

UNIVERSAL HUMAN VALUES

CHAPTER ONE

Understanding Value Education

Value education may seem a vague term to many of us even though we may be hearing about it frequently. While beginning this foundation course in value education, let us understand what we are talking about and what its need is, particularly in the context of professional education. In this course, we are going to clarify certain fundamental issues which are important to all of us in our life - issues which directly relate to our happiness, our welfare, our aspirations, goals and success in life. In a sense, value education deals with what is universally valuable to all of us, what is conducive to our individual and collective happiness and prosperity in a sustainable way. It enables us to be in harmony within ourselves, with other human beings and with rest of nature at large. Such an understanding will be vital for the successful conduct of our profession as well. Let us appreciate the need for such an input more elaborately in the following section.

Need for Value Education

All of us consider something or the other to be valuable. We set our goals, our aims on this basis, and then set out to work towards achieving them. While the need for determining what is valuable to us may seem evident, let us investigate into this a little more to understand the need for value education. Let us look at the following aspects to appreciate the need for value education.

- ***Correct identification of our aspirations.*** All human beings have aspirations. You may aspire to become a doctor or engineer or a lawyer, or a film star or something else. You must have made various plans for your future, be it immediate or long term. The planning may include your personal life, your family, your profession, your participation in the society and other such domains. But before you invest your energies to actualize your plans, it is important that you find out what you basically aspire for. Thus you

need to identify your basic aspiration. Based on the correct identification of this basic aspiration, you can frame your goals and sub-goals appropriately and working for these, you may hope to fulfil your basic aspiration.

- ***Understanding universal human values to fulfil our aspirations in continuity:*** Just identifying one's aspiration is not enough. We need to know how to fulfil our aspirations, how to go about actualizing our goals. Generally, we tend to pursue our goals in variety of ways as per our appraisal and beliefs. We keep on making experiments, learning from these and accordingly improving our understanding. This is how human beings have been moving on, right from the primitive 'Stone age' to the present day world of modern science and technology. Complete understanding of human values gives us a definite way to fulfil our aspirations.

Basically all of us are aspiring to be happy and whatever appears conducive to our happiness becomes valuable to us. Values form the basis for all our thoughts, behaviour and actions. Once we have known what is valuable to us, these values become the basis, the anchor for our actions. We know what we are doing is right and will lead to the fulfilment of our basic aspirations. Values thus become the source for our happiness, our success, our fulfilment. Without an appropriate value framework, we will not be able to decide whether a chosen action is desirable or undesirable, right or wrong. Hence there is a prime need for correct understanding of the value domain.- Value Education is the input necessary to fulfil this need. When we live with the correct understanding of values, we are happy in continuity, otherwise we feel deprived, frustrated and unhappy. What are the values that you hold worthy in your life? Have you verified them to be conducive to your happiness? It is important to explore the value domain in sufficient detail through value education. We also need to understand the universality of various human values, because only then we can have a definite and common program for value education. Then only we can be assured of a happy and harmonious human society.

- ***Complementarity of values and skills:*** In the endeavour to fulfil our aspirations, two things are essential:
 - (a) First and foremost, one has to know what really is conducive to human happiness - i.e. happiness for one and for all, and happiness at all times. This is what becomes universally valuable to human beings. This is the 'value' domain, the domain of wisdom. This helps us to identify and set the right goals and to proceed in the right direction.
 - (b) Secondly, it becomes essential to learn methods and practices to actualize this goal, to develop the techniques to make this happen in real life, in various dimensions of human endeavour. This is the domain of 'skills'.

Thus values and skills have to go hand in hand. There is an essential complementarity between values and skills for the success of any human endeavour. For example, I want to lead a healthy life. I understand that health is the basic requirement for a human being. I then learn skills to judge what food will keep my body healthy, what 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. Thus, both (values and skills) are important and these are complementary. Only wishing for good health will not help me keep my body fit and healthy and without having understood the meaning of health, I will not be able to choose things correctly to keep my body fit and healthy.

- ***Evaluation of our beliefs.*** In absence of a correct understanding of universal human values, we are driven by our 'ad-hoc' values and beliefs. If we look deep into ourselves, we find that each one of us believes in certain things and we base our 'values' on these beliefs, be they false or true which may or may not be true in reality. For example, someone may believe that "A corporate job is the best kind of job", "IIT is the best college to go to", "Metro cities are the best places to live in" and so on. We can also have beliefs such as "I want to become a famous person. Being a world-famous person will make me happy", "Money will make me happy", "Success is the ultimate thing, by hook or by crook", "If I study longer I will have better grades" etc. All of us live with such beliefs. These beliefs come to us from what we read, see, hear, what our parents tell us, our friends talk about, what the magazines talk of, what we see on the TV etc. i.e. there is a whole body of belief-system that we live with at any given time and these together constitute our worldview. These beliefs spread out far and wide into all our realms of living. The interesting thing about beliefs is that they usually change with time and we can trace examples of these by looking at our life in the past. We might have thought at one point of time that getting into a good college is the most important thing and now that may have changed to being able to get a good job. Once we get into a good job, doing well in that job and earning a lot of money may be important. Once we have the money, getting into a good position may become important – i.e. what we believe is to be important, may keep changing with time. Many times, we may even find ourselves trapped in conflicting beliefs.

Another thing about beliefs is that they are usually not the same for everybody. Beliefs could be held by a small group or a large group of people but they are not universal. For example: getting good grades may be important to you, but being able to earn money may be important for your friends. You may think being environmentally - friendly is important, your friend may think that it is okay to pollute the environment. This is not only true for ourselves, but largely true for most people around us: the beliefs keep changing from person to person. What I may believe to be of 'value' to me may not be of 'value' to your belief-system so when we interact, it may lead to conflicts and unhappiness. We face this problem today because the conditioned beliefs and

values we hold today are usually contradictory, conflicting and unstable and not based upon the right understanding of values we are not very sure of their correctness.

Living our lives based only on beliefs can not ensure happiness for us. This is very important for us to understand. Do we want to live with such shaky beliefs? Or do we want to know things for sure, for ourselves? We can either blindly follow our beliefs and *assumed* values, towards making our choices or we can base our choices upon values which are based on understanding of reality and we can ourselves validate them as well. What would you prefer?

- ***Technology and Human Values*** Technology is only a *means* to achieve what is considered “valuable” for a human beings in an effective and efficient manner. It is not within the scope of technology to decide what is valuable. This decision lies outside its scope. It thus becomes primarily important to know correctly what is ‘valuable’. Without this decision, technology can be aimless, directionless and can therefore be put to any use, either constructive or destructive.

It is thus with the understanding of values that we can decide on the appropriateness of technology and its application. Both the structure and use of technology is decided by values. For example: if we value the relationship with the environment, we will work to create environment-friendly technologies (the structure of technology) and also put it to right use (use of technology), say, for the enrichment of environment, replenishment of natural resources etc. Conversely, if the relationship with the environment is something we do not value, things could be the other way round.

As students of technology and management, we will be studying, creating, implementing and managing technologies which will affect the lives of a large number of people. Getting trained on technology without deciding what is valuable, could even prove counter-productive as our technical skills are likely to be misused. Therefore, it is essential that we understand how technology relates to us as individuals and to human society and nature at large before we attempt to put it into practice.

Thus, there is a need to supplement technical education with value education. This will enable a human being to decide and pursue what is really ‘valuable’ i.e. conducive to human happiness, human welfare, what is of ‘value’ to him.

To conclude, Value Education enables us to understand our needs and visualize our goals correctly, and also indicate the direction for their fulfilment. It also helps remove our confusions and contradictions and enables us to rightly utilize the technological innovations.

Value Education is a crucial missing link in the present education system which must be adequately replenished. It must be remembered that to become an excellent professional, the excellence of values along with the excellence of requisite professional skills is required. The present course is an effort in this direction.

*B*asic Guidelines for Value Education

Now that we have identified the need for value education, let us also visualize certain effective and widely acceptable guidelines which will enable the introduction of value education in the present system. Given below are broad guidelines to decide on what would qualify as an appropriate input in value education:

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. In addition, it need not restrict itself to a certain sect, creed, gender or nationality etc. So it has to deal with universal human values.

Rational

It has to be amenable to reasoning and not based on dogmas or blind beliefs. 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 is acceptable in a natural manner to all human beings. When we live on the basis of such values that are natural to us, it leads to fulfilment, leads to our happiness and also is conducive to other people we interact with, as well as with nature. We also would like to verify these values ourselves, i.e. we don't want to assume something just because it is being stated here or written in a book, rather, each one of us will want to verify these to find out whether they are true for us. This has to be done by both checking for validity within ourselves, as being naturally acceptable as well as something which we can implement in our living and observe its outcome to be fulfilling.

