

From Eudaimonia to Ātman: Human Being as the Embodiment of Innate Happiness

Asish Kr. Charan

Department of English, Bhatler College, Dantan, Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal, India & Research Scholar of Chandigarh University, Punjab.

Email ID: akcharan24@gmail.com

Abstract

Human beings are endowed with supreme infinite happiness. It is a scientific assertion that happiness is a natural state of human beings. Everyone is pursuing happiness and thinks that it can be attained, but it is already within us; it is realized through self-inquiry and inner reflection. This mirrors the Indian concept of Satchidananda—the timeless reality of Sat (Existence), Cit (Consciousness), and Ānanda (Bliss)—unveiling our 'self' as boundless, unified joy attained through self-inquiry and realization. Aristotle's eudaimonic ethical theory emphasizes discovering one's genuine self and developing it in line with deeper ideals for long-term happiness and potential realization. It centers on activity-based "higher pleasures" for the greater good. Eudaimonic well-being is also connected to the Indian tradition of well-being. It will also explore the process of transforming into the best self that represents perfection and virtue in accordance with reason and contemplation—the nectar of ultimate happiness—which will also be relished. So, this paper explores the innate nature of happiness as the essence of the human being, bridging Aristotelian eudaimonia—defined as virtuous activity in accordance with reason and self-realization—with the Indic concept of ānanda, the supreme bliss of the self (Ātman).

Keywords: Happiness, True Self, Satchidānanda, Eudaimonia, Well-being, Ānanda.

1. INTRODUCTION

No one can live longer without positive emotions (Happiness, love, sympathy, gratitude) as negative emotions like anger, hatred, fear, sadness, and jealousy are odd emotions of the human body. So, everybody wants to be happy, but very few people actually know how. This fact has been a recurring theme throughout the history of philosophical thought. The nature and cultivation of happiness have received a great deal of attention from thinkers in both the East and the West for at least 2500 years. The majority of philosophers concur that happiness is a crucial component of human life, but they have wildly divergent views on what exactly happiness is. Happiness has been equated with several things, including pleasure, morality, well-being, and the accomplishment of human nature. There are numerous interpretations of the word "happiness." Definitions of happiness can be discussed on the notions of "life ability" and "life satisfaction". In the broadest sense, happiness refers to life's overall quality, while in the narrowest sense, it only relates to a single delightful moment. Happiness stems from doing good—defined as psychological growth of the true self—rather than mere enjoyment, with well-being measured by full functionality, meaningful living, and self-realization. Philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle asserted that good souls can influence their own happiness through moral action and thoughtful reflection.

2. HUMAN BEING AS THE EMBODIMENT OF HAPPINESS

Gaining happiness through money or other material things is illusory at best and harmful at worst (Gilbert and Ebert, 2002, pp. 503-514). Such pleasures are not natural to us because they all pass quickly. Everything that is actually natural to us, everything that is a part of who we are at our core, must be present at all times. There is always a state of complete serenity and joy at the core of our being, regardless of the turbulence that is going on in our minds. Our minds become agitated by desire and fear, which blocks our minds' ability to see the bliss that is constantly present. When a desire or fear is eradicated, our mind's surface agitation melts away, and during this brief period of peace, our mind gets a taste of its own inherent bliss. Thus, happiness is a condition of being, a state in which the regular agitation of our mind is subdued. Our mind's activity disrupts it from its peaceful condition of simply existing and makes it forget about its own inner happiness. Our being is natural, and all of our doing is unnatural since our being is eternal and our doing is transient. As a result, all of our happiness is natural because it is a part of who we are, and all of our unhappiness is unnatural since it comes from what we do or believe. So, during times of sleep, a state of intense contemplation or absorption of mind and fainting, and when desired things are attained, and when termination occurs to disliked things, our mind becomes introverted and only experiences self-happiness. Thus, only in the state of real self-knowledge for constructing a true self, we can experience perfect and absolute happiness on a long-term basis (James, 2012).

