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**SELF-REALIZATION BY MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS:
COMPARISON WITH BHAGWAN SHREE MAYANAND CHAITANYA
AND PANDIT SHREERAM ACHARYA**

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ABSTRACT

Maslow stated that self-realization is the highest stage when humans gain familiarity with their true self, after fulfilling the needs of food, shelter, clothing, security, love, belonging, and self-esteem. Adding to this, Bhagwan Shree Mayanand Chaitanya focused on simple and ethical living for gaining acquaintance with self-worth. Extending these views, Shriram Acharya stated that lifestyle, which is based on morality, helps in attaining spiritual growth. All these aspects are not possible until and unless there is inner self-consciousness on changing self before changing others and reforming society as a whole.

Key words: Self-realization, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Bhagwan Shree Mayanand Chaitanya, Pandit Shreeram Acharya

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Self-actualization or self-realization

Self-realization, often known as self-actualization, has been roped in by Maslow in his theory of Hierarchy of Needs. In this theory, self-actualization is the highest level, where through motivation and support, humans become familiar with their potential, skills, abilities and competencies. This motivation and support help individuals to acquaint themselves with their real self. For this, they are expected to use their abilities, creativity, and values to their fullest. Evaluating the case from bottom, Maslow is of the view that food, water, sleep, clothing are important needs which are to be fulfilled (Tekke, 2019). Once these needs are fulfilled, then comes the issue of safety and protection, which needs to be stable for making the foundation of their stay within the society, strong. Next is the need for making the people feel loved and included within the mainstream activities of the society. This is achieved through friendships, family, acceptance to the issues confronted. As a sequential step, individuals feel the need of achievement, which increases their self-esteem. Once, all these needs are fulfilled, individuals feel the need of self-actualization (self-realization) been fulfilled. As a matter of specification, self-realization implies clear and concrete understanding on real self instead of the identity which enhances on receiving fame, money, or perfection. Accepting self (strengths *and* flaws) indicates practicing and living according to the values, which adds meaning and authenticity to life (Farimani & Shahri, 2020). Herein lays the effectiveness of the statement of Maslow, which indicates individuals to live up to their passion for succeeding in accomplishment of their goals.

1.2 A sneak peek into self-actualized people

Maslow stated that self-actualized people are **creative** and curious to explore the unexplored things. Their self-awareness is very high, due to which they tend to ponder on their thoughts and emotions. Unlike others, these people do not find difficulty in accepting reality and the way they are. A striking fact is that they are selfish towards their personal growth, and try to find purpose on which to base their life. Even if they are pressurized, these people take time to come up with independent thoughts and decisions (Tripathi, 2018). Their actions state their tendency to solve problems, even if they are of others.

1.3 Self-realization exemplified

When an artist creates a piece of art, his or her expressions are unleashed, due to which he or she comes to know their actual worth. Teachers acquaint self-realization when they illuminate students' knowledge and helping them grow. Students achieve this stage, when they explore their interests and values, instead of running in the blind rat race of going after grades (Rouse, 2004). Generally, individuals' need of self-realization is fulfilled, when they defend themselves, showing believe in themselves and trust in the process in spite of it being complicated.

1.4 Important key points

Self-realization is not the ultimate aspect in life. It is just a final destination which is aimed to be achieved in the ongoing process, where individuals grow by teach (Greene & Burke, 2007). In this process, they become acquainted with the changes, consistently discovering their real self with the passage of time.

1.5 Shriram Sharma Acharya on philosophy

Shriram Sharma Acharya is a renowned person, who believed in spiritual humanism. According to him, self-purification, moral living, and social reforms contribute heavily towards inner transformation. Purity, morality in selfless service, on humanitarian grounds, help in gaining trust, loyalty and dependence from the people (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016).

1.6 Bhagwan Shree Mayanand Chaitanya on philosophy

Bhagwan Shree Mayanand Chaitanya achieved accolades and glory by basing philosophy on Advaita Vedanta. He emphasized that self-realization comes from inner discipline, ethical living, and refraining from illusion (maya). According to him, ignoring essential aspects compel people to suffer intensively. On the other hand, true knowledge leads to liberation (moksha), assisting people to achieve self-realization (Chandekar, 2015). Moral conduct, meditation, and guidance from experts ensures spiritual growth.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Shriram Sharma Acharya's views on philosophy

Shriram Sharma Acharya was respectfully called *Shreeram Acharya*. He emphasized on the aspects of spiritual humanism, moral living, and inner transformation. His popularity emerged as Indian thinker, reformer, and the founder of the Gayatri Parivar movement.

2.1.1 Spiritual Humanism

Acharya was of the view that spirituality should be such which improves human life, and not pushing them away from mainstream social activities. In his views, true spirituality is the one which is adequate for serving people on humanitarian grounds. Here, Pandey, (2016) argued that serving implies service which is godly. Based on this, individuals attain personal growth, when their intentions are directed towards communal good and harmony. One who possesses this mentality becomes an asset for the society.