All Encompassing

Value education is not merely an academic exercise. It is aimed at transforming our consciousness and living. Hence, it has to permeate into all dimensions of our living, namely, thought, behaviour, work and understanding/realization; as well as all levels, namely, individual, family, society and nature.

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 understanding that it will

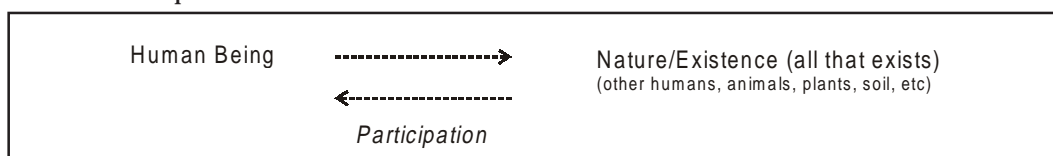
CHAPTER TWO

Self-exploration as the Process for Value Education

We saw in the previous chapter that the process used here for value education is self-exploration. As the name suggests, the process is to find out what is valuable to me by investigating within myself. Since it is me who feels happy or unhappy, successful or unsuccessful, therefore whatever is right for me, true for me, has to be judged within myself.

We discussed previously that the value of an entity is its participation in the larger order. In the case of the human being, to understand what is valuable, we need to study ourselves and the “larger order” around us, which is, everything around us. When we look around, we find other human beings; we find animals, plants, birds, insects etc. and then things like air, water, soil, stones, metals, etc. All these are things we live with and there is a need for us to understand our relationship with all of these things.

This is depicted below:



We live with this entirety – we live with our family, our friends, air, soil, water, trees - the nature around us and we want to understand our relationship with all these. Understanding of all these is to be done by me - the ‘self’. To understand my relationship with all these, I need to start observing inside.

Starting to Observe Inside

Normally, we are used to exploring outside. For example: we keep looking around, we observe trees, animals and other human beings. Seldom do we observe “what is going on in

me while I am observing outside”. Thus, it remains only external observation. When we say we want to self-explore, it means we have to now start observing within ourselves too and not observing just outside.

Let’s take the example that we are seeing a tree. When I see a tree, here is what is happening: the image of the tree is available on my eyes. From there, the information is passed on to me, and then I say: “I can see a big tree, and it is about 100 meters away and so on”. This is an example of observing outside. But when I start to observe what relation I have with the tree or, how does the tree relate to me, it is observing inside.

Now let’s take another example. When I get angry, I ‘know’ I am getting angry. In other words ‘I’, can ‘see’ the anger, in ‘myself’. I am no longer using my ‘eyes’ to see the anger, but I am observing this anger inside my own self.

What is Self-exploration? What is its Purpose?

Let us ponder over the following points to appreciate self-exploration and its purpose.

1. It is a process of dialogue between “what you are” and “what you really want to be”.
2. It is a process of self-evolution through self-investigation.
3. It is a process of knowing oneself and *through that*, knowing the entire existence.
4. It is a process of recognizing one’s relationship with every unit in existence and fulfilling it.
5. It is a process of knowing human conduct, human character and living accordingly.
6. It is a process of being in harmony in oneself and in harmony with entire existence.
7. It is a process of identifying our Innateness (*Swatva*) and moving towards Self-organization (*Swatantrata*) and Self-expression (*Swarājya*).

Now, we will go over the above points in detail.

1. ***It is a process of dialogue between “what you are” and “what you really want to be”.*** We will look into ourselves and find out what we are today, and how this contrasts from what we really want to be. If these two are the same, then there is no problem. If on investigation we find that these two are not the same, then it means we are living with this contradiction (of not being what we really want to be) and hence, we need to resolve this contradiction, this conflict within us.

Ask yourself this question: “Am I what I really want to be?”

When we look into this, we find that mostly we are not what we really want to be. These two are different and each one of us is faced with this contradiction. We are something and we want to be something else. This basic dichotomy, this basic contradiction has to be resolved. This dichotomy creates a conflict in us, which is a continuous cause for our unhappiness. What we are today- is the result of our pre-conditionings, our predispositions, our impressions and our beliefs. What we really want to be- comes from deep within us, that is naturally acceptable to us. This is something intact in us. It needs to be explored and found out.

“What I am” ↔ “What I really want to be”.

This dialogue needs to be started - between what you are and what you really want to be. On investigating into it, you will find that the contradictions are not outside of you. These contradictions are inside you. In fact, the contradictions that you see outside are mostly a reflection of the contradictions within. For example, we end up believing many things that are instilled in us since childhood – like “living is basically a struggle for survival”. And based on this belief, we plan our whole life. But have we even asked ourselves the question of whether this is the way in which I really want to live? We find that most of the time, we don't even care to know whether the things we have assumed are really true. We are defining our entire lives, all our desires, based on such assumptions, without even knowing whether these assumptions are naturally acceptable to us! This is a serious matter worthy of our attention.

All our unhappiness, all our discomfort, all our unease is because of this contradiction within – between what we are and what we really want to be. Each one of us lives with this feeling of discomfort, the unease within that keeps telling us “something is missing”. Each one of us is faced with contradictions and problems in various aspects of life – contradictions within ourselves, in our behaviour with people, in our interactions and thoughts about society, and in our interactions and notions about nature. And irrespective of where you are placed: in a nice school, in a great college, having a good job, having a lot of money etc., this discomfort is continuously present.

On careful self-exploration, we will find that we are being driven by a number of assumptions/ beliefs which are contrary to our natural acceptance and they cause contradiction within us. We have to start looking at these carefully.

Many times, you will find, *we want something, we think something else, we say something else, we do something else, and the results of our actions do not match with the expected outcomes!* This kind of dichotomy continues to exist in us, resulting in a state of unhappiness and as of today we don't seem to be doing anything at all in order to address these contradictions, whereas it is the basic issue that needs to be resolved.

2. ***It is a process of self-evolution through self-investigation:*** By self-investigation, we shall work towards being what we really want to be. Hence, the self-exploration leads

to our own improvement, our own self-evolution – we will become qualitatively better. We can be more in harmony within ourselves.

We saw in the earlier point that it is necessary to find out the contradictions in ourselves, to see that we are in contradiction. Where would we do this? Since the contradictions are in ourselves, it becomes necessary that we investigate into ourselves to find this out! Hence, it is necessary that we do self-exploration. It is not about exploring outside us, but inside us, in us. We have to start exploring ourselves. Through this process of self-exploration we can achieve self-evolution. This process of self-investigation needs to be started. It needs to start in each one of us. Once this dialogue within ourselves has been established, and we start evolving – we become comfortable within ourselves. The very process of being in this dialogue starts facilitating this self-improvement.

3. ***It is a process of knowing oneself and through that, knowing the entire existence:*** Thus, self-exploration leads to us knowing ourselves better. Today, we are largely unaware of our own characteristics, our own assumptions, beliefs and pre-conditionings. We will go beyond these beliefs to know ourselves. Once we have known ourselves, and we are sure of it, we can then also know all the things around us correctly. This way, we can be sure of these things in our own right, we can be authentic about them. We don't have to continue to live merely with assumptions about these things.

Ask yourself: Do I want to know myself? Do I want this self-investigation? Am I satisfied in living my life without having known myself? If I don't know myself, am not sure of myself, how can I be sure of what I want and what I do? – One finds that the need to know ourselves, to understand the self, is an innate need of every human being. This need to know does not have to be instilled from outside, once our attention has been drawn to this fact. Each individual would like to know himself/herself and can carry out this self-exploration and self-evolution.

As we know ourselves correctly, we are also able to relate ourselves correctly to the things around us. We can then understand the people we live with, the family we are born in, the people in society we interact with, in fact all the entities in nature/existence. Ask yourself this question: Are you satisfied with just knowing the immediate things around you, or do you also get curious about the larger reality around you? Each human being wants to know everything. Once we have known ourselves, we can also know the entire existence. This process starts with the self, and once we are sure of ourselves, we can, through that, also know the entire existence.

If we look at the basic fallacy in our current approach of understanding things around us, it is that we try to understand things around us without first being sure of ourselves. Since we don't know ourselves correctly, and it is *we who understand the world*, hence, all the pre-conditionings we have within, the contradictions we have within, reflect in

our perception of the world, and we start interacting with the external world, with the things around us based on these assumptions, based on these pre-conditionings. Therefore, it is important to know myself first, and when I am sure about myself and that there is no 'colouring' there then, I can know about other things properly. Then, I can be sure about the things I know, since I am sure of myself.

4. ***It is a process of recognizing one's relationship with every unit in existence and fulfilling it:*** Once we start knowing ourselves and everything beside us, we shall understand our relationship with them i.e. we shall understand our relationship with other humans, animals, plants and matter etc. We shall then know how we have to live in harmony with all these things.

