UNIT I: Self from Various Perspectives

LESSON 5

**THE SELF FROM EASTERN AND WESTERN PERSPECTIVE**

**Learning Objectives**

1. Explain the Eastern and Western thoughts

2. Differentiate the concept of self from eastern and western perspectives

**Western Philosophy**

* Christianity
* Rational
* Scientific
* Logical schools

**Eastern Philosophy**

* Buddhism
* Confucianism
* Hinduism
* Integral Yoga
* Islam
* Taoism
* Zen

**WESTERN CONCEPT OF SELF**

**Four Categories of Self**

According to Frank Johnson

1. ***Analytic*** – the self is an observer separate and distinct from external objects

2. ***Monotheistic*** - tendency toward unitary explanations of phenomena and closed-system view of self

3. ***Individualistic*** - self-expression and self-actualization are important ways of establishing who one is, as well as in finding satisfaction in the world

4. ***Materialistic*** - tends to discredit explanations that do not use analytic-deductive modes of thinking

**EASTERN CONCEPT OF SELF**

***HINDUISM***

“Change your perception of the world to perceive the Brahman in oneself and in others”

**Vedas**

* The earliest religious writings in the East
* The chants and hymns in this writings illustrate the Eastern mindset of a non-dual universe but rather a creation that is completely unified with the creator, with no distinction.

***BRAHMAN***

* The divine universal consciousness encompassing the universe.
* This is the “self” that is all within us.

***BUDDHISM***

“Self is not an entity, a substance, or essence. Rather, the self is a dynamic process. It is independent and ever-changing.”

“Self is seen as a deception, born out of ignorance, trying to control things and human-centered needs. Source of all agonies”

**Anatta**

* A doctrine taught by Buddha which is often defined as “no-self or no-soul”
* This is a concept that the sense of being a permanent, autonomous “self” is an illusion. There is no eternal, unchanging “self or soul” inhabiting our bodies or living our lives.

***CONFUCIANISM***

”The quest for the “self” in terms of substance, of spirit, of body, or of essence does not exist”

**Four Beginnings**

According to Confucian Philosophy

1. Heart of Compassion

2. Heart of Righteousness

3. Heart of Propriety

4. Heart of Wisdom

**Perfection of Virtues**

According to Confucian Philosophy

1. ***Jen***. Goodwill, sympathy towards others, politeness, and generosity.

2. ***Yi.*** Righteousness and respect of duty; respecting your position as a guardian toward nature and humanity.

3. ***Li.*** Having the right to practice propriety in all that you do. Propriety involves not demonstrating your inner attitude in your outer expression.

4. ***Chih***. Wisdom; this wisdom is expressed by putting Jen, Yi, and Li into practice.

“Personality is an achieved state of moral excellence rather than a given human condition”

“Self-cultivation is the final purpose of life. “

**The Self as Embedded in Relationships and Through Spiritual Development in Confucian Thought**

**Confucian Tradition**

* **Self-Development** is a lifelong commitment to learning. It involves practicing discipline for the mind and body to love life not as isolated individual but as an active participant in the living community.
* By continually opening the self to others that the self maintains its wholeness and identity

***TAOISM***

“Self is not an extension of social relationship. Rather, the self is but one of the countless manifestations of Tao”

**Chuang-Tzu**

“The perfect man has no self; the spiritual man has no achievement; the true sage has no name”

***ISLAM***

“Self (*Nafs* in Arabic) is a structured, self-regulated, and changing psycho-spiritual system reflecting the spiritual experience and accomplishment.”

**INDIVIDUALISTIC AND COLLECTIVE SELF**

**Individualistic Self**

* Emphasize the moral worth of the individual
* Encourages asserting one’s goals and desires
* Highly values independence and self-reliance
* Values personal goals over group interest
* Emphasizes personal achievements and a rational assessment of both the beneficial and detrimental aspects of relationships with others

**Collective Self**

* Emphasizes the interdependence and harmonious relatedness with one another.
* Values social networks and fulfillment of social obligations.

**CLOSING THE GAP**

**Roy Baumeister** proposed that self-concept could be organized in the three aspects: private, public, and collective. This theory is one of the self-concept theories that attempted to close the gap between cultural concepts.

**Three Aspects of Self**

According to Baumeister

1. ***Private.*** Refers to the mental processes that perceive one’s own traits or behavior.

2. ***Public***. Refers to generalized view of self, such as the perception of how others view you.

3. ***Collective***. Refers to the view of self in a collective concept.

**LIVING PRINCIPLES**

**EAST**

“The perfect virtues are gravity, generosity of soul, sincerity, earnestness, and kindness”

* *Confucius*

Be satisfied with whatever you have and enjoy the same. When you come to know that you have everything and you are not short of anything, then the whole world will be yours.

* *Lao Tzu*

The thought manifests as the word: The word manifests as the deed; The deed develops into habit. And habit hardens into character. So, watch the thought and its ways with care, and let it spring from love born out of concern for all.

* *Buddha*

**WEST**

“One can live magnificently in this world if knows how to work and how to love.”

* *Leo Tolstoy*

“Refrain from doing ill; for one all-powerful reason, lest our children should copy our misdeeds; we are all too prone to imitate whatever is base and depraved.”

* *Juvenal*

“There is no real excellence in all this world which can be separated from right living.”

* *David Starr Jordan*