The conceptualization of purusharthas was done in ancient Indian thought. It lays the foundation of a just society. One of the main objectives of this theory is to sideline the theory of individualism and to highlight the significance of family and society in the life of human beings. He totally discarded the concept of capitalism in which the individual is the extreme power and also communism which completely negated the existence of the individual, and who was reduced to a mere machine. In his view, society is a natural living organism which has its own soul, means, and ethos, and the needs of the society are paralleled to the needs of the individual.

#### **Kama**

*Kama* is the word to denote desires. Kama relates to the satisfaction of various natural desires. The longing for the happiness of body, mind, intellect and soul is called Kama. These are mainly food, sleep and sex. These are justifiable primordial desires, whose fulfillment is natural to man. However, as a word of caution, the PIH says that desires cannot be allowed to overpower a human being and hence must be reined in by reason or intellect. Intellect is guided by *Dharma*, or one's moral duty.

#### **Artha**

To fulfil desires and live morally, creation of wealth by honest means is important and hence the importance of *artha* as an objective in a man's life. The means of livelihood must be to a person's liking and give him due credit and respect. Again the influence of *dhama* in the acquisition of wealth is important. A person must aim for adequate wealth, and not be a slave to it. Related to the concept of

*Artha*, are *abhav* and *prabhav*. Inadequate wealth or *abhav*, is the state when one is unable to earn adequate wealth to support himself, and fulfil needs. At times, *abhav* is responsible for making an honest person corrupt and dishonest. It is the main

reason why a person becomes a criminal and resorts to nefarious deeds.

*Prabhav* refers to the harmful effects of having wealth more than is needed. He warned that wealth creation often led to desire for more and more wealth, leading to greed, dissatisfaction, and limitless desires. Greed also made man selfish and oblivious to the welfare of society. Panditji said, "In a state of affluence if there arises an excessive attachment to carnal pleasures, man becomes merely a mammon worshipper and loses all sense of duty to his society, country and *dhama*. He misses all *purusharthas* in life and ruins himself and others".

#### **Dharma**

"Dharma is defined as that which guides man on the path of both worldly well-being and also salvation". An individual's *dhama* towards his body is to look after his health, eat a balanced diet, give adequate rest, exercise etc. An individual must draw a line between justifiable needs of the body and cravings of the body. Similarly his *dhama* towards his mind is to free himself of negative emotions and impulses, while seeking knowledge, truthfulness, and wisdom are the *dhama* of the intellect. There are total of 10 factors comprising the individual *dhama* namely- nourishment of body, forgiveness, control, non stealing, purity of body, self control over sense organs, sufficient wealth, education, faithfulness and non action on the impulse of anger. Using his mind and intellect, a human being must discern what is good for him, and bring a balance in his life.

#### **Moksha**

The human being is now ready for attaining the loftiest goal or *moksha*. *Moksha* is akin to the liberation or freedom mentioned in the *Bhagavad Gita* and is the

Self-realization that there is a continuing indestructible self in the human soul. *Moksha* is seen as the ultimate truth of life and the highest *Purushartha*. *Moksha* is a Sanskrit word meaning freedom from all bondage. It is the realization that the real 'I' is not body, mind or intellect but it is the soul. This self realization does not stop at the individual, but also includes the understanding that the realization of 'I' and 'mine' includes successively the family, community, society, nation and all humanity including all animate and inanimate worlds, and the whole universe. The *purusharthas* *kama*, *artha* and *dhama* are important for happiness of body, mind and intellect, but *moksha* is the highest happiness of the soul.

#### **Samasthi: Individual And Society**

According to PIH, a man's 'I' is always connected with society's 'we' because a man is living in a society along with many other people. The cornerstone of this philosophy is that every individual is linked to other individuals, and thus to society. Thus, happiness and development of the individual depends on happiness and development of society. Hence, detailed plans for a mutually enriching and satisfying relationship with family, society, all humanity, all animate and inanimate objects, and rest of nature is outlined systematically. Panditji did not approve of the Social contract theory. He believed

society to be a vibrant living entity, born out of harmonious relations of members of society. According to the western Social contract theory, individuals came together for the safeguard of their common interest and also formulated some rules to monitor interactions within society. Panditji said that if an individual disavowed the contract as it was against his self interest, then the contract and society would fall apart. Supporting ancient Daishik Science, Panditji believed that society is a living and naturally developed organism and is not man-made. He believed that a society is born like any other creature, and the relation between society and individuals is the same as the relation of a tree with its branches and flowers. They are both inseparable from each other. To understand the relation between individual and society both need to be understood separately. When a child is born, he gains everything like his name, family, parents, mother tongue, moral education and values from society. Occasions are celebrated and losses despaired collectively in a society. Even great men and women are revered and their heroic deeds and memories are kept alive in society, and passed on from generation to generation. Centuries ago, people like Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Guru Nanak and more recently, Mahatma Gandhi, Bhagat Singh, Rani Lakshmi Bai were raised in India but their good deeds, sacrifices and love for country inspires generation till today. So we can see that Panditji envisages a nurturing society, and a dutiful individual, and both dependent on each other to flourish, neither dominating or subjugating the other.

#### **Principle of Ekatma (Unified) Social System**

The four purusharthas (objectives) mentioned earlier are the four bonds between the individual and society. Both these are linked to each other through education, work, pleasure and sacrifice. Society provides us education through which we can give practical shape to our thoughts. An individual works for himself and for the welfare of the society due to the education provided to him by the society, including his parents, teachers and peers. In return, society gives him an opportunity to earn his livelihood and pleasure. The last connecting feature is sacrifice which is linked to the emotional bond between the individual and society, spurring a human to work tirelessly for welfare not only of himself, but of society at large. The relationship between an individual and society is guided via different organizations and institutions prevailing in the society. Family is the main institution, followed by other organizations such as caste, sect, professional institutions, social and cultural organizations, political parties, NGO's and many more. When all the three- individual, organization and society work in tandem and unity, following principles of dharma, only then will overall society flourish, and everyone will achieve happiness.