What are the things we live with today? We live in our families – with our parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, we live in society – we interact with our teachers, with various people engaged in making available goods and services in the society. We live with nature – with animals, birds, plants, insects, materials, etc, and of course, the larger existence – all that space, and all those planets, stars and other entities that are suspended in it.

Do we know our relationship with each one of these entities? Do we know and understand our relationship with our parents? With our teachers? With the person next door? What happens when we do not understand this relationship? You would find that this lack of understanding leads to problems. For example: if you wrongly assume that animals may breathe away all the air, and hence all animals need to be killed so that there is enough oxygen left for human beings, it would be disastrous! We need to start seeing various interactions in which we face problems: for example, the problem of misunderstanding in relationships, the problem of wars and crime in society, the problem of pollution in nature, etc. Are these not *due to the lack of right understanding of our relationship* at various levels? We find that our problems in our relationship with various entities around us are due to our *assuming* certain things about these relationships which are not really true. For example: if we assume that mistrust is basic to a human relationship, we shall have problems, since all the time we shall mistrust people we come across, and mistrust is not acceptable to us, not acceptable to any human being!

The fact that we are related to all these entities can easily be observed in our day to day life. We don't have to create these relationships. These relationships are already there. We have *assumed something else* about these relationships. What is needed for us is to *correctly understand* our relationship with each of these entities. When we are able to understand this, we are able to fulfil our relationship with them. For example, when we understand that trust is basic to a relationship, that it is trust which is naturally acceptable to every human being, we become at ease and are able to orient ourselves correctly and our relationships become mutually fulfilling. Similarly, once

we see that we want to be in harmony with nature, that nature itself is in harmony, our interactions with nature lead to mutual prosperity. On the other hand, if we continue to assume that human beings and nature are at loggerheads, then we shall continue to have problems in multiple ways.

Thus, we start with understanding ourselves, and then through ourselves, we understand the rest of existence, and also our relationship with all entities in existence and then fulfil this relationship.

5. ***It is a process of knowing human conduct, human character and living accordingly:***
None of us wants to live with uncertainty. If our state of mind, our own behaviour keeps changing, we are not comfortable with ourselves. We all desire for certainty and stability. Once we know our own true nature, we will also understand what is our participation with the other things we live with – this is the ethical human conduct or the humane conduct. This is what characterizes a human being. When we know this true human character, we start moving towards it in a natural manner.

All the entities in the existence are characterised by their innateness, by their specific characteristics which are invariant. We recognize any entity by this innateness. What is then the innateness of a human being? Is a human being expected to exhibit different characteristics at different times and with different people?

If you ask yourself, whether you want a definite character or indefinite character – what is the answer? The answer is, we all want to have a definite character, a definite conduct. We are not satisfied with having an indefinite conduct, though we are living with indefiniteness. Example: We can't be sure of how we are going to be this very evening! We are not sure what our mood will be tomorrow morning. Sometimes, we are not sure about what mindset we are going to have the next moment! Are we comfortable with this state of affairs? Or do we want a definitiveness in our conduct? Explore.

There is a need to understand this definite conduct in a human being and how it can be ensured.

Once we know, through self-exploration, our own true nature and the things around us, we shall also know what our relationship and participation is with the other things we live with, all the things around us – then we will be able to rightly understand ethical human conduct or the humane conduct. Thus, the process of Self-exploration will enable us to identify the definitiveness of human conduct and to live accordingly.

6. ***It is a process of being in harmony in oneself and in harmony with entire existence:***
Through the process of Self-exploration, I establish a dialogue with my natural acceptance. This enables me to be in harmony within myself. Through the same process, I am able to explore into the harmony in the entire existence. We slowly come

to realize (and we will keep talking about this in the entire book) that there is an innate harmony in the existence. I only need to discover this. And once I do this, I can learn to live in harmony with the entire existence. Thus the process of Self-exploration helps me live in harmony within myself and in all my interactions with the world around. Would you desire to be in such a state? Well, we need to work for it.

7. ***It is a process of identifying our Innateness (Swatva) and moving towards Self-organization (Swatantratā) and Self-expression (Swarājya):*** When I identify my innateness, what I really want to be and establish a dialogue with it, it enables me to become Self-organized, i.e. I attain harmony in myself. This is *Swatantratā*. When I start living with this harmony, it starts expressing itself through my harmonious behaviour and work, and it naturally extends to my participation with the surroundings. This is working towards *Swarājya*.

Swatantratā : Being self-organised : Being in harmony in oneself

Swarājya : Self-expression, Self-extension : Living in harmony with others, and thus participation towards harmony in the whole existence

Ask yourself this question: Are you self-organized right now? Are you able to be in harmony with others?

If you are living in contradiction, then it means you are not self-organized. If you are living with pre-conditionings, wherein you have assumed certain things, have accumulated desires without having first evaluated them, then it means you are *partantra* (enslaved). If you ask this question: whether we are *swatantra* or *partantra*, what is the answer? Till there is a difference between what we are and what we really want to be, we are not *swatantra*, because we will always be in conflict. Hence, since we ourselves are not in self-organization, our expression in living: be it in behaviour with other humans or in our interaction in the form of work - the outcome is going to be one of conflict.

So, through this process of Self-exploration I begin by identifying my innateness (*Swatva*), what I really want to be. Then, living accordingly enables me to being in harmony within myself (*Swatantratā*) and finally being in harmony with the whole existence (*Swarājya*)

Content of Self-exploration

In the light of what we have discussed so far, the content of Self-exploration can be visualized in terms of finding answers to the following fundamental questions of all human beings:

1. ***Desire:*** What is my basic aspiration?

2. **Program:** What is the process to fulfil this basic aspiration?

Do you find these two questions relevant?

We will try to find answers to these questions by exploring within. These are very important questions since everything we do is related to some desire or the other we are trying to fulfil.

This is what any human being would like to know and work towards its actualization in life.

And if you have the answers to these two questions, is there any other question that remains to be answered?

We are going to observe and explore ourselves, our lives, what we do, why we do and how we do. We will study what human beings want, we will study what we really want. We also want to know how to fulfil what we want. We want to explore into what is valuable for us. Each one of us can explore this within ourselves.

Process of Self-exploration

In the sections above, we saw the need and content of Self-exploration. We will now move on, and find out how we will carry this out.

Following points are to be kept in mind regarding this process of Self-exploration.

“Whatever is stated is a proposal”.

Don't start by assuming it to be true or false.

Whatever we state here, is a proposal. Don't *accept it as it is*, or *assume* it to be true. We seem to have *assumed* many things to be true till now. If we *assume* what we are discussing here to be true as well, it would only *add to our set of assumptions and beliefs* and instead of being an aid for us, instead of helping us, it will only end *being a burden for us!*

Alright! If we don't assume it, how will we verify it?

“Verify it on your own right”

You need to rigorously verify all the statements and proposals being made here in your own right. No one else can do this for you; you have to do it yourself. It has to be self investigated by you. Verifying in your own right implies the following;

“Don't just accept or reject it-

- *on the basis of scriptures*
- *on the basis of instruments*
- *on the basis of others”*

Note: By the above proposal, we are not trying to undermine the importance of scriptures, instruments or the guidance obtainable from wise persons. Not at all! We are only suggesting that one should take all these as valuable proposals worthy of your own serious exploration and then acceptance.

Let us understand these in more detail:

“Don’t try to verify on the basis of scriptures/ what is written”.

By this we mean, let’s not compare what is being proposed here with what is written in some book, something that you have read or are reading i.e. we think we know certain things, because we have *read* about it somewhere, and *remember* it now. However, we are *not* talking about a *comparative study* between what we have read and what is being proposed here. Rather, we are talking about verification of these proposals *directly within yourself*.

“Not on the basis of instruments”:

Don’t assume these proposals as being true or false based on the conclusions somebody might have given after conducting experiments with physical instruments. The instruments only give information about some physical phenomena, but the conclusions we make are based on our own perception about the phenomena. Such perceptions also need to be subjected to self-verification.

“Not on the basis of others”:

Again, you may have heard something that some great person has said. You may *believe* what this person says to be true, and hence end up *comparing* what is being proposed here with what you *remember as being stated by that personality*. This would not mean verifying in your own right; it would mean *accepting on those great personalities’ right!*

“Firstly, verify the proposal on the basis of your natural acceptance”

Natural acceptance is a faculty that is present in each one of us. It is intact and invariant. We only have to start paying attention to it, to start “seeing” it. For example, ask yourself this question:

‘Is trust naturally acceptable to me in relationship, or is mistrust naturally acceptable?’ What is the answer? It turns out that trust is naturally acceptable to you in relationship.

