

# Congruity of Buddhist Psychology in Psychotherapy for Misguided Minds

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## Abstract

*Continuous upsurge in criminal activities against humanity raises several questions regarding behavioral practices and cognitive- consciousness of misguided minds. In the 1990s, western psychologists and behavioral scientists, performed different psychological studies and found out that the mental stability is everything and they claimed that the misguided mind could also be treated with the help of certain psychological practices. As a consequence, the word "psychotherapy" was coined, and the American Psychological Association approved a resolution on the effectiveness of psychotherapy in 2012, based on the definition provided by John C. Norcross. However, in this context, Buddhist teachings were relevant from ancient times. Buddha deeply investigates human emotions, feelings, actions, experiences, consciousness, and behavior. About 2500 years ago, Buddha provided treatment for the human mind or personality by his psychological practices which include different mindful pieces of training. Psychological practices proposed by Buddha are still relevant and help mankind in forming a better society. This paper is an analysis of the psyche of misguided and ill minds with the help of Buddhist psychology.*

**Keywords:** Psychology, Buddhism, Consciousness, psychotherapy, Mindfulness.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Human behavior and personality is very complex and vivid. A person's behavior is the result of various emotions and activities going on in his mind. Our brain is the one that manages all our actions. The study of human behavior and the mind is generally known as Psychology. It includes the examination of conscious and unconscious phenomena of mind, also it is the study of feelings and emotions. (LD, 2008) For many years' cognitive scientists have explored human behavior and mental processes, including cognition, emotions, feelings, perception, intelligence, brain functioning, and personality. (LD, 2008) With the help of research, psychologists found out that there is a certain connection between the mental functions of the individual and their social behavior. They also investigate the underlying cognitive functions and behavior of physiological and biological processes of the mind. (D.coon, 2008). Therefore, to deal with any sort of psychological disorder, the therapeutic practices performed on individuals are generally referred to as Psychotherapy. It is clear by some studies that misguided minds and their social behavior can be treated with the help of psychological practices. In this context, thousands of years ago, way more ahead of His time, Buddha propagates the analysis of the human mind and consciousness and puts it in front of the entire human race so that they can believe in mental healing. Although, an interface between Buddhist psychology and cognitive science began during the last three-decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The psychological approaches to treat cognitive disabilities in Buddha's teachings are extensive and His discourses on mindfulness are still relevant in modern times. (Silva, 2014) Buddha's foremost aim is to eliminate suffering. Buddhist ethics and philosophical teachings are most relevant in eliminating mental issues and lead misguided minds into conscious minds. Buddhist doctrines, ethics, theory of knowledge, theory of consciousness, and basic concepts of psychology of mind are some basic requirements for the understanding of Buddhist psychology. (Silva, 2014). Psychotherapy using therapeutic practices which includes Buddhist

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ethics, philosophy, and cognitive-behavioral psychology are the important factors to reform ill-minds.

## **2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Buddhism is generally considered the most ethical religion in the world. (Keown, 1996) Practicing Buddha's teaching protects one's mind from bad thoughts and deeds and reforms it to calm, compassionate state. (Tsering, 2006) The earliest interpretations of Buddhist psychology and philosophy appear in Abhidhamma, the third great section of the Pāli canon text. Particularly, Dhammasaṅgī and Paṭṭhāna are the two important books of Abhidhamma which depict all the systematic interpretations of philosophical terms and their psychological dimensions. (Thera N. , 1976) In general, through the ages, psychotherapy has been practiced by spiritual practitioners, philosophers, psychologists, profound experts, and individuals to mentally heal others. (Mijares, 2013) In psychotherapy, it is substantial that the patient has to uphold a cognitive state, where the conscious and unconscious believes reside in congruence. (Kawai, 2008) Psychological practices of Buddhism comprises of both Hinayāna and Mahāyāna tradition. They collectively emphasize on compassion, openness, self-discipline, self-liberation as well as helping others in attaining enlightenment. Buddhist psychology teaches mindfulness and its practitioners learn how to be conscious in each moment and cognitively manages their thought, feelings, and actions. (Mijares, 2013) Buddhist monks and instructors explain Buddhist principles and ethics with the help of illustrations. (Kawai, 2008) Buddhist ethics and morals provide a compendium for cognizance and remold the expression of anger, aggression, and violence to wisdom and internal peace. (Leifer, 2008) All religions of the world have already recognized that humans can change themselves with their thought processes and self-consciousness. (Lama T. D., 2019)

