



PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE – HEALTH – HAPPINESS

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1. Introduction:

Human experiences vary. Globalization and its complexities with technological growth make many demands and poses threat to survival. Many people are defeated by the everyday problems of life. Resentment is on the rise. India never wasted energies even at a time, when it had to face external interference. Indians always thought of higher life sticking to the traditions established from the Vedic period. From ancient times India retained her identity and kept itself in its prominent position. Philosophy offered support to other sciences. And as time went by its task was becoming difficult and the technological advantages dominated the scene. The specialist knew “more and more about less and less”. The gap between life and knowledge grew.

India held on to certain identity. The Indian thought will exhibit its uniqueness of human mind. Indian philosophy developed its own ideas. Philosophy in India is spiritual. The Gita and the Upanishads are the great literature of the country. Religion in India caters to the different stages of conditions of life. Knowledge of science makes a marvelous world in spite of some imperfections. Philosophy always moves into the areas of uncertainty in order to explore synthetic interpretations. Science gives us knowledge, but philosophy can give us wisdom.

2. Inadequacy:

Perception of inadequacy is prevalent in spite of circumstances and places. Dissatisfaction is subtly felt from within and it is seldom expressed consciously. No one in the world is fully satisfied and nothing is complete in life. Man looks around and blames the society. Other people are blamed for his sorrows. In the earlier stages of evolution there was no society and no organizations existed with regulations. When human beings lived like animals with insecurity, this restlessness can be understood. When systems came up, agreements among people to some degree helped but man still remained dissatisfied. Man continues to worry as he was. Morality provided guidelines and any violations were treated unethical. With mandates and “dos and don'ts” the man still remained in a state of bondage.

3. Freedom, not bondage:

No individual wishes to be compelled and he always seeks freedom and not bondage. The human mind has tried its best to probe into these difficulties and found out ways to achieve freedom. As long as we have a sense of ownership or possession of anything we are caught up in the ego and its bonds.



4. Central purpose of philosophy:

The discovery of the ultimate meaning and essence of existence is the central purpose. This is a foundation for righteousness, and attaining freedom. Philosophy is love of freedom which tries to explain the reality by reason. Philosophical knowledge cannot be had through sense experience. Hegel in his book "Philosophy of religion" says "Philosophy is not wisdom of the world but is knowledge of what is not of the world. It gives knowledge of the eternal". Philosophy is the expression of the inner urge to know the Atman. One has to feel philosophy not just understanding the teachings.

Man wants to know about transcendental matters, the secret of immortality and about the world. Philosophy becomes an occupation in the lives of enlightened people. The knowledge we obtain is mediate. Vedanta elevates the mind at once to the magnificent heights of Brahman-hood. Vedanta gives us the real inner spiritual strength. People carry out their activities with the philosophy of life they adhere to. Fact remains that "philosophy" is required. Spiritual meditations done on the Jnana - Yoga path needs philosophy which directs the course of life towards Absolute with understanding.

5. Personality Development:

Living without any purpose and wasted efforts do not cultivate an integrated personality. Our outlook should exhibit one supreme ideal. We want to achieve different things such as status, higher jobs but if our personalities have not grown in accordance with the needs frustrations occur. Time once wasted is gone forever. We, as committed individuals should generate the requisite convictions and march forward on rational basis.

The four fold ideal of life is a concept from ancient times. They are Dharma, Artha, kama and Moksha. Dharma is the means for the attainment of good. Our attitude towards elders and the weak should be without selfishness. Artha and kama are the two goals after the enjoyment. Moksha is freedom from desires and ignorance.

Four stages of Ashram life consists of Brahmacharya, Garhasthya, Vanaprashtha and Sanyasa. These convey practice of restraint, house holder duties, a life in isolation and the ultimate stage of renunciation. All this is to attain eternal peace.

