

CONCEPT OF GOOD LIFE

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1. Introduction:-

This paper aims at understanding and analyzing the concept of good life. Living a good life is a moral issue. Man is a rational animal. This inevitable truth provides a sort of foundation for ethics, and also for living a moral life. Every human innately should live a good life. Every human intends to lead the good life, although there are different views among people as to what the good life is. What is the good life? What is worth pursuing for its own sake? How do we improve our lot in life? All these philosophical questions are important in the present study.

Philosophy has something to offer in the struggle of mankind to attain a better existence and to retain an existence, because it can be more than just the critical self-reflection of the human spirit (Rupert Read, 2007).¹ Good life usually means a life which might rationally be wished for by every human. In the modern society most humans have regarded the good life as a happy life, although this is not always the case. Because, some people led a good life, yet they were still not happy in life. Thus, happiness has become associated with possession of money, goods and wealth in the modern societies particularly in the capitalist societies.

It is often argued that people's striving towards happiness is a vague idea, because they cannot accurately predict what will make them happy in life. So, it is not important to focus on that idea again. Instead it will be good to focus on the created wants and demands that may cause humans to associate money, goods and wealth with happiness. Why can't a

¹ Read, Rupert, *Philosophy For Life*, Continuum International Publishing Group, The Tower Building, 11 York Road, New York, 2007, p. 138.

poor human be as happy as a rich human? Most people of the modern society will opine that it is because the poor person can't have all the things they want. But assuming that the poor persons have what they need why should they want anything money can buy? Well they don't necessarily have to want anything, but society does its best to give people these desires, which is why they are called socially created or manufactured wants.

It may be mentioned here that 'How should I live?' and 'What sort of person should I be?' are said to be the two central questions in ethics, which could be answered in similar manner: 'Lead the life of a good human being' (Roger Teichmann, 2011).² This answer derives from the equation or association of 'good human being' with 'good human agent'. This answer also points to a substantive enquiry, into what actually constitutes the life of a good human being. Is this the same thing as a good life for a human being? It appears not. Because a good human being has suffered much evil, either natural evil or evil at the hands of others and sometimes for being a good human being; and surely the life of such a person is far from ideal, and could hardly be called a good life. This is certainly true if 'good life' means, roughly, a life which might (rationally, properly) be wished for (Roger Teichmann, 2011).³

"The Good Life" explores failure and success, freedom and discipline as elements - in equal measure - of the pursuit of the good life. Rev. Professor Peter J. Gomes introduces the four cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude, derived from the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, and concludes with an exploration of the three theological virtues - faith, hope, and love - which he calls "the content and expression of the good life." A good person, Gomes writes, "is one who is good at being a person, doing what is most good, most noble, and most pleasant." Yet Gomes draws a careful distinction between mere happiness and Aristotle's definition, which locates happiness as the result of good. "I've tried to suggest that happiness is by no means all there is to goodness," he said. It is perhaps because people are still living the good life that the present human society is still sustaining.

2. Meaning of Life:-

The meaning of life is a philosophical question concerning the significance of life or existence in general. In order to understand the meaning of life, it is important to raise some basic questions regarding the meaning of life such as "What is the significance of life?",

² ~~Teichmann, Roger, *Nature, Reason and the Good Life – Ethics for Human Beings*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2011, P. 131.~~

³ *Ibid.* p. 131.

What is the value of life?", "What are we living for?", "What is the purpose of human existence?" and "Why is a life called good life?" Many people have tried to answer all these questions from many different cultural and ideological backgrounds. Indeed, the issue of the meaning of life has been the subject of much philosophical speculation throughout human history.

It is said that the meaning of life is in the philosophical and religious conceptions of human existence, social ties, consciousness, and happiness. It borders on many other issues, such as symbolic meaning, ontology, value, purpose, ethics, good and evil, free will, the existence of one or multiple gods, conceptions of God, the soul, and the afterlife. A humanistic approach poses the question "What is the meaning of my life?" The value of the question pertaining to the purpose of life may coincide with the achievement of ultimate reality, or a feeling of oneness, or even a feeling of sacredness.