As has now been proven that society and individual are interdependent on one another, and that their happiness and interests are common. For purpose of smooth functioning at both individual and societal levels, many considerations like fulfillment of man's objectives in life, his responsibilities towards society, his ambitions, his sentiments have to be

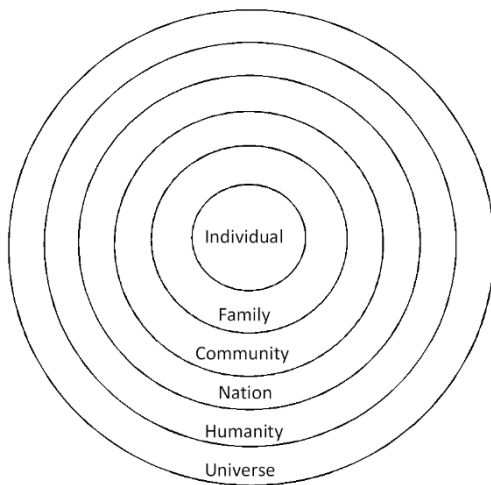
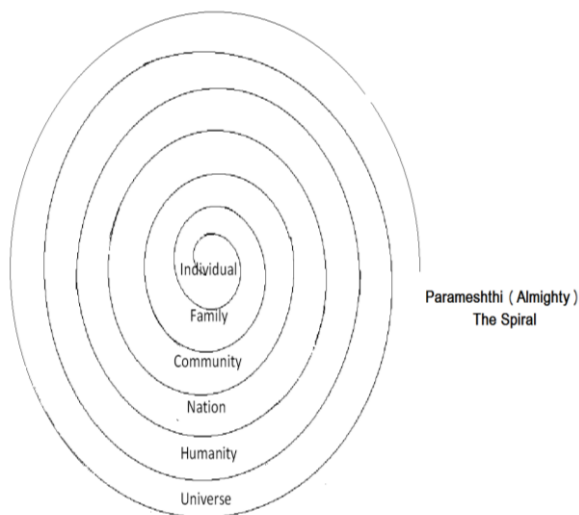
taken. For the purpose of establishing some order in transactions between individual and society, two different systems have been explained in depth and incorporated into the PIH from the ancient vedic philosophy. These are Ashrama Vyavastha at the individual level and Varna Vyavastha at the societal level.

The ashrama vyavastha envisages different stages of man's life, and his primary duties at each stage of life. The first 12 years of life are kept for the purpose of education and imbibing sanskars, which will remain with him for the remaining of his life. In ancient India, gurukuls, or residential schools existed which imparted students training, discipline, values and knowledge. This is the brahmacharya ashram. The second stage after the brahmacharya ashram is the Grihastha ashram or family life. The individual is now ready for shouldering the responsibilities which come with raising a family. Grihastha ashram allows a human being to enjoy sensory pleasures, but only according to the dharma. Sex is viewed as a means for procreation and advancement of one's family, rather than satisfaction of physical desires of men and women. Man and woman are instructed to dutifully and equally contribute towards harmony and prosperity within the family. If a family is run as per rules of dharma, it will inevitably lead to flourishing of society as a whole. The third ashram is Vanaprastha ashram. After finishing responsibilities of a householder, there is a phase when one has to prepare for sanyas, or asceticism. In this stage, man and woman can live in a natural environment away from home, to mentally disconnect from sensory pleasures and family responsibilities. This is the time for God-realization, by focusing on the ultimate truth of life and detachment with worldly belongings. The fourth stage or sanyas ashram, happens when one has detached himself from all bonds and is able to treat the whole humanity as his family and thinks about well-being of humanity at large. The fourth stage signifies payback of all social obligations.

Varna vyavasthalays down the principle of best use of talent, and advises each individual to work and earn livelihood in accordance with his aptitude. This notion has been severely condemned as it led to the indelible caste system in India which led to oppression of several people for centuries. Panditji envisages a society, where each fulfils a duty based on his or her capability.

#### **Samashti to Parameshthi**

The concept of PIH of extending one's vision to embrace whole of humanity is explained beautifully in the following diagrams.

**Diagram 1****Diagram -2**

Source- (V.V.Nene, 1991)

Diagram 1 represents western thinking where the individual is in the centre, and the family, community, nation, humanity and universe are in concentric circles around the individual. The conflict among them arises as the circles are all independent of each other.

Diagram 2 shows the PIH way of happiness, with the individual or the 'I' expanding as a continuum leading on to a spiral that encompasses family, community, nation, humanity and universe, ending in

realization of the supreme soul or God, which is the path to unending and permanent happiness.

### Conclusion

The concept of happiness explained by the PIH is a unique and relevant one especially in today's troubled times. The diversity existing among animate and inanimate life around us needs to be embraced and respected. It opposes unabashed consumerism and material advancement to favour a more balanced and inclusive social model. Happiness is defined as a way of life according to one's objectives, and in harmony with everything that surrounds us, and in recognizing the potential within oneself to transcend the body and feel united with the ultimate source of all life. Though it is based on Mahatma Gandhi's principles of Sarvodaya (progress of all) swadeshi (domestic) and gram swaraj (village self rule) and it is also a reflection of M.S Gowalkar's concept of Organicism, in a way, it also resounds with the eudaimonic theories put forth by Maslow and Carl Rogers to achieve self actualization and maximum of one's potentialities and fulfilment of a purposeful life leading to immense psychological happiness and well being.

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