## **3 BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGICAL CAUSES OF MISGUIDED MINDS**

According to Buddhism, the purpose of human life is to achieve mental peace and equanimity. But, in today's world, every individual is dealing with mental stress, anxiety, insecurities, and fear, because of these vices, people indulge in different immoral activities, which harms an individual as well as society in general. Buddhism mentioned in one of his philosophical concepts that there is always a cause for every action and reaction. As in psychology, characteristics of mind and matter are apparent in Buddhist teachings. (Kawai, 2008) The units of mind or thought (sampayutta dhamma) and the units of matter (rūpa kalpa) comprise the mind and body. (W.F.Jayasuriya, 2016) The cognitive and non-cognitive components or mental factors comprise the thought or unit of mind. (citta and cetasikas). (Thera N. M., 1987) This cognitive element, as well as the mental components present in each instant of awareness, are indicative of four groupings or masses of mental elements (nāmakkhanda). According to Buddhist psychology, fifty-two mental elements include emotion, recognizing, clinging, ill-will, and many others. In Buddhist psychology, Citta is defined as the awareness of objects or the things we perceive. According to the nature of being conscious of the object, all kinds of consciousness are essentially the same. However, it can be categorised as 89 or 121 based on its plane of emergence, kind, related dhamma, material and spiritual, jhana, the object that receives. (W.F.Jayasuriya, 2016)

Citta or consciousness which arises in the plane of sensual pleasures is termed as Kāma vacara, which is further classified and explains the consciousness which arises and leads into ill-will or bad actions. There are 12 Akusala Kāma vacara Citta, which explains demeritorious, unwholesome, or immoral citta. Through its root, Akusala consciousness is divided into three types: Lobhamūla (sense of belonging rooted consciousness), Dosamūla (hatefulness rooted consciousness), and Mohamūla (ignorant rooted consciousness). (W.F.Jayasuriya, 2016) Mental causative agents such as attachment, hate, and delusion are at the origin of all

forms of akusala citta or consciousness. The six sorts of mental states, Lobha (attachment), Dosa (hate), Moha (delusion), Alobha (non-attachment), Adosa (non-hatred), and Amoha (non-delusion), are defined as 'Hetu' in the Abhidhamma treatise, which means circumstances that reinforce effects implicated such as tree root. The perception which departs from such a "hetu" is referred to as "ahetuka." It refers to a state of consciousness which is not present in "hetu." Akusala Vipāka is the awareness which arise as a consequence of Akusala citta. According to the basis from which the mind emerges and the function that the mind performs, the Akusala vipāka citta is divided into seven categories. (Thera N. M., 1987) According to base, the five Akusala Vipāka citta are Eye-consciousness accompanied by indifference (cakkhu- viññāṇa upekkhā saḥagata, ear-consciousness accompanied by indifference (Sota- viññāṇa upekkhā saḥagata), nose- consciousness accompanied by indifference (Ghāna- viññāṇa upekkhā saḥagata), tongue- consciousness accompanied by indifference (Jivhā- viññāṇa upekkhā saḥagata), body-consciousness accompanied by pain (Kāya- viññāṇa dukkha saḥagata). (Thera N. M., 1987) According to function, the other two Akusala Vipāka citta are receiving consciousness accompanied by indifference and investigating consciousness accompanied by pain. Mental factors responsible for the awakening of consciousness are termed cetasika. They are defined in Abhidhamma (Buddhist psychology) as the aspect of mind that apprehends the quality of an object and they have to color the mind. Within Buddhist psychology, the mental factors are categorized as formations concurrent with the mind, which also can be explained as 'concomitants of consciousness'. (Thera N. , 1976) In the classification, immoral mental factors or mental factors responsible for bad actions or deeds, Akusala Cetasika is subdivided into 14 which are moha (Ignorance), ahirika (Shamelessness), Anottappa (Fearlessness), Uddhacca (Restlessness), Lobha (Attachment), Ditthi (Wrong view), Māna (Conceit), Dosa (Hatred, Fear), Issā (Envy), Macchariya (Stinginess), Kukkuca (Remorse), Thina (Sloth), Middha (Torpor), Vicikicchā (Doubt). (Thera N. M., 1987) All forms of immoral mental states have the first four characteristics. All attachment-rooted consciousness has lobha, and some of them have ditthi and mana. The other four forms of hatred-rooted consciousness are quite prevalent. Thina and middha are correlated to attachment and hatred-based consciousness in some individuals. Vicikicchā is correlated to a state of consciousness which is generally associated with uncertainty. The 10 evils are those performed through the three avenues of action: the body, speech, and mind, and they include thoughts, words, and actions. Deception, badmouthing, using nasty words, and engaging in unproductive discussion are the four evil deeds committed by speech. Covetousness, hate, and having erroneous beliefs are the three wicked mental acts. (W.F.Jayasuriya, 2016)