Why should we believe that we are naturally happy and that being unhappy is something we are not? Why do we not feel absolute happiness at all times if our inherent nature is actually happiness? We can grasp this by critically studying our experience of our three states of awareness: waking, dreaming, and profound sleep. Both when we are awake and when we are in a dream, we feel a combination of happiness and sorrow. As Nietzsche observes, "happiness and unhappiness are twins that grow up together" (Nietzsche, 1974, p. 270). Unhappiness does not even enter our minds while we are sleeping, nor does it appear as something we fear or want to avoid. In the waking and dreaming stages, we feel relative happiness and unhappiness because our true nature of absolute happiness is covered up and disguised at such times. When our mind is completely calm, like when we are in deep sleep, we experience perfect happiness. However, when our mind is active and processing thoughts continuously, as when we are awake and dreaming, we only feel a combination of partial happiness and partial misery. Our true nature—which is ultimate happiness—is what it is exactly now, in this waking state, but that absolute happiness is veiled and hidden by the constant activity of our mind. We are unable to experience more than a glimmer of our innate happiness when our mind is excessively agitated, which is to say when its activity of thinking becomes really intense. As a result, we feel restless and sad. We can fully experience our innate happiness; however, when our mind is generally calm, or when its activity of thinking lessens. Therefore, happiness is a state of being, and unhappiness is a state of doing. Desire manifests itself in us in a variety of ways, including as likes or dislikes, urges or aversions, hopes or anxieties, but no matter how it manifests itself, it interrupts our natural mental tranquillity and hides the happiness that is always present. As long as that desire lingers, our minds will continue to be agitated by it, which will keep making us feel sad. Therefore, according to Schopenhauer, human desire is insatiable. All of the suffering or sorrow we go through is solely a result of our desires. Our minds would be completely quiet if we were completely content and devoid of all cravings and concerns. As a result, we would fully experience the ultimate happiness that always exists at the very core of our being. No matter how disturbed our conscious mind may appear to be, we are actually always totally calm and happy deep within our beings. All of our anxiety and discontentment are just felt by our minds and not by our true selves. So, through the continuous process of being and becoming our true self enjoy supreme happiness. According to Renwick and Brown, quality of life is described as the extent to which a person enjoys the significant possibilities of his or her existence, such as features of "being,"

“belonging,” and “becoming,” (Renwick & Brown, 1996). On the other hand, this leads to an aspect of well-being concerned with growth and self-transcendence (going beyond oneself in pursuit of a meaningful action).

3. EUDAIMONIC WELL-BEING

Happiness is an umbrella concept having several notions such as well-being, hedonism, eudaimonia, health, flourishing, and so on. The World Health Organization defines health as a condition of whole physical, mental, and social (subjective) well-being and not just the absence of disease or infirmity. Happiness resides deep within us, at the very interior of our being. Happiness simply exists in us because our true self experiences it, not in any other external objects. Though it may appear that we get our happiness from things or events outside of ourselves, in reality, our happiness comes from within. Aristotle famously states that happiness “is an activity of the soul expressing virtue” (Aristotle, 2001, pp. 928-1112). He thought that we can learn to be happy to the extent that we can learn to be good. All of this is undeniably true and motivating. According to him, living a good life results from engaging in morally upright pursuits. What is now referred to as eudaimonic well-being combines aspects of stoicism and Aristotelian bliss. It has a tendency to diminish the importance of feelings in happiness, as well as a tendency to reinstate the Aristotelian notion of activity-based “higher pleasures” and the realization of one’s potential as the central ideas in a theory of happiness. According to Aristotle’s definition of eudaimonia, the development of virtue and the realisation of potential are both dependent on contemplation, and reflectivity is a crucial element of autonomy in many philosophical traditions (Dworkin, 1988; Ricoeur, 1966). In the fourth century BCE, in his treatise *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle popularised the term “eudaimonia,” which was first used in ancient Greece. Eudaimonism is an ethical theory that emphasises the significance of leading an exemplary life. *The Nicomachean Ethics*, which offered a practical rather than theoretical path to reaching well-being, is where this viewpoint on “the good life” first emerged. Aristotle’s concept of happiness, eudaimonia, derives from the Greek terms ‘eu’ (good) and ‘daimon’ (spirit) refers to an active conduct that is done for its own sake and demonstrates perfection and virtue in accordance with reason and contemplation, the abilities that set humans apart from other animals. Eudaimonia, according to Aristotle, is “virtuous activity in accordance with reason” (Aristotle, 2001, pp. 928-1112). The term eudaimonic happiness is commonly contrasted with hedonic happiness and denotes that happiness isn’t just about feeling good. Living well is viewed as “psychological development” rather than “enjoying life,” which is the essence of a good life (Aristotle, 2001, pp. 928-1112).