Similarly, ask yourself another question: “Do I want to live in relationship with others or do I want to live in opposition with others?” The answer is - live in relationship with others.

We find that we get the answers from within ourselves and it is spontaneous. The answers are there in us, naturally. We only need to trace them. We call this faculty the *natural acceptance*.

For every proposal being put forth here, we shall pass it through our own natural acceptance. If it passes through our own natural acceptance, i.e. if it is naturally acceptable to us, it is true for us. If it does not, then it is not true for us and we can drop the proposal. Let's not assume what is being stated here to be true! You need to ensure that you pass every proposal through your own natural acceptance!

Let's ask ourselves another very basic question: Do I want to be happy? The answer is a very quick yes! How did you get this answer? Of course, through your natural acceptance. *This 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 right!*

Once you start asking the question deep within yourself, you will be able to start accessing these answers yourself. This natural acceptance is there in each one of us, it is what we most spontaneously, most naturally desire. You don't have to *import* this natural acceptance from outside; you don't have to learn it from somewhere! For example, when you asked the question "whether trust is most acceptable to me in relationship", did you *ask anyone else* for the answer? Did you *read or learn the answer* from somewhere? Did you have to *refer to some instrument*? The answer is NO. This answer came from *within* you. Similarly, about the answer to- "Is living in relationship with others is naturally acceptable to me". Did you have to learn this from others? Again NO!

Thus, as first part of the self-verification, every proposal being put forth here, is passed through our own natural acceptance.

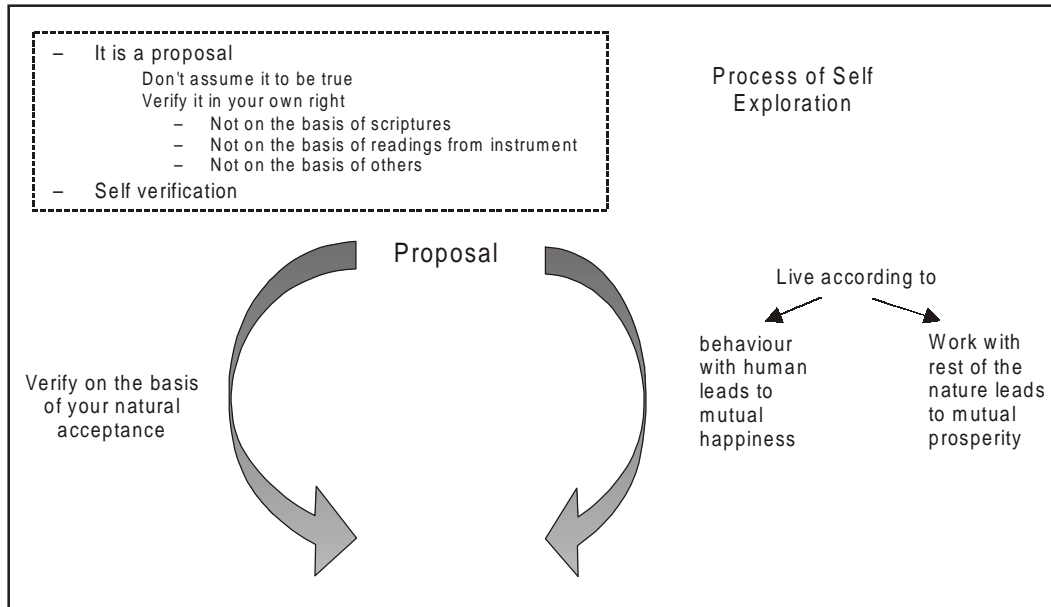
"Secondly, live according to the proposal to validate it experientially."

To verify the proposals, I need to live accordingly in my interactions with the world around. This involves two things: behaviour and work. If the proposal is true,

- (a) In behaviour with other humans,
 - (i) it will lead to mutual fulfilment
- (b) In work with the rest of nature,
 - (ii) it will lead to mutual prosperity.

I desire mutual fulfilment in my relations with other humans and mutual prosperity with the rest of nature. This way, I validate the truthfulness of the proposal.

The whole process of self-exploration can be represented as follows:



Natural Acceptance

At this point, we can make the following observations about natural acceptance:

- Natural acceptance does not change with time:*** The natural acceptance does not change with time. It remains invariant with time. This can be easily verified. For example, our acceptance for trust or respect does not change with age. People hundred years ago also had the same natural acceptance. We can try to verify this within our span of observation.
- It does not depend on the place:*** Whether we are in New Delhi, New York or Abu Dhabi, if we address our natural acceptance, the answer would still be the same!
- It does not depend on our beliefs or past conditionings:*** We may be told frequently not to trust people of other religions or castes, but is it naturally acceptable to us? No matter how deep our belief or past conditioning, as long as we ask ourselves the question sincerely, as long as we refer deep within ourselves, the answer will always be the same.
- This natural acceptance is 'constantly there', something we can refer to:*** Try this yourself: think of cheating or exploiting someone. The *moment* you think of this, you sense a contradiction within and feel unhappy that *very instant!* It happens very quickly, and we may not notice it, but it does happen! Similarly, the moment we think of

disrespecting someone, we become unhappy. The very thought is enough to cause a conflict, a strain within us. Thus, this natural acceptance is always there, and if we start paying attention to it, if we ask ourselves every time, for every thought and every desire we have, “Is this naturally acceptable to me?”, we will get an answer. Whatever we do, this natural acceptance is within us, it is telling us what is right. Every time we do something not readily acceptable to us. i.e. every time we think or do something not acceptable to us, there is a contradiction in us, because the thought/ deed conflicts with our own natural acceptance! The *moment* we think of cheating, we become unhappy. We don’t even have to carry out the action. It will become clear to us that while we want something else at the level of our natural acceptance, we think or do something else, based on our beliefs and preconditioning, which is contrary, it creates a disharmony in us; this is the cause for our unhappiness. Take for example, one may proceed with the act of cheating under the influence of say, an extraneous pressure but one keeps feeling unhappy about it and may even repent over this act in the course of time. If somebody asks, ‘why do you cheat?’, one starts offering explanations, inventing justifications. This is because it is naturally unacceptable.

- (e) ***Natural acceptance is the same for all of us: it is part and parcel of every human being it is part of human-ness:*** Let’s start exploring into this. We will find that no human being finds disrespect acceptable in relationship. No matter who the person, however bad or good, one always expects respect in relationship. For example, let us say a person ‘A’ disrespects ‘B’. This man ‘B’ may bear a grudge against ‘A’ and set out to “teach him a lesson”. This is because ‘B’ does not find disrespect acceptable and when he does not get respect, it offends him. This may actually end up leading to a large scale conflict!

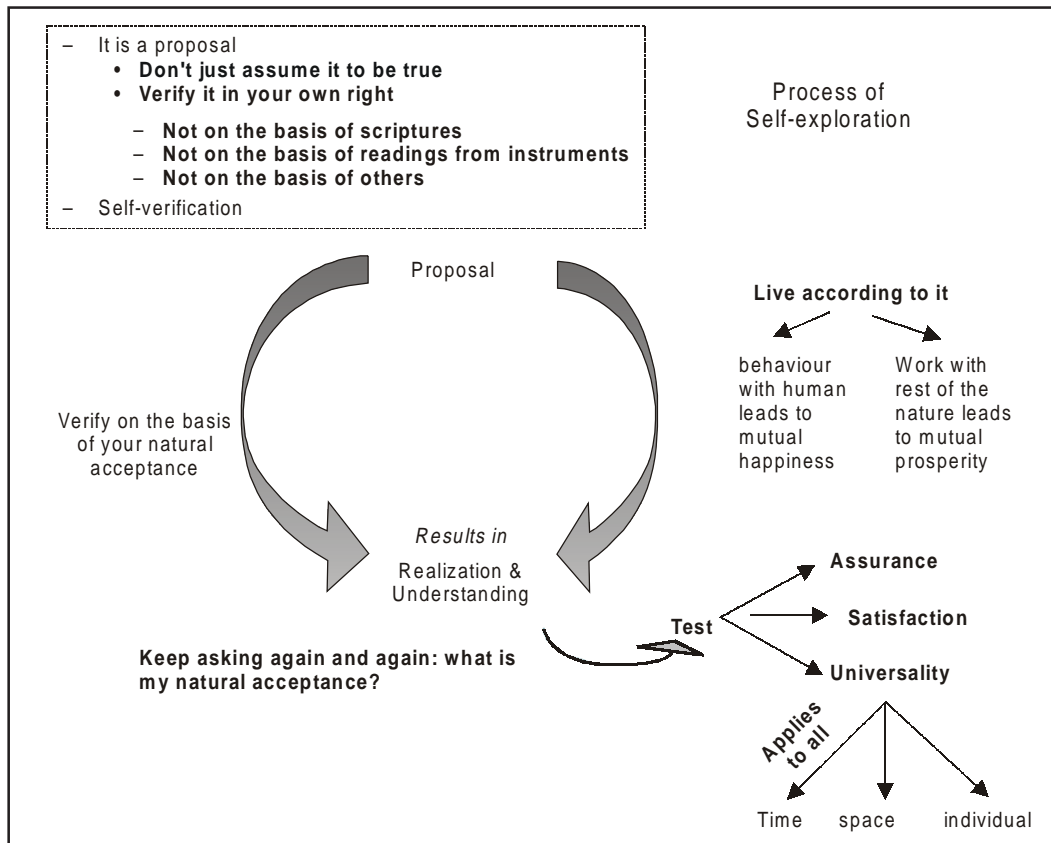
We can start checking and verifying this for ourselves. All of us have acceptance which are same, at a very deep and basic level. Our assumptions and choices, our likes and dislikes may be different, but on some very basic and common issues like need for happiness, trust, respect, prosperity, we are all the same, all of us have the same basic acceptance.

