

L– 6: Human Aspirations: Sustainable Happiness and Prosperity



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Lesson – 6

Human Aspirations: Sustainable Happiness and Prosperity

Learning outcomes: At the end of this lesson, you will be able to take adequate decisions/measures to attain sustainable happiness and prosperity for a satisfied and successful personal and professional life.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

As discussed in earlier lessons, the professionals (such as teachers of higher education institutions) are regarded as the most respected segment of the society and their relationship with society is based on trust between them. Generally, professionals need to sacrifice considerably, including some pleasures of life and devote sufficient time of their life to achieve the mastery on the *vast and complex body of knowledge* they have acquired. They also take pains to use this knowledge for the service of the mankind. Nevertheless, society also gives them a substantial amount of money and respect, name and fame in recognition of their services. Because of these privileges associated with the professional life, a large number of youths aspire to become a 'professional'. Currently, there are ample opportunities for the people to choose a career from the various available choices. For becoming a professional, students have to study hard for a long number of years to acquire the desired higher level of qualifications and competence. Students become *professionals on their own choice* and it is a hard-earned position for them. However, it is often seen that they do not seem to be happy with their professional life. This lesson is an attempt to help you to understand and take adequate steps to attain sustainable happiness and prosperity for a satisfied and successful professional life.

2.0 WHY SOME PROFESSIONALS ARE NOT HAPPY?

If you look around, you may notice many professionals who are not satisfied with their professional and personal lives. Some professionals engage themselves in some unethical practices, although they very well know that whatever they are doing is harmful to the society. In a way they cheat those clients who have faith in them, and this act of them may be considered as a sin. For example, some doctors undertake illegal sex determination test of the foetus and perform illegal abortions to earn more money. Some professors misuse their powers to award Ph.Ds. to undeserving research scholars just to get undue favours or oblige their colleagues of their fraternity who keep referring them for adjudication of Ph.Ds. Both these types of behaviours are unethical and lead to deterioration in the quality of education and research. If the causes of such unethical behaviours of the professionals are analysed, the following probable reasons emerge out:

- a) Earn more quick and easy money for getting more comforts
- b) Get support of other professionals for own survival because of the market conditions.

There are many professionals, who earn enough money from their ethical practices to lead a comfortable life. Even then they indulge in other unethical practices. This situation forces you to think about the reasons behind such behaviour. The most common reason may be '*misplaced notion about the purpose of life*' or in other words, their understanding about life

and their expectations from life. Socrates has said 'Ignorance is the cause of all evils', and therefore, first of all you should 'know yourself' i.e. everyone should first know what s/he really wants to be and based on his/her own strengths and weaknesses, choose the relevant occupation. The mismatch between what you really want to be (according to your choice) and what you are forced to be (due to your greed or social pressure or lack of opportunity) is the root cause of most problems of '*unhappiness*' discussed in the following paragraphs.

3.0 PURPOSE OF LIFE OF A PROFESSIONAL

Every person, irrespective of profession/occupation wants to live a '*fulfilling life*' or an '*abundant life*'. Now, this assertion raises a fundamental question, as to what do you mean by *fulfilling life* or an *abundant life*. There is a general consensus that most of the people in life aspire for '**prosperity**' and '**happiness**'. Most of the greeting cards which carry messages for different occasions like those for birthday, anniversary, promotion and other cards mention these two words. Methods for achieving happiness and prosperity are different for different people. A philanthropist may get happiness in donating to poor people in cash and/or kind, while a thief may get happiness in stealing things even from poor people. So, it is the mindset, which decides the ways of getting happiness. But the intrinsic desire remains the same i.e. to be happy.

Even when you become a professional of your choice, this problem of mismatch between your desires and your actions continues in your professional life. Argyris, C. (1974) has given the concept of '**Espoused Theories**' and '**Theories in Use**'. He expounds that the real problem with most of the professionals is that they unknowingly or subconsciously oscillate between these *two types of theories*. One is idealistic theory according to which all actions should be based on moral values and ethics so that they should serve the larger good and general interest of the mankind, and are called '**Espoused Theories**'. In other words, these theories are held in high esteem by professionals and they glorify and promote these theories in social and academic circles.

