The Benefits Of Perfecting Truthfulness

The Parami of Truthfulness expressly focuses on language, that is, the virtue of Right Speech on the Eightfold Path. The Pali word for truthfulness is sacca, and this term is contained within The Four Noble Truths, (The clear understanding of how reality operates, which ennobles the practitioner). Here is the quote from the ebook entitled “The Perfections Leading to Enlightenment” *by Sujin Boriharnwanaket, t*ranslated by Nina van Gorkom:

Truthfulness has the characteristic of non-deceptiveness in speech; its function is to verify in accordance with fact; its manifestation is excellence; honesty is its proximate cause.

Of course, the outward manifestation of truthfulness is speech, and speaking clearly and accurately is a fundamental support for interpersonal trust. I want to elaborate on the internal conditions supporting truthfulness.

The topic for discussion on July 12 doesn’t involve the Paramis—rather, the focus was on the similarities between Buddhism and Existentialism. Existentialism, particularly as presented by Sartre, describes the “*anguish*” (dukkha/distress and confusion) that all people experience when confronted by the responsibility of choice regarding beliefs and actions. This anguish can manifest as “*bad faith*”, (internal conflicts that I call “self-state conflicts”). The alternative is manifesting “*authenticity*”, which is the internal harmony between self-state organizations and outward behavior.

In Existential philosophy, everyone is confronted with *freedom*, that is, *the absence of any inherent or all-inclusive cultural values or behavioral norms.* This absence is termed “*absurdity*”, that is, not rational, (rational is defined as “a number that is not expressible as the ratio of two integers” according to Wiktionary).

As Buddhism explains this situation, *absurdity* represents the interdependence of reality, that is, the complexity of causative factors that can’t be rationalized realistically by humans. An important way Buddhism conceptualizes this complexity is *sunnata, voidness, the absence of an enduring and autonomous entity*. *Anguish* is *dukkha, that is, the manifestation of craving and clinging, with clinging being attachment to a particular rationalization about reality as ultimately true and permanent, and craving being the impulsive, reactive urgency in that regard. Bad Faith is craving and clinging.* Mindful investigation of the phenomena of craving and clinging plus intentional renunciation of attachment represents authenticity. *Authenticity doesn’t deny absurdity or the complexity of life—rather, the application of Right Intention, that is, the intention to be kind, compassionate, generous and equanimous imposes an ethical self-state organization that is responsibly responsive to the immediate requirements of human (and ecological) circumstances*.

The Parami of Truthfulness begins with clear awareness of how self-state organization comes to attention, followed by the authentic, existential choice to make real Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood. Perfecting this process involves ongoing mindful attention and effort.