Thus,

Natural acceptance is there in all of us. It is within us, all the time and we can refer to it, access it to know what is right for us. We only have to start referring to it. Each proposal in this book needs to be evaluated on the basis of your natural acceptance.

The realization and understanding is denoted below:

Accordingly, the complete process of self-exploration can be depicted as below.



The answers we get on having realization & understanding are:

- Assuring:** "I am assured of the answer or understanding in myself"
- Satisfying:** "I am satisfied that the answers are fulfilling for me."
- Universal:** "I know or realize that the answers I have got are the same for everyone. They are invariant with respect to:
 - Time:** These answers are the same at all times: past, present and future
 - Space:** These answers are the same at all places or locations
 - Individual:** The answers are the same for every human being

If the answers we get do not fulfil any of the criteria of being assuring, satisfying and universal; it means the answer is most likely coming from your past beliefs/conditioning and not from your natural acceptance. Hence, you need to re-verify the answer!

Let us not accept the proposals stated here because they are being repeated all the time! *Far from it! Each one of us* needs to start asking ourselves these questions and see what is acceptable to us! *You* have to start asking these questions yourself!

[This process of repeated self-verification of the proposals on the basis of my own natural acceptance and validating it experientially, and also testing the answers for assurance, satisfaction and universality ultimately results in what is called “Realization” and “Understanding”. When we have this realization and understanding, when we have this knowledge, it remains intact i.e. it stays with us at all times and is not moved or disturbed by external circumstances. In fact, it also starts expressing itself, in the most natural manner and starts impacting the environment and since it is true, it is readily acceptable to others too.]

For the remainder of this book, we will explore into these two basic questions

Desire: What is my basic aspiration?

Program: What is the process of fulfilling this basic aspiration?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Self-exploration is a process of dialogue between ‘what you are’ and ‘what you really want to be’. Explain and illustrate.
 2. “I want to become a doctor”
“I want to do research in astronomy”
“I want to serve the society”
“I want to be a film star”
“I want to earn a lot of money and fame”
In the above cases, what is the basic aspiration? Justify your answer.
 3. What is the content of self-exploration?
 4. Explain the process of self-exploration with the help of a diagram.
 5. What do you mean by your natural acceptance? Illustrate with examples. Is it invariant with time and place?
 6. What do you understand by the terms *Swatva*, *Swatantratā* and *Swarājya*?
 7. What are pre-conditionings? What is their source?
 8. Do you feel that you have some pre-conditionings? How do you evaluate them?
1. What is the need for value education in technical and other professional institutions?
 2. What do you mean by values? How do they differ from skills? How are values and skills complementary?
 3. What are the basic guidelines for value education?
 4. How do you presently decide what is valuable to you? How do you ensure that your decision is right?
 5. What is the difference between ‘belief’ and ‘understanding’?

CHAPTER THREE

The Basic Human Aspirations – Continuous Happiness and Prosperity

*C*ontinuous Happiness and Prosperity – Our Basic Aspirations

Make a list of all that you want in your life and reasons for wanting them. For example, when you start listing, your list may comprise of things such as- to be an engineer or an MBA professional, to get the highest grade, to be the first ranker in the examination, to be the smartest guy in the crowd, to be the master of all trades, to earn more wealth than the wealthiest person in the world, etc. Once you have made the list, see if there is anything basic to all of them? Is there any basic aspiration of yours behind all your wants? This is an exercise worth doing to find out your basic aspiration?”

Let us say, you want to be the first ranker in the class. Now, behind this desire to get the first rank, is there a more basic desire? Why do you want to get the first rank? If you keep asking this question, you will find that there is a basic desire. What is this desire, is it to be happy? Yes, it is! Take any other want or desire and you will find the same thing. You will find that each of your wants emerges from the basic aspiration to be happy. This can be verified by each one of you. This also implies that every human being is continuously trying to do things to make him/her happy, and every human being is capable of feeling this happiness in himself/herself spontaneously. It is intrinsic to all of us. We are all working for it continuously in different ways as per the level of our understanding. Sometimes, we succeed, many times we don't. But we still keep trying throughout our life for happiness. You will also find that we want the continuity of this feeling of happiness as well. We do not want happiness in spurts, in intervals, but we want it continuously. We do not want unhappiness even for a moment. How successful we are today in achieving this, is a matter

for serious exploration. But one thing is clear, that happiness is a basic aspiration of all human beings, and therefore, it becomes our prime purpose to gain the correct understanding about it. Going a little further in our exploration, we can also appreciate that being happy implies being free from contradictions, being in consonance with our natural acceptance, being in harmony.

In addition to happiness, we also aspire for adequate fulfilment of our bodily needs, i.e. the need for physical facilities. Physical facilities are the material things we use to fulfil the needs of the body. When we have enough of physical facilities, it gives us the feeling of prosperity. We want to have a continuity of this feeling too. Nobody wants to feel deprived, even for a single moment.

Thus there are two basic aspirations of every human being: continuous happiness and prosperity. These are at the root of all our aspirations and the efforts that go towards achieving these. We will understand the correct meaning of these two terms now.

Exploring Happiness and Prosperity

Happiness

Let us now explore into the meaning of happiness. Try to recollect situations when you feel happy. You will see that there is a set of feelings which you are able to accept effortlessly and naturally. These are feelings such as trust, respect, being confident about your future etc. These feelings are naturally and effortlessly acceptable to each one of us. We also welcome these feelings and desire them to continue in ourselves. When we observe such feelings, we find that these are the situations when we are in harmony and these feelings are a reflection of that harmony. Take for example: respect. Respect is a state of harmony between two human beings. When I respect the other and the other respects me, I like to be in that situation. It gives me happiness. Similarly, looking within me, when I have harmony in my thoughts, my feelings, I feel relaxed, happy. If this harmony is disturbed, I feel uneasy. Try to look at all the moments when you feel happy, you will find that there is an element of harmony in it, which you like. We will keep exploring about this harmony in the rest of this book.

We can thus understand Happiness as

“The state/situation in which I live, if there is harmony/synergy in it, then I like to be in that state or situation.”

i.e. **“To be in a state of liking is happiness.”**

When we are in such a state of happiness – we experience no struggle, no contradiction or conflict within and we enjoy such a state of being. And we wish to have its continuity.

On the other hand, when we experience feelings such as failure, disrespect, lack of confidence, being doubtful in ourselves or about others, we feel unhappy as they are states of conflict. These are the states when there is lack of harmony, either within us or between us and others. We do not wish for a continuation of these feelings within and want to try and change them – we can call this unhappiness. We can thus state unhappiness as:

“The state/situation in which I live, if there is conflict/contradiction in it, then I do not like to be in that state or situation.”

i.e. “To be in a state of disliking is unhappiness”

Thus, we can define happiness and unhappiness as

“To be in a state of harmony is happiness.”

“To be in a state of disharmony or contradiction is unhappiness”

It is important to point out that we do get an impression of happiness through our sensory interaction also such as while eating tasty food, seeing a beautiful picture, smelling a sweet fragrance, etc. However, these impressions of happiness are always short-lived and their continuity can never be ensured. In fact, all attempts to seek the continuity of happiness through sensory interaction only leads to more and more misery. This point will be elaborated further in Chapter 5.

Prosperity

We have spoken about happiness so far. Let us now look into prosperity and whether it is essential. It is easy to see that prosperity is related to material things or what we call as ‘physical facilities’. Think of all the things we need today. We use a brush to clean our teeth, clothes to wear, food to eat, vessels to cook and eat the food in, a pair of spectacles, a two wheeler or a four wheeler vehicle, a radio set, a mobile phone etc. So we need physical things to take care of our body and these need to be catered to. When we are able to cater to the needs of the body adequately, we feel prosperous.

