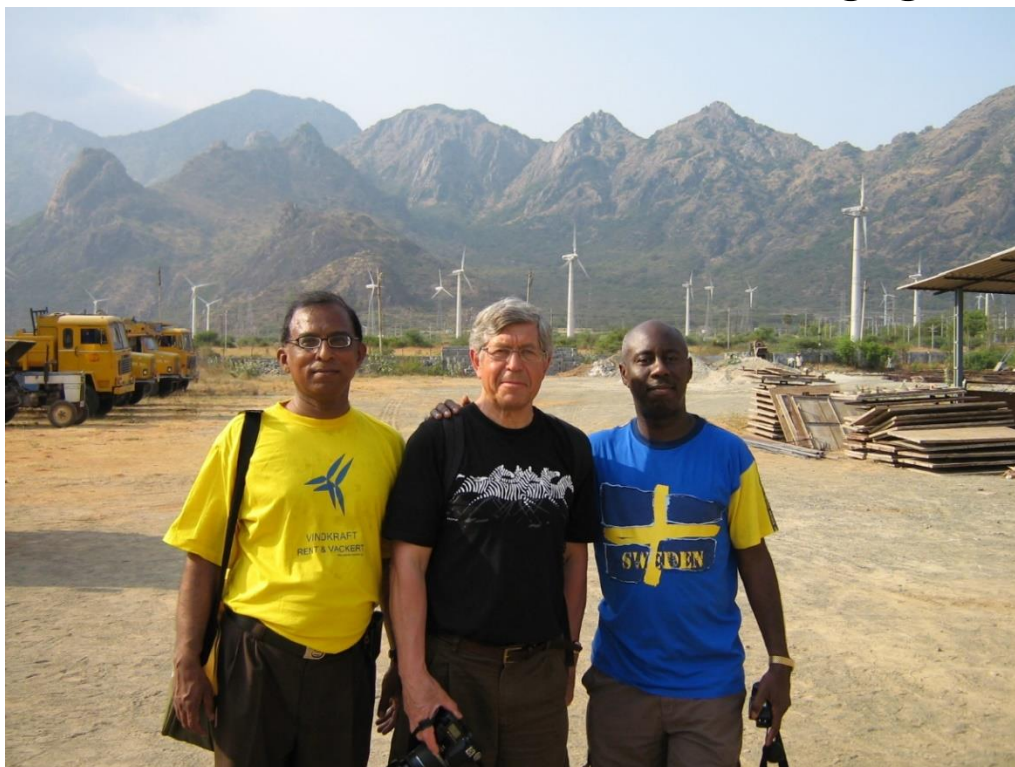


L–8: Harmony with Family, Society and Nature for Co-existence: ‘Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah’ (सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः)



Contributors

Dr. Shashi Kant Gupta

Professor of Assessment and Evaluation

Dr. A. K. Jain

Professor of Civil Engineering

Editor: Dr. Joshua Earnest, Professor of Electrical Engineering



National Institute of Technical Teachers' Training and Research
Shamla Hills, Bhopal M.P. - INDIA 462 002

Lesson – 8

Harmony with Family, Society and Nature for Co-existence: ‘Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah’ (सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः)

Learning outcomes: At the end of this lesson, you as professional will be able to plan to live in harmony with family, society and nature for peaceful co-existence.