It may be pointed out that many major historical figures in philosophy have provided an answer to the question of what, if anything makes life meaningful, although they typically have not put it in these terms. Consider, for instance, Aristotle on the human function, Aquinas on the beatific vision, and Kant on the highest good. While these concepts have some bearing on happiness and morality, they are straightforwardly construed as accounts of which final ends a person ought to realize in order to have a life that matters.

Yet, if action A is done towards achieving goal B, then goal B also would have a goal, goal C, and goal C also would have a goal, and so would continue this pattern, until something stopped its infinite regression. In this regards, Aristotle's solution is the *Highest Good*, which is desirable for its own sake. It is its own goal. The Highest Good is not desirable for the sake of achieving some other good, and all other "goods" desirable for its sake. This involves achieving *eudaemonia*, usually translated as "happiness", "well-being", "flourishing", and "excellence". What is the highest good in all matters of action? To the name, there is almost complete agreement; for uneducated and educated alike call it happiness, and make happiness identical with the good life and successful living. They disagree, however, about the meaning of happiness.

Needless to mention that when the topic of the meaning of life comes up, people often pose one of two questions: "So, what is the meaning of life?" and "What are you talking about?" The literature can be divided in terms of which question it seeks to answer. This discussion starts off with works that address the latter, abstract question regarding the sense

of talk of “life's meaning,” i.e., that aim to clarify what we are asking when we pose the question of what, if anything, makes life meaningful. Afterward, it considers texts that provide answers to the more substantive question about the nature of meaning as a property. However, most recent discussions of meaning in life are attempts to capture in a single principle all the variegated conditions that can confer meaning on life. This survey focuses heavily on the articulation and evaluation of these theories of what would make life meaningful. It concludes by examining nihilist views that the conditions necessary for meaning in life do not obtain for any of us, i.e., that all our lives are meaningless.

One part of the field of life's meaning consists of the systematic attempt to clarify what people mean when they ask in virtue of what life has meaning. A large majority of those writing on life's meaning deem talk of it centrally to indicate a positive final value that an individual's life can exhibit. That is, comparatively few believe either that a meaningful life is a merely neutral quality, or that what is of key interest is the meaning of the human species or universe as a whole.

An uncontroversial element of the sense of “meaningfulness” is that it connotes a good that is conceptually distinct from happiness or rightness. First, to ask whether someone's life is meaningful is not one and the same as asking whether his life is happy or pleasant. A life in an experience or virtual reality machine could conceivably be happy but very few take it to be a *prima facie* candidate for meaningfulness. Indeed, many would say that talk of “meaning” by definition excludes the possibility of it coming from time spent in an experience machine. Furthermore, one's life logically could become meaningful precisely by sacrificing one's happiness, e.g., by helping others at the expense of one's self-interest. Second, asking whether a person's existence is significant is not identical to considering whether he or she has been morally upright; there seems to be ways to enhance meaning that have nothing to do with morality, at least impartially conceived, for instance, making a scientific discovery.

Of course, one might argue that a life would be meaningless if it were unhappy or immoral, particularly given Aristotelian conceptions of these disvalues. However, that is to posit a synthetic, substantive relationship between the concepts, and is far from indicating that speaking of “meaning in life” is analytically a matter of connoting ideas regarding happiness or rightness, which is what I am denying here. My point is that the question of what makes a life meaningful is conceptually distinct from the question of what makes a life

happy or moral, even if it turns out that the best answer to the question of meaning appeals to an answer to one of these other evaluative questions.

If talk about meaning in life is not by definition talk about happiness or rightness, then what is it about? There is as yet no consensus in the field. One answer is that a meaningful life is one that by definition has achieved choice-worthy purposes or involves satisfaction upon having done so. However, for such an analysis to clearly demarcate meaningfulness from happiness, it would be useful to modify it to indicate *which* purposes are germane to the former. On this score, some suggest that conceptual candidates for grounding meaning are purposes that not only have a positive value, but also render a life coherent, make it intelligible, or transcend animal nature.

