



UNIVERSAL HUMAN VALUES AND ETHICS

Class Notes

ABSTRACT

A set of universal, rational, verifiable proposals about the human reality are systematically presented here. The self-exploration of these results in the discovery of the inherent relationship, harmony and co-existence facilitating transformation towards a holistic world vision and 'Human Consciousness'. It forms the essential content of universal human values or what is universally valuable for human being at the level of the individual, at the level of human-human relationship in family and society, at the level of human-nature relationship in societal systems as well as co-existence and mutual fulfilment in nature/existence leading to harmony within as well as a firm grounding for nature-friendly technologies and human-friendly systems.

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Class Notes for foundational courses on Universal Human Values which are presently being run by more than 40 universities and all AICTE affiliated colleges in India.

The course nomenclature may differ university to university.

Examples:

- AKTU has a 3-credit course “A Foundation Course on Human Values and Professional Ethics”
- AICTE’s Model Curriculum mentions this as a mandatory 3-credit course UHV-II: “Understanding Harmony”

We suggest universities use a common course name “A Foundation Course on Universal Human Values and Ethics”

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We consider the efforts towards integrating value education in the present education system and moving towards holistic value-based education as a worthy mission for the wellbeing of all. In this spirit, no royalty or fee is charged on this work.

These class notes for a foundation course in Universal Human Values and Ethics, are an outcome of the long-drawn search, visualization and experimentation by the authors and their colleagues in the UHV TEAM to evolve an effective and universally acceptable content and methodology for introducing value education in the present curricula of technical and other professional institutions. Thus, it is in response to a long-felt and urgent need to integrate education in human values with professional skills. A unique methodology focusing on the right understanding of the human reality vis-à-vis rest of existence has been systematically presented. This involves the discovery of the inherent harmony and co-existence in entire existence forming the basis of Universal Human Values and facilitating transformation towards holistic perception and ‘Human Consciousness’.

Starting with identification of basic human aspirations as happiness and prosperity in continuity, the discussion is focused on the appropriate programme to fulfill these enabling to live a fulfilling life. Understanding harmony at various levels starting from the human beings and spanning up to the whole existence forms the core contents of value education in These class notes. Finally, the important implications of ‘right understanding’ in life and profession are adequately elaborated.

Unlike the conventional treatment, the issues in professional ethics are analyzed in the context of right understanding thereby enabling the resolution of various ethical dilemmas. The main focus is on the development of the ethical competence in the individual through right understanding. The class notes conclude by proposing salient steps to undertake the journey towards holistic and value-based living.

Salient Features

- The prime focus is towards affecting a qualitative change in the consciousness of the reader, a change in the worldview rather than on mere information transfer.
- The whole content is presented in the form of proposals and the students are encouraged to self-explore and verify these on the basis of their natural acceptance and experiential validation.
- The style of presentation is in the form of a dialogue with ample repetition to assimilate the core concept.
- Each chapter starts with a recap of the previous understanding and ends with a crisp summary as well as a probing set of questions to test the grasp of subject matter, practice exercises to connect the proposals with real-life situation and some creative project work.

The class notes are supplemented with a Teacher’s Manual and a website. A model course syllabus is also given in the appendix to facilitate the teaching-learning process.

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Introduction

This material is based on the outcome of the long-drawn search, consultation and experimentation with a view to evolve an effective and universally acceptable methodology and content for integrating value education in the curricula of general, particularly technical/professional education. The first crucial step in this direction is to introduce a Foundation Course in Human Values and Professional Ethics for which these notes are prepared.

It may be emphasized that a unique approach of exploring the human reality vis-à-vis the rest of existence through a systematic process of self-exploration is proposed which naturally leads to the understanding of universal human values and ethical human conduct. Self-exploration on one hand enables the individual to gain right understanding in one's own right, and on the other hand, helps in self-evolution and life-long learning. It may be viewed as an effective process of value education.

Accordingly, the class notes are written in a way that it initiates a dialogue within the reader by systematically presenting proposals for exploration and facilitating the reader in the process of self-exploration. The whole discussion revolves around the central theme – **How to live a fulfilling life?** This exploration is a process of successively discovering and understanding the innate harmony at all levels in existence, living by which forms the basis for a fulfilling life.

These class notes have been divided into following four sections:

Section-I Introduction to Value Education

It comprises of chapters 1-4 which introduce the subject by explaining what is implied by Human Values and Value Education, highlighting the need, content, process and basic guidelines for education in human values. Then it elaborates on 'self-exploration' as the process for Value Education. In Chapter 3, the discussion begins with identification of basic human aspirations, as continuous happiness and prosperity; along with the basic requirement to fulfill these. The emphasis is on gaining correct perception about happiness and prosperity. The importance of 'right understanding' and the 'right programme' of living is highlighted which essentially involves understanding of harmony at various levels of living starting from the individual and spanning up to the whole existence. This becomes the real basis of understanding and assimilating universal human values in our day-to-day life.

Section-II Understanding the Harmony at Various Levels

It comprises of chapters 5-11, and forms the core section of the class notes, systematically facilitating the 'Understanding of Harmony at Various Levels' starting from Understanding Harmony in the Human Being and going over to Understanding the Harmony in the Family and in the Society which involves elaboration on human relationships and values; visualization of comprehensive human goal and its actualization in multiple domains of human activity. Next, the salient aspects of harmony in Nature and finally in entire existence are discussed. Thus, this section presents the crux of 'right understanding'.

Section-III Implications of the Right Understanding

It comprises of chapters 12-16 presenting the salient implications of the Right Understanding in life and profession. It is elaborated how the right understanding forms the basis of universal human values and definitiveness of ethical human conduct. The salient aspects of professional ethics are highlighted in the light of right understanding. It provides the vision for a holistic way of living – development of the holistic perception. Finally, the class notes are concluded with the indication of a few practical steps to facilitate transition from the present state towards the holistic way of living.

Towards the end of every chapter, a list of salient points is provided. The reader can go through the list and assure that one is now clear about all the important points. Also, an elaborate probing section on 'Test Your Understanding' has been appended with each chapter in order to evaluate your grasp of the subject matter.

Section-IV Appendices

At the end of the class notes, there are a few appendices which provide additional material supplementing the content discussed in the chapters.

Note to the Reader

As mentioned above, the main purpose of These class notes are to highlight the fact that to ensure 'living with fulfilment', it is essential to explore and understand the human reality vis-à-vis the rest of existence.

Therefore, the content of the class notes are a set of proposals which are neither meant to be memorised and reproduced, nor outrightly accepted or rejected, but rather gradually explored based on your natural acceptance. This will develop a dialogue within you – a dialogue between 'what you are' and 'what is naturally acceptable to you'. As you read the class notes, you may try to explore in this manner. As you proceed to explore, there may be a number of questions, most of which will gradually get resolved from within you in the course of self-exploration. It is important to realize that one feels assured only when the answer comes from within rather than being imposed from outside.

Our role is to draw your attention towards the proposals and help in initiating this process of self-exploration, self-verification in you. This process of self-exploration will lead to discovery of the values that are potentially there in you, i.e. it will lead to your self-evolution. With that, fulfilment of your basic aspirations is a natural outcome. This calls for sincere and focused effort on your part. For this, the following suggestions may be kept in mind as you go through the class notes.

Read with Awareness

Read with awareness, with a view to understand. Merely memorising something is not understanding. We have seen some reality; we have associated some meaning to it and we have represented that meaning with some words. These words are presented in the class notes as proposals. When you read a word, you associate some meaning to it. Is it the same meaning as intended by us? Further, you try to find the associated reality for yourself. If you are able to find the same reality as intended, the communication is successful. This may be understood as follows:

From authors: Reality $R_1 \rightarrow$ associating meaning to it $M_1 \rightarrow$ word W

To Readers: Reading the word $W \rightarrow$ associating meaning to it $M_2? \rightarrow$ seeing the reality $R_2?$

What is expected here is that $R_1=R_2$ for which M_1 has to be the same as M_2 . If you associate a different meaning or connect that meaning to a different reality, communication is not successful.

Let us take an example to illustrate. We want to convey the reality which is designated by the word 'chat' (W). You may already have some associated meaning for that word. It may be something like "it is a way to keep in touch with friends online" (M_2). You may, therefore, associate it with the reality 'chatting' (R_2). But here we are using the French word for cat, just to make the point clear about word, meaning and reality. The reality we are trying to communicate is the reality 'cat' (R_1). Is the reality you inferred from the word 'chat' the same as the intended reality (is $R_2 = R_1$)? Let us develop this example further, using the word 'chat'.

In order to convey the reality 'cat', we have written a word. Now, if you are acquainted with this word and the reality designated by the word, the word itself conveys the reality. If you are not acquainted by this word or the reality designated by it, we further add – 'Chat is an animal, a pet animal, an animal which is carnivorous and fond of catching and eating rats (M_2)'. This we will continue till you are able to identify the reality being indicated, by your direct observation or your past acquaintance with that reality. If we stop anywhere before this happens, you may miss the reality, i.e. there will be loss of communication. We are essentially describing some aspect of reality which you may already be acquainted with, i.e. we are helping you to get some idea as to what it may mean (so, we are helping to create some meaning associated with the word 'chat' in you), we go on building up these different aspects of reality, till you are able to identify the reality being conveyed. Then you say to yourself, 'yes, now I know what you are talking about'. That is an 'aha!' moment for you.

These class notes describes about the reality 'harmony' – the harmony in existence. You may or may not connect the word harmony with the existential harmony, so how do we communicate this reality

to you? And how do you see this reality yourself? We will do that by successively building the meaning of various aspects of the reality, just as we developed the description of the word 'chat' in the example above. We will describe various aspects (meanings) of harmony in successive chapters, and you can see those meanings in yourself first and grasp the reality yourself. All of us human beings have the innate potential to see, to know and that is what we are trying to address to. Chapters 5-7 are about the meaning of harmony that can be seen in human being, chapter 8 is about the meaning of harmony at the level of family, chapter 9 is about the meaning of harmony in society, chapter 10 is about the meaning of harmony at the level of nature and ultimately chapter 11 is about the meaning of harmony in existence. We are suggesting that you read with awareness and look at the proposals carefully to grasp the meaning being explained presently, and try to connect with the intended reality – the existential harmony. If you are able to see the existential reality, our joint effort to communicate it through These class notes are successful.

Avoid Jumps to Readymade Solutions

We sometimes tend to derive readymade solutions in different situations, trying to fit in some formula that will lead to a solution. What is being presented in the class notes are the basic understanding which underlies the solution in any situation. If the individual is able to get the understanding, one can design a life devoid of problems. As the problems vary from time to time, place to place, individual to individual; it is the responsibility of the person to work out one's own solutions. Understanding of values will help us in developing solutions which are mutually fulfilling in continuity. To facilitate this, a few examples have been given at appropriate places to enable you to relate the proposals to your life.

Avoid Comparing with Existing Beliefs/Notions

As such, all of us have long-held notions and beliefs of our own. They may be right or wrong, but we do believe them. If we are not cautiously aware, then we just tend to compare what is presented with our existing notions or beliefs. You may have one notion, but there may be something else intended here. Then how do you decide which one is true? Will you insist that only your present belief is right? Or, will you try to grasp what is being proposed here and explore it? And at the same time, will you also explore your present belief? What we are suggesting is to explore the proposals as well as to explore your own beliefs/notions. This will help you to check the validity of your own beliefs and assumptions as well.

Verify the Proposals (rather than agreeing or disagreeing)

On the basis of the comparison with our present beliefs/assumptions, we may agree or disagree with the proposal, but we will not be able to see the reality in this process. Hence, it has to be avoided.

Rather than agreeing or disagreeing, we are asking you to verify it.



We have placed a 'pause and think' symbol at several critical points in the class notes. Do try to spend some time to self-reflect, particularly at these points.

At the end of each chapter there is a portion called 'Test Your Understanding'. It has three parts. Section I is a set of questions to help you check how much you have grasped the concept presented in the chapter. Section II has practice exercises to help you connect the proposals with your day-to-day life. In section III, projects and modeling exercises are mentioned in which you can give a creative expression to your understanding. It will be desirable that you try as many of these exercises as you can before moving to the next chapter. When you have questions, write them down. It is possible that you are able to get a satisfactory answer from within as you explore further. In that case, mark the questions as answered. For the remaining questions further, self-exploration is required – you may like to re-read that particular topic, discuss with your teacher, visit the website, participate in a webinar or participate in a workshop. Definitely, it is more fulfilling to get answers to our fundamental questions from within.

You may notice that some statements, concepts and diagrams have been repeated in the class notes – this is to call attention to them time and again. They are meant to help you recap what has been already said and, in some cases, help you evaluate your beliefs which may be very sticky and obstructing you to see things as they really are!

To draw your attention to some points, we have mentioned certain problems such as the problem of domination in the family and society. These are not meant to be disruptive or to bring about in you a frustrating criticism of yourself or of others around, but rather, to draw your attention toward the root causes, i.e. living without awareness of some part of the reality.

To exemplify the proposals, we have used some examples and stories. These are meant to help you to connect the proposals to your living. They are not meant to be some ready-made solutions or do's and don'ts. Be aware not to get attached to the examples and miss the point!

In the class notes, the proposals are presented in a sequence. It will be desirable to go through them in the same sequence, simply because one set of proposals leads to the next. In a way, the whole class notes are a 'sentence' from the first page to the last page. Needless to say, reading the whole sentence in continuity will help in getting the meaning correctly.

Experientially Validate the Proposals

This self-exploration is an ongoing process. In the workshops, we usually say that “the workshop starts, but never ends”, because once you start exploring on your own right, it continues. It continues to be a tool for self-evolution. These proposals are not restricted to the class notes or the classroom! That is to say, the process of analysing, self-verification and mulling over the proposals can take place in our daily life. The good thing about value education is that you do not need a special lab for it – our whole life is the laboratory!

This exploration is for understanding which is for living with fulfilment. It must be clear that our ultimate aim is only this – living a life of mutual fulfilment – my fulfilment, the fulfilment of the other, and ultimately, the fulfilment of all. Living is the ultimate test of how much we have understood!

Now, we are ready to start exploring.

Chapter 1: Understanding Value Education

The topic of human values is normally discussed informally at various levels – in the family, in the society, in public lectures and now-a-days also through social media. Generally, it is found that in educational institutions, in schools and colleges, there are extra-curricular activities which tend to provide some value related inputs in bits and pieces. To provide a comprehensive understanding of Human Values, there is a need to make Value Education an essential part of our formal education curriculum. These class notes present the subject matter for a foundation course in value education which can become a regular part of the academic curriculum.

In this course, we shall be discussing certain fundamental issues which are important to all of us in our life – issues which directly relate to our happiness, our well-being and welfare, our goals, aspirations and our relationships. In a way, value education deals with something that is universally valuable to all of us, that is conducive to our individual and collective happiness and prosperity.

Let us first start with appreciating the need, the expanse and implications of such a subject.

Living a Fulfilling Life

Each one of us aspires to live a fulfilling life. For that, we make our roadmaps for a bright future which might include earning a lot of money, gaining power, attaining recognition, touring the world, having a loving family, ensuring harmonious relationships inside and outside the family, maintaining a healthy body, and so on. At the same time, we expect the environment to be pollution free, society to be free of crimes, nature to have abundance for all and peace everywhere. In fact, we want the life to be full of joy every moment.



It will be interesting to make a list of what all you require to live a fulfilling life!

Student life is expected to be the preparation for such a life. Now, it remains to be seen whether we really understand what a fulfilling life is. Can it be understood with definitiveness? Or, we will always have to plan just the next phase of life in an ad hoc manner, without being clear what we really want to be? Can it be understood through education? Can a formal course be a help on such issues? Or, will these always have to be dealt with at a personal level in bits and pieces? In order to find satisfactory answers to all these concerns, let us begin with understanding what a fulfilling life means.

As a proposal, just see if the following cater to a fulfilling life for you:

- There is a feeling of happiness within you, all the time.
- Your body is in good health.
- You are able to have what you require in terms of physical facility and you have a feeling of prosperity, all the time.
- You have good relations with everyone connected to you.
- There is peace and harmony in the society around you.
- You are able to co-exist with the nature and make effort for an environment in which there is no pollution or depletion of resources, and
- You are able to understand the salient aspects of your own reality as well as the rest of existence as it is.



See if all your desires fit in the above scheme or, is there something more that you require for fulfilment? Also check if every complaint that you may have is to do with the lack of fulfilment of one or more of these. Of course, if something is redundant above, it can be dropped.

This is essentially what you have been aspiring for, regardless of whether you have been successful in achieving it or not. Similarly, look back into your own actions and check whether you have been

making effort to achieve this or not. Reflect on this at the individual as well as at the collective levels – at the level of your family, your neighbourhood, your village/city, your country and so on. Thus, you will see that this basic aspiration is common to all. You are not the only one who aspires for a fulfilling life, but everyone else too. Now, if this happens to be a universal need for all human beings, would there not be a common programme for its fulfilment? Think over it.

Education for a Fulfilling Life

To understand what a fulfilling life means and to understand the programme to ensure it, there is need for appropriate education. Education is expected to be a process which prepares us to lead such a life. And only with such an expectation, a human being invests nearly one-fourth to one-third of one's lifetime in the process of being educated. While going through education, if we have the opportunity to get a holistic perspective about life and existence, the decisions taken by us will open channels for a happy and prosperous life. At this stage of life, while completing one's education, it is needful to gain clarity about what we really want to be, and to acquire competence to actualize it in life, visualizing clearly how one would like to see oneself, say, twenty years hence and further.

Take the case of relationship. Harmonious relationship is one important aspect of a happy life. Today, with fast life and changing social structure, sustaining harmonious relationships has become a challenge. Another important aspect is physical well-being and wealth. As you enter higher education, you may have two major milestones in front of you: career and marriage. Can there be some programme which can help you choose your career and spouse prudently? These are issues which may be of concern to each one of you.

Further, all of us live in a society. We are anyway related to the society. In fact, we are related to the whole world around us. We want fulfilling relations with all.

Even if there is a single relationship in which we find it difficult to ensure mutual happiness or mutual fulfilment, there appear to be only two options before us: either to ignore and forget the other or to feel stressed. Both of these options do not provide a mutually fulfilling solution. Can our education address such issues? Most of the time, it is found that youth read various books, discuss with friends, listen to talks and discourses to seek solutions to such issues which, at times, start appearing unsolvable. As a result, many of us are compelled to adopt piecemeal solutions, but that too has its own limitations.

Our society is of prime concern to us as our job or career or family are strongly connected to the society. When we get to know about negativity in day-to-day incidents around through the newspaper, news channels or social media, we start feeling more and more insecure and fearful. But this is not what we desire. Just ask yourself – do you want a fearful society or a fearless society? What is naturally acceptable to you? What is it that you aspire for?

Next comes the Nature around. We do feel agonized when we hear that pollution is rising, Earth's atmosphere is becoming warmer and warmer day by day, water table is going down, sea level is rising and coastal areas are sinking, food is getting contaminated, etc. Nowadays, we keep getting such messages on our gadgets every day. Certainly, this is neither good for us, the human beings, nor for the rest of the nature.

It may also be observed that on this Earth it is only the human being which goes through a long process of education, in the family, in the formal educational system and in the society. Formal education has been accepted as a basic human right; parents are motivated to send their children to schools and colleges; there is adequate institutional and learning infrastructure; teachers have been appointed and students are coming in fair numbers. All this effort has resulted in significant development of skills and information. Yet, it is the human being only who is creating so many problems on this planet. If one does not feel fulfilled within oneself, (s)he cannot be fulfilling for others

too. What remains to be addressed adequately in the present education system is this important aspect, i.e. fulfilment in human being.

As a human being, we have two important questions to resolve:

1. What to do?
2. How to do it?

A holistic education basically has to address both these aspects adequately. The domain of education which addresses the issues related to 'What to do?' is called Value Education. It gives us the clarity of our goal, our basic aspiration and the programme to fulfill the basic aspiration. The second domain which addresses the issues related to 'How to do?' is called Skill Education. It helps us learn skills, methods and techniques to implement the programme. Both are essential and complementary components of education, and need to be addressed properly.