We are all cheerful by nature. We want to return to our natural state because we want to be happy. Whether we are aware of it or not, we are all looking for what comes naturally to us. Think about why we want to get rid of an unpleasant state. Anything that is not genuinely natural to us prevents us from feeling completely comfortable or happy. Because of this, despite all the financial, mental, and emotional pleasures we may be experiencing, we never feel completely satisfied. Only in the state of real self-knowledge we can experience perfect and absolute happiness on a long-term basis. Therefore, we must master the science and art of simply being in order to learn how to be happy. We must reveal what our innermost essence is and learn to continuously and consciously abide in that state of pure being, which underlies and supports all of our mind’s surface-level functions, such as thinking, feeling, perceiving, remembering, and forgetting. Similarly, the eudaimonic approach considers well-being as the degree to which a person is fully functional, leading a life of meaning, and experiencing self-realization. It goes beyond evaluating basic pleasure and misery. The concept of well-being encompasses a range of specific psychological definitions, such as subjective well-being. Subjective well-being encompasses how people evaluate their own lives in terms of both affective (how we feel) and cognitive (how we think) components (Diener et al., 1998). The majority of recent research trends on happiness and well-being within either the hedonic or eudaimonic traditions. The hedonic approach to happiness seeks maximum pleasure and enjoyment with

instant gratification. Beyond this, the eudaimonic approach focuses on change, growth, and upending homeostasis. Eudaimonia refers to the activities linked with making the most of oneself in accordance with one's deeper ideals and true self. Hedonia encompasses the absence of pain and discomfort as well as interests that are pleasurable and enjoyable. As a result, we have the traditional difference between virtue and enjoyment. Like the difference between eudaimonia and hedonia, the word 'Preyas', which is used to represent common pleasure in the Katha Upanishad, is distinguished from 'Sreyas', which is used to describe the supreme purpose of life and includes all higher happiness with values that lead to it (Hirianna, 1975).

Eudaimonia, however, is a comprehensive notion, and different intellectual persons have concentrated on different features, as would be evident from the review of the literature. Furthermore, it has been challenging to come up with a single definition because eudaimonia is sometimes understood as a state of well-being, and other times as a method of action or thinking. According to Ryan: "Eudaimonia...describes a process of living based on contemplation, virtue, and realization of potentials" (Ryan et al., 2008, pp. 139–170). Philosophers place a strong emphasis on intellectual growth in this context, while psychologists link it to "full functioning" and "living in accordance with one's true nature" (Veenhoven, 2013, p. 162). Huta examines the relationship between fulfilment and happiness and demonstrates the complexity of the idea of eudaimonic well-being by outlining a number of eudaimonic-focused ideas. For example, Eudaimonia and self-determination theory have a similar understanding of autonomy and the importance of being true to oneself. Self-determination theory, which dates back to the early 1970s and is still heavily explored today, is analogous to eudaimonia in that it sees autonomy as the primary factor contributing to happiness (Ryan & Deci, 2000, pp. 68–78). Being true to oneself, having several facets of oneself harmoniously interwoven, and supporting one's actions rather than allowing them to be dictated by internal or external pleasures are all examples of being autonomous. Another member of the eudaimonic family that emphasises the subjective sensations that result from the development of potential is personal expressiveness. The basic claim of the personal expressiveness idea is that when one brings out the best in themselves, they also feel completely alive. According to the eudaimonic view, full functioning is an objective state that involves living in accordance with one's true nature, or daimon, and is perceived as personal expressiveness and energy (Ryan, Huta, et al., 2008, pp. 139–170; Ryff, 1989, pp. 1069–1081); (Waterman et al., 2008, pp. 41–79). Waterman suggested what he called personal expressiveness as a definition of eudaimonia. He explains eudaimonia as "an ethical theory that calls people to recognize and to live in accordance with the daimon or true self". Personally Expressive Activities Questionnaire (Waterman et al., 2008, pp. 41–79) is characterised by six feelings about one's most representative activities: that they make one feel alive, that they express who one really is, that one is intensely involved in them, that they are what one was meant to do, that they make one particularly complete or fulfilled, and that one has a special fit or meshing with them. Seligman explained eudaimonia as leading a meaningful life, that is, one in which one thinks about the wider context and does good for others. He made a distinction between the pursuit of meaning and the pursuit of pleasure and engagement. Eudaimonia is moreover strongly linked to values. Eudaimonic endeavours are motivated by ideas about what it means to act morally or truthfully. A higher pleasure has been referred to as eudaimonia (Seligman, 2006).