Hence, talk of “life's meaning” is not necessarily about purposes, but is rather just a matter of referring to goods that are qualitatively superior, worthy of love and devotion, and appropriately awed. It is implausible to think that these criteria are satisfied by subjectivist appeals to whatever choices one ends up making or to whichever desires happen to be strongest for a given person.

Although relatively few have addressed the question of whether there exists a single, primary sense of “life's meaning,” the inability to find one so far might suggest that none exists. In that case, it could be that the field is united in virtue of addressing certain overlapping but not equivalent ideas that have family resemblances. Perhaps when we speak of “meaning in life,” we have in mind one or more of these related ideas: certain conditions that are worthy of great pride or admiration, values that warrant devotion and love, qualities that make a life intelligible, or ends apart from base pleasure that are particularly choice-worthy. Another possibility is that talk of “meaning in life” fails to exhibit even this degree of unity, and is instead a grab-bag of heterogeneous ideas.

As the field reflects more on the sense of “life's meaning,” it should not only try to ascertain in what respect it admits of unity, but also try to differentiate the concept of life's meaning from other, closely related ideas. For instance, the concept of a worthwhile life is probably not identical to that of a meaningful one. For instance, one would not be conceptually confused to claim that a meaningless life full of animal pleasures would be worth living. Furthermore, it seems that talk of a “meaningless life” does not simply connote the concept of an absurd, unreasonable, futile, or wasted life.

Fortunately the field does not need an extremely precise analysis of the concept of life's meaning (or definition of the phrase "life's meaning") in order to make progress on the substantive question of what life's meaning is. Knowing that meaningfulness analytically concerns a variable and gradient final good in a person's life that is conceptually distinct from happiness, rightness, and worthwhileness provides a certain amount of common ground.

The desire satisfaction theory explains why there are many models of a good life, rather than just a single one. What makes my life good may be very different from what does the trick for you, because you and I may not want the same things. Our deepest desires determine what counts as life's improvements or failures. On this line of thinking, nothing – not health, love, knowledge, or virtue – is an essential ingredient in making everyone's life better off. Whether our lives have been improved depends entirely on whether our desires have been fulfilled (Russ Shafer Landau, 2012).⁴

3. Theoretical Basis of the Good Life:-

Humans are animal beings first and rational beings second. These two aspects of the human beings are associated with the good life. Many philosophers talked about the good life. For example, the foundation of Plato's theory of the good life rests on the idea that everything has one function or use which it is naturally suited for. The justness, beauty, virtue and excellence of the particular thing all depends on the fulfilment of that function. According to this idea, even human has one function for which he or she is naturally suited. Human is, of course, a bit more complicated than a chair or a horse, so figuring out his or her proper function is by no means an easy task and one subject to much debate. For Plato, though, human's function is dictated by nature and thus objective. There is no relativism or subjectivism involved; each human cannot decide for himself or herself what his or her function is. Rather, there is one universal function dictated by nature that is the same for all people in all circumstances and situations.

It can be stated that Socrates endeavours to understand the meaning of morality, to discover a rational principle of right and wrong, a criterion by which to decide moral issues. The questions uppermost in his mind are: How shall I order my life? What is the rational way of living? How ought a reasoning being, a human being, to act? There must be more to the matter than that; there must be some principle, or standard, or good, which all rational

⁴ Landau, Shafer, Russ, *The Fundamentals Of Ethics*, Second Edition, New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 43.

creatures recognize and accept when they come to think the problem through, what is the good, what is the good for the sake of which all else is good, the highest good.