Contents

1.0	INTRODUCTION	3
2.0	PROFESSIONAL’S HARMONY WITH FAMILY	3
2.1	Misunderstanding Among Family Members	4
2.2	Mitigating Misunderstandings	4
2.3	Abuse of Trust	5
3.0	PROFESSIONAL’S HARMONY WITH SOCIETY	6
3.1	Conflict of Interests	7
4.0	PROFESSIONAL’S HARMONY WITH NATURE	8
5.0	SUMMARY	10
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	11

Lesson – 8

Harmony with Family, Society and Nature for Co-existence: ‘Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah’ (सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Professionals are supposed to work as leaders (not as a political leader) to show and guide the right way of doing things to society on different aspects of life, such as education, health, ethics, lawful conduct, aesthetics, arts and culture. In other words, professionals show the path to the society as to how to live a proper life. However, for this to happen satisfactorily, professionals have to first show that they themselves live in harmony with their family, society and nature. The present day definition of healthy person is ‘*when that person is physically, mentally and socially fit*’. That is why you as professional teacher say to your students that they must develop healthy habits. That is why, when a student tells a ‘lie’, the teacher tells him/her that it is wrong habit. In other words, a person to be healthy has to be in harmony with oneself, family, society and nature. This harmony with oneself is possible only when a person is able to discover his/her ‘**natural acceptance**’ (discussed in preceding lesson) and chooses a profession according to that *natural acceptance*. This identification of natural acceptance is possible through the process of realization (knowing what the reality is) and understanding (knowing ones’ own role in this reality). If a person has identified his/her *natural acceptance* and leads the professional and personal life accordingly, then s/he will be able to show a definiteness in his/her life and the behaviour will not be affected by some small variations in the economic or social environment around him/her. When a person shows a consistency or definiteness in his/her personal and professional behaviour, s/he will not only be able to, develop his/her professional skills, but also, be able to gain the **trust** of the people around him/her. Trust is a basic or fundamental condition for a stress free, smooth and harmonious relationship between two individuals. Hence, for establishing a relationship of trust with family, people around in his/her profession and nature, these are the aspects discussed in this lesson.

2.0 PROFESSIONAL’S HARMONY WITH FAMILY

Every professional normally lives in a family, which may be a nuclear family of life partners with children or extended family where members of three generations may be living together. For an effective professional life, it is essential for them to have a harmonious relationship within the family. Otherwise, it will lead to stress in the members which in turn will affect his/her professional performance. Normally, every member in the family takes care of each other and thinks of welfare and well-being of other members although there may be exceptions to this statement. In few cases, some particular member of the family may be exploiting the situation by taking advantage and enjoying privileges of being the family member, but not contributing his/her own bit. Sometimes, it may also happen that, although every family member is trying to do his/her best with full honesty in the common interest of

the family, some kind of misunderstanding may crop up between some family members, which may require some introspection and reflection.

2.1 Misunderstanding Among Family Members

Gaur (2016) states that the main cause of such misunderstanding is that people are not able to distinguish the 'intentions' of the person with his/her 'competence/capability' and this creates the problem. It is agreed that harmony with family and society also depends upon how other members of family and society respond. However, in most cases with the genuine efforts of an individual, it is possible to establish harmony with most of the members of the family and society (barring some exceptionally bad members). This can be better explained with the following examples.

Example 1

A father wants to earn enough money so that he could provide necessary facilities to his kids. But, due to some ill-health, he feels tired quickly and is not able to work as much as he wants to do and hence, earns lesser money. Since he is not able to fulfill the demands of his kids due to lack of money, his kids think that their father does not work hard enough to earn money for them, because he is not much bothered about them. In this case, the father has good intentions about providing needed facilities to the kids, but due to his ill-health (in other words lack of competence to earn sufficient money) he is not able to earn enough. This creates a misunderstanding.

Example 2

A man is not very efficient in his official work and hence he requires more time in the office to complete the task given by his boss. Moreover, his boss is a tough task master and is very particular that deadlines should be met. Due to this work pressure, the man spends more time in office to meet the targets. His wife observes that his colleagues return from office in time, but her husband is always late. So, she thinks that her husband is not bothered about family and likes to spend more time in office, rather than at home. In this case also, the wife is mistakenly confusing 'intentions' with 'competency' to work.

If you reflect and look around, you will find many such examples where people confuse intentions with capacity/competence and this creates the misunderstanding and problems in relationships.