The relationship between duty, morality, and genuine happiness is explored in Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals. According to Kant, when human beings consciously and carefully direct their reason towards the pursuit of happiness, it does not genuinely lead to true happiness. If reasonable minds calculate and plan too much to relish happiness, the true happiness becomes elusive. So, persuasion of happiness under the guidance of reason is uncertain and unstable. Only duty and morality serving for others can lead to true happiness (Kant, 1998). Therefore, he comes to the conclusion that "to produce a will that is good... the highest good and the

condition of every other, even of all demands for happiness" is the proper purpose of reason rather than achieving happiness (Kant, 1998, Ak. 4:397). Only when deeds are carried out in a sense of duty regardless of inclination or self-interest can moral worth emerge (Kant, 1998, Ak. 4:399). According to Kant, "morality... is that which alone has dignity" (Kant, 1998, Ak. 4:435), indicating that morality alone bestows dignity. According to this theory, genuine happiness can only be meaningful when it is based on moral autonomy and goodwill; therefore, morality and duty do not contradict happiness but rather enhance it by elevating the individual.

If a man sets his goal to manifest his inner self to the fullest potential, he can achieve perpetual happiness. Martin Seligman's book *Authentic Happiness* aligns with the same philosophical thought that cultivating the highest potential, a human being can perceive their inherent characteristic of nature, which is happiness (Seligman, 2002). Seligman's PERMA model- Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment eudaimonically presents happiness as an unfolding process based on good qualities and a meaningful life (Seligman, 2011). The fundamental qualities of human beings – self-respect, self-confidence, truthfulness, clear thinking, determination, courage, honesty, sympathy, faithfulness, patience, love, and wisdom are inner resources of a human, when flourished, naturally lead to true happiness. So, happiness is not created from outside but arises through the manifestation of the inner self. His idea of engagement is an experience of complete immersion in purposeful activity, which unveils the true nature of the self (Seligman, 2011). According to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, this experience is "Flow," and it directs people's energy towards accomplishing objectives, which enhances their quality of life (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Through differentiation and integration, flow experiences increase happiness: people feel more capable, and their feelings and thoughts are in harmony with their activities (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi clarifies that having money or power does not ensure happiness (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). Each person has to cultivate and protect happiness within themselves. The only way we can achieve happiness is by mastering our inner experience. Relationships improve feelings of happiness. It gives life meaning, aids in overcoming obstacles, and enhances well-being through deeds of kindness (Seligman, 2011). Our social nature, which is motivated by love, compassion, and cooperation, has evolved to promote survival and solid relationships. In Seligman's PERMA model, 'meaning' emphasises having a purpose, serving something bigger than oneself, and coordinating actions with basic values for profound fulfilment (Seligman, 2011). Accomplishment highlights the natural human desire for competence, mastery, and achievement regardless of whether it has no direct connection to other factors (Seligman, 2011). Seligman's concept aligns with Indian ideas of *ātma-prasāda* and *svadharma*, as well as Aristotle's notion of virtuous activity. While *ātma-prasāda* refers to a state of inner contentment or happiness of the self that results from carrying out that duty in a righteous manner, *Svadharma* refers to an individual's intrinsic duty or natural disposition (Radhakrishnan, 1951). According to Seligman, dedicating oneself to something bigger than self-gratification is the highest aspect of well-being (Seligman, 2011). This is directly consistent with the eudaimonic claim that self-realization can be attained via moral purpose and selfless action. His observations bolster the notion that when a person is in harmony with virtue and meaningful activity, they become a manifestation of intrinsic happiness, luminous, self-fulfilled, and internally complete. There are also similarities with the Indian Purusharthas: *Mokṣa* (liberation), *Dharma* (virtue), *Artha* (engagement), and *Kāma* (positive emotion) (Sharma, 1999).