However, when it comes to real life practices, some professionals take decisions based on practical considerations and justify their ethically wrong decisions based on excuses such as: 'it has to be done for survival in the present system', 'one professional alone cannot reform the whole system', 'you cannot grow, if you do not follow the 'tricks of the trade' and so on. All these reasons or justifications can be said to emerge from the '**Theories in Use**'. Thus, there is a conflict between what professionals should do and what they actually do. The main reason for such conflicts may be that professionals have not clearly resolved in their mind as to what they want in their professional and personal lives. In other words, such **professionals** are not clear about the **purpose of life**. Therefore, it is better to discuss what is meant by '*prosperity*' and '*happiness*'.

4.0 SUSTAINABLE HAPPINESS FOR THE PROFESSIONAL

When are you happy? One of the answers to this question is generally given as 'you are happy when you are able to get what you want'. In other words, you feel happy when you are in a situation of your liking or state of your liking. An example can illustrate this further.

Example 1

You like to be in an office room where temperature is maintained at a comfortable 24°C by an air conditioner. Then you feel comfortable to work in that room and this makes you happy. But, if for some reason, the air-conditioner in that room stops working and the temperature of the room shoots up to 40°C, then you do not feel comfortable. If the air-conditioner is not repaired at the earliest, then you will start feeling unhappy. In another instance, you feel comfortable in the office room where temperature is maintained at 24°C, but you have to share the same room with a colleague who always creates problems for you. Then again this will be a state of disliking or unhappiness for you.

So, happiness here means, 'to be in a state of liking'. However, human beings want 'state of liking' in many aspects of life simultaneously. It may be not only be about physical comforts but also of good relationships with friends, social recognition and such others.

Generally, human beings are not only satisfied with physical comforts in their lives. Rather, they also want to have many other things, such as to remain healthy, look beautiful/handsome, be liked, loved and respected by others. Some ambitious people also wish to do something great, so that they can get some 'name' and 'fame'. However, if you think about what are the driving forces for all these actions in human beings, then you will realize that people wish to derive happiness by fulfilling their desires. So happiness is the most basic desire which everyone longs for.

For being happy as a professional, you need to be in harmony with people around you. For example, if you love some people, you wish that, those people should appreciate your love. If you respect the seniors, you wish to be respected by your juniors. Moreover, any person cannot remain happy in the company of people who dislike him/her. Naturally, nobody would like to do this, because being with someone who is not of your liking will result in disharmony as everyone wants to live in harmony. So, to be happy requires that you are in harmonious relationship with the people around you.

Sometimes, you are not happy because you have contradictions within yourself. There is a conflict between 'what you are' and 'what you really want to be'? The reasons for this situation is that, often you as professional live a life according to choices of others such as parents, spouses or children. You wanted to get some type of job you liked, but you could not get it due to lack of opportunities or lack of your capability. Maybe, your superiors in the

organization might have given you some work, which is not of your liking. All these situations create conflicts within you and this results in the state of *unhappiness*.

From the above discussions, it may be concluded that for you to be happy, you should not only have physical comforts, but be in harmony with persons who matter in your life, but also should not have any contradictions within *oneself*. It is also defined as ***'happiness is due to the happenings around you'***, and the happenings around you is dynamic. This means that whenever, the *happenings* around you change, your happiness also changes.

Another term closely related is ***happiness*** ('*Anand*' in Sanskrit), is the term '***joy***' ('*Sadanand*' in Sanskrit) also called as ***sustained happiness***. Your '***joy***' is something which will not be disturbed by the happenings around you, because it wells up from deep within yourself, as it is rooted in the *right value system* and *priorities* that you have chosen, adapted and practice yourself (i.e. *oneself*) all the time. Therefore, ***joy (sustained happiness)*** is defined as ***'the state of being conflict free within oneself'***. Three conditions arise out of this definition:

- a) *Being in harmony oneself*, which is the *calmness* that wells up from deep within.
- b) *Being in harmony with family* and persons who matter to you. In other words, being in harmony with the family and colleagues who matter most in anyone's life, it can be said that sustained happiness is also 'Being in harmony with family and society'
- c) *Being in harmony with nature/surroundings*. In other words, being in the physical situation of your liking.

If you summarise the above conditions, then you can re-define '***joy***' (*Sustainable Happiness*) is, '*Being in harmony with oneself, family/society and nature*'. Practicing this state of harmony for most of the people is easy said than done. How to establish this harmony will be discussed in the following lessons.

ACTIVITY - 1

List down some purposes of your own life for introspection to check whether it is affecting the attainment of sustained happiness in your life and post it in the E-portfolio.