6. Spiritual life:

Human nature is to run after worldly enjoyments. Men are in bondage and do not think of higher life. Remaining busy with mundane activities is an unfortunate situation. The Bhavadgita says that among thousands of people hardly a soul attempts liberation and rarely is a man blessed. We have no urge for spiritual life. Worldly lives do not give us satisfaction we are seeking. Divinity inherent in us needs to be nurtured and awakened to the truth. Determination to proceed along the path should not be delayed anymore and all efforts are to be directed on this spiritual path. One has to refer to the book "I am That" of Nisargadatta Maharaj, here in "I am that by which I



know I am” is mentioned. This definition of Self is philosophically profound and spiritually exact. This situates the self at the source, brings the minds to silence and release from self - misunderstanding. Maharaj continues to say “spiritual progress stagnates at the conceptual level because you accept a concept and stop at it – it is precisely this that sabotages meditation; namely grasping at a concept. Therefore the counsel “ — just be, do nothing —. Nothing to be done. Then all your riddles will be solved and dissolved”

7. Jivahood:

Mind and body are inert. When they are associated with consciousness they gain sentiency. When the subtle body leaves the gross body we say that the person is dead and gone. Illuminator of the world is Self and substratum of the world is Reality. The illuminator and the substratum of the world must therefore be the same. Self is the reality. This realization destroys ignorance which veils the truth and liberates individual from samsara. The changing nature of the inert world should not pose a problem to us. Our identification with it becomes bondage. Things related to the body “as my” and the body as” I”; these notions give rise to likes and dislikes. The mind gets agitated and results in unhappiness.

8. Vedantic sadhana:

Ritualism is noticed in Dwaita. Advaita shows the path for a steady rise to the vision beyond the Body, Mind and Intellect. Adisankara’s sadhana panchakam consists of five verses for the students seeking divine state. Masters of the Vedas and Upanishads used this path. The verses contain the following items. 1. Study the Vedas daily 2. Perform diligently the duties ordained by them 3. Dedicate karmas to the Lord 4. Renounce desires 5. Wash away sins 6. Pleasures of samsara are with pain 7. Seek the self 8. Escape from the bondage of “home” 9. Seek companionship of wise men 10. Be established in firm devotion to Lord 11. Cultivate virtues. 12. Avoid desire ridden actions 13. Surrender to a Master 14. Service to him. 15. Worshipping “OM” 16. Listen to Upanishadic declarations. 17. Reflect on upanishadic commandments. 18. Take refuse in the Truth 19. Avoid arguments 20. Follow the Sruthi. 21. “ I am Brahaman attitude. 22. Renounce pride. 23 Give-up the idea “I am the body. 24. Not to argue with the wise. 25. Hunger and disease get treated 26. Biksha food 27. No delicious food 28. Take what is ordained by Him 29. Endure pairs of opposites 30. Avoid wasteful talks. 31. Be indifferent 32. No obligations. 33. Solitude. 34. Quiet mind. 35. See the “Self” every where 36. Finite world is a projection of self. 37. Past deeds to be corrected. 38. Detach from future karmas. 39. Exhaust past actions. 40. Absorb in “I am Brahma” Bhav.

On the same lines one can refer to other prakarana grandhas which show us the way to work on the Vedanta path to the liberation.

9. Health as an asset:

Irritability and being tense is a common feature noticed. In order to have life filled with



happiness and purpose oriented, it is necessary that we learn to control our emotions and manage health. Information regarding this has to be procured and made available. Ignorance cannot be accepted. The 1964 report of the President's commission on heart diseases, cancer and stroke from the U.S.A concludes with: "the single major deficit in the national battle to overcome killing and crippling diseases is lack of accurate information at the proper time". Simple adjustments in life style for a healthy living can include diet, alcohol, smoking, exercise, work ,tension, emotion and holidays. If body and mind are maintained in the right relation it is a key to perfect health. What one needs is a sound mind in a sound body.

10.What can be done for happiness?

To get what one wants to really achieve it is necessary to first step out of the comfort zone. Obstacles encountered could be real, imaginary and self imposed. One has to stay focused on what is most important at the moment. Remember that every time when one steers away from important activities there is a price to pay. Commitment is a must. Procrastination is an enemy. If you wait for right mood it will never come. Everything happens for a reason. One must have the courage to face the realities. Learn to accept criticism. Other people are judging you with or without your permission. If you deny your potential, this is detrimental to your success. Avoid negative thinking and learn to solve your problem by scrutiny. Mind filled with anger and resentment will bring in greater irritation and frustration.

11. Conclusion:

Observing all norms established by scriptures, reflecting on those Upanishadic ideals, and living a vedantic philosophical life with a quiet mind will make life meaningful. Such individuals will derive all the happiness.

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