Value Education

Looking at the list of aspirations for a fulfilling life which we discussed earlier, one can make out that ensuring such a life necessitates that we understand ourselves and everything around us, clearly identifying our relationship with everything around. When we try to fulfill our relationship with other human beings or any entity in the rest of nature, that defines my participation with the larger order. This participation constitutes the domain of human values.

The value of an entity is its participation in the larger order of which it is a part.

For example, the value of a pen is that it can write. Here writing is the participation of the pen in the bigger order in which it is present along with paper and human being. The value of an eye is that it can be used for seeing. The value of a vegetable plant is that it provides nutrition to animals and humans.

What is the value of a human being then? This question implies – what is the participation of a human being in the bigger order? For example, if your participation in the process of education is to understand what is being taught, your value is to make effort to understand. **The value of a human being is its natural or expected participation in the larger order – at the level of the individual, at the level of family, at the level of society and ultimately, at the level of nature/existence. It is interesting to note that you feel happy in the process of fulfilling your participation in the larger order.** In this example, if you understand what has been taught, you feel happy. The teacher also feels happy when you participate in understanding what is being taught.

For human being, this bigger order includes other human beings, plants, air, water, soil, animals, birds, etc., i.e. the entire nature/existence. The value of a human being is its participation in this entire nature/existence. Hence, to understand human values, we need to study the human reality along with all that is there in the entire nature/existence which constitutes the larger order. The role of human being is to understand and fulfil its relationship with each and every unit in the existence.

To understand human values, there is need for value education. We need to explore and understand things as they are; so that we are able to fulfill our participation with them. **The part of education that deals with the understanding of one's participation in the larger order, and thus ensuring it in living, is called as Value Education.** It forms the basis of the rest of education as well. Ultimately, the whole education needs to be value based. If it is not value based, it will not serve to fulfill the basic aspiration of the human being, i.e. a life of fulfilment. It can at most provide skills to a person to fulfill the need for physical facility, or so to say, make money, but the basic desire will remain untouched. A simple appraisal of the current state of the affairs shows that our life has become more focused on making money rather than ensuring a fulfilling life. This deficiency needs to be rectified by making education wholesome and conducive to a fulfilling life.

Skill Education

Skills (technology, management, medicine, etc.) are necessary in our life. Skills have been developed to such a fine extent in every area – in medicine, in production, in construction of bridges and buildings, in all kinds of transportation from bicycles to aeroplanes, in telecommunication and television, to name a few. The list is very large. Skills are definitely required. However, along with skills, it is essential to decide the purpose for which they are to be used. Can you see that?

Complementarity of Values and Skills

Let us reflect upon a few questions to understand the complementarity of values and skills: Will you use your communication and management skills for dominating over others or for mutual fulfilment, making friends? Will you use your medical skills for profiting from disease or for ensuring long-term health? Will you use your finance skills for ensuring equitable distribution of wealth or for profit-maximisation for a few? Will you use skills for nurturing others or for exploiting others and exploiting nature? Will you use the communication facilities that have been developed, particularly the mobile phones with extensive options, for providing human education to the people or for promoting consumerism and indulgence? We can see that skill is important, but it is more important to see the purpose the skill is used for.

We can see that skills are only a means to achieve a given purpose. While skills are required to achieve a particular purpose in an effective and efficient manner, it is not within the scope of technology, management, medicine, etc. to decide the purpose. This decision lies outside its scope. It thus becomes important to identify our purpose as human beings. Without this decision, skills can be aimless, directionless and can therefore, be put to any use – for constructive or destructive purposes.

For instance, students of technology will be studying, creating and implementing technologies. If they are getting trained on technology without deciding the purpose of human being, their technical skills could even prove counterproductive when used to dominate, exploit or harm others. We developed technology for harnessing atomic energy or nuclear energy. Now, how much of it has been used for welfare purpose and how much of it has been used for destructive purposes? It seems that we have generated enough nuclear weapons to destroy this Earth 30 times (needless to say that one cannot destroy the Earth more than once).

Taking another example – supposing we get convinced that for a happy life, the health of the Body is the basic requirement, we will learn skills to keep the Body healthy. Skills such as learning which food will keep the Body healthy which physical practices will keep the Body functioning properly, what would be the possible ways to do certain kinds of work with the Body? All these fall under the domain of skills. But along with it, it is crucial to understand for what purpose we shall be using our body; and this comes under the value domain.

As explained above, values and skills have to go hand in hand. There is an essential complementarity between the two for the success of any human endeavour towards the goal of living a fulfilling life.

Priority of Values over Skills

As elaborated above, values are required to decide “what to do”, while skills are required for “how to do”. Now, when we ask ourselves what would be the priority order, it is easy to see that “what to do” has to be decided first and then only we can think of “how to do” rather than the other way around. Can you see that?

For example, if you were to go to a railway station and ask for a ticket, the clerk would ask you where you want to go. But if you keep telling the clerk that you want the fastest train, the most comfortable train, the best air-conditioned train and all that, will it work? That is how many of the things we are doing today are happening! We are working out ways and means to go fast, to travel at supersonic speeds, but are we clear about where we want to go and what we will do when we reach there; and

if that will lead to our fulfilment or not? This is an important question that must be kept in the forefront of whatever we think and do.

Thus, can you see that values have a higher priority over skills even though both of these are essential for human welfare?

Appreciating the Need and Important Implications of Value Education

Having explored the complementarity and higher priority of value education in tandem with the skill education, we shall now highlight some of the important implications of value education to further substantiate its need. These include the following.

Correct Identification of Our Goals

Value education helps us to identify our goals appropriately. The questions such as the following need an authentic answer which can only come through Value Education.

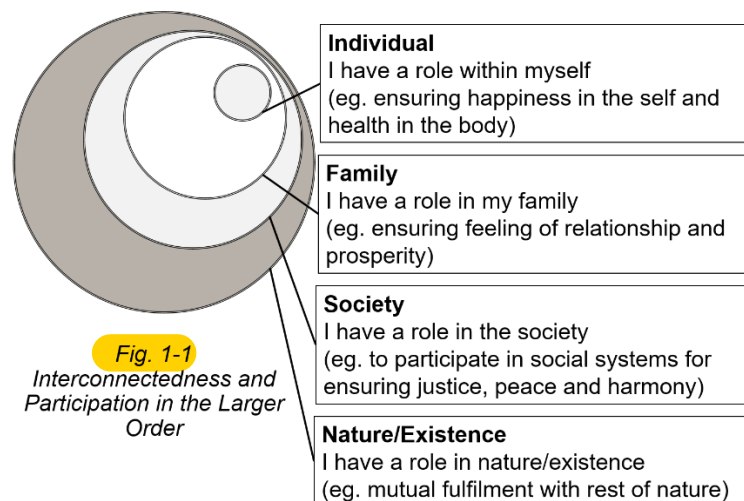
Can the goal of a human being be to accumulate as much wealth as possible or to ensure a prosperous life? Are accumulation of wealth and prosperity the same thing or different? Can the goal of a human being be to work just for sensual pleasures, and that too in continuity? Is the sensual pleasure and happiness the same thing or is it something different? Is our goal decided within oneself or by looking at others?

There are so many issues such as the ones mentioned above that we are struggling with. This leads to a state of dilemma. Deciding our goals with definiteness becomes a difficult task. In the successive chapters, we will start exploring into all these issues one by one systematically. It will help to develop the basis for you to decide your goals by yourself, and not under the influence of others. Just think that if your goal is also not your own but borrowed from others, will its achievement be fulfilling to you? Hence, it is important that at this stage of your life, you are able to correctly make out your goals with confidence.

As we proceed further, we will see that with the understanding of the human being, the nature and the harmony in relationship, it will be possible for us to know our participation as human being in every sphere of our living and therefore, understand our purpose, our goal appropriately. This calls for developing a holistic perspective.

Development of a Holistic Perspective

The outcome of value education is a holistic perspective with the clarity about human being (the one who understands), about the nature/existence of which we are an integral part as well as our participation in this nature/existence. This participation is our role, it is our purpose, it is our right, it is our responsibility and it is our value. In terms of day-to-day living, it means that we are able to see our role with respect to ourselves, with respect to the family, with respect to the society and with respect to nature/existence (fig. 1-1). We can also see that we feel happy when we fulfil our participation at any level.



We are interconnected, interrelated in this existence – from the smallest level to the whole cosmos. There is a chain of connectedness with mutual fulfilment at every level. With a holistic perspective we are able to see every little part of it. We can also see that our own existence is by virtue of this mutual fulfilment. It is the same for other human beings as well as all the units in nature, like air, water, plants and animals. The rich bio-diversity is fulfilling for us and is readily available to us without any effort from our side. It is like a gift of mutual fulfilment. All the wisdom, information and skills which the long human tradition has developed are also readily available to us without any effort from our side. This also develops a deep sense of gratitude for the society and ultimately for the whole existence.

In the light of the holistic perspective, we can understand that the nature or the existence is in harmony and there is relationship among all the units of nature, including human beings. We can now perceive that the harmony, the relationship is the running thread across all that exists, across all the units in nature – from a single atom to the whole cosmos. We can now see that, in fact, all these units, from atoms to cosmos, are the expressions of this harmony and relationship at different levels.

Clarity of Programme to Live with Holistic Perspective

We are all faced with many questions regarding our program of living, such as: what thoughts are naturally acceptable to me with which I would like to continue, what food will keep my body healthy which clothes will fulfil the need of my body better, what behaviour with my friends will sustain our relationship, how I can be a help to the other in my family, how I can participate in the college or neighbourhood or the society at large so that there is mutual fulfilment, what my role can be in maintaining the harmony of the environment which includes trees, air, water, etc. We all have such concerns and we keep struggling with confusion about all these aspects and the notions vary from person to person. Can we get a vision, a programme that can be holistic as well as universal? This will give us the clarity to work out the day-to-day programs.

Value Education provides us the vision which will help us to get answers to all these questions. We can see that this clarity of programme is necessary for our own state of happiness.

Evaluation of our Beliefs

Our conduct depends on what we understand or believe about ourselves, our family, the society and the nature around. Value education also helps us become aware of our own beliefs. Much of our behaviour or working is based on beliefs about which we are ourselves quite unaware of. These somehow become the guiding factors of the decisions of our life. Hence, it is important to evaluate our own beliefs sincerely. Of course, all beliefs are not wrong, but there may be many that are.

For example, if we believe that earning money is the ultimate goal of life and sensual pleasures are the only source of happiness, we make effort for accumulating money and indulging in sensual pleasures as much as possible. Like that, there may be many different beliefs and based on these beliefs, different programs for fulfilment.

One of these beliefs could be that the very design of nature is such that there is struggle for survival and the 'survival of the fittest'; and that human beings have to struggle their way through life. With this belief, invariably we think in terms of competition, instead of cooperation with human beings; we may even think of domination which may ultimately lead to fighting and even war. We may think in terms of accumulating more and more physical facility. For this we think of exploitation and mastery over rest of nature, instead of ensuring mutual enrichment. This may ultimately lead to resource depletion and environment pollution. We can see that the major problems that we see today in the society, have their seeds in the wrong beliefs that we have in us about ourselves and about the rest of nature.

Do you know for sure what exactly your beliefs are – about human being and about this nature/existence? Is there struggle for survival and survival of the fittest in nature? Is the cosmos in harmony or heading toward chaos? A belief is an assumption which we are not sure of, but since it has been reinforced over and over again, we also tend to hold it and repeat it. Inside, we also don't know, we are also not sure! On the other hand, understanding means knowing without doubt what it actually is.

At the collective level, the culture and civilization are characterized by the understanding or belief about these two entities: one about the human being, and the other about the nature/existence. The society propagates its understanding or beliefs through education to the next generation. Of course, here education means all the inputs that an individual absorbs from the family, the school/college as well as the larger society – through people, practices, festivals, media, etc.

Find out if you are getting these inputs. Find out if you are drawing some conclusions out of these inputs. Find out if you are setting your goals with these inputs.



Solution of Existing Problems

If we understand our participation (human values) and live by them in the complete expanse of our being (from ourselves to family, to society and to the entire nature), it will lead to a fulfilling life for ourselves and fulfilling for all around. The problems, including wrong beliefs, are mainly because we do not have understanding and we are not making enough effort for it.

Once we have a holistic perspective and the clarity of the programme to live by it, we are able to realise that most of the existing problems are actually symptoms and consequences of our wrong beliefs. Then, in due course of time, we will be able to root them out, not only at the personal level, but also at the family level, in our workplace, at societal level and in our interaction with the rest of nature. With right understanding of things, we are better able to define our role in different phases of life and work accordingly. One thing that happens with such inputs is that we do not create problems for ourselves or others; secondly, we are able to resolve the existing problems at different levels of our living; and thirdly, we are able to lay down a programme, whatever be the scale which does ensure fulfilment for all. Thus, we are able to participate in the collective fulfilment of the society around.

Development of Ethical Competence

Ethics is the expression of definite human conduct in one's behaviour, work or participation in the larger order. It is easy to appreciate that the core purpose of value education is to develop ethical competence among human beings which will reflect in all their pursuits. The problem of unethical conduct in various professions which is becoming a grave menace almost everywhere, can also be tackled effectively by focussing attention on development of ethical competence through human value education. We shall discuss in detail about the salient implications of value education in context with professional ethics in the third section of the class notes.

Guidelines for Value Education

Now that we have identified the need and implications of value education, let us visualize certain effective and widely acceptable guidelines which will enable the introduction of value education in the present academic system. Given below are the broad guidelines:

Universal

Whatever we study as value education has to be universally applicable to all human beings and be true at all times and all places. This implies that it should not change depending upon sect, creed, nationality and gender, etc. It has to deal with universal human values.

For example, the feeling of respect in relationship is something universal, so it can be a part of value education.

Rational

It has to be amenable to reasoning and not based on dogmas or blind beliefs. It should be open to address the related questions. It cannot be a set of sermons or do's and don'ts.

Natural and Verifiable

We want to study something that is natural to us. Being natural means, it has to be acceptable in a natural manner. When we live on the basis of such values that are natural to us, it leads to mutual fulfilment. It leads to our happiness and it is also conducive to the happiness of other people we interact with, as well as enriching for other units in nature. We also want to verify these values ourselves, i.e. we don't want to assume something just because it is being stated here; rather, each one of us wants to verify these to find out whether they are true for us. This can be done by both checking for validity within ourselves, as well as something which we can implement in our living and observe its outcome.

All Encompassing

The content of value education has to cover all dimensions of our being (thought, behaviour, work and understanding) as well as all levels of our living (individual, family, society and nature/existence). It is not merely an intellectual exercise or information transfer.

Leading to Harmony

Finally, value education has to enable us to be in harmony within and in harmony with others. Hence, when we live on the basis of these values, we start observing that it leads to harmony in us and harmony in our interactions with other humans and the rest of nature.

Content of Value Education

We have seen that the value of a human being is the participation of the human being in the larger existential order. Hence, to understand human values, we need to study human being along with all that is there in the existence. The role of human being is the relationship with each and every unit in the existence. That means the scope of study has to be all encompassing, i.e.

- It covers all dimensions of human being – thought, behaviour, work and realisation.
- It covers all levels of human living – individual, family, society, nature and existence.

Accordingly, the content of Value Education has to be to understand human being, human aspirations, happiness; understand the goal of human life comprehensively; understand the other entities in nature, the innate inter-connectedness, the harmony in the nature/existence and finally the role of human being in this nature/existence. Hence, it has to encompass understanding of harmony at various levels, namely, individual, family, society, nature and existence, and finally, learning to live in accordance with this understanding by being aware of one's thought, behaviour and work.

Process of Value Education – Self-exploration

Human Values can be understood by an appropriate process of self-discovery, because they are potentially there in each and every human being. There is already a natural acceptance for values in a human being. It is only that we have to discover them or become aware of them. For example, if you are asked, what is naturally acceptable to you: the feeling of relationship or feeling of opposition with other members of your family? Just observe within for the answer. The natural response is feeling of relationship. This feeling of relationship is a value for us. In this discussion, this feeling was not created in you. You already had the acceptance for it. It was only uncovered by drawing your attention within through the question for exploration. Hence, to study human values, the process has to be such that it develops a process of self-exploration in you. Taking every statement as a proposal, you are able to investigate the reality by yourself. Value education is not a set of do's and don'ts or a set of sermons. It rather is a process of self-exploration and self-investigation. This will be further elaborated in the next chapter.

Salient Points

- We are all seeking and working for a fulfilling, harmonious life. It is something we consider valuable, something of value.
- The value of any entity is its participation in the larger order of which it is a part. With a holistic perspective, we can see that a human being participates at the level of individual as well as at the levels of family, society and nature/existence. The value of a human being is its participation that leads to harmony at all these levels.
- Value education is that part of education which deals with understanding one's participation in the larger order, and thus ensuring it in living.
- It is essential that any content on value education be universal, rational, natural, verifiable, all-encompassing and leading to harmony.
- The content of value education must be all encompassing, i.e. it must include all dimensions of a human being as well as all levels of human living.
- The process of value education is essentially a process of self-exploration (self-reflection and self-discovery). Self-exploration includes self-verification at the level of natural acceptance and experiential validation in living.
- Ethics is the expression of definite human conduct in one's behaviour, work or participation in the larger order which is a result of right understanding about ourselves vis-à-vis rest of nature.
- Development of ethical competence in the individual is the way to ensure professional ethics.

Test Your Understanding

Part 1: Questions for Self-evaluation

(Have we grasped the basic proposals made in this chapter?)

1. Define Value. Explain the Value of a Human Being with a few examples.
2. Define Skill. Elaborate on it with a few examples. Highlight the differences between Values and Skills.
3. As mentioned in the chapter, as a human being, we have two important questions to resolve:
 - a. What to do?
 - b. How to do?Elaborate on the meaning of these two questions with a few examples.
4. Describe the two domains of education. How are they complementary? How do they assist in living a fulfilling life?
5. What is the content of Value Education? Discuss the need for it in technical and other professional institutions.
6. Explain the basic guidelines for Value Education. What is the need for these guidelines?
7. List any three implications of Value Education. Explain how they are related to your life.
8. Describe the process of Value Education.

9. Define ethics. How are values and ethics related?

Part 2: Practice Exercises for Self-exploration

(To help connect the content to one's life, at least at the level of thought, these exercises may be done individually or in a group, particularly with friends and family members)

1. What does a fulfilling life mean for you? List out the top five points that occur to you when you think of a fulfilling life. While making the list, please consider your entire life, not just the present stage of your life (youth, middle age, old age, etc.).
2. Choose any five things that you consider as human values. Now write all the basic guidelines, and check if you they satisfy the basic guidelines.
(Hint: Someone may say Trust is a human value. Now check if it satisfies the basic guidelines).
3. Is it important for you to know about the value of a human being? Can you see that skill development and value education are both essential for you? Write about the kind of education you feel is essential for you. What outcome do you expect from it?
(Hint: Education includes all the inputs you get from family, school/college and society. You understand something or learn something from these inputs).
4. Make a list of your desires – we will keep referring to this.

Part 3: Projects and Modelling Exercises

You may like to revisit this part of Test Your Understanding after reading through the complete class notes once and self-exploring all the key proposals. With that, you may have some (or many) aha! moments in which something clicks for you, you understand a proposal. What you have understood may be expressed in various creative ways which appeal to different people. This part is for you to give a creative expression to your understanding. Of course, you can do this in a group also. Creative expressions may be in the form of sketches, drawings, paintings, clay models, sculptures, songs, poems, music, dance, audios, videos, games, puzzles, stories, skits, plays, dramas, charts, diagrams, plans, survey questionnaires, blogs, something on social media and so on. It is the story of your own life – and it matters. While some hints are given above, please feel free to share your real aha's in your own way!

“When I fulfil my participation in even the smallest of ways, I feel happy! It is as simple as that. I just have to figure out my natural participation in every aspect of my life, develop my competence to fulfil my participation and just do it! That is my ultimate autonomy, freedom and happiness”!