Additionally, some philosophers have outlined certain positive traits of a eudaimonic individual, including autonomy, self-acceptance, mastery of life's tasks, and pleasant relationships with other eudaimonic people (Maslow, 1970; Ryff, 1989). A higher pleasure is one that makes use of and stimulates abilities that set humans apart from other animals, such as the capacity to be guided by ideals and vision. Higher pleasures do not necessarily equate to better pleasures. According to Ryff's definition of eudaimonia, achieving one's potential and flourishing

in the face of existential challenges are greater indicators of well-being than merely feeling happy. Flourishing refers to an aspect of well-being concerned with growth and self-transcendence in pursuit of a meaningful action. His eudaimonic model of psychological well-being is likely the most well-known. It consists of six components: self-acceptance, good relationships with others, independence, environmental mastery, life purpose, and personal development. Peterson, Park, and Seligman suggest that “uniting eudaimonic emphases is the premise that people should develop what is best within themselves and then use these skills and talents in the service of greater goods” (Christopher et al., 2007, p. 150).

4. THE INDIAN TRADITION OF WELL-BEING

Since ancient times, one of the main objectives of India's wisdom traditions has been the study of the nature of happiness and well-being, which has similar characteristics to eudaimonic well-being. Such research has advanced in Santana Dharma within the framework of the dual nature of man acknowledged by Indian traditions. Numerous phrases from the Sanskrit language that are associated with happiness and well-being have filtered into other Indian languages. Sukha (agreeableness), santosha (happiness), ullasa (pleasant experience), harsha (joy), shanti (peace), trpti (satisfaction), and tushti are those that convey positive impact and common happiness (contentment). Each of these terms has a unique context in which it is used. Sukha and santosha are the words that are most frequently used to describe happiness and well-being. This was referred to as ‘Preyas’ by the seers and sages of old. The phrases ‘ananda’ and ‘sthitaprajna’ relate to a state of happiness associated with spirituality or transcendence, whereas all these ideas refer to an individual's sense of wellness in regular states of consciousness (Salagame, 2006). Sthitaprajana, as used in the Bhagavad Gita, refers to a solid staying in one's self. Shreyas is the term for the sense of well-being connected to spirituality. The concept of wellbeing is referred to as “swsthyam”. It consists of two parts: The Sanskrit words “swa” means “one's own, belonging to oneself, often serving as a reflexive pronoun; innate, natural, inherent, peculiar, inborn” and “stha” means “standing, staying, abiding, being, existing” (Apte, 1988, p. 417). Together, the two elements represent a condition of self-absorption. While the Bhagavad Gita refers to this in a cognitive sense using the term sthitaprajana, Ayurveda describes swsthyas as a state of harmony in the operation of soma, psyche, and spirit. The word “ananda” has a spiritual connotation that suggests that pleasure and misery are transcended in a conventional sense. Transcendence does not imply that a person is pain-free. Instead, he or she will be able to maintain a state of calm and tranquillity without experiencing the highs and lows that are part of everyday life. This is called sthitaprajna. The words ‘prajna’ and ‘sthititha’ in Sanskrit both refer to states of awareness. A person whose identity is established in a transcendental level of awareness is referred to by this word, which is used in the Bhagavad-Gita. This state is regarded as the optimum state of well-being in Indian tradition. In Indian philosophy, human happiness is realised through the doctrine of the four Puruṣārthas, namely Dharma (virtue), Artha (wealth), Kāma (pleasure), and Mokṣa (liberation). These represent the fundamental aims or values of human life and together provide a comprehensive framework for well-being and provide a balanced, happy, and meaningful life, where each goal supports the others. Since all four Puruṣārthas are associated with human striving and fulfillment, they are directly connected with happiness. These four goals of human life are interconnected. Material success (Artha) and Pleasure, sensual enjoyment (Kama) are meaningful when they serve righteous conduct (Dharma). By satisfying material and emotional needs ethically, one clears the path for spiritual progress (Moksha), which is considered the highest happiness (Paramananda). Kāma and Mokṣa are both explicitly linked with happiness. Kāma denotes the joys and pleasures experienced by ordinary human beings, while Mokṣa represents “supreme, unalloyed, eternal happiness”. Tamil tradition expresses this distinction clearly: Kāma is “*cirrinbam*” (small, transient happiness), Mokṣa is “*pēr-inbam*” (great, lasting happiness). Indian philosophy does not reject worldly happiness, but frames it within a larger structure that leads to liberation. The