To Socrates, knowledge is both the necessary and sufficient condition of virtue: without knowledge virtue is impossible, and its possession insures virtuous action. "No man is voluntarily bad or involuntarily good". "No man voluntarily pursues evil or that which he thinks to be evil. To prefer evil to good is not in human nature; and when a man is compelled to choose between two evils, no one will choose the greater when he may have the less". With Socrates knowledge of right and wrong was not a mere theoretical opinion, but a firm practical conviction, a matter not only of the intellect, but of the will. Furthermore, virtue is not only good in itself; it is to a man's interest. The tendency of all honourable and useful actions is to make life painless and pleasant; hence the honourable is also the useful and good. Virtue and true happiness are identical; no one can be happy who is not temperate and brave and wise and just (Frank Thilly, 1994).⁵ Socrates said that knowledge is the highest good. The central thesis of the Socratic ethics is contained in the formula: "Knowledge is virtue". Right thinking is essential to right action and right action leads to the path of the good life

Plato was one of the earliest and most influential philosophers - mostly for idealism - a belief in the existence of universals. In the Theory of Forms, universals do not physically exist, like objects, but as heavenly forms. In *The Republic*, the Socrates character's dialogue describes the Form of the Good. In Platonism, the meaning of life is in attaining the highest form of knowledge, which is the Idea (Form) of the Good, from which all good and just things derive utility and value.

Aristotle, an apprentice of Plato, was another early and influential philosopher, who argued that ethical knowledge is not *certain* knowledge (such as metaphysics and epistemology), but is *general* knowledge. Because it is not a theoretical discipline, a person had to study and practice in order to become "good"; thus if the person were to become virtuous, he could not simply study what virtue *is*, he had to *be* virtuous, via virtuous activities. To do this, Aristotle established what is virtuous: Every skill and every inquiry, and similarly, every action and choice of action is thought to have some good as its object.

⁵ Thilly, Frank; *A History of Philosophy*, Central Publishing House, Allahabad, 1994, p. 71.

This is why the good has rightly been defined as the object of all endeavours. Everything is done with a goal, and that goal is "good".

In the *Republic* Plato argues that the proper use or function of man and his soul is to live justly and to achieve a state of unity and harmony. Man consists of several parts, each different and with different aims, goals and appetites. He lists the intellect, spirit/courage, and physical desires as the three parts of the soul, though he may simplify this for ease of understanding. That's irrelevant though, it's just important to conceptualize the soul as composed of several conflicting parts. But this state of conflict is undesirable and man must attempt to harmonize his soul. This can be done by teaching each part to perform its function as nature dictates, without interfering in the business of other parts. It is the job of reason in circumstances such as these to intervene with other aims, intent on balancing the soul, providing some satisfaction for all. When this is accomplished, when the parts of the soul are fulfilling their natural functions well and, under the guidance of reason, are in harmony and balance with the others, then the soul is just, unified, good and happy.

But for Plato this does not seem to be quite enough. This is an appropriate and fitting state of being, but surely just being is not performing one's natural function. A knife may be sharp, smooth, clean, well-balanced and of good size, but until it starts cutting it is not performing its function. And so the above description is not man's function, but merely the state of affairs or being required to properly perform his function. It is in the *Phaedo* and *Apology* that we get a sense of man's proper, natural function. He is to pursue knowledge, intelligence, and ultimate reality. This is the way man truly attains virtue and it is on par with the path of the gods. In *The Republic* Plato argues similarly, proposing that man is to search for the good and the other forms. In both these cases man's function is to use his mind/intellect/ reason in search of truth, knowledge and ultimate reality. In this way he will minimize its impediment and allow himself to pursue his true function to the maximum of his ability. And this quest and search is man's function and the only way to the good life. It depends on the justice and harmonization of the soul. Socrates even admits in *The Republic* that he himself knows not just what the good is, but he knows we should strive for it and the knowledge of it.

Human beings have an inherent drive and passion for finding absolution in what they deem the 'good life.' We are all striving towards it, the good life, happiness, well-being, a well-lived life, fulfilment. But what is it that makes us feel good? Though difficult to give a comprehensible definition, goodness is generally referred to as specific traits or properties of a real object or set of objects. More so, the concept of goodness can be divided into other, subsidiary concepts. That is, a series of events which lead to innate goodness. In essence, both are deemed circular and leave no meaningful definition for discussion.

The good life is a condition in which a person will be the most happy. Such happiness can be researched through a deductive perspective, which has been done by many philosophers over time. Two such philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, deem the good life as the state in which a person exhibits total virtue.