5.0 PROSPERITY (SAMRUDDHEE) FOR THE PROFESSIONAL

'*Prosperity*' is related with abundance of physical resources required for living a comfortable life. The meaning of *prosperity* in Sanskrit is '*Samruddhee*'. This includes basic things such as food, clothing, and shelter. In these modern times, it also includes: resources for education, medical treatment, communication, transportation and entertainment. These resources are required basically to take care of the needs of human body i.e. to sustain human body in a decent and comfortable manner. In addition, these physical resources are required for getting good education, good medical treatment and good entertainment, such as, money required for site seeing in the country and in other parts of the world. So, when people are able to accumulate enough physical resources they feel *prosperous*.

‘Prosperity’ may also be defined as ‘*a feeling of possessing required physical resources in abundance*’. In this definition, two words are critical, the first one is ‘abundance’, which indicates that the physical resources in possession is more than that which is required by you to live. In other words the physical resources with you ‘are in excess’. The second term is ‘feeling’, i.e. it is a feeling of having physical resources in abundance. This term ‘feeling’ is very critical, because people who have physical resources many times more than require still feel that they do not have sufficient resources and continue to strive for more of it, even at the cost of their health and time. There are many instances where people spend their whole life in amassing resources and they do not have time to use these resources for enjoyment or some other useful activity. Such people confuse between ‘prosperity’ by ‘wealth’.

‘Prosperity’ is ‘*Samruddhee*’ in Sanskrit and ‘wealth’ is called ‘*Sampatti*’. So ‘wealth’ is physical resources and ‘prosperity’ is a feeling of having ‘enough physical resources’. Socially also, when you send greetings to your relatives and friends during festivals, then it is common to wish them for ‘prosperity’ and not for ‘wealth’. Because what is essential in life, is ‘prosperity’ and which is achievable in normal circumstances. Nevertheless, adequate skills related to your profession for earning sufficiently enough is also required to be acquired.

Thus, there is no limit to acquire the wealth, as it is endless. But a person can decide that how much wealth s/he requires for fulfilling his/her essential needs and desires. However, if desires are unlimited and unrealistic, then the wealth required to fulfill those desires will be also unrealistic and/or unlimited. So, if needs and desires are limited, a person can earn enough wealth to satisfy those needs and desires. After the required wealth has been accumulated by you, you may feel that you are now ‘prosperous’.

6.0 NEED FOR SUSTAINABLE HAPPINESS AND PROSPERITY

If you are asked “whether you would like to be unhappy even for an hour”? The answer will be a definite ‘NO’, which means that all human beings always want to remain happy. Hence, the concept of Sustained Happiness (or joy) and Prosperity is discussed.

6.1 Sustained Happiness (Joy)

It will be better to discuss about *happiness* first, as most people confuse ‘pleasure’ or ‘enjoyment’ with *happiness*. You may derive pleasure or enjoy things through your sensory (organs) interactions, but sensory interactions cannot be continuous and it is limited by the capacity of the human body. The following example can throw more light.

Example 2

You may enjoy tasty food and derive pleasure from it, but there is limit to which you can eat tasty food. Pleasures could be enjoying tasty food, seeing an interesting movie or smelling a pleasant fragrance is short-lived and their continuity cannot be ensured. Rather too much enjoyment may harm the body and it may lead to diseases. Similarly, indulging in too much

tasty food may also affect the heart, kidneys, digestive system and insulin system of the body and so on. Another example is when people who watch too much television or internet may develop many physical problems.

Thus, to experience **joy** (sustained happiness) or **sadanand** in your personal and professional life, you need to **have the right values** and **set the right priorities**. In other words, too much pursuit of body pleasures may lead to sufferings instead of happiness. So, joy can be achieved only by controlling the desires related to pleasures. However, if there are no pleasures in life, it may become a boring life. Whereas, too much of pleasures may create problems for the body itself. Therefore, for a joyful or sustainable happiness, there is a need to strike a correct balance.

Essentially, the common cause of unhappiness is found to be conflict with oneself i.e. conflict of *what you wish to be* and *what you are actually doing*. In other words, '**joy**' or '**Sadanand**' state can only be achieved when an individual is in harmony with *oneself, family/society and nature*. So, if you really want to have *sustained happiness*, you have to not only think about pleasures, but also, work for having harmony with oneself, family/society and nature. How to achieve this state of mind is discussed in the following lessons.