#### **4 REMEDIAL PROCESSES OF PSYCHOTHERAPY BY VIRTUES OF BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY**

His Holiness Dalai Lama suggested that the key to human happiness lies in an individual's mind. (Lama H. H., 1999) Unquestionably, the biggest hindrances to our well-being and our capacity to carry on with a profoundly satisfying life, are our relentless affinities toward ruinous or afflictive feelings. The contribution of Buddhist psychology in the field of emotion studies, destructive emotions, treatment of depression, memory and mind, mind-body connection, and cognitive-behavioral science and related issues is very valuable. The developing associations between Buddhist ethics and moral psychology are a significant feature of the Buddhist-cognitive science interface. Evidence regarding our emotional process is continuously emerging from science, especially psychology and neuroscience, and studies suggest that it is possible to achieve meaningful change in our emotional and behavioral patterns through conscious effort. (Lama T. D., 2019). Over the years, scientists have been able to study the connection with higher cognitive functions in the brain, such as logical thinking (the prefrontal cortex), and all those areas known as limbic system, including amygdala in the form of almond

and which are linked with our most fundamental instinctive and emotional reactions. (Lama T. D., 2019) All mental states are believed to comprise both cognitive and feeling aspects to some extent in Buddhist psychology, and to contain five ubiquitous mental components, one of which is "feeling." Perception, desire, effort, and touch are the other four. The fundamental difference in modern psychology is typically established between emotional states which are delightful or euphoric and are referred to as positive and those that are unpleasant or agonizing and are considered as pessimistic. The dissimilarity in classical Buddhist psychology, on the other hand, is quite significant. Consequently, the fundamental distinction is between those states that are helpful and those that are harmful, rather than between those that are pleasurable and those that are unpleasant. "Afflictive" mental states, generally referred to as klesha in pāli, are those that have a negative influence on our long-term quality of life, but "non-afflictive" mental states do not. (Hua, 2003) A thorough understanding of pessimistic emotion's destructive nature, as well as the belief that we can and should seek to overcome it, is a vital component in developing an effective perspective of resistance to this. This perspective can be developed by focusing diligently, with sympathetic attention to the destructive consequences which these emotions have on our lives and the lives of those around us. (Akincano, 2009) We might analyze how such emotions—for example, anger and greed—are not just the root causes of many of our collective issues, such as war, hunger, and environmental destruction. Compassion and benevolence, perseverance towards the violators of abuse, compassion through the acquiescence of suffering, compassion through the quiet reflection of truth, tranquility, consciousness, magnanimity, philanthropy, Joy in the offering, ability to understand the consequence of sufferings, self-awareness, thoughtfulness, and cultivating inner values are some of the requirements for living a peaceful life. The Buddha's doctrines, notably his method of meditation, are aimed at achieving perfect mental health, serenity, and contentment. . (Rahula, 1959) The Buddha also established Buddhist social ethics, emphasizing the significance of family and societal peace. The Buddha advocated the cultivation of socially beneficial characteristics such as self-control (dāma), mental tranquilly (sama), and constraint (restraint) (niyama).(Rahula, 1959)

As previously mentioned, practicing virtues entails both a volitional effort to avoid committing these evils and the performance of moral actions that are their opposites. Therefore, one can prevent killing as well as protect a living organism, i.e., a sense of purpose from concern for its life; and one might resist generating strained sentiments amongst individuals and rather than promote equanimity and benevolence. Giving or philanthropy (dāna), moral behavior or habits (sīla), mindfulness (bhāvana), upholding the meritorious (apacayana), ministering to the befitting (veyāvvacca), offering validity (pattidāna), partaking of intrinsic value (pattnumodāna), experiencing the teaching (dhammasavana), and reassessment of false views (dhammadesan) are the ten positive moral acts (cetan sila). (W.F.Jayasuriya, 2016) Right thoughts, right resolve/aspiration, right speech, right action/conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration are the eight-fold Path (astangika-māgga) proposed by Buddha as a means to end suffering. (Rahula, 1959)

## **5 MODERN TRENDS IN MENTAL WELL-BEING USING BUDDHIST PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC PRACTICES**