Part 4: Your Questions

Write down your questions or doubts in your note-book. If any of the previous questions have been clarified by your self-exploration of the proposals so far, please mark them as answered. We would like to discuss the questions remaining unanswered in your self-exploration.

Chapter 2: Self-exploration as the Process for Value Education

Recap

In chapter 1, we discussed the need, basic guidelines, content and process of value education. We saw that the value of any entity is its participation in the larger order. As a human being, we feel happy when we are fulfilling our participation, our role i.e. we feel happy when we are living in accordance with our value (i.e. living in harmony within, living in harmony with other human being as well as with every unit in nature/ existence). Value education is about understanding our values and living accordingly. We also mentioned that the process for value education is self-exploration.

In this chapter, we will elaborate on the process of self-exploration with the help of some examples.

What is Self-exploration?

Let us begin by understanding what is meant by self-exploration. It is a process of seeing the truth about a reality on our own right, by our own investigation, observation and analysis. Through this process, we are trying to understand the reality that exists and our participation with it, which we are calling values. It is for you to decide what is valuable for you and what is not. Whatever is given in the class notes is just a proposal for you for your self-verification.

Now, how do we verify a proposal? Do we compare it with our existing notions, existing beliefs? Do we compare it with what we have heard or read? Is such a process assuring for us?

The first step is to verify the given proposal on your own right by referring it to your 'natural acceptance'. If the proposal is naturally acceptable to you, it is right for you. If it is not naturally acceptable to you, it is not right for you.

For example, if you ask yourself, what is naturally acceptable to you – 'to be in relationship with your family members?' or 'to be in opposition with them?' The answer may be obvious and quite spontaneous. How did you get this answer? You see, we have such answers within. We don't have to learn them or get them from outside or refer to some instrument! We are calling this faculty as natural acceptance. It is naturally a part and parcel of our being. We only need to start referring to it. Each one of us i.e. every human being has this faculty of natural acceptance and therefore, the potential for self-exploration. We do not need any special qualification for it. We only have to start exercising this capacity to convert our potential into competence.

Naturally, we want to be in relationship with our family members, regardless of the way they are living or we are living. It is something that each one of us can easily verify. Many a time, we might be living with a feeling of opposition, even with our family members, but that is not naturally acceptable to us. With a feeling of opposition, we feel uncomfortable within and want to resolve the situation. It is the feeling of relationship only that we always aspire for.

Further, self-exploration is a process of dialogue. To begin with, it is initiated as a dialogue between us and you. These class notes systematically presents a series of proposals for your exploration. As you explore, you try to verify the proposals and start asking these questions to yourself. Then, it turns into a dialogue within your own Self.

The Dialogue Within

Let us look at the dialogue within. It is a dialogue between “what I am” and “what is naturally acceptable to me” (refer to fig. 2-1).



Fig. 2-1. The Dialogue Within

Try to see your present state. Find out if,

- you are clear about your natural acceptance and whether that is guiding you or,
- you are not very clear about your natural acceptance and you are deciding on some other basis.

Many a time, there is a gap between what you really want to do and what you actually do. Find out if there are occasions when you end up saying “I did not mean to say...” or thinking “Oh! How could I have done something like this? I really did not mean to do it”. This kind of dichotomy is uncomfortable to us because there is some basic issue that needs to be resolved. Normally, we may not be able to do anything to address these contradictions. Here we are trying to get to the basic issues, so they can be resolved.

“What I am” has to do with my desires, my thoughts, my expectations, my imagination and all that is going on within me (refer to fig. 2-2). It includes the way I feel, the way I think, how I make decisions, what I expect from others and all that. It is my current competence on the basis of which I live.

“What is naturally acceptable to me” is my natural acceptance. It is my intention. It is “what I really want to be”. It is a basic reference which is a part and parcel of every human being. We may or may not be referring to it at present, but it is always there. I may or may not be living according to it, but I can see “what I really want to be”. For example, we can easily see that we want to live in relationship, we want our bodies to be healthy and so on. That is our natural acceptance.

We may be largely unaware of ourselves, i.e. own desires, assumptions, beliefs and pre-conditionings etc. Now, if you have to look at “what you are”, if you have to look at your own desires, thoughts and expectations, if you have to see your imagination, where do you have to look – within yourself or outside yourself? Of course, you have to look within. Similarly, to see “what is naturally acceptable to you”, you have to look within. These are two realities within each one of us.

Earlier in this chapter, we asked what is naturally acceptable to you – “to be in relationship with your family members” or “to be in opposition with them”? You can see what is naturally acceptable to you. Also, when you look at “what you are”, what do you find? Do you think of relationship all the time? Or sometime you think of relationship and sometime you think of opposition? Or you think of opposition all the time? Only you can see what you are, what is going on within you.

When you are able to see both these realities, you can find out if they are same or they are different, whether they are in harmony or they are in contradiction. This is the dialogue within. You may well ask as to why this is important.

Let us take an example to find out. Let us say that you are thinking of taking revenge from someone. After two hours of thinking how to take revenge, you drop the idea. Now, during these two hours, were you comfortable within or uncomfortable within?

Not at all comfortable, isn't it? You dropped the idea, so nothing was expressed to the other person, but what about you? You made yourself uncomfortable for two hours! We can see, when we are thinking of taking revenge from someone, we have a feeling of opposition in us. Since this feeling of opposition is not naturally acceptable to us; what we are feeling and thinking is in contradiction with our natural acceptance. We are uncomfortable because of this contradiction. Like that any

contradiction, between “what you are” and “what is naturally acceptable to you”, will be a source of discomfort for you.

This dialogue within yourself is in terms of first finding out, “what is naturally acceptable to you” and then finding out “what you are”. After that it is about finding out whether “what you are” is in line with your natural acceptance or it is in contradiction with your natural acceptance. This is the meaning of dialogue within oneself. We are trying to initiate and facilitate the process of dialogue within you. We are trying to give the right proposals which you can verify and find out whether these are naturally acceptable to you or not.

Once that dialogue starts in you, you will yourself start asking the question whether your desires, thoughts are in line with your natural acceptance or are they not in line with your natural acceptance, whether they are in harmony or in contradiction. We have already seen that when they are in contradiction, we are uncomfortable within. We will further see that when they are in harmony, we are comfortable within. Once this dialogue within ourselves has been established, we start to be in harmony within. The very process of being in this dialogue starts facilitating one’s self-evolution and we start becoming more and more comfortable within.

Now let us see what happens when you are in harmony within. Let us say, you have a feeling of relationship and you are thinking of relationship. Since your natural acceptance is also for relationship, you are in harmony within – “what you are” is in line with “what is naturally acceptable to you”. Like this, when you are in harmony within, you are comfortable within. Try to observe whether you feel happy or unhappy.

Every time we do something that is not naturally acceptable to us, there is a contradiction in us. We don’t even have to carry out the action – just thinking of something that is not naturally acceptable is enough to create that state of conflict within us. Let us recall the example of thinking about revenge for two hours. We saw that we were uncomfortable within. That is because “what I am” was in contradiction with “what is naturally acceptable to me”. This contradiction within is leading to a state of unhappiness.

However, much of the time, we may not be aware of ourselves – of “what is naturally acceptable to me” or of “what I am”. Also, the internal dialogue between these two may or may not be taking place. Now, if you pay attention, you can:

- Become aware of “what is naturally acceptable to you”
- Become aware of “what you are”, what you are feeling, what you are thinking (of your desires, thoughts and expectations)
- Start/strengthen the dialogue between the two by asking “is ‘what I am’ in harmony with ‘what is naturally acceptable to me’”?

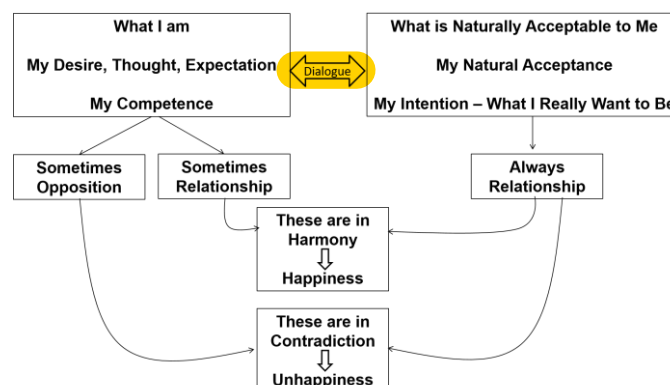


Fig. 2-2. 'What I Am' and 'What I Really Want to Be'

When we are in harmony within, we are in state of happiness. When we are in a state of contradiction within, we are in the state of unhappiness. Therefore:

Happiness is to be in a state of harmony.

Unhappiness is to be forced to be in a state of contradiction.

We don't want to be in contradiction, so whenever there is contradiction, we want to run away from it; but if we cannot run away, and if we are forced to be in that state, we call it unhappiness.

It is possible for each one of us to do this self-exploration. The dialogue within constitutes the major part of it.

Let us now identify the content of self-exploration and also look at the process in more detail.

The Content for Self-exploration

What should be the content for self-exploration?

Whatever is essential for us to understand for moving towards a fulfilling life should naturally form the content for self-exploration. Isn't it?

Thus, the content for self-exploration basically has the following two sub-parts:

- a) Desire: What is our basic aspiration?
- b) Programme: What is the way to fulfil this basic aspiration?

First, we want to explore into our desire as a human being, and second, we want to explore into the programme to ensure the fulfilment of that desire. The desire is essentially the basic aspiration, the aim, the objective, the purpose, what we want to achieve – what is our goal. The programme is the process of achieving the desire, the action to achieve our goal.

Are both these questions important for you? Is it important for you to find out what your basic aspiration is? Is it important to find out the programme for the fulfilment of your basic aspiration?

These are two important questions for any human being. Now let us see, if we have answers to both these questions, are there any more questions that we are left with? That is to say, if we know our basic aspiration and we know the programme of fulfilment of our basic aspiration, what other questions are we left with?

If we can get the answer to these two questions, practically all our questions are answered! In fact, most of the questions that we have generated are because of the lack of clarity of these two. If we get the answers to these two questions, we only have to act!

The Process of Self-exploration

We have already started identifying the process of self-exploration. Now we can look at it in more detail.

As mentioned earlier, whatever is stated here is a proposal, do not assume it to be true or false, right or wrong. Verify it – verify it on your own right, on the basis of your natural acceptance.

However, verifying it on the basis of natural acceptance is only a part of the process. What more is needed will now be presented. Look at fig. 2-3. It represents the complete process of self-exploration.

Whatever is stated is a **Proposal (Do not assume it to be true/ false)**
Verify it on your own right

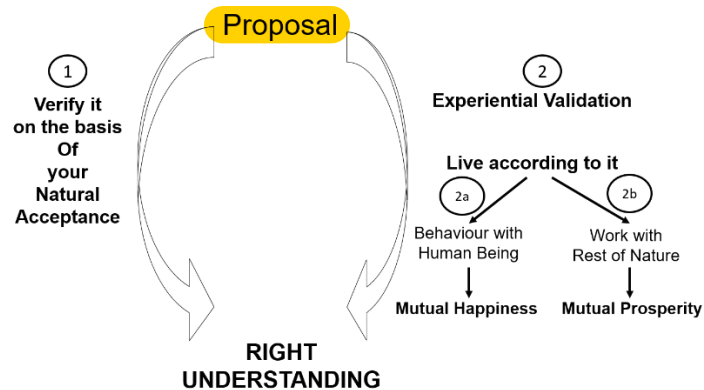


Fig. 2-3. Process of Self-exploration

The first part of self-exploration is to verify the proposal on the basis of our natural acceptance. Once we have verified that a proposal is naturally acceptable to us, we are sure that it is something which we would like to live with.

The second part of self-exploration is experiential validation. It means trying to live according to the proposal. In living there are two parts – one is the behaviour with other human beings and the second is work with rest of nature. When we are behaving with human being on the basis of this proposal, we want to verify whether it leads to mutual happiness or not. If it leads to mutual happiness, it is a right proposal; if it does not lead to mutual happiness, it is not a right proposal. Similarly, when we are working with rest of nature, on the basis of this proposal, we want to verify whether it leads to mutual prosperity or not. If it leads to mutual prosperity, it is a right proposal; if it does not lead to mutual prosperity, it is not a right proposal.

As an example, let us explore the proposal, “the feeling of respect is natural in relationship”. As a first part of the exploration, you can verify, whether feeling of respect is naturally acceptable to you or feeling of disrespect is naturally acceptable to you. This is part one of the self-exploration. The second part is living according to the proposal. That is, you have the feeling of respect in you, and now, you are expressing this feeling of respect in your behaviour with the other human being. Let us find out whether it leads to mutual happiness or not. If it does, the proposal is a right proposal, otherwise it is not.

I can see that this feeling of respect is naturally acceptable to me, therefore, it leads to my happiness. Similarly, this feeling of respect is naturally acceptable to you, therefore, it leads to your happiness as well, i.e. it leads to mutual happiness, and hence the second part of the self-exploration also holds true. Putting these two parts together, now we can say that the given proposal “the feeling of respect is natural in relationship” is a right proposal.

We can also verify this in case of our interaction with rest of nature. Let us check whether ‘the feeling of nurturing (enrichment) in our interaction with the environment is natural’. You can verify whether feeling of nurturing is naturally acceptable to you or feeling of exploiting is naturally acceptable to you. This is part one of the self-verification. Further, we can proceed to the second part of self-exploration – living according to it. By nurturing and enriching the environment, does it lead to mutual prosperity? If we can see that the enriched environment facilitates better food production, leading to our prosperity and it also leads to prosperity of the environment in terms of its enrichment, we can conclude that it leads to mutual prosperity. Thus, this proposal passes both parts of self-verification. Therefore, this proposal ‘the feeling of nurturing the environment is natural’ is a right proposal.

What we are verifying for any proposal in the second part is, “does it lead to mutual fulfilment in our living”? Mutual fulfilment means that:

- a. Our behaviour with other human beings leads to mutual happiness.
- b. Our work with the rest of nature leads to mutual prosperity.

At this point, there may be a question, “is it necessary to experientially validate a proposal if it is not naturally acceptable”? It is an important question. What is being said here is that both parts of self-exploration are essential. We may not be very sure of our natural acceptance or we may not have the confidence that we really have the right answers within (that we can really be self-referential). So, we propose that you experientially validate the proposals. Of course, if you are very sure that a proposal does not pass the first test, you need not go to the second test.

When we are able to verify a proposal, both by way of verifying through natural acceptance and by way of verifying through experiential validation, the ultimate outcome is “right understanding”. We will explore into the details of right understanding in the chapters to follow.

Understanding Natural Acceptance – the basis for Right Understanding

(Distinguishing between acceptance and natural acceptance)

When you try to find the answer to the question “what is naturally acceptable to you – to be happy or unhappy”, you get the answer quite spontaneously, isn’t it? The answer is coming from somewhere deep within. It may appear to be a simplistic or subjective way of finding out, but we will see that it is a powerful way to know what is right for us.

Where does the answer come from? Let us explore these possibilities:

1. It is coming from your likes and dislikes, assumptions, pre-conditionings, beliefs, world-view, perspective, etc.
2. It is coming from your natural acceptance.

Let us distinguish between our natural acceptance and our acceptance (likes and dislikes etc.).

Natural acceptance has to do with something fundamental, something related to our purpose, something related to our basic desires. When we ask a question related to these, we get a definite answer from our natural acceptance. For example,

- Is happiness naturally acceptable or is unhappiness naturally acceptable?
- Is it naturally acceptable to live in relationship or in opposition?
- What is naturally acceptable – to nurture your Body or to exploit it?

For all these questions, we get a definite answer when we refer to our natural acceptance.

On the other hand, if we are asking questions relating to the details of how to fulfil these basic desires, if we are asking questions relating to our expectations from outside; the answers are not definite. For example,

- Is eating rice naturally acceptable or eating wheat is naturally acceptable?

This question cannot be resolved by referring to our natural acceptance. We need to relate it to the basic desire i.e. ‘to nurture the Body’ which we have already verified through our natural acceptance, and then check for the detail under consideration. In this case, if rice is going to nurture the Body, it is acceptable to eat rice, if it is going to harm the Body, it is not acceptable to eat rice.

To see if a specific choice is in line with our natural acceptance or not, we have to see its compatibility with naturally acceptable feelings or natural purposes. Then we can find the answer.

Specific choice → feeling/purpose → natural acceptance Can evaluate on basis of our natural acceptance

Specific choice → natural acceptance

Can't evaluate on the basis of our natural acceptance, so we need to reformulate the question to check the associated feeling/purpose

With this at the background, now we can evaluate cases of natural acceptance and the cases of acceptance based on likes and dislikes, assumptions, pre-conditionings, beliefs, world-view, perspective, etc.

For example, we may have a liking for some specific type of tasty food, say a particular type of chocolate. We have an acceptance for it, but is that acceptance in line with our natural acceptance or not? We have to refer to something more fundamental, something more basic, something related to the feeling or purpose to find the answer. If we have asked ourselves "do we want to nurture the Body or exploit it?" and found the answer that we want to nurture the Body, we can ask ourselves if that specific tasty food will nurture the Body or exploit the Body. If we find that the given chocolate, will not really nurture the Body or harm the Body, we can conclude that the choice of that chocolate is not in line with our natural acceptance. While we have a liking for the taste of that particular chocolate, we have an acceptance for it, but it is not in line with our natural acceptance. You see, acceptance and natural acceptance are two different things, and we shall explore this as we go along.

To take another example. We may have been influenced by our friends to use foul language while speaking to each other on the grounds that it is indicating that we have grown up, we are independent or we are close friends. We may have adopted such a way of speaking also. We may even fit-in with our friends by doing so. While we may have an acceptance for using foul language, is it naturally acceptable to us? Once again, we have to find out if this choice is in line with our purpose or naturally acceptable feeling. Ask yourself, again, if the feeling of relationship is naturally acceptable or a feeling of opposition. Now, when you ask yourself "does the use of foul language always used to express relationship or is it sometimes used to express opposition", you may find that it is not necessarily fostering relationship. You can easily see that you have an acceptance for this assumption, but it is not in line with your natural acceptance.

Of course, all acceptances are not wrong. Passing them through our natural acceptance will validate them and contribute to our self-confidence.

We do develop an acceptance for many things which are not naturally acceptable to us. However, given an open choice, we would not choose them. We may have accepted competition but is our natural acceptance for collaboration and cooperation or for competition? Similarly, we may have accepted 'struggle for survival, survival of the fittest'. Now check if your natural acceptance is for mutual fulfilment or to struggle for survival? We may have accepted opposition but our natural acceptance is for relationship. When we think of opposition, or we live in opposition, we are not comfortable within; it is not comfortable for the other too and yet we keep living that way because we are made to believe that there is no other way out and we have developed an acceptance for it. However, given an open choice, given a possibility that we can live in relationship leading to mutual happiness as well, we would immediately opt for relationship. When we think of relationship or we live by it, we are comfortable within and it is comfortable for the other as well, therefore, it is in line with our natural acceptance.

Then, how can we be sure that the answer we are getting is coming from our natural acceptance? Some of the characteristics of natural acceptance are:

- a) **Natural acceptance does not change with time:** What is naturally acceptable to you today is the same as what was naturally acceptable to you yesterday, and what will be naturally acceptable to you tomorrow. For example, our natural acceptance for the feeling of trust, for the feeling of respect in relationship remains invariant with time: a child naturally accepts having the feeling of trust. Twenty years later, when (s)he becomes a youth, she still has a

natural acceptance for trust; and when she grows into an old person, (s)he continues to have a natural acceptance for the feeling of trust – there is no change in the natural acceptance with time for any given person.