6.2 Prosperity

Similarly, nobody would like to remain without *prosperity* in his/her life. You need prosperity during childhood for good nourishment and education, during adulthood for good care of your children and family and during old age, prosperity is required for you for good medical treatment and maybe to follow religious/social pursuits. In Indian culture also the most common blessing given by the elders is 'Sada Khush Raho' (always be happy) or 'Sada Sukhi Raho' (always be prosperous). Thus, it is a natural desire for human beings to aspire for happiness and prosperity throughout their life. This desire is termed as being in the state of '**sadanand**' in Sanskrit. There is nothing wrong to aspire for this state as even the religious scriptures suggest ways and means for attaining this state. However, often due to misunderstanding and internal conflicts, many people unable to achieve this state of mind. The reasons for this is discussed in the next lesson '*Harmony with oneself*'.

Not achieving the sustainable state of 'prosperity' is often due to not possessing the right notions of the term 'prosperity', as many still confuse between 'prosperity' with 'wealth'. The actual meaning of the word 'prosperity' is '**the feeling that you have more than the required physical resources for yourselves**'. This definition means that you accumulate sufficient physical resources which is required to live your personal life with comfort and also the manage professional work. However, large number of people have developed a mindset, where they want to accumulate 'unlimited wealth' to indicate prosperity in their lives. This pursuit for accumulating unlimited wealth has the following consequences:

- a) It is a never-ending process, as there is no limit to wealth accumulation. Since the person will be always busy acquiring the wealth, s/he may not find time to enjoy this wealth and essentially, the person may be working more than the capacity of his/her body and in the long run s/he may develop some disease, which may lead to his/her *unhappiness*.
- b) Since the person will become so busy in accumulating wealth, s/he may not have time for oneself. This person may not even find time to establish harmonious relationships with oneself, family and society. This situation will disturb the harmony and ultimately lead to his/her unhappiness.
- c) If everyone on this earth starts accumulating wealth, it may lead to ecological and social problems, since the earth also has limited resources. 'Mahatma Gandhi', father of the nation, rightly said that the *mother earth can satisfy every one's need, but not a single person's greed*.

6.3 Wealth and Businessperson

Wealth can be an 'aim' or means for achievement for the businessman or woman, because s/he is able to put the wealth for productive use by investing it in manufacturing, production, job creation and others. However, for professionals some wealth may be required for smooth running of their profession, but it cannot be the main focus of their profession. If professionals start focusing on wealth creation and management of wealth, then they are left with very less time for developing professional excellence. As discussed in a previous lesson, lack of professional excellence forces a professional to indulge in unethical practices and that ultimately leads to conflict with self and disturbance of harmony with society.

Joy (sustainable happiness) and **prosperity** is possible, only when the professional keeps in mind that his/her requirement of physical resources is to be limited to his/her essential needs and the aim of his/her personal life is not to accumulate excess wealth other than his/her bodily needs. If you as a professional teacher like to continuously acquire much wealth, then you should leave the teaching profession and become a business person.

ACTIVITY 2

List some aspects in your own life for introspection to check whether it is affecting the attainment of *sustained happiness* and *prosperity* in your life and post in the E-Portfolio.

7.0 SUMMARY

Most people wish to have a happy and prosperous applicable for professionals and professionals of higher education. However, for achieving prosperity, professionals need to develop the adequate skills related to profession for earning enough. Excelling in the profession and serving the society should be the aim of professional life and professionals should derive happiness from it. In return, they can expect respect, name and fame.

Therefore, true meaning of *prosperity* and joy (*sustainable happiness or sadanand*) and the difference between ***prosperity*** and ***wealth*** has been discussed in this lesson.

Professionals, who mainly focus on acquiring 'wealth' should prefer to be businessperson, rather than becoming a professional. Otherwise, they will continue to live with inner conflicts and may indulge in unethical practices and never be able to experience the *joy and happiness* in their lives. To achieve ***joy (sustainable happiness or sadanand)***, professionals are required ***have the right values, set the right priorities*** and ***follow ethical practices*** for which s/he is required to live in *harmony with oneself, family, society and nature*. For achieving harmony with oneself, the most important condition is that a professional should be in the profession of his/her own choice and s/he should like the chosen profession. However, if professionals are more interested in accumulating wealth, then it will create conflict within oneself leading to disharmony, which requires that you to re-set to the right value systems and priorities.

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L-6 DISCUSSION FORUM

Start a discussion on the *social media* about the difference between happiness ('Khushi' in Hindi) and joy ('Sadanand' in Hindi)