Humans, their characteristics and their activities can be evaluated in relation to the parts they play in human life. Alternatively saying, that every facet of human life can contribute to what is deemed good. Humans, being a subject of creation, ultimately entail goodness. Such a life is one in which actions someone does and feels leads to what is otherwise known as happiness. Such happiness is neither just an experience; nor is it found as a result of following moral laws. Rather, happiness is an activity. It is the events of the individual which lead to the life of good. Over time, philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle have tried to highlight the concept of goodness by defending various accounts. Such accounts do not require that a person who is well off merely experience any feelings of happiness or satisfaction. What they do require is that their desires are consciously fulfilled, which does not come down to the same thing.

Some thinkers like Cooper and Hutchinson write that Plato's argument for the good life is stemmed from love because through this, individuals can rid themselves of desires. That is, love is actually the quest for that good. Aristotle argues that the good life is different for each individual because it comes from living one's life according to one's virtues, and each person has different virtues.

Through analysis of their works, both Plato and Aristotle agree the good life is a demonstration of perfect virtue. However, they disagree on the particular definition of virtue and its relationship to happiness. Therefore, both disagree on the ways of attaining such happiness. Plato argues that a person will exhibit total virtue when their desires have been quenched, while Aristotle believes the perfect state of the individual will bring their ultimate

virtue. Plato sees the good life as being attained through the perfect love and lack of desire, while Aristotle believes that the good life is achieved through a perfect state which causes its citizens to act upon their virtues.

The original Platonic view of the world is that it is a two tiered place, the upper tier being the world of perfection, the lower tier being the world of reality, and love falling somewhere in between. The theory is that the plane of reality is an imperfect copy of the plane of perfection. According to the Platonic view, humans only see glimpses of the good while existing in the plane of reality.

Plato believes that love is the midpoint between reality and perfection, mortality and immortality. Love does not fall into the sphere of immortals and perfection because how could love be a god if he is not in possession of beautiful and good things? Since Love is the love of beautiful things, Love must have desires and therefore cannot be a god Yet Love is greater than mortals because love has and always will exist. Thus Love is a great spirit, a halfway point between the realms of existence.

To Plato, the good life is one in which a person exhibits perfect virtue and is therefore closer to the higher realm of existence. Virtue comes from the absence of desires, so true happiness means being satisfied to the point one does not have desires. This satisfaction and happiness occur when a person arrives at the mystical understanding of the world.

According to Plato, through Socrates' dialogue, love is the medium in which humans will attain the knowledge of the good, and come upon this understanding. It is human nature to seek out happiness, and ownership of good things makes one happy. In order to show that happiness lies in virtue, Aristotle first splits forms of the good into three parts, external goods, goods of the body, and goods of the soul. He goes on to say that goods of the soul (virtues) are the most important because with them, a person can gain material wealth and pleasure. Aristotle defines happiness and therefore the good life as the realisation and perfect exercise of excellence. This is subsequently referred to as *Eudaemonia*.

There are however three things that make men good and excellent; these are nature, habit and reason. The road to happiness is through formation of habit and reason which create virtuous action, in addition to possessing a nature that compliments them. Both Plato and Aristotle see happiness as being virtuous, but disagree on the nature of virtue, causing their ideas to follow varied paths. They do however meet at key points. Plato sees happiness as being close to godliness. By living virtuously one can obtain this godliness. To Aristotle,

happiness is the result of being virtuous because by being so, one obtains pleasure and external wealth. Plato and Aristotle further agree that education is the means to attain virtue, but they disagree on how a person should be educated because of their differing views on the cause of virtue. According to Aristotle, virtue comes from the agreement of the nature, habits and reason in a human's conscience. Therefore, Aristotle states that education should begin from birth and it should involve changing the child's habits and forming his reason so that their nature, habits and reason will align.

Another key agreement between Plato and Aristotle is the importance of interpersonal relationships in the quest for the good life. Both agree that interpersonal relationships account for the education of individuals, but Aristotle goes further because he sees attaining the good life as societal.