- b) **Natural acceptance does not change with place:** Naturally acceptable feelings, like trust, respect, affection, etc. remain invariant with place. These feelings are naturally acceptable to me when I am in India, in America, in Africa, in Europe or in any other place. Like that, my natural acceptance to keep the Body healthy does not change with place. No matter where we are, we have the same natural acceptance at all the places.
- c) **Natural acceptance does not change with the individual:** Natural acceptance is the same for all of us; it is a part and parcel of every human being; it is part of our human-ness. We can check with the naturally acceptable feelings once again and find out if they are naturally acceptable to Indians, to Americans and to any and every human being. Our assumptions, our likes and dislikes, our views on issues may vary; but the feelings that are naturally acceptable to one are also naturally acceptable to every human being. In that sense, natural acceptance is universal. That is why by understanding our own natural acceptance; we can also understand the natural acceptance of others.
- d) **Natural acceptance is uncorrupted by likes and dislikes or assumptions or beliefs:** We have taken the examples of this above also. When we ask the right questions, we can see our natural acceptance and it is there. Natural acceptance remains unaffected by our likes and dislikes, our belief systems and our preconditioning even if they are very deep and influence our thoughts day and night. For example, even if we are preconditioned for years 'not to trust anyone', if we ask the question as to what is naturally acceptable 'trust or mistrust', the answer is in favour of trust.
- e) **Natural acceptance is innate; we don't need to create it:** Whatever be the background of a person, this faculty is very much there. For example, the moment we think of disrespecting someone, how does it feel within? Comfortable or uncomfortable? Similarly, the moment we think of opposing anyone, how does it feel? Are we at ease or we feel uneasy? Of course, uneasy. Why is this happening? Because we have the faculty of natural acceptance as a part and parcel of our being and it keeps hinting that what we are feeling, thinking or doing is in harmony with our own natural acceptance or not. We can start referring to it at any time, it is always there.
- f) **Natural acceptance is definite:** It is for relationship, harmony and co-existence which is universal. This we can directly verify by asking, what is naturally acceptable to us – relationship or opposition, harmony or disharmony, co-existence or struggle? When we look into the details of relationship, harmony and co-existence, in chapters to follow, we will ask these questions again regarding each and see that these three – relationship, harmony and co-existence, ultimately provide the guidance for our living in harmony, happiness.

This natural acceptance is innate in each of us; it is uncorrupted and it is universal, i.e. it is invariant with respect to time, place and person. It may seem very simple to begin with, but we shall see that this becomes a very powerful way for us to know what is ultimately true for us on our own right. All we have to do is to start referring to it and validating it in our living. Since we have so many strongly held beliefs, we may confuse them with our natural acceptance. The experiential validation gives us another opportunity to examine the proposal. That is why both the parts of self-verification are essential.

Let us not assume even this to be true. Let us explore and find it out for ourselves.

Appraisal of the Current Status

Today, we have so many inputs available to us – from family members, friends, teachers in school/college and from the society through social media, newspapers and so on. We are told what we should do, what we should think, what is valuable and what is not. We do not evaluate our beliefs or assumptions as we treat them as our personal domain. This 'my way' is treated as our personal domain. Living on the basis of it is assumed to be freedom which is very dear to us. When it comes in conflict, we try hard to search out justifications and make all efforts to defend our own assumptions. Since we do not have a readily available means to verify, we continue with a life, which is sometimes happy and sometimes unhappy. If we really look into ourselves, we will find that we are all looking for a way to discriminate all the inputs as well as to verify what we have already assumed on some definite basis.

Now, if you observe a child, (s)he wants to understand what is right, to learn right skills and to do what is right. Initially it goes by what is given, learns by observation and practice. The child learns language like this, for example. However, as the child grows, it wants to be assured of its assumptions, assured that living accordingly will indeed lead to happiness and prosperity.

It is true that we can understand from those who have understood life and are living a happy life. The parents, friends, teachers and role models in society are all essential as a help in the process of learning. Their conclusions are useful as proposals for us. But, to internalize something, to make it a part of our understanding, it is necessary to explore within. Only after we are able to see or know the reality as it is, we become self-assured, self-confident.

We will discuss this in detail when we elaborate on the system of education in chapters to come. However, let us now see what happens, if we go by exploring within; and what happens if we go otherwise, by assuming without exploring.

If we can see things clearly for ourselves through self-exploration and if these are reinforced by observation and practice, it becomes part of our understanding. Once we have understood something, we are sure, we are self-assured, we are self-confident that living like this will lead to mutual fulfilment. In living, when we are able to validate this understanding and it gets further reinforced. Such a state may be called self-organised. We are able to make decisions that are right, i.e. decisions in the interest of mutual fulfilment, i.e. mutual happiness and mutual prosperity. We are able to take the inputs from outside without being over-powered by others, by peer pressure, by our own whims and fancies, etc., but rather we are able to see things clearly ourselves; and help others also to see the possibilities of living in a mutually fulfilling, self-organised manner.

On the other hand, if we are unable to see the things for ourselves and the assumptions remain unverified, the feeling of assurance is absent; and we are not self-confident. Rather, in adverse conditions, we may become reactive and try out various, even arbitrary options. In this process, we are susceptible to outside influences and pressures as our own unverified assumptions are not stable. In this case, generally, we tend to live by prescriptions, do's and don'ts; i.e. our living is largely dictated by others (human beings or prevailing conditions). This is a state of enslavement (enslaved by our own wrong assumptions)!

One can take many examples like:

- We believe that it is a good thing to respect elders. However, when it comes to living with it in our day-to-day practice, are we able to ensure it? 100% of the time?
- We think it is good to eat food that is nutritious. But, is that a part of our living always? Or we tend to eat food that is tasty even if it is not good for health, or we eat junk food because our friends keep talking about it.
- The choice of clothes; is it our own choice based on our natural acceptance to protect the Body or it is a choice influenced by the advertisement or by the wish to fit into our peer group?

By and large, we tend to reinforce what we already believe. It is comforting for us. We tend to go with prevailing notions, so as not to be an odd man out. By and large, we have been trained to take the word of some authority and not think for ourselves; so, we generally tend to doubt ourselves. However, somewhere deep within, we are all seekers; we want to know things as they really are and live accordingly.

We are seeking to look within, at our natural acceptance so that we may be able to find out what we really want to be; and living accordingly leads to mutual happiness and mutual prosperity. For that These class notes is a set of proposals to help us see the reality. When we explore into them and find the meaning in them, only then it becomes our thought; and potentially, our understanding.

Let us see how we are going in the colleges and universities today, where we are dealing with youth. Are these inputs going by:

1. **Self-exploration:** Inputs are in the form of proposals, there is space for self-verification, asking questions, discussion and we are able to draw our own conclusions or
2. **Accepting assumptions:** Inputs are in the form of do's and don'ts, given statements and we are led to go by what is given.

Reflect which of the above methods is naturally acceptable to you. In These class notes, we are taking the first approach of self-exploration. Thus, all that has been written in These class notes is to be taken as a proposal. Do not assume it to be true or false, but verify it on your own right!

The Way Ahead

In any child, the basic process of understanding starts with imitation. (S)he imitates and learns the language, mannerisms and so many things. Further, (s)he obeys what (s)he is asked to do; (s)he works with basic discipline provided; (s)he is i.e. obedient. But as (s)he grows, (s)he wants to verify things and decide on its own right. That is the time when (s)he needs both, the right content in the form of proposals and the right process in the form of self-exploration. Also, (s)he needs encouragement to verify things through the process of self-exploration, so that (s)he develops a holistic vision/perspective of human existence (as discussed in chapter 1). It includes understanding of harmony at all levels of human existence – from individual to family, society, nature and existence; and then, the competence to live in harmony at all these levels, leading to a fulfilling life, a life full of happiness and prosperity. This is expected to be the main emphasis of education and sanskar in future.

Important Implications of Self-exploration

It will be quite educative to learn that the process of self-exploration can results in the following important implications, which will be conducive to a fulfilling life.

1. It is a process of knowing oneself and through that, knowing the entire existence.
2. It is a process of recognizing one's relationship with every unit in existence and fulfilling it.
3. It is a process of knowing human conduct and living accordingly.
4. It is a process of being in harmony within and in harmony with the entire existence.
5. It is a process of identifying our innateness and moving towards self-organization and self-expression.
6. It is a process of self-evolution (evolving as a human being) through self-exploration.

Now, let us elaborate at bit on each point.

1) It is a process of knowing oneself and through that, knowing the entire existence.

Going through this process of self-exploration we are able to know about ourselves; we are able to see our natural acceptance, we are able to see 'what we are' in terms of our desires,

thoughts and expectations; we are able to see whether things are in harmony or disharmony within. It is a process of knowing oneself.

The Self is the knower. When we know the Self, through the Self we can know about the other: the other human being, the rest of the nature and ultimately the entire nature and existence.

It is important to know oneself first. When we are sure about ourselves, only then we can know about other things properly, we can be sure that we are not looking at the world through our coloured perception.

On the other hand, when we try to understand things around us without first being sure of ourselves, all the pre-conditionings we have within, the contradictions we have within, reflect in our perception of the world. With that, when we interact with the things around us, we end up with mixed results – sometimes happy and other times unhappy.

2) It is a process of recognizing one's relationship with every unit in existence and fulfilling that relationship.

Through self-exploration, when I know about myself and I know about the other, I know about the nature and the whole existence; then I am able to recognise my relationship with other units in nature and also, I am able to see how to fulfil that relationship. It is a process of recognizing one's relationship with every unit in nature, in existence and fulfilling it.

3) It is a process of knowing human conduct and living accordingly.

Definite human conduct is living in a manner that we are able to fulfil our definite relationship with other units in nature/existence. When we know what definite human conduct is, we express it in our living. It is mutually fulfilling conduct.

Therefore, first we know the Self and through the Self we know the other units in nature, in existence. Second, we are able to identify our relationship with the other units in nature, in existence; and third, we know what our conduct as a human being needs to be, and then we live accordingly. This is how we can develop this competence to live with definite human conduct. The major role of education is to facilitate the development of the competence to live with definite human conduct.

4) It is a process of being in harmony – within oneself and with the entire existence.

When we know what definite human conduct is, we can live accordingly. In this way, we are able to live in harmony within and with others and ultimately, we are able to live in harmony with the entire existence; it is desirable and also naturally acceptable to all of us.

5) It is a process of identifying our innateness and moving towards self-organization and self-expression.

Now, we can see that through self-exploration – first we know our natural acceptance, what we really want to be, what is our essence, our innateness. Once we know what is naturally acceptable to us, we are able to live in accordance with it. Then we are in harmony within. When we are in harmony within, our behaviour and work is going to be naturally acceptable to the others also, therefore, we will be living in harmony with others too. And when we expand this to every unit in nature, in existence then we will be able to live in harmony with the entire existence.

6) It is a process of self-evolution through self-exploration.

When we do this self-exploration, we discover what is naturally acceptable to us and also become aware of 'what we are'. The very process of being in a dialogue within facilitates self-improvement. We are basically aligning 'what we are' and 'what we really want to be'. We are lining up our desires, thoughts and expectations with our natural acceptance. By doing this,

gradually we are more in harmony within and therefore, more in a state of happiness within. Thus, this process leads to our evolution.

In fig. 2-4, the self-evolution and self-expression is shown.

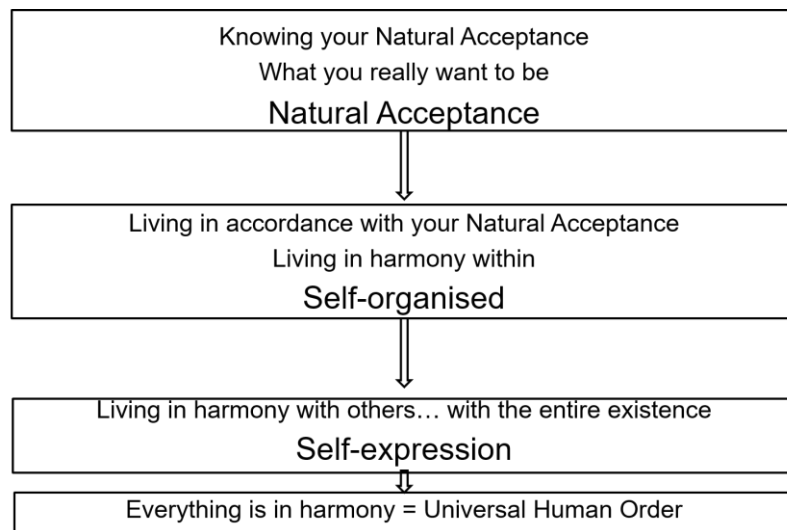


Fig. 2-4. Self-evolution and Self-expression

The purpose of These class notes is to initiate or augment a process of self-exploration in the reader. You can check for yourself, whether this is desirable for you or not.

We are placing this up-front so that you have a full view of where we aim to reach. It is this exploration that will help us develop a holistic perspective that was mentioned in chapter 1. As we go into further chapters, these points will be detailed and clarified.

To conclude, the complete process of self-exploration which is depicted below (fig. 2-5) yields right understanding as the tangible outcome. Right understanding can be recognised as follows:

- a. **It is assuring:** We feel assured, we have no doubt about it. This is because it is based on our natural acceptance, which is intrinsic to us, inseparable from us. We only have to become aware of it. Once we are aware of it, once we know it, it remains obvious. No amount of input or preconditioning otherwise can influence or change understanding based on natural acceptance.
- b. **It is satisfying:** We all have the need to know, to understand. When we understand something, it is satisfying, it is fulfilling for us.
- c. **It is universal:** We are able to see that right understanding is definite and invariant with respect to:
 - i. Time: It holds good in all time – past, present and future
 - ii. Space: It is the same at all places or locations
 - iii. Individual: It is the same for every human being

To take an example, let us examine the proposal 'the feeling of respect is natural in human-human relationship'. We can verify that the feeling of respect is naturally acceptable to us. We can validate that when we behave with other human being with a feeling of respect, it is naturally acceptable to the other. We can conclude that having a feeling of respect leads to mutual happiness. When we understand this by way of self-exploration, we can see that it is very assuring. Assuring in the sense that we have no doubt anymore; whether feeling of respect is natural or feeling of disrespect is natural; whether we need to have a feeling of respect or disrespect in our relationship. This will remain certain in us, even if we may have feeling of disrespect from time to time, due to our preconditioning. It is satisfying, as it fulfils our basic need to know. Further, we can see that it is universal: as this is true in all time – today and tomorrow; in all places; and for every human being. Do keep exploring it.

**RIGHT
UNDERSTANDING**

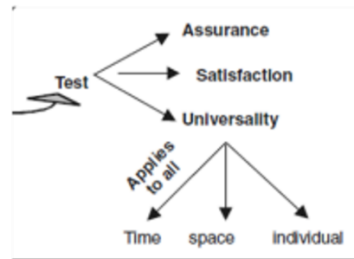


Fig. 2-5. Characteristics of Right Understanding

In case the outcome of self-exploration does not fulfil any of the above three criteria, it means that it is not the right understanding. It could be a pre-conditioning or we have made a mistake in looking into our natural acceptance and so, we need to continue exploring.

Self-exploration ultimately results in right understanding of the entire existence, i.e. “realisation of co-existence”, “understanding of harmony” and “contemplation of relationship”. Once we have this right understanding and when our imagination is fully guided by it, we reach to a state of continuous harmony and happiness within. This is expressed in our behaviour, our work and in our participation with every unit in nature in a harmonious manner. It ultimately becomes the foundation for an undivided society and a universal human order. Further, when this is passed down from one generation to the next in continuity, generation after generation, it forms a human tradition of happiness and prosperity for every human being. This is the coveted outcome of value education.

The process by which we try to understand is very important. What we intend to do through These class notes, is to initiate, facilitate and support a process of self-exploration in you which is starting as this dialogue between us and you.

Salient Points

- The process of understanding human values is self-exploration, i.e. by exploring within, on the basis of natural acceptance; and with that, experiential validation, i.e. by exploring outside.
- Natural acceptance is the innate capacity of every human being to see the intrinsic purpose, to see what is natural, what is right and thereby conclude what is not right (wrong). It is not the same as the likes-dislikes or assumptions and beliefs but something definite that does not change with time, place or person. It is innate, invariant and universal. There is a natural acceptance for relationship, harmony and co-existence in each one of us.
- Self-exploration is a process of dialogue within us – between “what I am” (my desire-thought-expectation) and “what is naturally acceptable to me” (my natural acceptance). Once we start referring to our natural acceptance for questions relating to feeling and purpose, we get the right answers from within.
- When “what I am” (my desire-thought-expectation) is in harmony with my natural acceptance, I am in a state of happiness. When there is a contradiction between these two, I am in a state of disharmony and unhappiness.
- The content of self-exploration is:
 - a) Desire or basic aspiration of human being, which is for continuity of happiness and prosperity and
 - b) Programme to fulfil the basic aspiration.
- The process of self-exploration is self-verification. Whatever is stated is a proposal. Do not assume it to be true or false, right or wrong. First, verify it on the basis of your natural acceptance. Next, verify it experientially – if the behaviour with human being results in mutual happiness and the work with rest of nature leads to mutual prosperity, only then the given proposal is right for you, otherwise it is not right for you.
- One evolves through self-exploration – by knowing oneself, knowing the entire nature/existence and the inter-relationship with every entity in nature. Through self-

exploration, one is able to know human conduct; and live in harmony within oneself, in family, in society and in nature/existence.

- The outcome of self-exploration is development of right understanding. Right understanding is the understanding of the harmony from the Self to the entire existence, i.e. realisation of co-existence, understanding of harmony and contemplation of relationship; and on that basis, understanding human conduct. Right understanding is definite; it is assuring, it is satisfying and it is universal.
- Living on the basis of right understanding (living with right understanding as our internal guide), one is in a state of harmony within, i.e. one is self-organised. With the state of harmony within, one is able to live in harmony with the outside world – the behaviour with human being leads to mutual happiness and work with rest of nature leads to mutual prosperity. This is referred to as self-extension, extending the harmony within to the world outside. Being in harmony within and being in harmony with the outside world is living with continuous happiness which is the basic aspiration of human being. For this, self-exploration is the essential starting point.

Test Your Understanding

Part 1: Questions for Self-evaluation

(Have we grasped the basic proposals made in this chapter?)

1. The process of value education has been proposed as 'self-exploration'. What could be some other possibilities for the process of value education?
2. Explain the process of self-exploration. What is the expected result of self-exploration? Please explain the process, content and natural outcome of self-exploration with a neat diagram and two examples from your life.
3. What exactly are the following realities:
 - a. "What I am"
 - b. "What is naturally acceptable to me"
 - c. The dialogue between "what I am" and "what is naturally acceptable to me"
 Explain each with any three examples.
4. Describe the term 'Natural Acceptance'. How do you make out if it is your natural acceptance or not? Describe the characteristics of Natural Acceptance. Explain with examples from your own life.
5. Distinguish between Natural Acceptance and Acceptance with a few examples.
6. Given any proposal, if one is not doing self-exploration, what are the other possibilities? Give two examples to explain.

Part 2: Practice Exercises for Self-exploration

(To help connect the content to one's life, at least at the level of thought, these exercises may be done individually or in a group, particularly with friends and family members)

1. Find out if the following are naturally acceptable to you

Statement	My present thinking (beliefs) about the statement	Naturally Acceptable?
I want to be happy		
I want to make others happy		
I want to be healthy		
I want to live in relationship		
I want to have more than others		
I want to have more than what I really need		
Feeling of respect in relationship	Only if you have money, people respect you	Feeling of respect is

		naturally acceptable in relationship
Respect elders		
Respect all		
This is just a sample list. Please make your own list		

Can you observe that when you really try, you can refer to your natural acceptance?

Note any five things that appear naturally acceptable to you. Now, verify for yourself that your 'natural acceptance' does not change with time or place. It does not depend on your beliefs and past conditionings and that it is always there. If not, would you still call it your natural acceptance? And if not, what can it be termed as in place of natural acceptance?

e.g. eating sweets. It may appear naturally acceptable. Now explore, whether it changes with time, place and individual or not. You will see that sometimes you like eating sweets, while sometimes, you do not feel like eating sweets. Same thing happens with place. And not everyone wants to eat sweets. Thus, it does not fulfil the criterion. It is not your 'natural acceptance'. Then what is your natural acceptance? Find it out (here, while eating sweets is your liking, nurturing your Body is the natural acceptance).