2.2 Mitigating Misunderstandings

For removing misunderstandings between family members, you have to consciously work to mitigate it and everyone has to start with oneself. If you explore your *natural acceptances* in family relationships, then you will find that first you wish to be happy and live stress free in family and you desire the same state of mind for every member of your family too. It is also natural that as a family member each one of them also desires the same for you too. If you

assume that your family members are like you and they are your well-wishers, as you are for them, then it will result in unwavering confidence in you, and your behaviour towards every family member will be very natural and free from any kind of suspicion. This type of behaviour will induce same feelings in your family members and their behaviour will also become natural and they will also stop seeing your intentions with any suspicion. This mutual behaviour will develop trust amongst every family member. This is further explained by the following examples.

Example 3

When there is a feeling of trust amongst family members and you notice that the behaviour of one family member 'A' is not as expected. Even then you continue to trust that 'A', and not doubt 'A's intentions. Rather, you try to understand the problems or weakness in 'A' and try to remove the cause, so that capability of 'A' improves and s/he starts working and behaving as before with other family members.

Example 4

Sometimes, a family member 'B' is having some ill feelings against some other family member 'C'. If family member 'C' continues to behave normally with family member 'B', then in the long run, the ill feeling of the family member 'B' will gradually diminish.

As the saying goes ***trust begets trust***, the only condition is that it requires ***patience*** and ***time***, which should be continually nurtured. Thus, if a family member shows trust for a long time towards every other member, then every other family member also develops the trust towards others and sustainable peace and harmony will set-in/prevail in the family.

2.3 Abuse of Trust

Now you may ask a question, that if you go on trusting people without doubting their intentions, then some family member can take advantage of this situation and exploit others. This is a genuine question because, such cases have happened in many places. The concepts discussed in the above paragraphs is not that you trust everybody blindly. Rather, you should start the relationship based on mutual trust and give that family member a chance to reciprocate that trust. Moreover, if you find that family member is not able to perform up to the expectations, then you should help him/her to build his/her capability to perform up to the expectations. In this way, an environment of trust will develop and capacity of family members will also develop with the help of each other.

However, if some family member due to some bad habits or some bad intentions continues to exploit that trust, then you should try to counsel that family member and if that family member does not change his/her attitude/habit, then you can withdraw or minimise the relationship depending upon the kind of biological (i.e. blood relationship) relationship you have with that family member. The point here is that you should not mistrust family members

and should not start every relationship on mistrust because, if you start relationship based on mistrust, then positive relationship will not get developed and there will not be any harmony. It will create more stress and will reduce the capacity to help each other leading to more mistrust. However, if relationships are established based on trust then, it will lead to greater harmony, stress free life and promote capacity building of each member leading to more trust development and synergic relationships. Nevertheless, if someone misuses this relationship of trust then you always have the choice to come out of that relationship or minimise the intensity of the relationship.

For harmonious relationship within family, it is essential that professionals develop the culture of trust within every family. They should educate the family member that in case a family member's behaviour/working is not up to the required expectations and you have doubts about his/her intentions, you should check whether he/she is facing some problem. If so, you should try to help to improve his/her capacity/competence levels in order to build up the confidence to come up to the expectations.

3.0 PROFESSIONAL'S HARMONY WITH SOCIETY

It is evident from the previous sections that initially, it is difficult to achieve the harmony with oneself and within family as it requires considerable efforts. However, after the harmony is established, life becomes more peaceful and fruitful in the family. It is now obvious that the ***basis of a harmonious relationship*** between any two individuals is ***trust***. Therefore, for establishing the harmonious relationship with society also, you as a professional have to develop the trust with the individuals of the society. In the family, every member has almost equal importance. Sometimes, some *power relationships* does exist. But, in these power relationships, there is also an element of love and belongingness. The importance of every member and feeling of love and belongingness for and by every member cannot be generally expected in society. In this situation it is more difficult to develop a relationship of trust with society.