2.1.2 Gayatri Philosophy (Wisdom & Purity of Thought)

Shreeram Sharma Acharya emphasized great importance on chanting Gayatri Mantra, as it helps in

cleansing the thoughts possessed by the individuals. This mantra is also helpful for developing wisdom and knowledge, awakening moral consciousness of the people. Therefore, Vaniquotes.org, (2018) was of the view that his philosophical views are based on channelizing thoughts to rights actions, which ultimately leads to the creation of an educative society.

2.1.3. Self-transformation is important before changing others

Acharya practiced and preached that real change begins from within the individual. If there is no initiative to change the self, then reformation on thoughts, habits, and character of society cannot be productive. When individuals feel inner drive to change themselves, then only they can improve society. For feeling this properly, Thegaudyatresuresofbengal.com (2019) argued that individuals need to be disciplined, bringing self-control within them, practicing ethical living, for accomplishing the goals. All these aspects lead to enhancing familiarity with true self.

2.1.4. Yug Nirman (Reconstruction of the Era)

Acharya was more into Yug Nirman or creating a better society, which is devoid of malice like corruption, superstition, and inequality. Supporting this, Tekke, (2019) stated that he aimed to create this society through the promotion of values like honesty, simplicity, and cooperation. He also encouraged the youth to take the lead for this constriction.

2.1.5. Simple Living, High Thinking

As per the believes of Acharya, simple lifestyle helps in achieving the goals more easily as compared to avarices like greed and excess. In order to avoid these, he recommended balancing material needs with spiritual growth. According to him, as stated by Farimani and Shahri, (2020) happiness comes when individuals are satisfied from within and not if they possess material things.

2.1.6. Karma and Responsibility

Acharya's philosophical views also involve karma, which states that every action has exclusive consequences. According to karma, individuals are responsible for their own actions performed, progress measured and tracking of the performances displayed. Tripathi, (2018) opined that for achieving good benefits from Karma, hard work is combined with ethical conduct. In this context, consistency and balance paves the way for success.

2.2 Philosophy of Bhagwan Shree Mayanand Chaitanya

Bhagwan Shree Mayanand Chaitanya is one of the other scholars, who asserted his views on philosophy. These views are generally understood within in terms of Indian spiritual thoughts. Special attention is given to non-dualism (Advaita), which deals with inner awakening, and disciplined ethical living. His teachings are less systematized in textbooks, which makes it easier for the children to

understand these views, and their implications. On the contrary, Rouse, (2004) was of the view that some classical philosophers, explained philosophical views by relating them with themes and not formal doctrines.

2.2.1. Non-Dualism (Advaita)

Bhagwan Shree Mayanand Chaitanya focused on unity between soul and supreme reality in his views. One of his central ideas is ignorance causing a sense of separation. Here, Greene and Burke, (2007) argued that self-realization implies recognizing the inner unity and conscience.

2.2.2. Maya and Illusion

As per Bhagwan Shree Mayanand Chaitanya, material world is temporary and illusory, offering a utopian society, with no wrongs. If individuals attach themselves too much with this world, then they suffer much, as they do not get any concrete results in the form of goal fulfilment. However, D'Souza and Gurin, (2016) are of the view that if people are able to detect the harsh realities, then they can feel the freedom from illusion. This does not mean that life is to be rejected, but submitting to everything should not be the ultimate goal.

2.2.3. Self-realization in terms of inner discipline

Bhagwan Shree Mayanand Chaitanya taught that true knowledge comes from inner experience which is practically felt and not by rote learning from the theories of books. For gaining this experience, Chandekar, (2015) cited that meditation, self-control, and introspection are mandatory. Encouragement is needed for pushing individuals to conquer ego, anger, and greed, in the process of realizing the true self.

2.2.4. Spiritual guidance from a Guru or teacher

Mayanand Chaitanya did not attain the status of Bhagwan Shree just like that. He stressed on the importance of getting guided from an enlightened teacher (Guru). Without a Guru, individuals cannot understand the contribution of faith, humility, and surrender in the process of spiritual practice. As a result of this guidance, Pandey, (2016) was of the view that people learn to live their life with practical real-world example, instead of blindly following the customs, traditions, and rituals.

2.2.5. Moral and Ethical Living

One of the other teachings by Bhagwan Shree Mayanand Chaitanya is that spiritual progress cannot be achieved without proper ethical considerations. In this context, useful elements are truthfulness, compassion, and non-violence. If there are purity of thought, speech, and action in the behavior, then an individual is considered to be ethical and moral. According to Vaniquotes.org, (2018), the actions performed by the individuals, makes them accountable for the results to be received from Karma. The

lesson here is that moral life paves the way for mental and spiritual awakening.

