UNIT-VII
HAPPINESS: HEDONISTIC & EUDAEMONIC VIEW

Happiness is something that people seek to find, yet what defines happiness can vary from one person to the next. Typically, happiness is an emotional state characterized by feelings of joy, satisfaction, contentment, and fulfillment. While happiness has many different definitions, it is often described as involving positive emotions and life satisfaction.

Hedonistic vs Eudaemonic Happiness

People spend much of their lives trying to find happiness and fulfillment. Happiness is a subjective concept, so it is often more useful to use the term well-being. What makes someone happy? How can one find lasting well-being? They are questions that every individual grapples with in their lives, because the answer is not the same for every person.

Philosophers have debated these questions for a long time. As a result, two main types of happiness have been defined. The first is **hedonistic happiness**. Hedonistic happiness has to do with pleasure. It relates to the enjoyment of experiences. **Eudaimonic happiness** comes from finding purpose and meaning in life. The two are thought of differently because hedonistic happiness has more to do with experiences and enjoyment of them, while eudaimonic happiness has to do with finding meaning in those experiences.

Hedonism

Hedonists argue that human beings are motivated by pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain. Pleasurable experiences bring happiness, while painful ones reduce it. For example, a hedonist would pursue some of their favorite things in life. They believe that happiness comes from steak and lobster dinners and extravagant desserts. Traveling the world, seeing shows, and going to museums

can bring joy. Reading books, and watching movies that make one happy can bring happiness. With the hedonic approach painful tasks such as chores, doctor's appointments, or heartbreak should be avoided to maintain happiness.

However there have been many criticisms of this approach. There's a certain **logical fallacy**, or a flaw in reasoning, that comes with hedonism. These critics say that hedonic pursuit of happiness does not always help someone's overall well-being. Pursuing good experiences are not always best for our overall mental and physical health. Many of these experiences can lead to negative consequences. Drinking excessive amounts of alcohol, or using drugs may be enjoyable experiences in the moment, but they can have long-lasting negative impacts. They may bring temporary happiness, but in the long-term they can bring addiction and disease, which does not contribute to a person's overall well-being. In fact, it brings pain, which hedonists argue should be avoided.

Philosophers of Hedonism

The hedonic approach first originated with the Greek philosopher **Aristippus**. He believed that ethical questions should center around our end goals. To him, the end goal was pleasure. He believed that pursuing sensual pleasures such as sexual intercourse, or enjoying food and alcohol helped people achieve this end goal. In fact, he spent most of his life pursuing pleasure, leading many of his contemporary Greeks to regard him as undignified.

The ideas of hedonism were revived by British philosopher Jeremy Bentham. He related the theory to utilitarianism. Since he believed that the only goals people had related to pleasure, he thought people should look for the greatest amount of pleasure in life. This idea grew into the belief that if an action increases happiness, then it must be morally right. If it produces pain, it must be morally wrong.

Eudaemonic View

Eudaemonic happiness is an attempt to pursue more lasting and meaningful happiness. Just because an experience is pleasurable does not mean it can create happiness. Drinking may bring happiness in the moment, but continued use can hurt your well-being, leading to complications and unhappiness. Instead, the eudaemonic approach attempts to find happiness through personal fulfillment and growth. For example, learning to become a kinder person can bring self-fulfillment. Volunteering in your community, helping your local soup kitchen, or cleaning up your neighborhood is more likely to increase your well-being. Studying hard, and building your skills can help you gain maturity and knowledge, increasing happiness.

Many psychologists have embraced this approach, since they find it more logical than hedonic happiness. Maslow's hierarchy of needs supports this theory. **Maslow's hierarchy** defines the needs of humans and stratifies them. According to Maslow, self-actualization can bring lasting happiness only after our basic needs are met. He acknowledged that momentary pleasure is not sufficient to achieve well-being. Humans need friendship, love, self-esteem and the ability to pursue self-improvement to achieve well-being.

Philosophies of Eudaimonia

The first philosopher of eudaimonia was the famous Greek **Aristotle**. He created this theory of happiness in response to hedonism, since he found the idea to be lacking refinement. He defined eudaimonia as the "highest human good." If Aristippus' end goal was pleasure, then Aristotle's was good for its own sake. He believed every human was unique, and to increase their wellbeing they should develop that uniqueness in order to contribute to the world.

The concept of eudaimonia did not see a revival until the 20th century. **G.E.M. Anscombe** recommended a revival of eudaimonia

in ethics because she believed it grounded morality in human interests, instead of in the rules created by governments through laws. She disagreed with the ideas of utilitarianism developed by hedonism. The concepts of moral right and wrong required an authority role to dictate what was deemed "good" and "bad." Instead, human beings should pursue the "highest good" for lasting happiness, and rely less on moral rules created by authority figures.

Summary

Happiness is a subjective concept, so it is often better to use the term **well-being**. **Hedonic happiness** is a philosophical belief that pursuing pleasurable experiences, and avoiding painful ones will lead to happiness. This idea was first proposed by **Aristippus**. However, critics of this approach argue that it is based on a **logical fallacy. Eudaimonic happiness,** results from finding meaning and purpose. The idea of eudaimonia originated with **Aristotle**. His ideas are supported by **Maslow's hierarchy**, which states that people need more than pleasure to achieve a state of well-being.