However, as discussed in lesson 1, professionals can work smoothly only when they have a relationship of trust with their clients. So on one extreme it is difficult to develop trust with members of society (many of whom professionals even do not know) and on the other extreme trust is an essential component for smooth functioning of the professions. Hence, it is a challenging task for professionals to harmoniously carry on their profession. Moreover, it is more important for professionals to develop that trust as compared to that of the clients. Power relationship between clients and professionals is also such that it becomes the responsibility of the professionals to develop that trust. Now it is a million-dollar question as to how can professionals develop trust with society.

3.1 Conflict of Interests

If you analyse the reasons of not developing trust by one individual or group of individuals, then the *conflict of interest* emerges as most common cause. Following examples can throw more light on this.

Example 5

Suppose a company secretary of a large company holds a large number of stocks or shares of that same company. If that company secretary suggests that it will be in the interest of the company to grant bonus share free of cost against each share held by the shareholder, then this suggestion of company secretary may be taken with suspicion by other stakeholders of the company.

Example 6

Some lawyers are seen with mistrust by their clients, as they think that lawyer is trying to prolong the case, so that the lawyer continues to extract more money.

Example 7

Similarly, when a gynecologist doctor, who is also the owner of the hospital suggests that for smooth delivery of the baby, a caesarian operation of the pregnant lady is necessary, then it is natural for relatives of pregnant lady to doubt that doctor is suggesting this because s/he owns the hospital and wants to make more money by performing the caesarian delivery.

Example 8

If a professor offers the paid coaching classes to students of his/her college at his/her home or some coaching centre is also an example of *conflict of interest*. As most of the students who do not attend his/her paid coaching classes fail in the examination, then it is natural for stakeholders to think that professor is intentionally not teaching well in the college regular classes, so that the students fail in the examinations and are forced to attend his/her paid coaching classes.

Example 9

Similarly, if a teacher of higher education (as s/he is a professional) of a public sector/ government institution draws salary (i.e. tax payer's money) from the government and simultaneously earns a second income after office hours by teaching at home or coaching centre (as it is illegal by law) secretly, is also another example of *conflict of interest* as a government officer is on duty for 24 x 7 hours.

If you try to find out the **root cause** of the *conflict of interest* in all of the above viz. company secretary, lawyer, doctor and professor, then the root cause of the problem seems to be the ***desire for excess money***. This 'desire for excessive money' is the root cause of ***trust deficit***. If

you examine the life style of professionals in ancient India, it is a well-documented that professionals in ancient India viz. Teacher (guru), Doctor (Vaidya), Judges (Raj Guru) and others were not allowed to accumulate wealth, and the society at that time used to guarantee to take care of their basic needs. Since professionals never accumulated wealth in ancient India, they lived a very simple life and there was no reason to doubt their decisions and actions. Moreover, as discussed in previous lessons, professionals should think of **accumulating knowledge** and **use that knowledge** for the **betterment of the community**.

Now the big question as to why professionals need not have more money. If they have more money, then they will also need time to invest and manage it and this process will take their time and attention away from the knowledge acquisition. They will fall in the trap of multiplying their wealth and there is no limit to wealth accumulation. This accumulation of wealth will make professionals more of business person, rather than lover of knowledge, with professionals losing the trust of the society. As discussed in lesson 1, professionals work in **highly uncertain, complex** and **high-stake** situations and it is possible that despite of their best intentions and efforts, the outcome of the decisions/actions may be negative. If a professional is viewed as a money-minded person, then the clients may think that such a professional has taken decisions based on his/her interest for earning more money, rather than based on the interest of the clients.

