



Anandamaya Kosha from the View Point of Ancient and Modern Science

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Abstract

Ánanda' is the basic fabric of our creation. It is Ananda which supports or anchors the whole creation. It cannot be correlated with happiness. It is not found within the object of happiness rather is found within. In Vedas, Upanishads and Bhagavad gita, the word Ananda signifies eternal bliss which accompanies the cycle of birth and death. Those who renounce the fruits of their actions and surrender themselves completely to the divine will, arrive at the final termination of the cyclical life process to enjoy eternal bliss or Ananda, which is perfect union between individual soul with the supreme.

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Index Terms Mantra recitation, mindfulness, memory

DOI Number: 10.14704/nq.2022.20.8.NQ44544

NeuroQuantology 2022; 20(8): 5181-5184

Introduction

Upon the advice of father Varuna, Bhrgu does Tapas fifth time and it becomes final for him and never returns to his father. It awakens his inner self and realizes that Ánanda' or Blissful state anchors our existence¹. Joy or bliss is the Sanskrit word for Anandamayakosha and this closest to our essential nature and hence called the subtlest of the sheaths. The Upanishad speaks of the sheaths which constitute the gross, subtle and causal bodies of a living creature. Brahman is the innermost reality which is untouched by any of them.

Sometime Ananda is explained as the state when there is happiness within the state of

unhappiness and vice versa. In happiness you are jumping, in unhappiness you are dull and sometimes high, sometimes low. So our mind keeps on fluctuating. In Ananda, there is no fluctuation of Mind. There is unified experience and that experience does not change. Death cannot change that experience; birth cannot change it; love and hatred cannot make our experiences alter this state. When our mind has become steady in experience and does not fluctuate under any condition that is Ananda. So we call it the experience which is eternal and continues to be felt all times. The experience which you have in your life every day is not same or uniformity. That is



the reason why it is believed to put *Ánanda'* after the name of many Sannyasi, which signifies that are blissful as they renounce every worldly object of the world and no materialistic object in this world can affect their state of Ananda and make them miserable.

Although the translation of *Ánanda'* is written as blissful state but is felt at the core of Yoga that there is a state of mind which does not change, despite anything that happens in life. With that state of mind you can live with all the conditions. You can live with a good partner or bad partner, prosperity or poverty, disease or death, in a discotheque, on a beach, a hotel, everywhere, because nothing affects you. You are where you are, firmly rooted in your own self, but at the same time you can interact with everyone. You can even fight, but still not be affected.

Bliss that we are talking about is final outcome of spiritual sadhana. Bliss is continuous state of happiness. It is the highest and pure state of happiness. God is Sat, Chit, Ananda (Bliss). Bliss is supreme form of God. It is the form of formless God. Bliss is not attained by obtaining any external thing or depends on any inner thing. Bliss is the result of evolution of consciousness. It is a state on its own. Bliss is the true nature of soul. One who starts the journey of exploring his soul attains this state. Bliss is beyond body, mind, intellect and emotions and is the state of pure consciousness. It is the non-dual state.

Our day-to-day happiness varies hour to hour and depends on several factors. One of the main factors is restlessness of our mind it is also cause for unhappiness. The mind is always conditioned by its past and the present due multifarious activities of man. Without the presence and pleasantness of mind one cannot experience anything in life. Unless the mind is happy one cannot experience happiness. When the mind is in sorrow we experience

sorrow. Hence our happiness doesn't remain constant due to our restless mind.

Happiness is a kind of emotion. The happiness is created on account of something and the something could be anything but it should be of your liking. If something happens different to our liking then it will not create happiness, instead it may erupt altogether opposite emotions. It results in causing upset, depression, unhappiness, irritation etc. The intensity of any emotion does not remain stable and will go on changing. All kinds of emotions are either above or below the normal stable state. The stable state is that in which there is neither happiness nor unhappiness. It is a non involved state. In this state one experiences calmness and pleasantness. A person who maintains this stable state will never be a victim of any emotional stress and strain.

Modern Understanding about Ananda

In modern science *Ánanda'* is understood as 'Happiness'. "Overall happiness is the degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of his/her own life-as-a-whole favorably². In other words: how much one likes the life one leads. The key terms in this definition may be elucidated as follows. The word 'happiness' is not used to denote positive appreciation of life only. It refers to a degree, like the concepts of 'length' or 'weight', it denotes more or less of something. When we say a person is happy, we mean that he or she judges his of her life favorably rather than unfavorably. At the individual level, the term happiness is used to describe the state of an individual person only; it does not apply to collectivities. Thus, a nation cannot be said to be happy. At best, most of its citizens consider themselves happy. Subjectively Happiness denotes a subjective appreciation of life by an individual. So there is no given 'objective' standard for happiness. A person, who thinks he/she is



happy, really is happy, even if that person is misinformed. Judgmentally, the word 'happiness' is used where somebody has made an overall judgment about the quality of his or her life. This implies an intellectual activity. Making an overall judgment implies assessing past experiences and estimating future experiences and estimating average quality of life. One consequence of this conceptualization is that the word 'happiness' cannot be used for those who did not make up their mind. One cannot say whether a person is happy or not, if that person is intellectually unable to construct an overall judgment. Thus, the concept cannot be used for animals or small children. Nor is the concept applicable to people who did not reflect on the quality of their life or could not reach a conclusion.