In the context of spiritual psychology, the word "mindfulness" has been widely accepted. Some contemporary psychotherapy approaches based on "mindfulness" were developed in the late 1980s. Hakomi treatment was created in the early 1980s by Ron Kurtz (1934–2011). This might have been the first form of therapy to combine meditation with Buddhism's Divine Mindfulness and remedial physical activity. (Davids, 2016) Jon Kabat Zinn's Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), introduced at the University of Massachusetts Medical Centre in 1979, was a watershed event in cognitive behavioural therapy. (Kabat-Zinn, 1990) This book is recognized for being the first to integrate the notion of "mindfulness" into cognitive behavioural therapy. MBSR emerged as an unconventional therapy for chronic pain, and clinical research has shown that it reduced a variety of symptoms within the first decade of usage. MBSR is an assessment-based cognitive behaviour treatment that includes 8 weeks of Buddhist mindfulness practice. After the 8-week program, individuals continued to practice daily meditation. As a consequence, the MBSR program evolved into more than just a therapeutic application of meditation techniques, but also a part of these individuals' lives. Patients may not have a religious connection to this program as the three key symbols of Buddhism—Buddha, Buddha's teachings, and Buddhist Sangha are not present. Patients who continue a regular meditation practice, on the other hand, may represent the modern aspect of Buddhism, according to an instructor. In other words, for members of society who do not choose to become monks, this is a significant indication of Socially Engaged Buddhism. This is mirrored in Thich Nhat Hanh's prologue to the book, wherein he developed the concept "Socially Engaged Buddhism."

Under the guidance of Kabat-Zinn, Zindel V. Segal, J. Mark G. Williams, and John D. Teasdale analysed mindful meditation and developed Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) in 1987. This program is beneficial for preventing depression resurgence. (Segal ZV, 2002)

Marsha M. Linehan's Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) incorporates mindful meditation and psychoanalytical therapeutic interventions are based on Buddhist teachings. DBT is based on Zen Buddhist teachings on becoming aware of one's consciousness. This increased awareness is used by DBT counsellors to assist the client to recognize how their behaviour influence others and vice versa. DBT isn't just a "band-aid" way to address the issue. The most fundamental thing to understand about Dialectical Behaviour Therapy is that it is not a quick fix for drug addiction, alcoholism, or mental disorders. (Linehan, 1993) In his book Zen therapy, David Brazier addressed these issues for the first time. Following that, he merged psychotherapy, early Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, and Jodo-shin (pure land) Buddhism to create the Amida Trust, a charitable organization in England, whose efforts have spread to Spain, Canada, and Korea. Caroline Brazier wrote a book titled Buddhist psychology: Liberate your mind, accept life in the same context. (Brazier, 1996)

The relevance of cognitive distortions in depression and anxiety was recognized by psychiatrist Aaron T Beck, the developer of CBT or Cognitive Behavior Therapy. Since it is distinguished on cognitive and behavioral models of human behavior, Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) is one of the primary approaches of psychotherapy and represents an important category of psychodynamic psychotherapy. Lord Buddha developed a variety of cognitive remedies. In the tale of Kisagotami, the Buddha implemented a psychological method to reprimand (Cognitive Behavior Therapy) to provide enlightenment to a young mother who had lost her child. She had been devastated due to the immense loss. She went to Buddha, carrying her son's body, and pleaded for medication to bring him back to life. She was instructed by the Buddha to collect mustard seeds from a home where no one had died. Kisagotami went from the door - to - door, but she couldn't identify a single home where no one had died. She gradually realized

the significance of death and came to terms with it. She came to know that death is a universal occurrence. Buddhist psychotherapy is based on the Buddhist paradigm of psychological suffering (i.e., the noble fourfold truths) and the factors of mental suffering (attachment, eternality, and clinging to the reality of self). It incorporates self-awareness, judgment, perspective, and methods for reducing psychological distress. The human psyche, both dysfunctional and non-pathological, is discussed in Buddhist philosophy. Abhidhamma (the Buddha's higher teaching) analyses the cognitive development of human beings. Man is depicted in Abhidhamma as a behavioral creature conjured up of both consciousness and substance. (Davids, 2016)

## 6 CONCLUSION

To conclude, the problem of felons or society, in general, is complicated. In the end, the perpetrators are hostages of lobha, dosa, moha, and other negative mental states. They really aren't altogether atrocious, but when they lack awareness and are overpowered by these negative feelings, they are compelled to engage in unwholesome behaviour and attitude. As a consequence, they should be treated with sympathy and be reprimanded than guilty and punitive.

The comprehension of this natural rule is therefore beneficial for people to avoid difficulties and live their lives more responsibly. Whatever kind of punishment is used, it is preferable to treat wrong doers with humanity and offer them the opportunity to repair and repay their mistakes via constructive activity rather than imposing capital punishment or a life sentence. In terms of psychotherapy techniques, despite being a part of the penal system, psychotherapists have made a substantial contribution to offenders' well-being. Each patient's psychotherapy should be tailored to their circumstances, traits, and temperament, whether using contemporary technology or conventional methods. According to Buddhist belief, individuals can refrain from all unwholesome behaviors and live a virtuous and tranquil life if they practice mindfulness and thorough perception through meditation. However, their effectiveness is entirely dependent on their method of practice, effort, and patience; the harder they strive, the more freedom and happiness they achieve. One of the collective efforts that all Buddhists should perform for the wellbeing of all living creatures is psychotherapy.

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