The present day situations have created big problems for sincere professionals. The Indian media have brought to light several incidents where the relatives of patients have beaten up the doctors because something went wrong with the patients. Such incidents are indicators of loss of trust due to general perceptions in the public mind that professionals have become lethargic and money minded. In ancient India, professionals were always respected by the general public at large, because the general public was aware of the fact that, although the professionals had so much knowledge and could use that knowledge to earn excessive money, they did not do that. Instead, the professionals lived modest lives and used that knowledge to serve the society. From these discussions, it can be concluded that to gain the trust of the society and to develop a harmonious relationship, professionals need to develop an image that they are the seekers of knowledge and not of money as was in ancient India.

4.0 PROFESSIONAL'S HARMONY WITH NATURE

The most difficult task that mankind is facing in the 21st century is to re-establish the harmonious relation between human beings and nature. The unprecedented scientific and technological developments of the last two hundred years have given tremendous impetus to humans to exploit the nature for their own pleasures. The mute nature could not raise its voice against such exploitation, but this exploitation has disturbed the balance of nature so much so, that now survival of mankind seems under threat, the indications of which are quite evident. Everybody agrees that the relationship of nature and mankind cannot be termed harmonious and fault for this situation lies with human beings. If there is no harmony between

nature and mankind then it will very adversely affect all aspects of human life. Despite all scientific developments you still basically depend on nature which is made of five tatvas i.e. basic elements viz. earth, water, air, fire (energy) and space.

If you analyse this world, it can be classified in four orders, the most fundamental order is '**material order**' (i.e. land, soil, mountains, rivers, seas, minerals, gases and such others) which is made of these five traditional elements or tatvas mentioned above. This material order supports '**plant order**' on earth grow all type of plants, fruits, vegetables, cereals and others with the help of space, water, air, and energy. This plant order in turn supports '**animal order**' 'since all kind of bacteria, insects, land animals, birds, fishes and other sea animals require food from plants.

The most outer order is that of '**human beings**' who are using their knowledge to harness all three orders i.e. *material order*, *plant order* and *animal order* for their own pleasures. If you analyse closely, it becomes clearly visible that *plant order* is dependent on *material order*, but plant order has not disturbed the material order, similarly *animal order* is dependent on plant and material order, but animal order has not disturbed either plant order or material order. It is because all the three orders behave according to the basic **principle of nature** i.e. to *maintain the balance by following the cycle of taking and giving*.

Water cycle, Nitrogen Cycle, soil-plant-soil cycle are such examples which show that how different orders interact with each other and at the same time maintain a balance so that this beautiful earth continues to exist with all its diversity of flora and fauna. However, human order is taking so much and so quickly from all other three orders and returning it in such a distorted form that it is not able to become natural part of the nature.

Example 10

You are returning so much plastic waste every year to nature, that it is not able to absorb even one percentage of it and hence plastic is contaminating the earth and water both. This contamination is so intensive that it has poisoned the animals, birds and the water creatures. When these poisoned animals, birds and water creatures are eaten by human beings, they poison the humans which has led to emergence of unheard diseases such as corona virus COVID-19, which originated in China and became a pandemic across the world in early 2020.

So, the *present life style of humans is neither suitable for these three orders nor even for you*. In this scenario it is the **duty of all professionals (such as you) to selflessly and truthfully work** to continue to create new knowledge, in their respective areas for preserving the planet earth **from further deterioration**.

Example 11

Engineers should develop renewable energy technologies, energy and environment friendly materials and processes, recyclable goods or their parts. Professors should teach relevant energy and environment friendly technologies, lawyers should force parliament to make relevant acts or laws such as on ban on single use plastics and so on.

Thus, for harmonious relation between mother earth and human beings it is ***absolutely essential*** that all professionals work in unison and take environmentally-sustainable decisions. You have to understand that for *sustainable happiness*, it is essential to have conducive and *sustainable environment*. How professionals can work for sustainable development is discussed in later lessons.