4. Good Life and Happiness:-

Good life and happiness are two concepts which closely associated with each other. What is the relation between living a good life and being happy? To many people, the good life is a financially prosperous life, and happiness lies in the possession of wealth. Worldly success is what counts, and anyone who is not 'successful' in the usual sense is counted a 'failure.' Others strive for a life based on honour and public recognition. A good life is made up of hobnobbing with the right people in the right settings, and happiness is a matter of gaining respect. Along with these, there are lives that show by their living a desire for glory or power that inspires great efforts. Others, who are not drawn to wealth, power or glory because of the difficulties involved in attaining them, may choose the pursuit of pleasure. A good and happy life is one in which pleasures outweigh the pains overall. When questions are asked about the good life and happiness. People constantly answer those questions with their lives, and we see many different ideas of the good life and happiness playing out in the strivings of human beings to live well and be happy in life.

Both Plato and Aristotle felt that happiness was an important factor of life. Plato's notion of happiness was significantly different from those with normal views. He spent as much time undermining the traditional understanding of the "good life" as to describing his own conception. Plato considered happiness as a state of flawlessness that is hard to apprehend because it is based on metaphysical presuppositions that appear unclear for ordinary understanding. Aristotle speaks of the "good life" as the happy life; he does not

mean that the “good life” is merely one of feeling happy or amused. Rather, as the “good life” for a person is the active life of functioning well in those ways that are essential and unique to humans. Aristotle’s idea of the “good life” is very similar to mine because my definition the “good life” is merely one with a balanced lifestyle, accomplished goals and dreams, receiving an education, and stability in all aspects of life. These similarities and differences can be observed by exploring what Aristotle and Plato taught.

Both Aristotle and Plato see the “good life” as the state in which a person exhibits total virtue. A virtue is total moral excellence. However, these philosophers disagree on the definition of virtue, and its relevance to happiness. Virtue is an essential component of the good life according to Aristotle. The “good life” cannot be identified with virtue because being virtuous is consistent with leading an inactive domicile or with suffering greatly. As Plato reasoned, total virtue shows only when his desires have been extinguished. Aristotle argues that the “good life” is different for each individual because each person will have different virtues. Plato sees the “good life” as being achieved through the perfect love and lack of desire, while Aristotle believes that the “good life” is achieved through a perfect state that causes its citizens to act upon their virtues Aristotle’s ideas seem more practical and easier to follow whereas Plato’s works seem more complicated.

Both Plato and Aristotle concur that a good education is the way to attain virtue, but they disagree on how a person should be educated because of his differing views on the cause of virtue. By the means of education only one’s potential can be used to maximum extent. People without morals will never do beneficial deeds in their life. A lack of morals in life is a huge problem. A person without morals is one who does not care to help others, who do not care to put themselves in other’s shoes, and who thinks he is better than everyone else. This is a common trait in wealthy people as well. However, not all wealthy people are like this. Those who are will never know what it is like to live a life a poor person lives, nor will they be concerned. They do not think it is necessary to give to the poor because they feel it is their own money. A person with a lack of morals cannot tell the difference between right and wrong. They have never been taught or never acknowledged true morals

It is to be pointed out that the ancient Greeks wished their friends to ‘do well’ and ‘fare well’ in this life. These two, they thought, held the keys to human felicity. Doing well concerns ourselves, our own actions and feelings. We have some control over these aspects of our lives. So when we wish someone to ‘do well’ in life, we express the hope that the person

will be moral and fair in his or her dealings with others. Beyond securing basic physical survival, someone who does well in life can sleep with a clear conscience, whether blessed with material success or not. From many a philosophical point of view, the good life has an intrinsically moral core that involves compassion for the suffering of others and acting justly in the world.