2. Look into yourself, into 'what I am' and into 'what is naturally acceptable to me'. Make a list of at least ten things you can observe in your thought, behaviour or work. Now note these down (a sample table is given below):

What I am (My thoughts, behaviour or work)	What is Naturally Acceptable to me	Are these two in Harmony or Contradiction?	Do I feel Comfortable or Uncomfortable?	Dialogue
I make my parents happy	I want to make my parents happy all the time	Harmony	Comfortable	
But I get angry with them sometimes	Getting angry is not naturally acceptable to me. I really want to stay calm all the time	Contradiction	Uncomfortable	See example (b), below
Write down other thoughts you have	Write down your natural acceptance here	Harmony or Contradiction?	Comfortable or Uncomfortable?	

- a) Can you see that "what I am" and "what is naturally acceptable to me" are two realities within you? Who else can see these two realities, other than you? Are you able to see that all those things that are naturally acceptable to you are really valuable for you? Write down the conclusions you have arrived at from seeing these two realities.
- b) Can you see that self-exploration only means that you become aware of your natural acceptance, become aware of "what I am" and start the internal dialogue? You are basically asking the question "is it naturally acceptable to me" to yourself?
e.g. if I do not want to get angry ever, why do I then get angry? Find out if you have assumed that on some occasions, it is a must to get angry otherwise the situation will become worse, thus anger is required at times. But when I am angry, I feel uncomfortable within as it is not naturally acceptable to me to get angry! Then what to do? Can there be some other solution? Observe how the dialogue is taking place in you and note it down. What did you learn from observing the dialogue?

3. Look into what you really want to be and prepare a document (like a resume) as you see yourself three years from now. We can call it “future resume”. Please include the following five sub-sections:
- About you:
 - Your academic scholastic and professional qualifications
 - Your qualities as a human being (what kind of person you will be)
 - Your ability to live in relationship with people
 - Your health
 - Your work skills (what you will be able to do independently, without any help)
 - Your hobbies, co-curricular and extra-curricular interests
 - About your role in your family (what responsibility you will take in your family and also what you will expect from your family)
 - About your participation in the workplace (what responsibility you will take in your workplace and also what you will expect from the workplace)
 - About your participation in the neighbourhood / institution / larger society (what responsibility you will take in society and also what you will expect from society)
 - About your interaction with the rest of nature (what you will take from nature and also what you will do for nature)
- Can you see that you already have the commitment and potential for it? And you can make a program to use your next three years productively.

Part 3: Projects and Modelling Exercises

You may like to revisit this part of Test Your Understanding after reading through the complete class notes once and self-exploring all the key proposals. With that, you may have some (or many) aha! moments in which something clicks for you, you understand a proposal. What you have understood may be expressed in various creative ways which appeal to different people. This part is for you to give a creative expression to your understanding. Of course, you can do this in a group also. Creative expressions may be in the form of sketches, drawings, paintings, clay models, sculptures, songs, poems, music, dance, audios, videos, games, puzzles, stories, skits, plays, dramas, charts, diagrams, plans, survey questionnaires, blogs, something on social media and so on. It is the story of your own life – and it matters. While some hints are given above, please feel free to share your real aha’s in your own way!

“It is just a proposal. I only have to explore and decide on my own right. Nobody is going to preach to me about what to do and what not to do”.

1. Articulate the process of self-exploration. Show the dialogue between “what I am” and “what is naturally acceptable to me”. Share some outcomes from your self-exploration – what exactly you understood.
2. What is Freedom (deciding things “My Way”) and what is self-organisation (deciding on the basis of natural acceptance)?

Part 4: Your Questions

Write down your questions or doubts in your note-book. If any of the previous questions have been clarified by your self-exploration of the proposals so far, please mark them as answered. We would like to discuss the questions remaining unanswered in your self-exploration.

Chapter 3: Basic Human Aspirations and their Fulfilment

Recap

In the previous chapters, we explored into the need, guidelines, content and process of value education, followed by the details of self-exploration. Self-exploration is a process of understanding human values, first by exploring within, on the basis of our natural acceptance; and then by validating it experientially, by exploring outside (by living accordingly and observing the outcomes). We have also discussed about natural acceptance, and how it forms the basis of self-exploration.

While discussing self-exploration, we mentioned that there are two issues to be explored: first, what is the basic aspiration of a human being, and second, what is the process to fulfil this basic aspiration. In this chapter, we will discuss these two issues further.

What is Meant by Basic Aspiration?

Whatever we think, whatever we do is with some end in mind. We may be going to school to learn and be eligible for college. We may be doing engineering in order to get a job. We may be working in a job for the salary. We may be shopping with that salary. Like that there is a chain of thoughts and actions.

You can observe that when we achieve one of these, we tend to move on to something else. After school is completed, we start preparing for entrance exams. When we get admission into a college, we become concerned about the assignments, grades and the rank. Once that is done, placement becomes our target. Like that we keep doing something which we consider to be important at a given point in time.

Out of these which is our basic aspiration? Is it learning what is taught in school or getting that engineering degree or the job or the salary from the job or the shopping? Let us ask ourselves: what will make us fulfilled? Let us find out if there is an end goal which we want to achieve through all this. Is there an end state that we want to reach and then we want the continuity of that state? That end state is our basic aspiration.

Continuous Happiness and Prosperity as Basic Human Aspirations

To explore into the question of basic aspiration, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you want to be happy?
- Do you want to be prosperous?
- Do you want the continuity of happiness and prosperity?

The answers are in affirmative yes. Right? We have a natural acceptance to be happy all the time. We have a natural acceptance to be always prosperous.

The basic human aspirations are happiness, prosperity and its continuity. We may, of course, have different notions of happiness and prosperity, but we do want to be happy and prosperous. We may, at times, even feel that their continuity is not possible, but still we want to be always happy and always prosperous. There is no moment when we want to be unhappy or when we want to be deprived. This is what we are trying to confirm here by referring to our natural acceptance.

Basic Requirements for Fulfilment of Human Aspirations

Let us explore further by asking ourselves the following questions:

- Are we happy?
- Are we prosperous?
- Is there continuity of the two?

What answer do you get? Is it an affirmative yes? As far as the basic aspiration or desire is concerned, there is very much an affirmative yes; but when it comes to our state of being, it is not always so affirmative, isn't it? There is quite a gap between our basic aspiration and our state of being (see fig. 3-1); and this is not naturally acceptable to us. Is it?

Desire, Basic Aspiration	State of Being, What We Are
Do we want to be happy?	Are we happy?
Do we want to be prosperous?	Are we prosperous?
Do we want the continuity of happiness and prosperity?	Is there continuity of our happiness and prosperity?
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>Why this gap?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - between our desire and our state of being - between what we really want to be and what we are <p>What are we doing to fill this gap? Is it getting filled up or getting wider?</p> <p>We will explore into this</p> </div>	

Fig. 3-1. Basic Human Aspiration and State of Being

Let us continue the exploration further. Let us find out if our effort is for:

- Continuity of happiness and prosperity?
- or
- Just for accumulation of physical facility?

When we reflect on all the effort we are making, we can easily see that we are generally working for accumulation of physical facility! We are expecting happiness and prosperity, but the effort is for physical things. We don't even find out if we have enough physical facility or not; will it actually ensure happiness and prosperity or not; but we go on accumulating more and more. We are making this effort with the assumption that we will get happiness and prosperity out of the physical things. Find out if you have assumed that happiness and prosperity will automatically come when you have enough physical facility?



This may be one underlying assumption. We might be thinking that money is everything – once we have enough of it, everything will be all right – we will have happiness and prosperity. We may not even be aware that we have such an assumption driving our effort! So, go ahead and check if this is the case.

We can explore further by asking ourselves:

What effort are we making for continuity of happiness and prosperity, other than accumulation of physical facility?

If we have not assumed that physical facility is all that is required; then what else are we doing apart from that? This is something we need to explore in our own life. Where are we putting in our effort? We spend time in eating, sleeping, developing skills, working, watching TV and so on. We are putting in most of our effort for physical facility. This may be because most of the time, we have been trained to study for it, work for it and achieve it as much as possible. With all that effort, even if we are missing on account of happiness, we tend to keep working harder and harder for more and more physical facility.

If continuity of happiness and prosperity is not achieved by just accumulating physical facility then what else is essential to do? Let's try to find out by asking this question to ourselves:

- Is the unhappiness in my family
- More due to lack of physical facility or

- More due to lack of fulfilment in relationship?

Whenever there is any unhappiness in your family, what is the major reason for it? When you explore into it, you will find that the major reason for the unhappiness in the family is the lack of fulfilment in relationship. Don't just accept this conclusion, but check it yourself.

Now to look at the investment of your effort, find out:

- How much time and effort you are investing for physical facility, and
- How much time and effort you are investing for fulfilment in relationship?

What is, roughly, the percentage of your total time and effort spent for physical facility? Eating, sleeping, working, studying and so on are all related to physical facility. You can find out for yourself how your time is spent.

Generally, most of the time and effort is being invested for physical facility, assuming that everything is going to be fine when there is enough physical facility; then there will be no problem; there will be no unhappiness in the family.

In the meanwhile, if any issue of relationship has cropped up, we try to invest some time to patch it up or somehow manage it. Many times, we again invest physical facility to compensate for the dissatisfactions or complaints in relationship. If we are not able to give time to the family in day-to-day life, we then try to spend time with them on weekends, on dining out, by watching movies together or giving some gift, and so on. All this is possible only by investing physical facility, so we work even harder. But, does it work?

The problems are more due to lack of fulfilment in relationship, and we are investing major part of our time and effort for physical facility. We are so careful about investing money and other material resources. But when it comes to investing ourselves, our time and effort for relationship, we are not very aware about it. This is certainly not a right kind of investment.

Can you see that:

The unhappiness in your family is more due to lack of fulfilment in relationship, but the major part of time, or most of the time and effort, is spent for physical facility?

With all this discussion, the conclusion that we want to draw out of this is a very simple one:

For human being physical facility is necessary, but relationship is also necessary.

Does it make sense? Is it true for you?

Now we can see that as far as human being is concerned, physical facility is a necessity, but relationship is also necessary. Both are important.

In fact, by seeing this, we can understand the difference between animals and human beings. Physical facility is necessary for animals as well as for human beings. For animals, it is necessary as well as adequate (which means that animals can be satisfied with physical facility alone). But when it comes to human beings, that is not the case – physical facility is a necessity, but physical facility alone is not going to suffice for the fulfilment of human being.

To take an example, when an animal has lack of physical facility, it becomes uncomfortable. When it has the physical facility, it becomes comfortable. When a cow gets a stomach full of grass, it become comfortable, sits and chews the cud. With enough grass to fill the stomach, the cow is comfortable. But, what about a human being?

When a human being has lack of physical facility, (s)he becomes uncomfortable and unhappy. Once (s)he gets the physical facility, (s)he forgets about it and starts thinking about many other things.

Does it happen with you? Once you do not have a facility that you need, you keep thinking about how to get it.

If one does not have enough to eat, (s)he will feel low. But once (s)he has enough food, it is simply ignored, forgotten. If we don't get enough to eat, we are uncomfortable and unhappy. If we have enough to eat, we tend to forget about food and start thinking of many other things.

If you do not have a house of your own, it occupies your thought much of the time. But once you have a house of your own, you simply forget about it and start thinking about so many other things, like furniture in the house, your career, your social connections, etc. And if they are not up to your expectations, you start feeling anxious. Seldom you feel happy that you have a house of your own. Can you see that?

We keep asking participants of our human value workshops, "Do you know how many pairs of clothes you have"? Generally, not more than 10% of the people even know how many pairs of clothes they have. That means if we did not have clothes, we would have been be unhappy and uncomfortable, but now that we have clothes, most of us tend to forget about it. And of course, we have many other things to think about.

So, we can conclude that physical facility is necessary for animals; it is necessary for human beings also; However:

- For animals, physical facility is necessary as well as adequate.
- For human beings, physical facility is necessary but physical facility alone is not adequate.

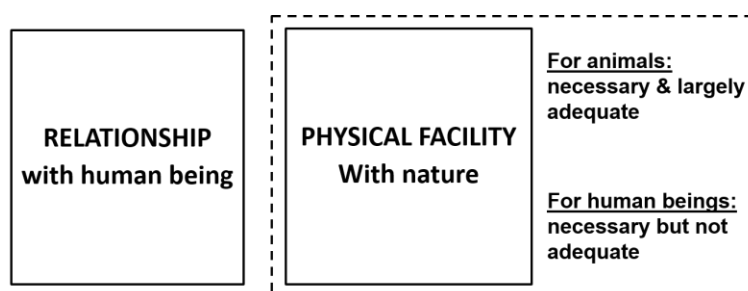


Fig. 3-2. For Human Being, Physical Facility is Necessary but Relationship is also Necessary

When it comes to human being, the lack of physical facility makes him/her uncomfortable and unhappy, but availability of physical facility alone does not ensure the feeling of happiness or prosperity. Something more is required. And if you look at what more is required, fulfilment in relationship is also required (see fig. 3-2).

Can you see this? Imagine being in a five-star hotel for a month with every facility – except that you have no one to talk to!

While we do have a natural acceptance to live in relationship, are we actually living in relationship? Have we understood this or just assumed it? To explore this further, find out if:

1. You want to live in relationship (harmony) with others or
2. You want to live in opposition with others or
3. You believe, living has to be necessarily in opposition with others, i.e. there is 'struggle for survival', 'survival of the fittest' and if you feel happy living this way?

A little introspection will show that out of these three, what is naturally acceptable is the first one. Isn't it? You certainly do not want to live in opposition with others. But you may be conditioned to think in a manner as mentioned in the third option, because this is mostly what we are teaching today in the schools and colleges. Relationship is naturally acceptable to us but what we are trying to teach the children is opposition and struggle. If we adopt the third option, it has significant negative implications in our life, in the family and in the society. And we can see this all around today.

In relationship, what is generally happening today is something like this:

Every time when there is fight, we want to resolve it. We start the next day with the thought that we don't want to fight today; but a fight takes place again (sometimes by the end of the same day).

Does this happen with you, with your brother, sister, father, mother, spouse, children, with your friends, co-workers, etc.? Getting irritated, angry, not speaking for days on end, dragging each other to court, divorces, etc. are indicators of the situation in relationship. While there is a willingness to live in relationship, the right understanding about relationship is lacking; the competence to fulfil the relationship is lacking. That is why this fight and all these other problems in relationship happen again and again. We think it is the fault of the other person – we want them to improve; they think it's our fault and they want us to improve; neither improves and we somehow try to manage relationship.

For ensuring fulfilment in relationship, it is necessary to have right understanding about relationship. Can you see this? Further, right understanding about oneself vis-à-vis rest of nature is also necessary in order to correctly assess our need for physical facility and the correct method for making it available.

Right Understanding, Relationship and Physical Facility – All Three are Required for Fulfilment of Human Being

From the preceding discussion, it may be concluded that for fulfilment of human being – physical facility, relationship and right understanding – all three are necessary. It is indicated in fig. 3-3.

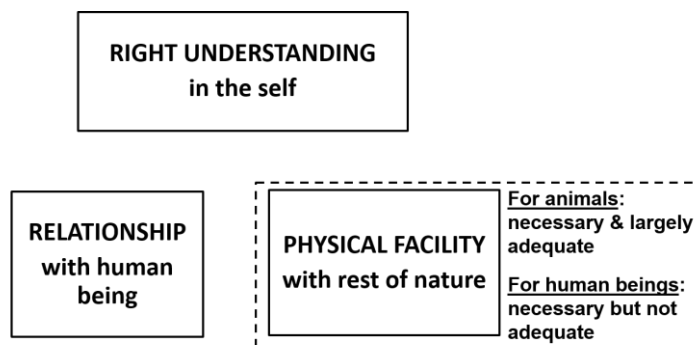


Fig. 3-3. For Human Being, Physical Facility, Fulfilment in Relationship as well as Right Understanding are Necessary

Now you can find out if all three of them are required or you can do away with any of them. Do you need physical facility? Do you need fulfilment in relationship? Do you need right understanding? Is there anything unnecessary, superfluous? We can easily make out that all three are required.

These three are of different types. To explore this further, let us look at these situations:

- It is hot and humid and you are sweating. If you switch on an air conditioner, does the cool air from it help? You can see that it makes the environment more conducive, and your body is no longer sweating. The air conditioner and cool air are physical facility. It is useful for protecting the Body from excessive heat.
- Now, you are sitting in that air-conditioned room. A person, with whom you have a feeling of opposition walks into the room. Your body is comfortable with the cool air, but how do you feel

within? Comfortable or uncomfortable? With a little exploration you will be able to see that you would feel uncomfortable. It is due to the feeling of opposition that is within you. Check if it will make any difference if you made the room cooler (or warmer)?

- After this person has left the room, you are sitting alone but you are still thinking of that person. You have contradictions in your thought. You are thinking about how to resolve these contradictions but you are unable to. Will you feel comfortable within or uncomfortable within? Once again, you can see that you will be uncomfortable within, regardless of the temperature of the air conditioner. Without the requisite knowledge, the right understanding (of relationship and the feelings in relationship) can you resolve these contradictions? Can any amount of physical facility resolve these contradictions in you?

We can see that physical facility, relationship and right understanding are three distinct realities. When we look them in more detail, we can see that:

- Right understanding (in the Self) is understanding myself, understanding all that I live with (the entire existence) and understanding my role with respect to all that I live with, i.e. myself, my family, society, nature/existence.
- Relationship is essentially the feeling I have for other human beings (in the family, in the society).
- Physical facility includes all things physical.

All three are required for fulfilment of human being. One cannot be substituted for the other.

Next, let us find out if we are taking care of all three of them or we are largely focusing on physical facility? You can see that we need all three of them, but today the major focus is on physical facility. Now, you can verify if this prevalent belief that physical facility can take care of everything is true or not. Can we take care of relationship with physical facility alone? Can we take care of right understanding with physical facility alone?

Priority – Right Understanding, Relationship and Physical Facility

Now, the next question is that if all three of them are required, what is going to be the priority?

Priority indicates what is fundamental, what is the relative importance. Working on the higher priority facilitates the fulfilment of the lower priority. It does not mean that we can do away with the lower priority. To identify the priority order, find out what is fundamental, what is going to facilitate the other.

We can ask this question about priority directly to ourselves to get the answer. Take some time and think it over.

All three of them are required. Right understanding in the Self is a priority because only with right understanding we can ensure fulfilment in relationship; and we are able to make out how much physical facility is required. Therefore, right understanding is the first priority.

As we discussed, the problems in the family are more due to lack of fulfilment in relationship, rather than the lack of physical facility. It indicates that relationship is more important than physical facility.

To take an example, a lady teacher was attending one of the evening human values workshops. Two days after the topic on relationship and its priority was discussed, she shared her experience. She was in the kitchen, while her two sons, aged about five and eight, were playing cricket inside the house. Hearing the sound of a shattered windowpane, she rushed out of the kitchen. But before she reached the children, she recollected the priority. Now this is just in her assumption, yet she was able to see that relationship is certainly a higher priority over physical facility. "I can get the window pane repaired for a few rupees, but it would take much more if I were to lose the affection from my children", she thought. She asked the boys,

“I hope you are not hurt”, while she collected the broken glass pieces and put them in the dustbin. “We are OK” said the older one. And as she was going back to the kitchen, the younger one said, “won’t you beat us”? Because he had a good idea of his mother – who, in a state of unawareness, valued physical facility more than the children’s feelings!

Now, if you look at this overall priority, right understanding is the first priority, fulfilment in relationship with human being is the second priority and ensuring physical facility with rest of nature is the third priority.

Regarding priority, we will keep it open as to whether this is the right priority for you or not – feel free to experiment with the priority order and come to your own conclusion. One thing is very clear that all three of them are required – the right understanding in the Self is required, the fulfilment in relationship with human being is required and physical facility (with rest of nature) is required; and all three have to be ensured separately (one cannot be substituted by the other).