5.0 SUMMARY

This is an over-arching concluding section binding together even the previous lessons of this unit as they are also interlinked. For *co-existence of individuals with each other and nature*, and happiness of every individual (especially you as a professional). Since professionals are leaders or role models in the society, they are supposed to first show to the society, how to live in harmony first with oneself, family, society and nature. It is not a very difficult task, but it requires a proper *realization* and *understanding* leading to identification/discovery of the '***natural acceptance***' of oneself, the following steps need to be followed:

- a) To live in *harmony with oneself* a person should identify his/her profession according to his/her liking and capability. If someone likes and is capable in some kind of profession, it is highly possible that s/he will excel in that profession and will be able to earn sufficient money and reputation in the long run, although initially it may not seem to be a lucrative one. However, if a person chooses a profession which is not of his/her liking and capabilities but prospects of earning more money in that profession, even then it is highly possible that after sometime s/he may not enjoy the profession and may feel stressed and dis-interested. The criterion of earning money should not be the sole deciding factor,
- b) To live in *harmony with family*, every member of the family should start treating each other with trust. The relationships should start with trust and even if behaviour of a family member is not up to the mark. Instead of doubting his/her 'intentions' one should try to find out the level of his/her 'capability/competence' to work and help him/her to come up to the expectations. If you could identify such weakness, then you should develop that individual to overcome that weakness and help him/her to come up to the desired expectations.
- c) To live in *harmony with society*, the same condition as for family is applicable. You have to treat the society as family i.e. the concept of Indian wisdom of 'vasudhaiva kutumbakam'. In addition to this, the most important thing is that you should **NOT** start accumulating wealth, but *aspire for prosperity* and *not for wealth*, as discussed in

lesson 1. **Professionals** should aspire to **accumulate knowledge** and **not wealth**. A classic example of an outstanding professional is the living legend, Prof. Goodenough of Texas State University, Texas, USA who got the Nobel Prize for Physics at the age of 97 years in the year 2019 for his contribution to the world with *Lithium-Ion* battery and which was the trigger for Industrial Revolution 4.0 (IR4) revolutionising the entire lifestyle of human beings.

If professionals start accumulating wealth, it will create *conflict of interests* and their relationship with society, which is based on trust, will deteriorate. Professionals should use their knowledge to serve the society. If they start accumulating wealth, their time and focus will shift from pursuit of knowledge to pursuit of wealth and this will affect their harmony with oneself and the society. Similarly, administrators should accumulate power, and not wealth. Only business persons can accumulate wealth since they use wealth for creating jobs by expanding the business.

- d) To live in *harmony with nature*, human beings should learn from the *plant order* and the *animal order* that their consumption pattern should be such that they return back to the nature as much as they take from nature. This requires multi-pronged strategies which are discussed in lessons 3 to 15 and lesson 20. But it is worth mentioning that as professionals are most knowledgeable and most respected individuals in the society, it is their onerous duty to not only suggest ways and means to protect nature, but also, to live their own lives according to those suggested principles.

You should not forget that **sustainable happiness is best possible in a sustainable environment**. If every individual (especially you as a professional) works for establishing harmony with the oneself, family, society and nature based on these principles automatically happiness set in for all and you as a professional would be able to achieve the mission of Indian civilization i.e. 'Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah'.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] Gaur, R.R, Sangal, R, G.P.Bagaria (2016) – A foundation course in Human Values and Professional Professional Ethics; Excel Books, New Delhi
- [2] Altekar, A.S. (2009) – 'Education in Ancient India' Isha Books: Delhi
- [3] Chopra, Deepak (2008) – 'The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success', Hay House, New Delhi, Reprint 28th 2020.
- [4] Argyris, C. and Schon, D. (1978) – Organizational Learning: A theory of Action Perspective. Addison Welsley Publishers, Reading, MA
- [5] Argyris, C. and Schon, D. (1974) – Theory in practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness. Jossey – Bass Publishers, San Francisco, CA

L– 8 DISCUSSION FORUM

Start a discussion on social media about the steps that may help you in achieving harmony with family, society and nature.