Manusmṛti highlights that pleasure and wealth must be abandoned if they violate Dharma, emphasizing that happiness separated from morality ultimately causes misery. So, it emphasizes that true happiness lies not in pursuing one Puruṣārtha alone, but in their harmonious and proportionate practice. Thus, Purusharthas upholds a universal ethical vision in which happiness is a holistic and gradual development. It integrates happiness, prosperity, morality, and salvation into a unified vision of human life, presenting happiness as both materialistic enjoyment and spiritual realisation. This fourfold framework ensures that happiness is properly ordered and fully realised rather than denied or absolutised.

In Advaita Vedānta, Satchidānanda—comprising Sat (existence), Cit (consciousness), and Ānanda (bliss)—establishes happiness as the inherent essence of the self (Ātman), independent of external conditions. Ānanda, synonymous with the self-illuminated Brahman, seems restricted through avidyā (ignorance), which superimposes craving and limitation onto pure awareness (Śaṅkara, c. 8th century/1994). Sense objects merely create the illusion that happiness comes from outside sources by providing brief glimpses of the innate happiness (Vidyāraṇya, 1380/1998). True discernment of Satchidānanda through jñāna (self-knowledge) unveils happiness as eternal, non-dual, and self-existent (Radhakrishnan, 1951).

In *Pañcadaśī*, happiness (*ānanda*) is not a product of external objects or material success, but of the essential nature of the self (*Ātman/Brahman*). Vidyāraṇya explains that happiness is intrinsic, self-illuminating, and ever-present, though it appears concealed due to ignorance (*avidyā*) (Vidyāraṇya, 2005). This position is made explicit in the *Tattva-viveka Prakaraṇa*, where he declares:

ayam ātmā parānandaḥ parapremāspadam yataḥ |
na bhūtaṃ na bhaviṣyāmi iti premātmanīksyate ||
(*Pañcadaśī*, Tattva-viveka Prakaraṇa, v. 8)

Here, the self (*Ātman*) is identified as supreme bliss (*paramānanda*) and as the ultimate object of love. All experiences of affection are, in truth, directed towards the self alone; consequently, happiness is not conditioned by time, objects, or future attainment (Vidyāraṇya, 2005, Tattva-viveka Prakaraṇa, v. 8). This insight is further strengthened in the following verse:

tatpremātmārtham anyatra naivam anyārtham ātmani |
ataḥ tatparamam tena paramānandatātmanah ||
(*Pañcadaśī*, Tattva-viveka Prakaraṇa, v. 9)

Human beings pursue external objects only under the mistaken belief that such objects will enhance their own happiness. Since the self itself is of the nature of bliss, ignorance alone propels the outward search for happiness (Vidyāraṇya, 2005, Tattva-viveka Prakaraṇa, v. 9). According to *Pañcadaśī*, the true self is described as *Sat-Cit-Ānanda* (existence-consciousness-bliss), and happiness is therefore not something newly produced, but something that is always already present. Bondage arises not from the absence of happiness, but from the failure to recognize one's own nature as bliss (Vidyāraṇya, 2005).