Therefore,

Prosperity: is the feeling of having or making available more than required physical facilities.

To ascertain prosperity, two things are essential:

- (a) Correct assessment of need for physical facilities, and
- (b) The competence of making available more than required physical facilities (through production).

We need physical facilities as we saw in our earlier discussions. Do you think we can quantify the need for physical facilities? Is there a limit to the need for physical facilities? We will discuss about these issues in the succeeding chapters. At this point, one thing can be clearly stated that we can be prosperous only if there is a limit to the need for physical facilities. If there is no limit, whatsoever be the availability with us, the feeling of prosperity cannot be assured. A little exploration in this direction, which we will carry out more elaborately in chapter 5, will show that physical facilities are the needs of the body and their need is limited in time and quantity. Thus we can identify a limit to these needs and evaluate whether we have enough.

Secondly, just assessing the need is not enough. We need to be able to produce or make available more than the perceived need.

Thus, prosperity can be clearly understood and evaluated. Evaluate it for yourself. See if there is a limit to the need for physical facilities that you have listed for yourself. See whether you feel prosperous at the moment. This is an important thing to understand!

While understanding prosperity, let us also look at another point - the difference between wealth and prosperity. Is there a difference? For example, let's assume I have a lot of wealth; a lot of money. You come to my house, but I get worried that you may stay back longer than expected and I might have to feed you, tea, snacks or even a meal. It is a funny situation, but it may happen. What would we call this state? A person has a lot of money, but does not want to share even a bit of it. The person *has wealth*, but *feels "deprived"*; in other words the person does not have a feeling of being prosperous. If one *felt* prosperous, he/she would have shared what one has, since there is more than enough wealth anyway. On the other hand someone who does not have a lot of wealth may welcome you into his/her house and ask you to stay back for a few days and help you out. This is an indication of feeling prosperous. Thus, we can see that:

Wealth is a *physical* thing. It means having money, or having a lot of physical facilities, or both.

Prosperity is a *feeling* of having more than required. Prosperity is a *feeling* of having more than required physical facilities; it is not just physical facilities.

This is a very important distinction. We mostly fail to make this distinction today. We keep working for wealth, without realizing that the basic desire is for the feeling of prosperity, to have a *feeling* of having enough. Let's ask ourselves, "What is naturally acceptable to me?":

Accumulating more and more wealth while feeling deprived,

OR

Having requisite wealth and feeling prosperous.

We find the latter naturally acceptable. Not only do we want wealth, but we want to feel prosperous too. In other words, our basic desire is to feel prosperous, and wealth is a *means* to that end. In order to feel prosperous, we need to first decide how much wealth/physical things is needed, else it is like trying to fill water in a glass that has no bottom; the glass will never be filled, howsoever, one may try.

We see that today, we are generally unable to do this. We are busy accumulating wealth, but we don't feel prosperous! This is because, we do not identify our needs, and hence, no matter how much we have, it is always less, and we feel deprived!

It is also important to point out that since for all our physical facilities, we are directly or indirectly dependent on nature, the continuity of prosperity can be ensured only if our production systems are in harmony with the nature. This implies that we use natural resources in a renewable manner and utilize appropriate technologies so that the human needs are satisfied and nature is also enriched. For example, we need food for the body. We grow grains in our fields. If the farming method is such that it retains/enhances the fertility of the soil, we can continue growing grains on the same piece of land and keep feeding our body. Otherwise, the land may turn barren after sometime and we may have to go without food.

Look at the Prevailing Notions of Happiness and Prosperity

In the light of the above discussion, let us have a critical look at the prevailing notions of happiness and prosperity. In the current scenario, we are generally trying to achieve happiness and prosperity by maximizing accumulation and consumption of physical facilities. This is an attempt to achieve happiness through pleasant sensory interactions. The physical facilities are not seen in terms of fulfilling bodily needs but as a means of maximizing happiness. This has resulted in wrong assessment of wants for physical facilities as being unlimited. But this pursuit is self-defeating. Neither can we hope to achieve continuous happiness through sensory interactions nor can we have prosperity, as it amounts to trying to fulfil unlimited wants through limited resources. This effort is engendering problems at all the levels. It is becoming anti-ecological and anti-people, and threatening the human survival itself. Some of the consequences of such a trend are summarised below:

- At the level of the individual – rising problems of depression, psychological disorders, suicides, stress, insecurity, psycho-somatic diseases, loneliness etc.
- At the level of the family – breaking of joint families, mistrust, conflict between older and younger generations, insecurity in relationships, divorce, dowry tortures, family feuds, wasteful expenditure in family functions etc.

- At the level of the Society – growing incidences of terrorism and naxalism, rising communalism, spreading casteism, racial and ethnic struggle, wars between nations, attempts of genocide, fear of nuclear and genetic warfare, etc.
- At the level of nature – global warming, water, air, soil, noise, etc. pollution, resource depletion of minerals and mineral oils, sizeable deforestations, loss of fertility of soil.

It therefore, calls for an urgent need for human beings to correctly understand happiness and prosperity as well as the sustainable way to achieve these. This theme will be gradually unfolded in the following chapters.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. "To be in a state of harmony is happiness." Examine this statement and illustrate with two examples from your day-to-day life.
2. What do you understand by prosperity? What is the difference between prosperity and wealth? How are the two related?
3. What is your present vision of a happy and prosperous life?
4. Critically examine the prevailing notions of happiness and prosperity and their consequences.
5. "I will learn and improve only if I am unhappy. If I become happy, my learning will stop"- Explore the validity of this viewpoint.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Program to Fulfil Basic Human Aspirations

We saw in the previous chapter that the basic human aspirations are happiness and prosperity in continuity. In this chapter, we will explore how this happiness and prosperity can be ensured.

*B*asic Requirements for Fulfilment of Human Aspirations

To find out what our happiness and prosperity are related to, let's start with a very simple exercise. Let's make a list of everything we want today and see what these wants or aspirations in turn depend on.

Below is a sample list. Now, you should go ahead and make your own list! Yours might be longer or shorter, it may have different things than the one we have below:

List of Wants

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A big Car• Happiness• A great house• Big Bike• Lot of money• Clean city• Peaceful society• Respect• Better mobile	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take care of my parents• A good laptop• Get a top MBA• Own a big house• Not get angry• Knowledge• To be a well known person• Become a politician• Roam the world
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Contd...

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good friends • A nice music system • Peaceful life • Be loved • Peace of mind • Be a good person • Do social work • Have respect • Satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have great food • Be healthy • Protect Nature • Get good marks • A digital camera • A good guitar • Read a lot of books • Understand the purpose of life • Peace of mind
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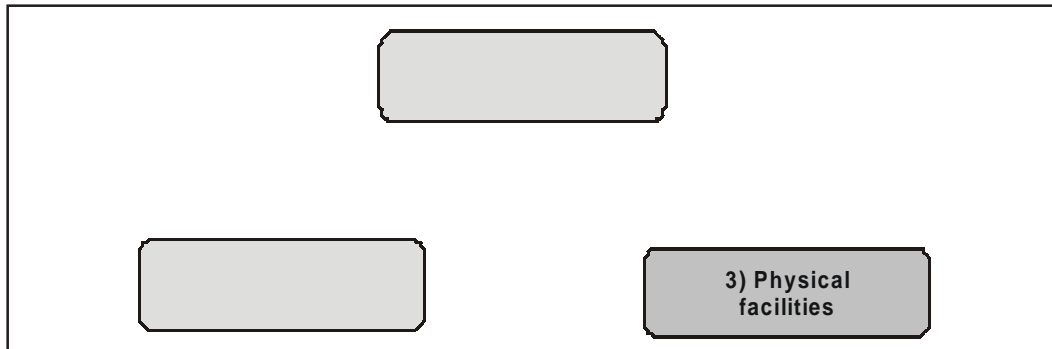
Now let us underline the items that are to do with something physical. For example: a guitar is a physical thing, while happiness is not a physical thing. Similarly, a big house is a physical thing, while the need to do social work is not something physical in nature.

List of Wants

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>A big Car</u> • Happiness • <u>A great house</u> • <u>Big Bike</u> • <u>Lot of money</u> • Clean city • Peaceful society • Respect • <u>Better mobile</u> • Good friends • <u>A nice music system</u> • Peaceful life • Be loved • Peace of mind • Be a good person • Do social work • Have respect • Satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take care of my parents • <u>A good laptop</u> • Get a top MBA • <u>Own a big house</u> • Not get angry • Knowledge • To be a well known person • Become a politician • Roam the world • <u>Have great food</u> • Be healthy • Protect Nature • Get good marks • <u>A digital camera</u> • <u>A good guitar</u> • Read a lot of books • Understand the purpose of life • Peace of mind
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We see that some of our desires or wants are to do with physical things. We call these 'physical facilities'. We have desires which are other than physical facilities too. We will discuss about them subsequently and put them into other two categories.