It follows from the above that 'Faring well' concerns events and occurrences over which we do not have so much control. "Faring well" means succeeding in life, coming into a prosperous condition, with all the benefits that come with money and social acceptance. Someone who is faring well in life has had a bit of good luck. It is possible to do everything right in order to succeed, but still fail to do so. For example, you can study hard for your degree, get your professional qualifications, work diligently, become competent, but still not succeed. The cards may not fall your way. As Sartre says, "You are free to try, but not to succeed." This seems right to me, and so I will come down with Aristotle against Plato on this point, that doing well is not all that is involved in attaining happiness in life.

Plato's Socrates famously says that the good person cannot be harmed, that virtue is knowledge, and that happiness consists entirely of doing well and being just. Aristotle argues that a degree of luck plays into our happiness. He insists that most of our happiness is in our own hands, but that it can be affected by outside circumstances. So while being happy is mostly a matter of 'doing well' (and 'thinking well'), great misfortunes can damage our happiness. It may be that such a person, by 'doing well,' will attain a degree of dignity in suffering, but he will not be happy; or, as Aristotle has it, 'blessed'.

In light of this result, it can be said that living a good life is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for happiness. In other words, it is possible to live a good life without being happy, but not happy without living a good life. This a 'philosophical' account of the relation because many philosophers have a particular idea of happiness and the good life that is not shared by everyone, with their emphasis on clarity of thought and sound reasoning. In addition, though philosophers recommend the philosophical life as both the happiest and the best, they are not in a position to legislate for everyone what happiness must be. Nevertheless, the traditional philosophical view is not without support. All we have to do is look at the results of many lives that strive for wealth, power, fame, glory or pleasure. So many disasters befall those who pursue a good life with no moral core, or reflective turn of

mind, that it makes some sense, as philosophers argue, to pursue the wisdom to recognize the good life, and, within that life, such happiness human beings can attain.

There are a variety of ways to live a good life, and hedonism explains why this is so: there are many paths to happiness. Can woodcutters, professional athletes, or musicians live very good lives? Not according to Plato and Aristotle, who thought that philosophical contemplation, were essential to a truly good life. Nowadays we are likely to reject such views as a narrow-minded and elitist. We think that people from all walks of life have the potential to be well-off. This democratic view about the prospects for the good life fits comfortably with the hedonistic outlook. Because the sources of happiness vary quite widely, and happiness is the key to a good life, there are many ways to live a good life. (Russ Shafer Landau, 2012).⁶

Hedonism offers us a kind of flexibility that some of its competitors lack. Many of these competitors identify a kind of activity, such as doing philosophy, as the greatest good. They then say that those who don't pursue it, or who pursue it badly, are unable to lead a good life. Hedonism rejects all such approaches. The best activity for human beings is the one that brings us the greatest happiness. But what makes me happy need not make you happy. So my recipe for the good life may be very different from yours.

5. Conclusion:-

In conclusion it can be said that living a good life is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for happiness. In other words, it is possible to live a good life without being happy, but not happy without living a good life. A life without happiness cannot be a good life. It also means that happiness is sufficient for a good life: When you are happy, your life is going well. The happier you are, the better your life is going for you. And the unhappier you are, the worse off you are. On this view, there is only a single thing that is intrinsically valuable: happiness. Everything else is valuable only to the extent that it makes us happy. Likewise, there is just one thing that is intrinsically bad: unhappiness. Unhappiness is the only thing that directly reduces our quality of life.

Thus, living a good life does not necessarily mean living a happy life, although most of the time, living good life and being happy go together. For a person may be leading a good life, still he may be unhappy. Living a good life usually involves self-control, sacrifice, toils

⁶ Landau, S.R., *The Fundamentals Of Ethics*, Second Edition, New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 24.

etc. Thus, good life is a sacrificial life. In fact, living a good life does not guarantee being happy in life. Living the good life is essential in the society. Good life is a virtuous life. To know how our lives can be better, we first need to know how they can be good. In other words, we need a standard that will tell us when our lives are going well for us. That standard will help us determine our level of *well-being*, or *welfare* in the society.

Many worldly things can improve our well-being, which can pave the way to a better life – they help to make it possible, and may, in some cases, even be indispensable to it. Philosophers call such things instrumental goods, things that are valuable because of the good things they bring about. If there are instrumental goods, then there must also be something worth pursuing for its own sake, whose goodness is self-contained, something valuable in its own right, even if it brings nothing else in its wake. Such things are intrinsically valuable. A good life is going to contain a lot of what is intrinsically valuable.