It is interesting that out of these three, today, generally we are not taking care of the first priority; we are not taking care of the second priority; the major focus is on the third priority. Can you see this? Can you see that our major focus is not on right understanding in the Self, not on fulfilment in relationship, but the major focus is on physical facility? And now you can see that if we are not focusing on the first two priorities and we are only trying to work with physical facility, where will we end up? Similarly, if we take care of all three of them, what is the result? What is the outcome? We would like to investigate this next.

If we are only working for physical facility, the outcome is depicted in fig. 3-4. At the level of physical facility, we are feeling deprived and we are making others deprived or exploiting others. When we don’t have right understanding (about relationship) in the Self, we are not able to ensure fulfilment in relationship, therefore, we are unhappy within. When we are unhappy within, we are going to make others unhappy, isn’t it?

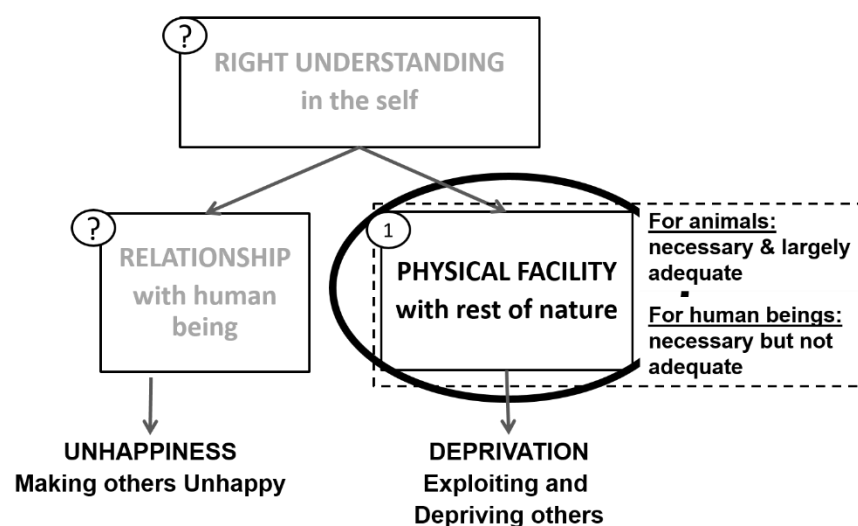


Fig. 3-4. Human Being Living with Physical Facility as the First Priority

To exemplify this point, we particularly ask mothers, “when do you shout or beat the child? When you are comfortable within or uncomfortable within”? The answer is simple – uncomfortable within.

When you are unhappy within, you make the other unhappy. You can find this out for yourself, in the interactions with family members and friends. If we don’t have right understanding about relationship, we don’t know about the feelings in relationship. If we have not ensured those feelings in us, we are unhappy within. In that state of unhappiness, we are not able to ensure fulfilment in relationship – we make others unhappy. This is one outcome.

The other outcome is that if the right understanding is missing, we are not able to identify our need for physical facility. Now, if we are not able to identify our need for physical facility then regardless of how much physical facility we accumulate, we never feel that we have enough. We keep wanting more. This feeling of not having enough is the feeling of deprivation. Now, if we have a feeling of deprivation, will we think of nurturing others or exploiting others? Find it out. Again, the answer is simple – we will think of exploiting others to get more and more physical facility.

Once, while taking tea with students, we asked them a funny question, “come, let’s find out how much tea will be needed to fill this cup – if it does not have a bottom?” Naturally, they were amused and smilingly replied, “sir, are you joking? It is so obvious that if this cup doesn’t have a bottom there is no question of it getting filled; no amount of tea will be sufficient to fill it up. But why are you asking us such a trivial question?” Then the discussion continued, “so, you can see that if this cup has no bottom, there is no question of ensuring its filling. That’s good, you all appreciate this so easily. Now let us look at the cup of our aspiration for physical facility, for money. Does it have a bottom? Do you know how much physical facility you require? If you don’t know how much is required, can you ever feel prosperous, regardless of how much you earn”?

Isn’t this obvious enough? It gives a clue to the assumptions driving so many of us who are engaged in pursuing more and more physical facility. Ponder over this.



If we do not know how much physical facility we require, we will never have a feeling of prosperity, regardless of how much we accumulate. The accumulation of physical facility may go on increasing, but our feeling of deprivation will continue; and, if we feel deprived, we think of depriving others, exploiting others and accumulating more and more.

If you look around, there are generally two kinds of people today:

1. Those lacking physical facility, unhappy and deprived
2. Those having physical facility, unhappy and deprived

Do you see these two types of people? Do you see people who don’t have enough physical facility, and they are deprived and also unhappy? Do you see people who have lots of physical facility, but still they don’t feel that they have enough (and they need more and more)? Such people do not have the right understanding of their need for physical facility, so they keep feeling deprived and unhappy.

Try to find out where you are – at 1 or at 2?

You see, the whole concept of what is called development today, largely takes us from ‘1’ to ‘2’. While working for development, we are focusing on a good outside environment, lavish infrastructure, etc. – is it sufficient for your happiness and prosperity? The nice apartment, 24-hour electricity, running water, laptop, mobile, a big car, wide roads, trains, planes and all this may be required. However, is it sufficient to ensure continuity of your happiness and prosperity? Through education, if we are focused on that good job just for a high salary and more and more physical facility, without having clarity on how much is required, it can only take us from ‘1’ to ‘2’; and it can never ensure happiness, prosperity, and continuity of the two.

Whereas we really want to be is in the following state, i.e.

3. Having physical facility, happy and prosperous.

Find out what is naturally acceptable to you – to be in 1, 2 or 3? It is easy to see that we naturally want to be in the state 3, of having more than enough physical facility, happy and prosperous, isn’t it?

However, where are we today – at 1, 2 or 3? And even more importantly, what is our effort for – 1, 2 or 3?

Now, if we are able to ensure all three, i.e. right understanding, relationship and physical facility, in that order of priority, let us see the outcome (refer to fig. 3-5).

- Through right feeling in relationship, based on right understanding, we can ensure mutual happiness – happiness for ourselves as well as happiness for others.
- With right understanding, we can identify the need for physical facility. We can also learn how to produce using a mutually enriching production process. Once we are able to ensure the availability of more than required physical facility, we have a feeling of prosperity; isn't it?

Now ask yourself, when you have a feeling of prosperity within you, will you think of nurturing others or exploiting others? Think about it. When you can see that you have more than what is required, i.e. you have a feeling of prosperity, you will naturally think of nurturing others and not exploiting them. You will think of helping others in their effort for prosperity. If someone is thinking of exploiting others, it simply indicates that (s)he has a feeling of deprivation, not of prosperity.

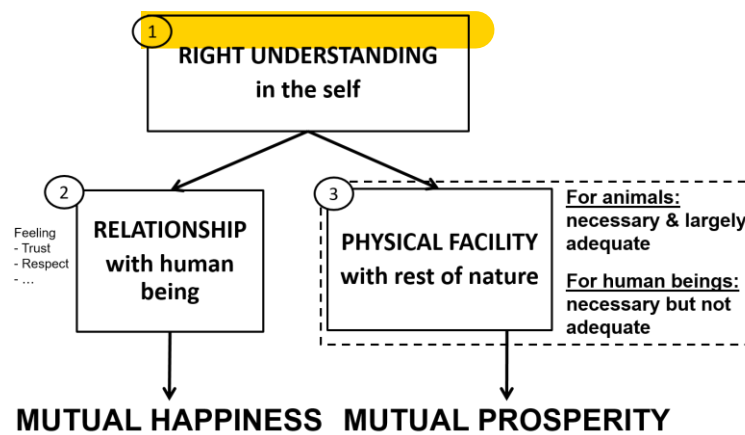


Fig. 3-5. Human Being Living with Right Understanding, Relationship and Physical Facility in Priority Order

Right understanding + Relationship → Mutual happiness
 Right understanding + Physical facility → Mutual prosperity

In this way, with right understanding and fulfilment in relationship, we can ensure mutual happiness. With right understanding and enough physical facility (working with rest of nature), we can ensure mutual prosperity, mutual enrichment. Therefore, by ensuring right understanding, relationship and physical facility, we can ensure happiness and prosperity for ourselves and work for happiness and prosperity for others. Can you see that?

Development of Human Consciousness

The basic aspirations of human being, i.e. happiness, prosperity and its continuity, are fulfilled by right understanding, relationship and physical facility, in that priority order.

A human being working for all three of them can be fulfilled. Therefore, a human being living with all three is living with **‘human consciousnesses’**.

On the other hand, if one is living for physical facility alone, one is living with **‘animal consciousness’**. While physical facility may suffice for animals, it is not adequate for human being to be fulfilled.

Now you can find out if development would basically mean development of human consciousness in the human being, or just the development of physical facility is sufficient.

A word of caution here. By using the word ‘animal consciousness’, we are not trying to demean animals.

Animals living with animal consciousness	they are in harmony	this is fine
Human being living with human consciousness	they are in harmony	this is fine
Human being living with animal consciousness	they are in disharmony	this is the problem

Animals living with animal consciousness, living for physical facility alone, living for food, shelter, etc., are just fine – they are in harmony with the rest of nature! Only when human beings try to fulfil themselves on the basis of physical facility alone, they tend to be in disharmony within and in disharmony with others. The problem is with human being living in animal consciousness. You can see that opposition, struggle, war, etc. is on account of such human beings. You may call this as inhuman-consciousness or something else, if animal consciousness gives a sense of demeaning the animals.

Holistic Development

(Transformation from Animal Consciousness to Human Consciousness)

With this background refer to fig. 3-6 and ask yourself:

1. What is naturally acceptable to you – to live with animal consciousness (inhuman consciousness) or to live with human consciousness?
2. Where are we now? Living with animal consciousness or human consciousness?
3. Whether this transformation from animal consciousness to human consciousness is desirable or not desirable?

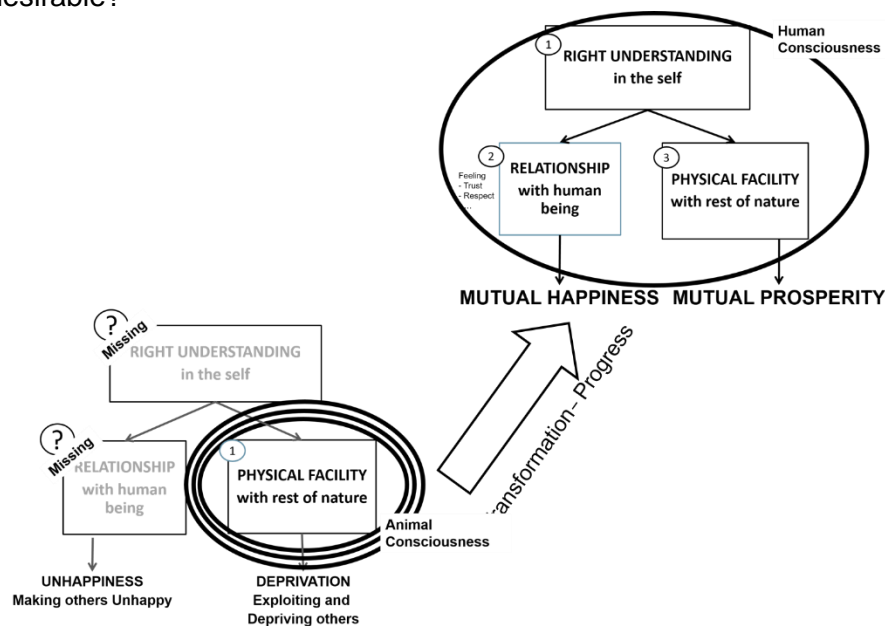


Fig. 3-6. Transformation, Progress, Development

Keep exploring these questions.

If we see today, the world is largely focused on physical facility as the sole or primary measure of progress and development. Nations measure Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and its growth rate as the key indicators for development. Families and individuals also have a similar notion of their own well-being – they use job position, net-worth, bank balance, the house, the cars and other physical facility as indicators of progress, development and success.

The predominant perception regarding development, success and prosperity is largely to do with accumulation of physical facility – more and more physical facility. This perception is there in the society, in the education system and even in the family. Find out if you are also only trying to make

this circle of physical facility bigger and bigger? Like making effort for a salary of ten thousand rupees, fifty thousand, one lakh and so on? Find out if all this is taking you to human consciousness? Is just making the circle of physical facility bigger sufficient for the continuity of happiness and prosperity? Find out if just increasing the quantity and variety of physical facility alone is enough for development.

With right understanding, we can clearly envisage holistic development as the transformation of consciousness – from animal consciousness to human consciousness. Of course, it will necessitate working on all three – right understanding, fulfilment in relationship as well as physical facility; and in that order of priority.

Role of Education-Sanskar

(Enabling the Transformation to Human Consciousness)

We are providing inputs to the children in many ways. Starting from the family, the parents and other family members are providing inputs right from day one. The formal education system, i.e. schools, colleges, universities, etc. are also providing inputs. And the society is giving inputs through the role models, through the media and so many other means. All these put together shape the perspective and feelings of a child. Can you see that?

All these inputs put together is what we are calling education-sanskar.

Education is developing the right understanding (holistic perspective).

Sanskar is the commitment, preparation and practice of living with right understanding. The preparation includes learning appropriate skills and technology.

We will build on the details as we go along.

The role of education is to facilitate the development of the competence to live with human consciousness, with definite human conduct. For this, the education-sanskar has to ensure:

1. Right understanding in every child,
2. The capacity to live in relationship with other human beings, and
3. The capacity to identify the need for physical facility, the skills and practice for sustainable production of more than what is required, leading to the feeling of prosperity.

These are the three components of education-sanskar, if it has to ensure development of human consciousness.

With this, let us see whether we are ensuring all three of them or not in the present-day education-sanskar. We can see that today, in our programs of education,

1. The first one is largely missing (are we teaching the students to explore and know (have right understanding) or to assume and reproduce the content?)
2. The second one is largely missing (are we teaching relationship and cooperation or opposition and competition?)
3. And in the third one, you will see that identification of need for physical facility is missing. The willingness to produce by way of labour is also missing. The core feeling that is being generated is to accumulate more and more, to consume more and more, rather than to produce as per need.

One of our colleagues shared this incident. He said, "I was having a discussion with the final year students of a well-known institute. I asked the students about their expectation when they graduate. One of the students very articulately said, 'No. 1, good job i.e. good salary, No. 2, job satisfaction'; and then slowly he added 'No. 3, if possible, no work!' Present-day education is setting such expectations in students".

Is that happening? You can reflect on your expectations and experience from the present-day education.

Education provides thought leadership and direction to the society through the preparation of individuals. These long-term potential of human education-sanskar is:

1. Right understanding in every child – by facilitating the development of right understanding, it will lead to living in human consciousness.
2. The capacity to live in relationship – by facilitating the capacity to live with mutual happiness or justice in relationship with other human being it will ensure harmony in the family; and that harmony will extend to the larger family, and ultimately go up to the world family, leading to an undivided society.
3. The capacity to identify the need for physical facility, developing the skills and practice for sustainable production of more than what is required leading to the feeling of prosperity; a mindset of production through labour and of right utilisation of the physical facility. This will ensure harmonious family order and extend beyond the family order through participation by the family members in the larger societal systems; ultimately to universal human order.

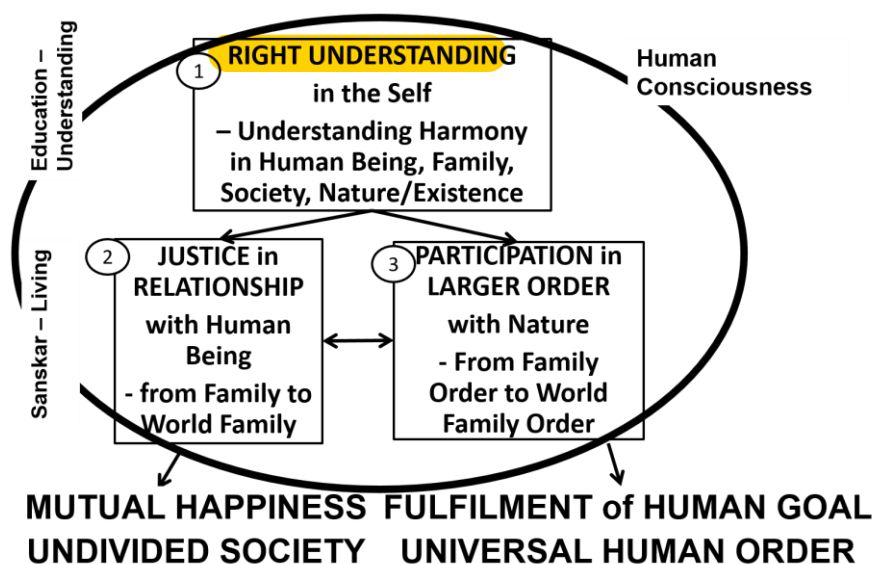


Fig. 3-7. Living with Human Consciousness

The outcomes of human beings living with human consciousness are depicted in fig. 3-7.

This is the proposal about the role of education. If you can see this, you will see that the role of education is essentially to facilitate holistic development, i.e. the individual transformation to human consciousness as well as the societal transformation to universal human order. We will discuss both these transformations in chapters to follow.

To sum up, our basic aspiration of continuity of happiness and prosperity is fulfilled by right understanding, relationship and physical facility, in that priority order. The most significant human activity towards this end is human education-sanskar.

Salient Points

- The basic human aspiration is to be in a state of continuous happiness and prosperity. It is something we want to be and continue to be, without any break.
- For fulfilment of human aspiration, three things are necessary: right understanding in the Self, fulfilment in relationship with human being and physical facility with rest of nature, in that order of priority.

- Fulfilment of relationship (with human being) leads to mutual happiness, and fulfilment of physical facility (with rest of nature) leads to mutual prosperity.
- Living with all three, right understanding, relationship and physical facility, in that order of priority, is fulfilling for human being. Seeking and ensuring fulfilment in this manner is living with human consciousness.
- Living solely on the basis of physical facility is not fulfilling for human being – for human being, physical facility is necessary but it does not suffice. It may be adequate for the fulfilment of animal. If one is seeking fulfilment solely out of physical facility, ignorant of the need for right understanding and relationship, (s)he is living with animal consciousness or inhuman consciousness. Animals living with animal consciousness are fine, they are in harmony; only human beings, living on the basis of physical facility alone tend to be in disharmony; so, human being living with animal consciousness is a problem.
- The transformation from animal consciousness to human consciousness is the essential core of holistic development. With human consciousness at the base, holistic development includes development of relationship as well as required physical facility.
- Education-Sanskar has the pivotal role in the development of human consciousness. It has to ensure right understanding in the Self of every child, capacity to live in relationship with other human beings as well as the capacity to identify the need for physical facility, the skills and practice for sustainable production of more than what is required, leading to the feeling of prosperity. Such an education will eventually be able to prepare the child with the competence to be in harmony within, to live with definite human conduct and to be in harmony with the world outside for actualising an undivided society and universal human order.

Test Your Understanding

Part 1: Questions for Self-evaluation

(Have we grasped the basic proposals made in this chapter?)

1. What are the basic human aspirations and what are the requirements to fulfil them? Indicate their correct priority. Support your answer with two examples.
2. Why is right understanding required in relationship for mutual happiness? Illustrate with the help of two examples from your life.
3. Why is right understanding required for ensuring physical facility? How does it result in mutual prosperity? Illustrate with the help of two personal examples.
4. Distinguish between 'animal consciousness' and 'human consciousness'.
5. Describe the societal impact of living with human consciousness.
6. When do you say that the development is holistic? What is the role of education in it? Explain briefly.

Part 2: Practice Exercises for Self-exploration

(To help connect the content to one's life, at least at the level of thought, these exercises may be done individually or in a group, particularly with friends and family members)

1. Take the list of your desires (from chapter 1). Update it, if you feel that is necessary. Now for each item on the list, find out what would be necessary to fulfil it, i.e. will it require:
 - a. Right understanding?
 - b. Relationship (right feeling)?
 - c. Physical facility?

Desire	Fulfilled by		
	Right understanding	Fulfilment in relationship	Physical facility
Good health	?	?	Yes (food etc.)
Lots of friends	?	Yes	?