Let us look at the following:

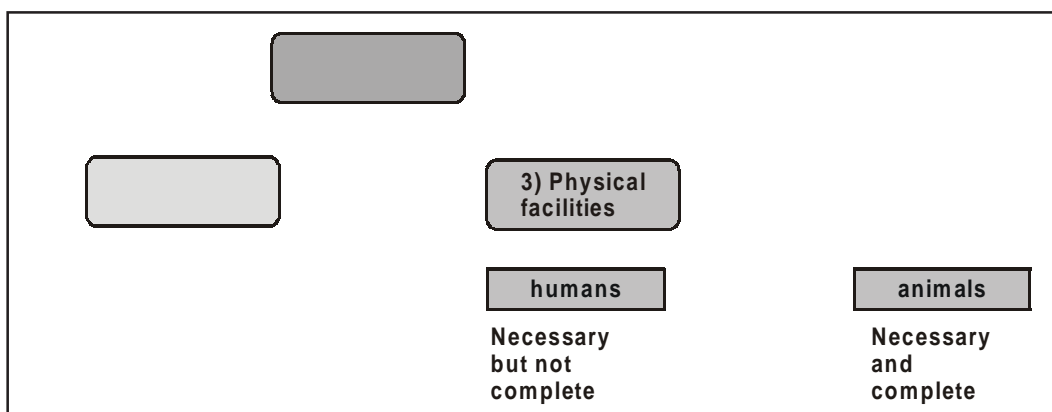


Now, here is a set of proposals:

“Physical facilities are necessary for human beings”

“Physical facilities are necessary for human beings and they are necessary for animals.”

“Physical facilities are necessary and complete for animals, while they are *necessary but not complete* for humans”



It is easy to verify this:

For animals: We see that animals need physical things to survive, mainly to take care of their body. Take a cow for example. A cow will look for food when it is hungry. Once it gets the grass or fodder, it eats it, sits around to chew at leisure. Hence, we can see that as long as animals have physical things, they are largely fine. They don't desire other things like knowledge, or a peaceful animal society or getting a good MBA! This is the case with humans, so let us look into how we humans fare.

For humans: Now let's take the human being. Let's take you. Let's say you are hungry. What do you do? You would look for some food, perhaps, some tasty food. Once you have had your fill, do you just sit around and relax? The answer is an emphatic “No”! We all have

other needs, other plans, perhaps we think of going to a movie, or reading a book, or go to college, or watch some TV, or spend time with family and friends... the list is endless. Thus, it is easy to see that while physical facilities are necessary for us human beings, they are *not complete by themselves* to fulfil our needs. Our needs are more than just physical facilities; we need physical facilities, but the need does not end there.

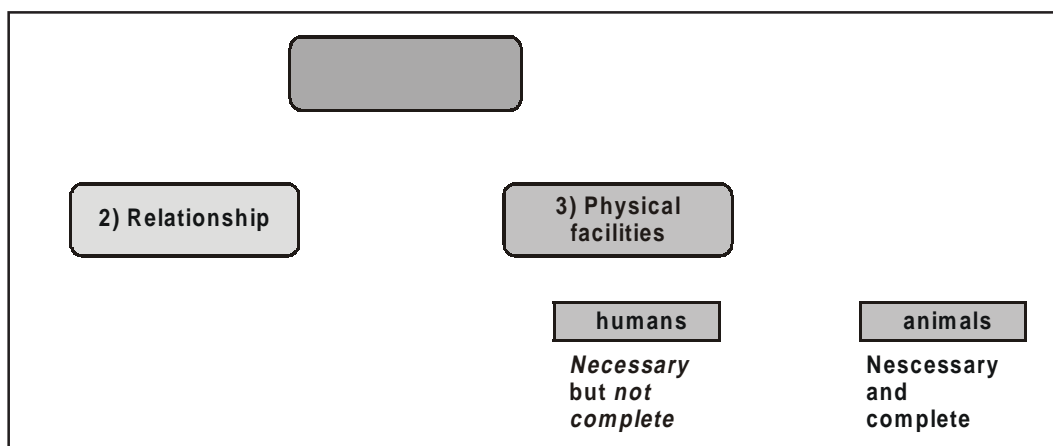
Hence, we can say for animals – “Physical facilities are necessary and complete”;

For humans – “Physical facilities are necessary but not complete”

Here is another proposal:

“Besides physical facilities, we want relationship”.

By relationship, we mean the relationship we have with other people, or human beings: father, mother, brothers and sisters, our friends, our teachers; we desire good relationships with all of them. When we have a problem in these relationships, it troubles us, we are bothered by it. So let's write down relationship as well:



So we have identified two categories of our needs so far:

- **Relationship and**
- **Physical facilities.**

Now let us see how we want to be in relationship and what we want from physical facilities.

In Relationship

Mutual fulfilment: We want to have mutually fulfilling relationships. [You can verify this for yourself]. If there is a problem in relationship, we feel uneasy, it bothers us. Even if we

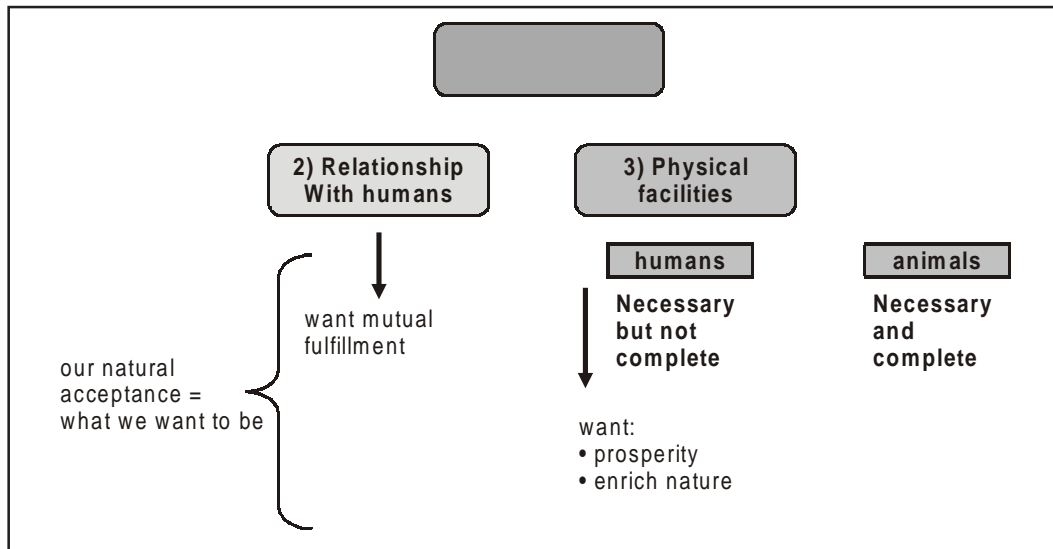
are interacting with someone, and something we said or did offends them, it makes us uneasy; i.e. we want mutual fulfilment in relationship. Both us and the person we interact with, need to feel fulfilled, need to feel satisfied from the interaction. You can check this in your daily life as well. For example, let's say you had an argument with a friend in the morning. You find that the uneasy feeling stays with you for a long time, even after you have stopped speaking to your friend and have physically moved away from him/her. You may keep thinking about it, may get angry or frustrated, perhaps you wonder what may have gone wrong and how it could have been avoided or perhaps you wonder how you should not commit the same mistake the next time, but, it *stays with you*. On the other hand, had there been no such problem with your friend, you are fine, you don't have any issues, and if you had a great time with him, then too it stays with you, as a good feeling or a good memory. Thus, mutual fulfilment in human relationships is something we want, we aspire for.

From Physical Facilities

Prosperity in us, enrichment in nature : Let's ask ourselves, "Do I want to live with a sense of prosperity or with a sense of deprivation?" The answer is, I want to live with a sense of prosperity. We studied prosperity in the previous chapter. Let us have a quick overview again. Prosperity means the feeling of having or being able to have more physical facilities than is needed. (We had drawn a distinction between *prosperity* and *wealth*, wherein we saw that just having wealth is not sufficient for prosperity. For ensuring feeling of prosperity, identification of need for physical facilities is also essential, over and above having wealth. Further, feeling of prosperity will lead to sharing with the other, becoming an aid by enriching the other. Deprivation will lead to exploiting the other. This is a simple test of prosperity).