Overall the evaluation of life aimed at is an overall judgment. It embodies all criteria for appreciation, which figure in the mind. In the past hedonists used to equate happiness with sensory pleasures only; however, there are more modes of appreciation. Apart from the sensory system, cognition and affect also enable individuals to appraise their life. Thus, evaluations also involve cognitive appraisals, based on aspirations, expectations and values. The evaluation also draws on affective conditions, in particular on average mood." The word **happiness** refers to a judgment, which integrates all the appreciation criteria used. Thus, the idea that one has all one has ever desired does not necessarily make a person happy. Despite all material endowments such a person may feel pain or be depressed. Similarly, the appraisal that one's life is 'exciting' does not necessarily mark oneself as happy either; life may be too exciting to be enjoyable".

Life-as-a-whole," we do not use the word 'happiness' to characterize satisfaction with specific aspects of life, such as marriage or work. 'Happiness' refers to satisfaction with

life-as-a whole. It covers past, present and anticipated experiences. This does not mean that all things ever experienced are given equal weight in the evaluation. As stated above, evaluation involves a sifting and ordering. In this process some aspects may be emphasized and others ignored. Past life experiences for example, seldom enter into the evaluation process in their original phenomenological Gestalt. What is taken into consideration is mostly a shallow representation of what one tasted previously. In our own life, the term 'happiness' concerns the evaluation of one's own life, not of life in general. A pessimistic 'Weltanschauung' does not necessarily characterize someone as **unhappy**".

"Favourably evaluation always embodies appreciation; a conclusion as to whether one likes something or not. The term 'happiness' refers only to judgments concerning this aspect. Happiness judgments concern the dimension extending from appreciation to depreciation, from like to dislike" or from 'satisfaction' to 'dissatisfaction'.

Ancient Approach of Ananda

In yoga philosophy, "it is said that God is **Sat Chit Ananda** (existence consciousness bliss). Paramhansa Yogananda³ says that Ananda is different from temporary joy that comes from sense pleasures such as eating, listening to music, and seeing beautiful things. It is also not a monotonous joy that is always the same. Ananda refers to a joy that changes and dances itself in many ways to enthrall your mind and keep your attention occupied and interested forever". According to Paramhansa Yogananda, "Ananda can only be found through regular, deep meditation. This joy lives within and cannot be found through anything outside oneself. When one has divine joy, the joy remains despite any difficult outward circumstances". Swami Vivekananda⁴ has claimed that "the reason different



meanings of Ananda and different ways of achieving it are present in Hindu philosophy is that humans differ from each other, and each chooses the most appropriate path to Ananda for him or herself". "According to the Vedanta school of Hindu philosophy⁵, Ananda is that state of sublime delight when the jiva becomes free from all sins, all doubts, all desires, all actions, all pains, all sufferings and also all physical and mental ordinary pleasures. Having become established in Brahman it becomes jivanmukta (a being free from the cycle of rebirth). The Upanishads repeatedly use the word Ananda to denote Brahman, the innermost Self, and the Blissful One, who unlike the individual Self has no real attachments. Based on a reading of the Bhagavad Gita, Dvaitavedanta interprets ananda as happiness derived via good thoughts and good deeds that depend on the state and on the control of the mind. Through evenness of temper and mind, the state of supreme bliss is reached in all aspects of one's life. According to the Vishishtadvaita vedanta⁶ school which was proposed by Ramanujacharya, true happiness can be only through divine grace, which can be only achieved by total surrender of one's ego to the Divine. According to Ramana Maharshi⁷, happiness is within and can be known only through discovering one's true self. He proposes that Ananda can be attained by inner enquiry," using the thought "Who am I".

A Relation between Ananda, Vijnana, Mind, Prana and Body

The aim of Yoga in totality is to know about our true self. When we start exploring our 'soul', there arises the true Ananda. But every individual try to find out Ananda in the object of their happiness which is not real and this happiness is momentary. This momentary happiness suppresses our wisdom and we start brooding in negative aspect of it called wrong notion. This

wrongly directed notion causes unrest in our Mind which in turn results in turbulences in the flow of our Prana. And this finally settles down in our Sthulasareera and becomes the cause for many diseases.

Operational Tools of Anandamaya Kosha

It is quite difficult to suggest the operational tools for Anandamayakosha but some components of Karma yoga can be considered to understand our true self and real happiness. Every work that we do in our day today life is associated with fruit and when we do not succeed in that we become restless. Bhagavad Gita advocates that fruits should never be expected when we take up any task and this really brings Ananda. In other words, Self less service and purity in thought and emotional process makes us to experience Ananda.

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