Vidyāraṇya then establishes the metaphysical foundation of this happiness by identifying the self with Brahman:

iti sac-cit-parānanda ātmā yuktyā tathāvidham |
param brahma tayoś caikyam śrutyanteṣūpadiśyate ||
(*Pañcadaśī*, Tattva-viveka Prakaraṇa, v. 10)

Happiness, therefore, is not merely psychological or emotional, but metaphysical. Brahman, defined as *Sat-Cit-Ānanda*, is realized as one's own self, and this realization alone results in everlasting bliss (Vidyāraṇya, 2005, Tattva-viveka Prakaraṇa, v. 10). *Pañcadaśī* further explains that material pleasures are merely reflections (*ābhāsa*) of true happiness. When the mind becomes temporarily calm—for instance, when a desire is fulfilled—the inner

bliss of the self is reflected in the mind and mistakenly attributed to the external object. Objects, therefore, do not generate happiness; they merely quiet mental modifications (Vidyāraṇya, 2005).

Vidyāraṇya analyzes happiness across the three states of experience: waking (*jāgrat*), where happiness is mixed with effort and limitation; dream (*svapna*), where happiness is mentally projected; and deep sleep (*suṣupti*), where happiness is experienced without any objects (Vidyāraṇya, 2005). The experience of bliss in deep sleep is particularly significant, as it demonstrates that happiness belongs to the self rather than to sensory engagement. Finally, Vidyāraṇya removes the fear of loss of happiness in both the presence and absence of objects:

abhāve na paraṃ prema bhāve na viśaya-sprhā |
ato bhāve 'py abhāve 'sau paramānandatātmanah ||
(*Pañcadaśī*, Tattva-viveka Prakaraṇa, v. 11)

Whether objects are present or absent, happiness remains unchanged, for it belongs exclusively to the self, whose nature is supreme bliss (Vidyāraṇya, 2005, Tattva-viveka Prakaraṇa, v. 11). Misery arises when the self is falsely identified with the body and mind; this superimposition (*adhyāsa*) compels individuals to seek happiness externally. *Pañcadaśī* repeatedly emphasizes that ignorance alone obscures happiness, not the absence of favorable conditions (Vidyāraṇya, 2005). Liberation (*mokṣa*) is thus defined as the constant recognition of one's own blissful nature through knowledge (*jñāna*). Unlike transient pleasures, this happiness is permanent, independent, and eternal. Once ignorance is destroyed, happiness ceases to be episodic and becomes consciously established. Happiness, therefore, is not a performance or achievement, but a realization. All forms of happiness ultimately point to the same truth: *ānanda* is the essence of the self, and liberation consists in the awareness and abidance in that bliss (Vidyāraṇya, 2005).

5. CONCLUSION

To experience happiness, therefore, we need to return calmly to our natural state of being, as it is the innermost source of happiness in the contemplative mood of transcendentalism. The science of just being is an attempt to get true knowledge through careful observation and rigorous experimentation (Davidson & Dahl, 2017). It is a practical skill that may be developed and applied to achieve an experience of unfathomable pleasure and happiness. This art and science of being also includes the art and science of consciousness and self-knowledge, in addition to the art and science of happiness. Now, indicators of happiness are being developed in numerous nations worldwide. The Bhutanese state is emphasizing 'Gross National Happiness' (GNH) over 'Gross National Product' (GNP) (Ura et al., 2012). Here, GNH signifies development with moral values for peaceful coexistence with other countries and contributes to the happiness and well-being of people. As a result, for Bhutan, the pursuit of Gross National Happiness serves as a link between the core principles of equality, kindness, and humanity and the imperative need for economic prosperity (Thinley, 1999).

REFERENCES

- [1]. V. S. Apte, *The Student's Sanskrit English Dictionary*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, India, 1988, p. 417.
- [2]. Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics," in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, R. McKeon (Ed.), Modern Library, New York, USA, 2001, pp. 928–1112.
- [3]. M. Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, Harper & Row, New York, USA, 1990.
- [4]. M. Csikszentmihalyi, "If we are so rich, why aren't we happy?" *American Psychologist*, vol. 54, no. 10, pp. 821–827, 1999. DOI:10.1037/0003-066X.54.10.821
- [5]. R. J. Davidson and C. J. Dahl, "Varieties of contemplation: A scientific investigation," *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 569–586, 2017. DOI:10.1177/1745691617709588
- [6]. E. Diener, J. J. Sapyta and E. M. Suh, "Subjective well-being is essential to well-being," *Psychological Inquiry*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 33–37, 1998. DOI:10.1207/s15327965pli0901_3