As the hedonist understands it, happiness is attitudinal pleasure: the positive attitude of enjoyment. It can range in intensity from mild contentment to elation. Being happy does not necessarily feel like anything; there is no special sensation or physical quality associated with happiness. I can enjoy a home-team victory or a beautiful painting without experiencing any physical pleasure (R.S. Landau, 2012).⁷ Happiness, understood from now on as enjoyment, is indeed a good candidate for an intrinsic value. It's not like a vaccination or a chocolate bar. If such things generate no benefits – if, say, the vaccination fails to protect you from disease, or if you hate chocolate, then there is nothing valuable about them. They are good, when they are, only because of the benefits they bring about. Thus they are only instrumentally good. Happiness isn't like that. It is worth pursuing for its own sake. It is valuable in its own right (R.S. Landau, 2012).⁸

This makes perfect sense if we assume that our individual desires hold the key to a good life. I prefer chocolate to vanilla, and you don't? Then chocolate makes me better off, and vanilla does not the same for you. You really, really want to collect igneous rocks? Splendid. Then you would better get your hands on some. But my life will go perfectly well without any. The desire satisfaction theory easily accounts for this: your life goes well to the extent that your desires are satisfied. Since people desire very different things, there is a wide

⁷ Landau, Shafer, Russ, *The Fundamentals Of Ethics*, Second Edition, New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 22.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 23.

variety of good lives (R.S. Landau, 2012).⁹ Every human should want to live the “good life.” People all around the world strive to live the “good life” each day. A good and happy life is one in which pleasures outweigh the pains overall. Many questions have been asked about the good life and happiness. People always answer those questions with their lives, and we see many different ideas of the good life and happiness playing out in the strivings of humanity to live well and be happy.

A balanced lifestyle is vital in living the “good life.” One’s lifestyle is made up of everything he does for example, work, school, social life, and of course personal time. A balanced lifestyle is a collection of all the activities and places that characterize who one is as a person. If one dwells over a stressful situation not only will they be able to see the good out of the situation but it could also lead to pain of any kind, heart disease, sleep problems, and depression. Keep in mind that there is always some good in every bad situation. In order to live the “good life” one must be able to handle stressful situations.

By the definition of the “good life,” discussed above, everyone must be positively stable in every aspect of life. Being financially stable provides a healthy and safe way of living. Plato agreed with this and said, "Lack of activity destroys the good condition of every human being. The “good life” is simply success though stability, accomplished goals and dreams, and a balanced lifestyle. Peace comes with contentment. Harmony is achieved through balance. Stability revolves around rationalization. The “good life” without either element; contentment, balanced rationalization cannot be achieved in its true essence. If we started to appreciate what is given to us we would truly see how easy it is to fully understand and live the “good life.” Let’s make the best out of our life for all in this modern global society. Let’s better ourselves so that we can make a difference and the entire society of the rational beings can live the “good life” as well.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 43.

Notes and References:-

- ¹ Read, Rupert, *Philosophy For Life*, Continuum International Publishing Group, The Tower Building, 11 York Road, New York, 2007, p. 138.
 - ² Teichmann, Roger, *Nature, Reason and the Good Life – Ethics for Human Beings*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2011, P. 131.
 - ³ *Ibid.* p. 131.
 - ⁴ Landau, Shafer, Russ, *The Fundamentals Of Ethics*, Second Edition, New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 43.
 - ⁵ Thilly, Frank; *A History of Philosophy*, Central Publishing House, Allahabad, 1994, p. 71.
 - ⁶ Landau, S.R., *The Fundamentals Of Ethics*, Second Edition, New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 24.
 - ⁷ Landau, Shafer, Russ, *The Fundamentals Of Ethics*, Second Edition, New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 22.
 - ⁸ *Ibid.* p. 23.
 - ⁹ *Ibid.* p. 43
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