2.2.6. Liberation (Moksha)

The ultimate purpose of life, as explained by Mayanand Chaitanya, is **Moksha, which implies** freedom from ignorance and rebirth. This liberation is achieved through pure knowledge, devotion, and self-discipline. Specifically, Thegaudyatresuresofbengal.com, (2019) stated that it is explained as the state of mind, which ensures stable peace, awareness, and unity with the Absolute power, that is, supreme, almighty, who governs every action and its results and effects in the universe.

3. METHODOLOGY

Positivism philosophy has been applied in this paper, for establishing positive, scientific, objective, real, and epistemological knowledge related to self-realization and actualization. This philosophy is apt as its real facts are produced in the process of discussion and analysis. Deductive approach is applied for deducing relevant facts on self-realization, as described by philosophers like Maslow, Bhagwan Shree Mayanand Chaitanya, and Shreeram Sharma Acharya. Here, literature review is considered for deducing the important facts on the topic. Explorational research design is apt here, as unexplored realms of these philosophical views are taken up for further exploration. This is in terms of real-world issues like Maya (illusion), to which people are helpless. Data on subject matter is collected from secondary sources like books, journal articles, papers, government websites and reports. After collection, analysis is done through thematic analysis, where themes related to philosophical views on self-realization are used for explaining the different philosophical views proposed. Ethics here, implies acknowledging the sources used for averting the instances of plagiarism and collusion. Also, ethical considerations indicate not considering the sources which need subscription.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Self-realization is the highest goal

Maslow was of the view that self-actualization is the highest human need, which is to be fulfilled. If this need is achieved, then they become aware of their capabilities to learn and become the one which they wish to be. On the other hand, Mayanand Chaitanya opined that self-realization is the stage, when individuals realize the unity of soul with the supreme power (Farimani & Shahri, 2020). Here, Shriram Sharma Acharya's views are no less important, as it stated that self-realization awakens the inner divine potential to find meaning in realizing self-worth.

4.2. Inner Transformation

Maslow stated that growth comes from adequate self-awareness and acceptance of the worldly issues. On the other hand, Mayanand Chaitanya opined that inner awakening reduces ignorance (maya).

Shriram Sharma Acharya can also be placed in the same line, as he proposed that change in thoughts and character paves the way for personal and social upliftment (Tripathi, 2018). Overall, real growth begins from within the self of the individuals, and development or change of others become secondary.

4.3. Purity in thoughts and consciousness

As per the arguments of Maslow, self-actualized people think practically. On the contrary, Mayanand Chaitanya was of the view that purification of mind, through discipline and meditation, is important for creating a proper example before others to emerge as a conscious being. In this context, Shriram Sharma Acharya added that purity of thought, through Gayatri philosophy, purifies the minds of the people (Rouse, 2004). Here, the statement proved is clear and pure thinking, which is placed on a higher pedestal for achieving self-actualization.

4.4. Freedom achieved through ego and illusion

Maslow argued that ego is to be reduced for gaining social approval on the freedom to be achieved. On the other hand, Mayanand Chaitanya was of the view that ego and illusion create false hopes, putting the identity formation on stake, increasing the suffering. Here, mention can also be made of Shriram Sharma Acharya, who proposed that ego, greed, and selfishness obstruct inner growth (Greene & Burke, 2007). Overall, transcendence of ego is necessary for realizing real self-worth.

4.5. Ethical and moral living

Maslow was of the view that self-actualized individuals are naturally ethical. For Mayanand Chaitanya, moral discipline prepares individual's mind for liberation. Here, Shriram Sharma Acharya can also be placed, as he proposed the importance of ethics and character building which are important for ensuring spiritual growth (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016). Therefore, based on these aspects, moral life supports self-actualization.

4.6. Purpose and meaning in life

Self-actualized people are the ones who live with clear purpose and creativity, as explained by Maslow. This purpose is the moksha, which Mayanand Chaitanya considered as the life's purpose. Liberation was the main focus, here, which takes the shape of selfless service and recreating a society with no wrongs and malice, as proposed by Shriram Sharma Acharya (Chandekar, 2015). Based on these aspects, it can be asserted that self-actualization directs individuals to proceed in life with meaning.

4.7. Service expanding self

Maslow, in these views, focused on concern for humanity, and not just personal success. This concern raises compassion, which was roped in by Mayanand Chaitanya. In his explanation, he asserted that

compassion arises naturally, when self-realization is achieved. In this context, Shriram Sharma Acharya's views can also be placed, as the views are directed towards serving society on humanitarian grounds (Pandey, 2016). Based on these aspects, expansion of self-actualization from selfish interests is asserted.

CONCLUSION

Based on the thematic analysis, it can be asserted that Maslow, Bhagwan Shree Mayanand Chaitanya, and Shriram Sharma Acharya's views are tied in a common thread that is self-actualization. This is achieved through inner awakening, arising from self-awareness, ethical living, freedom from ego, and adding purpose into the service through humanity. This purpose concretizes the purpose with which individuals approach life issues. This approach is taken after careful observation of the approaches taken by others. As the focus is to achieve self-actualization, therefore, self-awareness is to be adequate for ensuring balance in other aspects of life.

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