- [7]. G. Dworkin, *The Theory and Practice of Autonomy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 1988.
- [8]. D. T. Gilbert and J. E. J. Ebert, "Decisions and revisions: The affective forecasting of changeable outcomes," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 82, no. 4, pp. 503–514, 2002. DOI:10.1037/0022-3514.82.4.503
- [9]. M. Hiriyanna, *Indian Conception of Values*, Kavyalaya Publishers, Mysore, India, 1975, pp. 17–18.
- [10]. M. James, "What is happiness?" in *Happiness and the Art of Being*, 2nd ed., CreateSpace, USA, 2012, pp. 52–69.
- [11]. I. Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, M. Gregor (Trans.), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 1998 (Original work published 1785).
- [12]. A. H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, 2nd ed., Harper & Row, New York, USA, 1970.
- [13]. F. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, W. Kaufmann (Trans.), Random House, New York, USA, 1974.
- [14]. C. Peterson, W. Ruch, U. Beermann, N. Park and M. E. P. Seligman, "Strengths of character, orientations to happiness, and life satisfaction," *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 149–156, 2007. DOI:10.1080/17439760701228938
- [15]. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 1, George Allen & Unwin, London, UK, 1951.
- [16]. R. Renwick, I. Brown and M. Nagler (Eds.), *Quality of Life in Health Promotion and Rehabilitation*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, USA, 1996.
- [17]. P. Ricoeur, *Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, E. V. Kohák (Trans.), Northwestern University Press, Evanston, USA, 1966 (Original work published 1950).
- [18]. R. M. Ryan and E. L. Deci, "Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being," *American Psychologist*, vol. 55, no. 1, pp. 68–78, 2000. DOI:10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68
- [19]. R. M. Ryan, V. Huta and E. L. Deci, "Living well: A self-determination theory perspective on eudaimonia," *Journal of Happiness Studies*, vol. 9, pp. 139–170, 2008. DOI:10.1007/s10902-006-9023-4
- [20]. C. D. Ryff, "Happiness is everything, or is it?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 57, no. 6, pp. 1069–1081, 1989. DOI:10.1037/0022-3514.57.6.1069
- [21]. K. K. K. Salagame, "The role of spirituality in attaining well-being," in *Dimensions of Well-being*, A. D. Fave (Ed.), Franco Angeli, Milan, Italy, 2006, pp. 538–551.
- [22]. Śāṅkara, *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*, S. Radhakrishnan (Trans. & Ed.), Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, India, 1994.
- [23]. M. E. P. Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, Free Press, New York, USA, 2002.
- [24]. M. E. P. Seligman, *Flourish*, Free Press, New York, USA, 2011.
- [25]. R. N. Sharma, *Indian Philosophy*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, India, 1999.
- [26]. J. Y. Thinley, "Values and development: Gross national happiness," Centre for Bhutan Studies, Thimphu, Bhutan, 1999.
- [27]. K. Ura, S. Alkire, T. Zangmo and K. Wangdi, *A Short Guide to Gross National Happiness Index*, Centre for Bhutan Studies, Thimphu, Bhutan, 2012.
- [28]. R. Veenhoven, "Notions of the good life," in *The Oxford Handbook of Happiness*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 2013, p. 162.
- [29]. Vidyāraṇya, *Pañcadaśī*, Swami Vijayananda (Trans.), Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata, India, 2005.
- [30]. A. S. Waterman et al., "The implications of two conceptions of happiness," *Journal of Happiness Studies*, vol. 9, pp. 41–79, 2008. DOI:10.1007/s10902-006-9020-7

Cite this Article:

Charan, A. K. (2026). From Eudaimonia to Ātman: Human Being as the Embodiment of Innate Happiness. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Arts, Science and Technology (IJMRASST)*, 4(2), 31–39.

Journal URL: <https://ijmrast.com/>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61778/ijmrast.v4i2.223>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

© The Author(s) 2026. IJMRASST Published by Surya Multidisciplinary Publication.