Other desires...			
Your priority	1, 2 or 3?	1, 2 or 3?	1, 2 or 3?

If it requires more than one of these, mark which one is the higher priority. Explain your conclusion from this exercise.

- Can all your aspirations be fulfilled just by physical facility?
- Is right understanding required for the fulfilment of none, some or all of your aspirations?
- Is relationship required for the fulfilment of none, some or all of your aspirations?
- Can one be substituted for the other (e.g. can right understanding be substituted by physical facility). If they are distinct things, what are their key characteristics (or what are the key differences between right understanding, relationship and physical facility)?
- What is the priority order of these three?

Keep this list handy, because we intend to use the same list in future chapters as well.

- List your activities throughout a typical day in your life. Categorise these activities as activity for developing right understanding, activity for fulfilment in relationship and activity for physical facility (see table, below).

Activity	This activity has time and effort for		
	Right understanding	Fulfilment in relationship	Physical facility
Exercise, playing games (2 hrs/day)	?	?	2 hrs (for health of body)
Talking with friends	?	3 hrs (for relationship)	?
Studying	1 hr (studying for values)	?	6 hrs (studying for skills)
Sleeping			
This is just a sample list. Please make your own list			
Total Time and Effort	Max 24 hrs		

Find out what percentage of your time and effort is being spent for each of these three. What do you conclude from this exercise?

- Refer to your natural acceptance and find out if
 - You want to live in relationship (harmony) with others or
 - You want to live in opposition with others or
 - You believe living has to be necessarily in opposition with others, i.e. there is 'struggle for survival', 'survival of the fittest' and check if you feel happy living this way?
 Now conduct the same exercise for at least 20 occasions in your life and note the observation. Then draw your conclusions and write them down.

Part 3: Projects and Modelling Exercises

You may like to revisit this part of Test Your Understanding after reading through the complete class notes once and self-exploring all the key proposals. With that, you may have some (or many) aha! moments in which something clicks for you, you understand a proposal. What you have understood may be expressed in various creative ways which appeal to different people. This part is for you to give a creative expression to your understanding. Of course, you can do this in a group also. Creative expressions may be in the form of sketches, drawings, paintings, clay models, sculptures, songs, poems, music, dance, audios, videos, games, puzzles, stories, skits, plays, dramas, charts, diagrams, plans, survey questionnaires, blogs, something on social media and so on. It is the story of your own

life – and it matters. While some hints are given above, please feel free to share your real aha's in your own way!

“Day after day, week after week, year after year I have been running for happiness. Now I know exactly where to put in effort. I can imagine my life (after few years) – it will be wonderful”.

1. Personal transformation to 'human consciousness' by focusing on right understanding, fulfilment in relationship and on physical facility.
2. Societal transformation from inhuman society to humane society.
3. For both, human education has to be the foundation.

Part 4: Your Questions

Write down your questions or doubts in your note-book. If any of the previous questions have been clarified by your self-exploration of the proposals so far, please mark them as answered. We would like to discuss the questions remaining unanswered in your self-exploration.

Chapter 4: Understanding Happiness and Prosperity – Their Continuity and Programme for Fulfilment

Recap

In the previous chapters, we saw that the basic aspiration of a human being is continuity of happiness and prosperity. We also saw that there are three basic requirements to fulfil this aspiration are: right understanding, relationship and physical facility, and that too in the correct order of priority.

In this chapter, we will learn in more detail about happiness and prosperity. We will investigate the common perspectives on these basic aspirations, evaluate them and try to acquire right understanding about these, through self-exploration. We will also investigate in more detail about how the basic human aspiration can be fulfilled. What is going to be the method, what is going to be the process?

Exploring the Meaning of Happiness

Happiness is something we are all interested in. All our efforts are for being in a state of happiness. However, there is generally no single notion for it! Is it something subjective which can't be defined or is it something real which can be objectively defined? This is what we have been trying to explore.

In chapter 2, we had proposed that when we are in harmony within (between 'what I am' and 'what is naturally acceptable to me'), we are in a state of happiness (refer to fig. 4-1). We had asked you to explore whether this holds good for you or not. Could you recollect the times when you felt happy and verify this proposal?

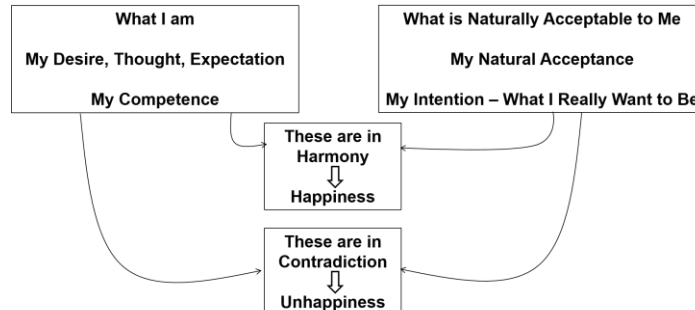


Fig. 4-1. Happiness and Unhappiness is Within

We had also indicated that if these two are not in harmony, we are in a state of contradiction. We want to get out of that contradiction and if we are forced to continue, we feel unhappy. Could you explore into this by recollecting the times when you felt unhappy?

Let us now delve deeper into the meaning of happiness. What is being said here is that happiness is something real, something definite. Therefore, it can be defined, it can be understood and we can make effort to achieve it. The detailed proposal for happiness is:

"The state or situation, in which I live, if there is harmony / synergy in it, it is Naturally Acceptable to me to be in that state / situation".

"To be in a state / situation which is Naturally Acceptable is Happiness".

i.e. "To be in a state of Harmony / Synergy is Happiness".

i.e. Happiness = Harmony.

To explore this proposal, let us take some specific examples.

Try to remember the time when you found the solution to a problem that you had been struggling with for a long time. Did you feel happy the moment you found a solution? Even now, when you recollect that moment, you might feel happy! Whenever there is harmony in our thoughts, we feel happy. If this harmony is discontinued, we feel uncomfortable. Whenever there is a contradiction in thought, we feel unhappy. This way, you can explore into the state of your being and try to verify that when you are in harmony within, you are happy and vice versa.

Now, let us explore some situations in which you are interacting with the outside world. In addition to you, there is another person. There is a feeling of affection in you for your family members. They also have a feeling of affection for you. There is harmony in the family. In such a situation, you will feel happy being in family, isn't it? Similarly, if someone is dominating, there is a disharmony in the family and you feel uncomfortable about it. You want to get away from the domination, but you don't know what you can do about it. In this type of situation, you feel unhappy. Find it out for yourself.

Some exploration will show that when we are in a state of harmony within, we feel happy because that state is naturally acceptable to us. When we are in a situation with the outside world in which there is harmony, we feel happy as the feeling of being in that situation is naturally acceptable to us. This state or situation of natural acceptance is happiness.

Now, find out when you are in a state or situation of harmony, and therefore happiness, do you want that feeling to continue or do you want to discontinue it? As an example, let's take a situation. Say you met a dear friend for whom you have a feeling of respect. He also reciprocates with respect for you. When you meet you shake hands – this is the expression of the feeling of respect. The question is – do you want the feeling of respect to continue? It is easy to see that we want the feeling of respect to continue. Of course, we are not referring to continuing the situation – you certainly would not like the handshake to continue for a very long time! It is the continuity of harmony that we are seeking. In this case it is the feeling of respect that we want to continue to have.

Further, we can see that not only do we want to continue to be in a state of harmony, we would like to share it with others, and to extend it as far as possible. For example, when we have a feeling of affection for someone in the family, it leads to a state of harmony within and we want to continue with it. We also want to extend it to the others in the family. Ultimately, we want to ensure this feeling of harmony with everyone.

It may be easier to see that you do not want to continue in states or situations in which there is contradiction or disharmony. For example, if you are thinking about someone that you had an argument with, you feel opposed to that other person. Then, for the time duration you are thinking about this person, you are uncomfortable, isn't it? Similarly, if there is a conflict in your family on some issue and you don't know how to resolve it, you are uncomfortable and you want to come out of it.

These are the states where there is lack of harmony within or there is lack of harmony between us and the outside world. We do not want to continue in such states or situations and we want to come out of them as soon as possible. In case we are unable to come out of them, we are in a state of unhappiness. We can thus infer about unhappiness as:

“The state or situation, in which I live, if there is disharmony / contradiction in it, it is not Naturally Acceptable to me to be in that state / situation”.

“To be forced to be in a state / situation which is not Naturally Acceptable is Unhappiness”.

i.e. “To be forced to be in a state of Disharmony / Contradiction is Unhappiness”.

i.e. Unhappiness = Disharmony.

Let us take an example to illustrate these definitions of happiness and unhappiness. You are sitting in the lawn with a close friend, a friend with whom you have feeling of affection, unconditional affection. You are sitting together for hours without much exchange of words. Will you be in a state of happiness

within or unhappiness within? Similarly, when you are sitting in the office of your boss with whom you have feeling of opposition, waiting for taking instructions from him. He is looking into something and you are waiting, sitting together for even a few minutes without any transaction of words. Will you be in a state of happiness within or unhappiness within? Obviously, in case one, you are in a state of happiness, as you are having a feeling of affection, which is naturally acceptable to you; whereas, in case two, you are in a state of unhappiness as you are having a feeling of opposition which is not naturally acceptable to you.

Programme for Continuity of Happiness

Now, for the continuity of happiness, we have to look into the total possibility of our being. Ensuring harmony in every aspect of living would lead to continuity of happiness. Let us find out – as a human being what is the total expanse of our living?

We live at several levels, starting with ourselves. Then, we live with other people in our family, in the larger society and we are embedded in the nature. Whether we are aware of it or not, the expanse of our living is at four levels:

1. As an Individual human being
2. As a member of a family
3. As a member of society
4. As a unit in nature/existence

Let us take a look at these different levels of our being.

As an individual human being: Each one of us is engaged in ourselves much of the time – in our desires, thoughts, beliefs, imaginations, memories, future plans, etc. No one else is involved.

As a member of a family: We are born in a family, we are nurtured and educated in the family. We live with our brothers and sisters, parents and grandparents, uncles and aunts, cousins and so many people. The family tries to ensure mutual happiness among the members, it takes care of their physical needs, it takes care of the young children, the old and all members in between.

As a member of the Society: Our family, together with other families is part of a larger group of people. We interact with many people outside of our family. In the society we produce, use and exchange things like food, clothing, housing, etc. There are systems for education, health, justice, production and order in society. Our village, town or city is a part of a larger society.

As a unit in Nature/Existence: We are a part and parcel of a large interconnected, interdependent eco-system along with the air, water, soil, plants, trees, birds and animals which we call nature. We are inhaling the oxygen rich air and exhaling carbon di-oxide laden air, which the trees consume. Our Earth is one of the many planets in our solar system. Our galaxy is one of the many galaxies. Then there is the all-pervading space. All that exists, units of nature in space, is called existence. We, human beings, are also units embedded in nature/existence.

We are living with all this expanse of our being, at these four levels; of course, we may or may not be aware of it. Find out if you are living at all these four levels.

We have explored that happiness is to be in harmony. We have also seen that the expanse of our being is these four levels. We can now see that for continuity of happiness, it is essential to ensure harmony at all these levels. To ensure harmony, it is essential to understand harmony.

The programme for ensuring the continuity of happiness is:

To understand the harmony
and

- } at all levels of being:
1. At the level of the individual human being
- }

To live in harmony

- 2. At the level of family**
- 3. At the level of society and**
- 4. At the level of nature/existence**

The scope of understanding extends from understanding the harmony in the human being, to understanding the harmony in the family, understanding the harmony in the society and finally, understanding the harmony in the nature and existence. The scope of living also encompasses these four levels – living in harmony as an individual, living in harmony in the family, living in harmony in the society and living in harmony in nature/existence. Can you see that?

Is it necessary to ensure harmony within, at the level of the individual? Is it essential to ensure living in harmony in family? Is it essential to ensure living in harmony in society? Is it essential to ensure living in harmony in nature, in existence?

If there is disharmony in our living anywhere anytime, it will lead to unhappiness, it will disturb the continuity of our happiness. Prima facie, all four are necessary, but you may keep on exploring.

Now, our effort, through These class notes, is to facilitate your self-exploration about the harmony at all these levels. We will place the proposals about each of these levels of harmony. Chapters 5-7 have the proposals about harmony in the human being, chapter 8 has the proposals about harmony in the family. In chapter 9, proposals about harmony in the society have been discussed and finally chapters 10-11 contain the proposals about harmony in nature/existence.

We trust that you will do your part, i.e. to explore each proposal on the basis of your natural acceptance and validate it experientially. If that happens in you, it will start or augment your self-evolution.

Exploring the Meaning of Prosperity

Prosperity is related to material things or what we have been referring to as physical facility. If you list out all the things that you use, it will probably be a long list. It will include food to eat, clothes to wear, shelter for protection, a mobile phone, a two-wheeler and so many other things. These things are required. When we are able to see that we have more than adequate physical facility, we feel prosperous.

Over and above physical facility, prosperity has to do with our feeling. The proposal is:

Prosperity is the feeling of having more than required physical facility.

There are two basic requirements:

1. Right assessment of the need for physical facility, along with its required quantity.
2. Ensuring the availability/production of more than required physical facility.

Do you think it is possible to quantify the need for physical facility? Can you quantify how much food is required? How many clothes are required? Like that how much physical facility is required? Explore into it. At this point, what we can clearly see is that we can have a feeling of prosperity only if we are able to do the right assessment of our physical needs. The right assessment of physical needs, along with their required quantity, will come through right understanding. Without that right assessment, the feeling of prosperity cannot be assured, regardless of the availability or accumulation of physical facility that we may have been able to do.

Just assessing the need is not enough. We need to ensure the availability or production of more than the required quantity. This requires skills, technology and production. With both of these, right assessment and availability, we have more than required physical facility. Over and above that, it is a matter of feeling that we have more than enough.

Let us take an example. When we look into our need of food for nurturing our body, we find that it is required in a limited quantity. No one can eat in unlimited quantity; can you see that? Once we are able to identify the need for food along with the required quantity, we can check whether we already have more than what is required. If we have more than required food or if we can ensure more than required food by way of production, we will have the feeling of prosperity as far as food is concerned. If we neither have the availability nor the ability to produce more than required quantity of food, we will feel deprived (as far as food is concerned). Find out if you are feeling prosperous or deprived (as far as food is concerned). Similarly, you can find out for clothes, mobile phones, etc.

When you have a feeling of prosperity, you will naturally think of nurturing and enriching others, isn't it? On the other hand, if we feel deprived then we think of exploiting and depriving others.

By and large, there is a confusion between accumulation of physical facility and the feeling of prosperity. It is generally assumed that the richer you are, the more prosperous you are; the more you have accumulated, the more prosperous you are. With this sort of assumption, we pursue prosperity with an obsession for profit, for accumulation. That is happening all around. The major focus in the society today is on accumulation of physical facility. In particular, there is a major focus on accumulating money.

Today, most of the wealth (money) in the world is owned by a very tiny percentage of people. Many such people are seen exploiting others, and exploiting the Earth, in an effort to accumulate even more. Without clarity about how much is required, the effort is for an unlimited quantity of physical facility, and by almost any means. First the efforts may be by legal means, and then slip to even illegal means. This is all because the quantity required is undefined and there is a feeling of deprivation!

Try to find out if you are feeling prosperous or you are feeling deprived.

We will revisit prosperity in chapter 7, after the discussion about harmony in the human being.

A Look at the Prevailing Notions of Happiness

In the light of the preceding discussion on happiness, let us take a critical look at the prevailing notions of happiness. One of them is that the continuity of happiness is possible through consumption of physical facility and enjoyment of favourable sensations. People may go to almost any extent to get the taste of their favourite sensation! It could be some particular type of touch, sound, sight, taste or smell.

Continuity of Happiness from Physical Facility?

Is it possible to ensure continuity of happiness by the consumption of physical facility, and the enjoyment of favourable sensation? Let us study this phenomenon and see what is taking place.

Physical thing → Contact with Body → Sensation (from Body) → Tasted by Self
- If taste is favourable → Happiness (Temporary)
- If taste is unfavourable → Unhappiness (Temporary)

We get happiness, or what appears to be happiness, when we eat our favourite sweet. What is happening is that a physical thing, this sweet, is coming in contact with our tongue. At that point, we can taste the sweet. Taste is a sensation. In case we find the sensation to be favourable, we feel happy. If we find the sensation to be unfavourable, we feel unhappy. You can observe this for any sensation – sound, touch, sight, taste or smell. But can it ensure happiness in continuity?

To take the sweet example further, let us say a particular chocolate is your favourite sweet – you like its taste. You get a lot, say 100 of them. Now you start eating these sweet savouries. You put the first chocolate in your mouth. If you like the taste, you feel happy about it but if you don't like the taste,

you feel unhappy about it. Let us say you like the taste and continue to eat. So now you have eaten 10 of them and your stomach is full. Do they still remain tasty? Go for another one, and another one... If you observe carefully, it can be seen that:

- When you start eating the sweet, it seems tasty (for you) and necessary (for the Body). You are eating for happiness (for you) as well as for nurturing your body.
- Once your stomach is full, it still seems tasty (to you), but it is now unnecessary (for your Body). Now you are still eating for happiness from the taste of it (for you), but you know it is no longer necessary for nurturing your Body.
- If you continue to eat some more and you are full up to the neck, what is your state? The sweet is no more a source of happiness for you. At the same time, it remains unnecessary for nurturing the Body. It is still your same favourite sweet, but now it is neither tasty to you nor necessary for your Body. Now you want to stop eating it.
- But if someone forces you to eat further; eating the same sweets becomes intolerable. Now, it turns into a source of unhappiness for you; and you have to deal with the stomach ache on top of it!

The conclusion is that you do get some sort of happiness from the sensation. However, this happiness is momentary, very short lived and it seems to pass through the following stages:

Tasty-Necessary → Tasty-Unnecessary → Tasteless-Unnecessary → Intolerable

Firstly, continuity of happiness is not possible from eating chocolates, nor from any other food or any other sensation for that matter; be it sound, touch, sight, taste or smell. Secondly, you become bored of the taste after indulging into it for some time. Even if one wants to get happiness out of taste, one has to keep changing from one sensation to another to another. Thirdly, the little temporary happiness you got from the taste is dependent on something outside, i.e. the chocolate in this example. There is no guarantee that you will get chocolate as and when you want to derive happiness out of its taste. This applies to any sensation from which one is trying to derive happiness.

[A point of caution: We are not saying that physical facility is not required. It is required for the Body. However, it cannot ensure continuity of happiness. Similarly, sensation has its definite role for the Body, but it cannot ensure continuous happiness.]

Continuity of Happiness from Favourable Feeling from Others?

The second prevailing notion is that we can be happy by getting favourable feelings from others. We tend to feel happy when others pay attention to us, when others praise us, when others respect us, care for us or express any favourable feeling to us.

For that, we keep doing all kinds of things. Wearing clothes of the latest fashion, going to college on that borrowed motorcycle and so many other things like that. Similarly, we may be pretending to be more than what we really are or agreeing with people just to be in their good books and to get their attention. All these are examples of our effort for getting feeling from others. We have a deeply held belief that we will get happiness like this.

Is it possible to ensure continuity of happiness by receiving favourable feeling from others? Let us study this phenomenon.

Other Human Being → Expression of Feeling → Feeling Received and Evaluated by Self

- If feeling is favourable → Happiness (Temporary)
- If feeling is unfavourable → Unhappiness (Temporary)

When someone is expressing a right feeling, like respect, that is naturally acceptable for you, you like to receive that feeling – you feel happy. Of course, if the other is expressing emotions that are not naturally acceptable for you, e.g. disrespect, you feel unhappy.

To take an example, you wear an exclusive dress while going for a party. Your expectation is that you will be noticed in the party, people will complement you and this will make you happy. You enter the door and the host appreciates your dress – you feel happy. Next minute another person points out that this dress is now out of fashion; he saw it in the neighbourhood goodwill store – your happiness is replaced by unhappiness.

The conclusion is that you do get some sort of happiness from the attention and feeling you get from others. However, this happiness is momentary, very short lived. So firstly, continuity of happiness is not possible through getting feeling from the other. Secondly, the little temporary happiness you got from the compliments is not your own property. You are not deciding the feeling – it is being decided by the other person. There is no certainty that they will notice you again or if they will even be around next time!

Happiness is not the same as Excitement

The question is whether the feeling that we got is happiness or something else.

- Was what we got from the favourable sensation = happiness?
- Was the favourable feeling we got from the other = happiness?

What we got in both cases is a sort of momentary happiness. We are calling it excitement. There is a confusion between excitement and happiness (a harmonious state within). Excitement is short lived, not sustainable, while a harmonious state within is something which can be continuous and sustainable. You have an expectation, say for a particular sweet, and if that expectation is fulfilled, you feel happy. However, since you are looking for continuity of happiness, you try to continue, in this case eating the sweet. But sooner or later you see that it cannot be continued indefinitely, so that happiness from eating the sweet dies out. In fact, there is no possibility to continue this happiness from eating the sweet. Somewhere you are able to see this. You are able to see that you have a deeper desire for continuity of happiness which this sweet is not able to fulfil.

This temporary happiness we are getting out of favourable sensation or out of the feeling we receive from the other is not really happiness (harmony). It is just a temporary state of excitement. If you look at it in a deeper sense, you would realize that this excitement is actually creating a disharmonious state within. That is why you feel uncomfortable within when you are in a state of excitement, so much so that it starts reflecting on your body in terms of disturbed pace of breathing, high blood pressure, etc.

Other Prevailing Notions about Happiness

There are many other assumptions, questions and confusions about happiness. Let us see a few of them here. Try to explore if they are valid:

“I will be bored of happiness if I am always happy”.

Of course, one will be bored of the excitement arising out of favourable sensation. If happiness is assumed to be excitement, we do get bored of it (excitement). Now, if we understand that happiness is to be in harmony, we can evaluate this assumption to be false.

“Happiness and unhappiness are two sides of the same coin” or “Happiness and unhappiness go together, they cannot be separated” or “Happiness and unhappiness are the two banks of a river and one is doomed to travel back and forth between the two”.

It is simpler to refer to our natural acceptance. “Do I want to be happy or unhappy”? And to further ask “do I want continuity of happiness”? The answers you get from within are authentic for you.

“Don’t bother me with vague things like happiness. I have to live and deal with other more important things in my life”.

Again, it is simpler to ask yourself what you are expecting to achieve out of the effort you are making – is it happiness or something else. Of course, the clarity of happiness is essential.

“If we become happy, progress will stop”.

Ask yourself what is the purpose of all this progress - is it for sustained human happiness or something else?

“I need to be unhappy to recognize that I am happy”.

The recognition of happiness is there in human beings innately, so comparing is not necessary. Like there is no need to be sick to appreciate health. However, if this assumption is very strong, keep exploring.

“We think of others only when we are unhappy. Thus, it is important / useful to be unhappy so that one can help others”.

When you are unhappy, find out whom you remember and for what reason – to help you to get out of unhappiness or for something else? Similarly, when you are happy, do you want to share it with other people? Whom do you remember then? When we are in harmony within, we can relate to other people in a more meaningful manner.

“Yes, I want happiness. But my desiring does not guarantee it. Why talk of that desire”?

Just desiring happiness is certainly not enough, one has to make the effort also. Ask yourself, in what direction would you like to make effort in – for happiness or for unhappiness?

“My happiness depends on the others. What can I do about it”?

If we can see that happiness is harmony, it is our property, and does not depend on the other. If we are expecting feeling from the other for our happiness, it certainly can't be guaranteed, nor can it be continuous.

“We do not want happiness for ourselves, but we want to make others happy (while we may stay unhappy)”.

Find out if you can give what you don't have. If you don't have harmony (happiness) within, can you give it to the other?

“Happiness is a small thing. We have higher aspirations, such as contentment, peace, bliss, etc.”.

True, we do have higher aspirations. However, ask yourself if you can get to contentment without harmony within?

Observations on Various Efforts for Happiness

Since methods of getting happiness from outside do not necessarily ensure harmony within, the underlying disharmony continues, the frustration keeps building up. When the unhappiness continues, we try to escape from it. People try all sorts of ways, some of which are mentioned in fig. 4-2.

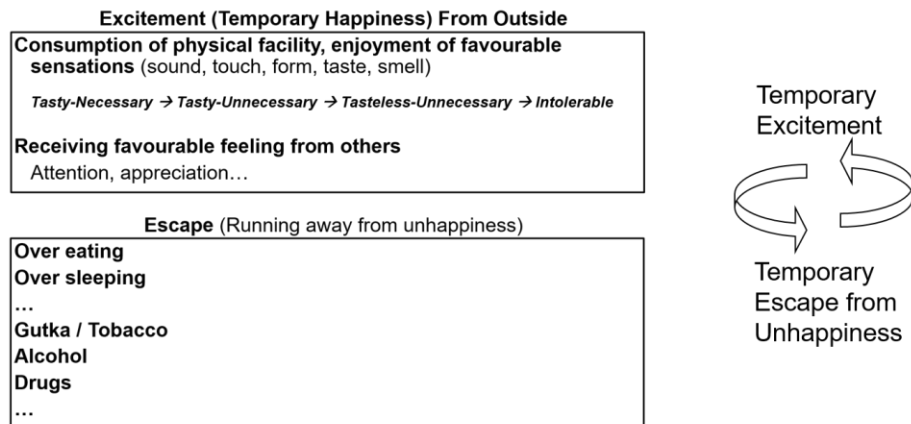


Fig. 4-2. Excitement and Escape

You can find out if these ways of escaping from unhappiness work or not. Take for example, people who smoke. Does their intake of cigarettes go up or does it go down when they are in more tension? Generally, the more the tension, the more is the intake of cigarettes. Needless to say, there are adverse side effects on the health of the Body. Is it a permanent solution to the unhappiness? We can easily see that cigarettes or any of the other means used for escape (such as alcohol, drugs, over eating, etc. as listed above) is not a permanent solution.

Another observation is that people with such assumptions about happiness tend to keep moving between excitement and escape. If we observe people working under unfavourable conditions they are under a lot of pressure. Such people tend to take to one escape route or the other, in the name of relaxing, chilling out, etc., so much so that it may even become an addiction. We can observe many well-meaning people caught up in this cycle.

Of course, such methods of trying to get happiness from outside, or the efforts for escaping from unhappiness in this manner are futile. Not only do these methods not work, but they also have many undesirable side effects. For example, rates of obesity, depression and suicide are increasing globally, particularly in high income societies, due to this confusion. Like that the side effects can be observed at every level – exploitation of human being as well as exploitation of nature, as indicated in fig. 4-3.

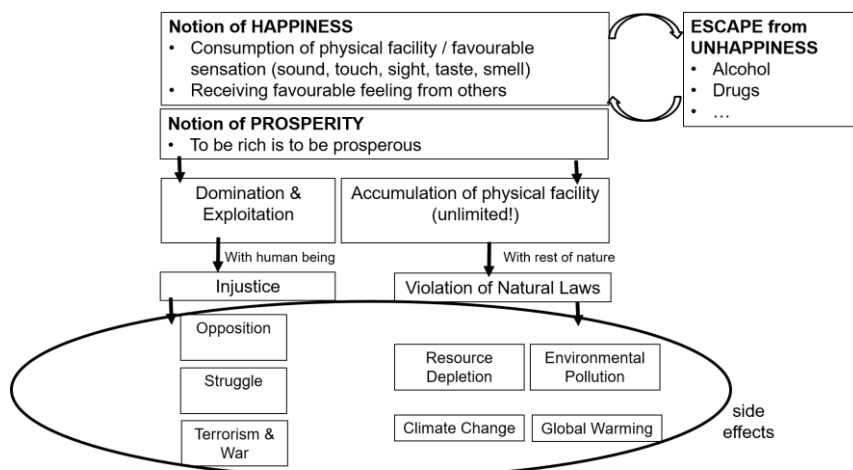


Fig. 4-3. A Critical Appraisal of the Current Scenario

The problems mentioned above have to do with one's notion of happiness and the programme for its fulfilment.

By now, you would have appreciated that in order to move towards a fulfilling life, of utmost importance to have clarity about happiness and prosperity. After going through the above discussion on these, it will be fruitful for you to pause and explore what has been discussed as well as your own present beliefs and experiences in this regard.



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The Programme for Happiness

We have seen that happiness is to be in a state of harmony. The expanse of our living encompasses four levels – individual, family, society and nature/existence. The programme for harmony is to make the necessary effort to understand harmony and to live in harmony at all levels of our being. This is articulated in figs. 4-4 and 4-5.

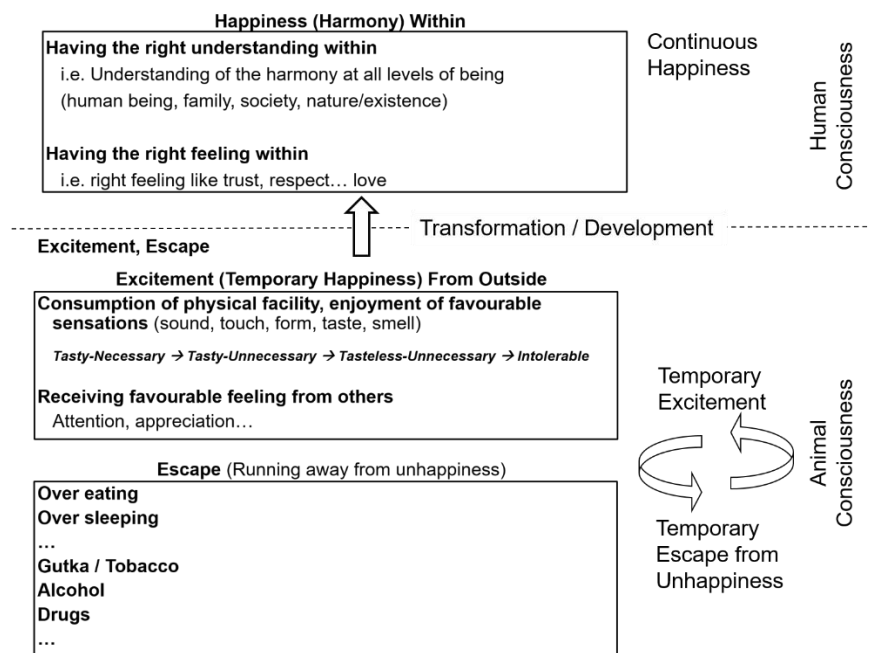


Fig. 4-4. Happiness, Excitement and Escape from Unhappiness

We have earlier proposed that the basic human aspiration for continuity of happiness and prosperity is fulfilled by right understanding in the Self, fulfilment in relationship and physical facility.

Right understanding is essentially the understanding of harmony in the entire expanse of our being, i.e. harmony in the human being, in the family, in the society and in nature/existence. If we are able to see the harmony at all these levels, there is a possibility of living in harmony at all these levels.

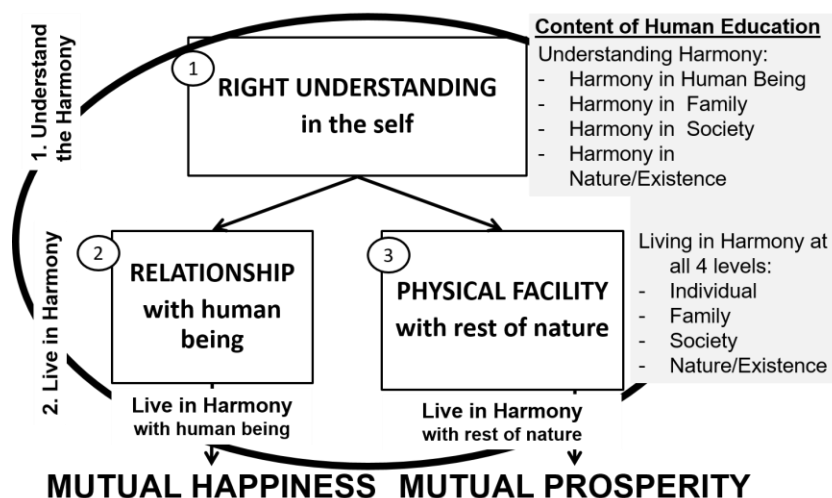


Fig. 4-5. Content of Human Education

In chapter 3, we had discussed the same with the orientation given in fig. 4-5. Understanding harmony is having right understanding in the Self. Living in harmony has two parts, i.e. living in harmony with human being, leading to mutual happiness and living in harmony with the rest of nature, leading to mutual prosperity. Physical facility comes from the rest of nature. When we are able to ensure adequate physical facility by a mutually enriching process, it leads to mutual prosperity.

We can now put it precisely. The programme to fulfil basic human aspiration is:

To understand the harmony and To live in harmony	}	In the individual human being In the family In the society In nature/existence
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Natural Outcome of the Programme

As we understand happiness and prosperity as our basic aspirations, we would naturally put in our efforts to:

1. Understand the harmony
2. Live in harmony

The natural outcome of understanding harmony will be to first be in harmony within, i.e. to be in a state of happiness within. When we are in harmony within, we will naturally make effort to share and extend that harmony in every action – from the smallest thing to the biggest thing that we do. Recall from chapter 1, we had discussed that the value of a human being is its participation in this nature/existence and fulfilling our participation leads to our happiness. This participation is something natural, rather than something forced upon us. Now if we can see that happiness is to be in harmony:

- Our participation with ourselves will be – to be in harmony as an individual human being.
- Our participation in the family will be – to ensure harmony with the other members of the family.
- Our participation in the society will be – to make effort for harmony in the society.
- Our participation in the nature will be – to work to maintain harmony with every unit in nature.

For this, it is essential to understand harmony. That is what we propose to do in chapters 5-11.

Salient Points

- Happiness is something definite; it can be defined and understood.
- To be in a state / situation in which there is harmony / synergy, that state / situation is naturally acceptable to me. To be in a state of harmony / synergy is happiness.
- To be in a state / situation in which there is disharmony / contradiction is not naturally acceptable to me. To be forced to in a state of disharmony / contradiction is unhappiness.
- We live as an individual, we live as a member of the family, we live as a member of the society and ultimately, we live as a unit in nature / existence. That is the expanse of our being.
- The programme for ensuring the continuity of happiness is
 - To understand the harmony and
 - To live in harmony

}	at all levels
	1. At the level of human being
	2. At the level of family
	3. At the level of society
	4. At the level of nature/existence
- Prosperity is the feeling of having or producing more than required physical facility.
- To have a feeling of prosperity, two things are required:
 - Right assessment of physical needs, along with their required quantity
 - Ensuring the availability / production of more than required physical facility

A prosperous person thinks of right utilisation and nurturing the other, while a deprived person thinks of accumulation and exploiting the other.
- The prevailing notions of happiness and prosperity can be summarised as follows:
 - Happiness is assumed to be excitement arising out of favourable sensation through the Body and favourable feeling from the other.
 - Prosperity is assumed to be accumulation of physical facility.
 - When these do not fulfil, and the unhappiness is still there, people try to escape from unhappiness by way of taking to alcohol, drugs, etc.

These notions have led to exploitation of human being as well as the rest of nature. There are visible impacts in the form of struggle and war with human being and resource depletion and environmental pollution with rest of nature.

Test Your Understanding

Part 1: Questions for Self-evaluation

(Have we grasped the basic proposals made in this chapter?)

1. Define happiness as proposed in the chapter. Explain with two examples from your day-to-day life to support your answer.
2. Four levels of living have been proposed in this chapter. What are these levels? Can you see that you are living at all these levels? Explain with examples from your life.
3. Discuss the programme for continuity of happiness.
4. Define prosperity as proposed in the chapter. Explain with two examples from your day-to-day life to support your answer.
5. Is there any difference between prosperity and accumulation of wealth? Explain with few examples of both, preferably from your own experience.
6. Is excitement and happiness the same thing or different? Explain with few examples of both, preferably from your own experience.
7. Critically examine the prevailing notions of happiness and prosperity in the society. What are the consequences of these notions?

Part 2: Practice Exercises for Self-exploration

(To help connect the content to one's life, at least at the level of thought, these exercises may be done individually or in a group, particularly with friends and family members)

1. It was mentioned that when you are consuming any physical facility, the following sequence applies:
Tasty-Necessary → Tasty-Unnecessary → Tasteless-Unnecessary → Intolerable
Observe this sequence for at least five types of physical facility, say a tasty food, TV programs, your favourite music, etc.
In contrast, observe that any feeling in you is either naturally acceptable or not. If a feeling is naturally acceptable, you want it continuously; and if not naturally acceptable, you do not want it even for a moment.
What are your conclusions from this exercise? Is continuous happiness possible through sensation by consuming physical facility? What are the other options for continuity of happiness?
2. Take your list of desires. Revise it if you need to. Now, if a desire is fulfilled, find out what it will result into – harmony (happiness), prosperity or something else (see table, below). If it is something else, try to identify exactly what it will result into. It may be excitement; it may be a temporary relief from unhappiness.

Desire	When this desire is fulfilled, I expect that it will result in		
	Harmony	Prosperity	Other
Good health			I will look good
Lots of friends			I like to be with friends
Tasty food			I like the taste of it
Lots of money		This should lead to prosperity	But I don't know how much money
Understanding my natural acceptance	This may lead to harmony		
This is just a sample list. Please make your own list			

Articulate the key conclusions that you draw from this exercise.

3. Observe yourself for a day.
 - a. Find two examples when you can notice that you are living as an individual, as a member of the family, as a member of society and as a unit in nature. Write down what you are taking or giving in each of these examples. Are there any other levels at which you live? What do you conclude from this exploration?
 - b. List three instances when you are happy and three instances when you are unhappy. Are the happy instances related to harmony at some level? Are the unhappy instances related to disharmony at some level? What was the reason for continuing to be in disharmony (even for a moment)? What do you conclude from this exploration?

Do this exercise in a group too, and share your observations with each other.
4. In the analysis of your list of desires (question 1, above), find out which desires or what part of each desire are continuous (that you want to continue every moment). E.g. you may want to continue to have lots of good friends. If you really look into it, you want to have a feeling of acceptance all the time. You may not want your friends to be physically around you 24x7, so the desire for lots of good friends can be split into 2 desires:

Original Desire	New Desire(s) – Original desire has been split into many sub-desires
Lots of good friends	
	Feeling of acceptance for me in my friends – continuous

	Being physically in the company of my friends – temporary (not continuous)
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Desire	Continuous	Temporary
Good health	Always	
Feeling of acceptance for me in my friends	Always	
Being physically in the company of my friends		Whenever I want
Tasty food		Whenever I want
Lots of money		Whenever I want
Understanding my natural acceptance	Continuous	
This is just a sample list. Please make your own list		

Part 3: Projects and Modelling Exercises

You may like to revisit this part of Test Your Understanding after reading through the complete class notes once and self-exploring all the key proposals. With that, you may have some (or many) aha! moments in which something clicks for you, you understand a proposal. What you have understood may be expressed in various creative ways which appeal to different people. This part is for you to give a creative expression to your understanding. Of course, you can do this in a group also. Creative expressions may be in the form of sketches, drawings, paintings, clay models, sculptures, songs, poems, music, dance, audios, videos, games, puzzles, stories, skits, plays, dramas, charts, diagrams, plans, survey questionnaires, blogs, something on social media and so on. It is the story of your own life – and it matters. While some hints are given above, please feel free to share your real aha's in your own way!

“Happiness is to be in a state of harmony. Unhappiness is to be forced to be in a state of disharmony”.

1. My state – making effort for excitement or happiness?
2. State of the society – making effort for excitement-escape or happiness?
3. Ultimately, I want happiness, regardless of the profession etc.

Part 4: Your Questions

Write down your questions or doubts in your note-book. If any of the previous questions have been clarified by your self-exploration of the proposals so far, please mark them as answered. We would like to discuss the questions remaining unanswered in your self-exploration.