As we interact with nature for our various physical needs, we can either exploit nature or enrich it. Let us ask ourselves "What is naturally acceptable to me? Do I want to protect and enrich nature, or do I want to exploit it?" The answer is the same for each one of us - we have a spontaneous expectation to enrich nature. We may not know how to go about it, but if we ask ourselves this question, if we ask it deep within, the answer is, given the choice, we want to live in harmony with nature.

Let us put down what we have found out so far:



What is Our State Today?

Now that we have found out how we want to be in relationship, and what we want from physical facilities, let us explore into how we fare on these two fronts today; what is our state today?

In Relationships

Ask yourself this question:

“Am I able to have such fulfilling relationships all the time today?”

What is the answer? Our answer is

“Sometimes I have good relationships, sometimes I don’t. Or perhaps, mostly I have good relationships, and sometimes I don’t,” or vice-versa.

We can see this in our interactions with our family and even outside the family. Sometimes it goes well, sometimes it does not. We can see this at the level of society as well. There are also larger issues like wars, fights and killing, which are extreme forms of problems in human relationships.

Have you wondered why this is so?

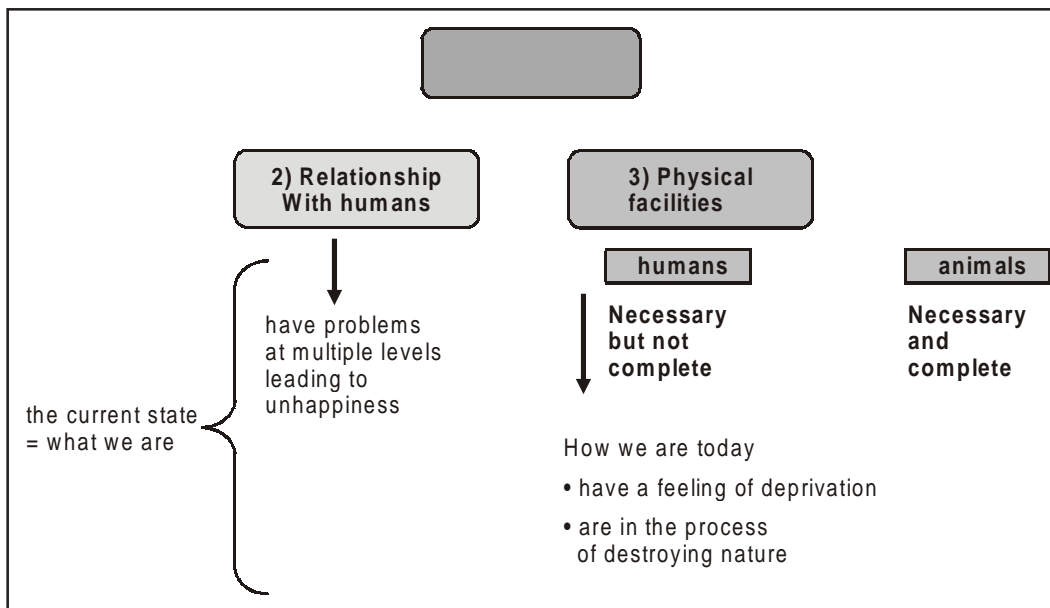
With physical facilities:

Let us ask ourselves these questions:

“Do I feel prosperous? Do I find that I have a feeling to share what I have?

Am I satisfied with my wealth today? Or do I want more? How much is this “more”?

From thinking over these questions and our response to them, it becomes clear, and increasingly so, that while we may have wealth, we are not able to feel prosperous.

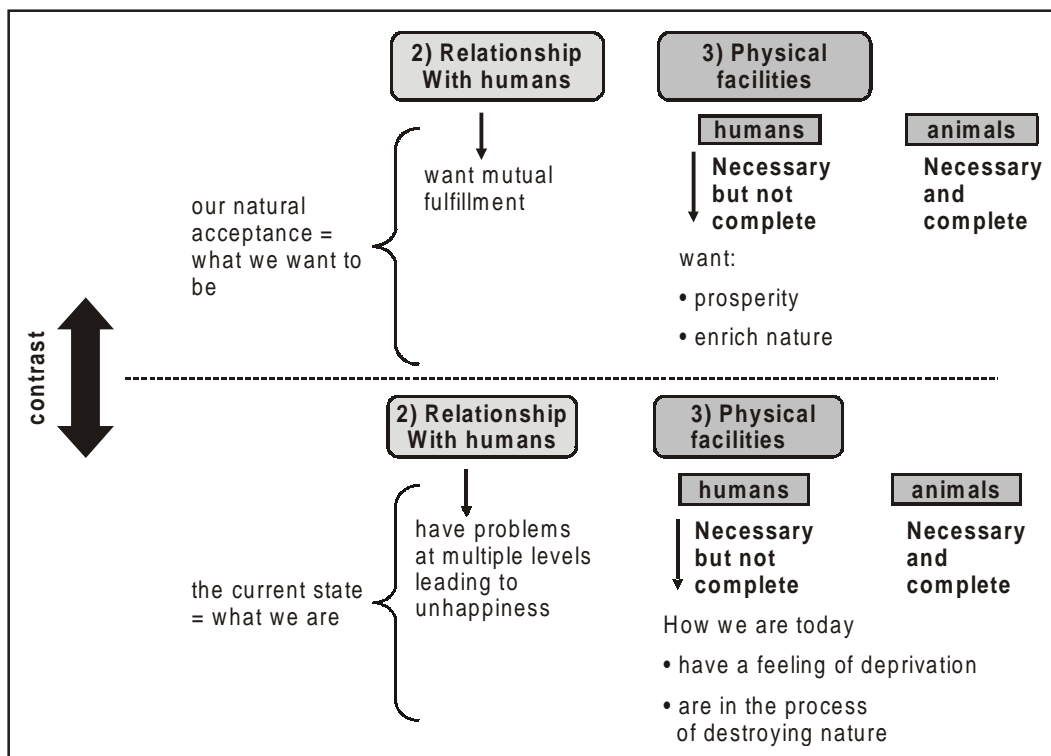


We thus seem to have quite a problem in our hands on both these fronts:

- ***Relationship with humans***
 - ❖ We are unable to have fulfilling relationships all the time: in family, outside family, and as a society – in the world at large
- ***Physical Facilities***
 - ❖ We want to *feel* prosperous, but end up working only for accumulation of wealth.
 - ❖ We want to enrich nature, but are exploiting it, destroying it.

Let us look into the reasons for these problems we seem to have in the next section.

Why Are We in This State? – Living with Wrong Assumptions



Look at the figure above. Can you see the difference between what we really want to be and what we actually are? Isn't it an irony? We want something, but we have ended up having something totally different. Let us investigate into this and see how we can resolve this issue. This is a significant point for us, since our basic desire is happiness and prosperity and its continuity, but on investigation, we find that our current state is quite unlike it! This has to be dealt with utmost seriousness! Let us look into this.

In Relationships

What could be the possible reason for the issues we have in relationships?

Let's ask the question in another way:

"Do I understand human relationships? Do I know what the other person's expectations from me are?"

The answer is,

"I mostly don't", OR

‘I am not sure about this’ OR

“It depends, It changes from time to time,” etc.

This seems to be our problem. We seem to be interacting with a lot of people, we keep getting ourselves into trouble in our relationships, but we don't seem to understand the first thing about relationships- the expectations! It may seem like a trivial thing, but it is very important. Problems in relationships can really disturb a person's state of mind to a very large extent. We live a significant portion of our lives in relationships. For example: If you had a tiff with your father or your brother, it can stay with you and bother you for a very long time, so much so, that till the issue is resolved, you may not be able to do anything else! This issue is basically because we *assume* something about relationships, and then we go on to live them on the basis of this assumption. But if our *assumption* is false, then we end up in problems. For example, we may assume, that we can become close to someone by being authoritative with them or taking decisions for them. While we may try and boss over the person, it is not going to lead to mutual fulfilment.

From Physical Facilities

Again, we can see here that we have *assumed* that accumulation of wealth is the only thing we need and the rest shall be taken care of. As we have seen, this is an incorrect assumption. Having wealth is *necessary*, but not *sufficient* for prosperity.

We have also made numerous assumptions about our interactions with nature, that we can exploit nature, that nature is present solely for our consumption and so on and so forth. It is easy to see today, with the widespread havoc we are causing in nature, that this assumption is incorrect.

We can make some additional observations here:

Question 1: “Is the unhappiness in my family today more due to lack of [3] Physical facilities, or due to lack of [2] Relationship”?

- Each one of us can explore into this. This exercise is worth doing. Find this out. We generally start thinking about physical facilities and assume that if we have physical facilities, life will be completely ok. But just think, that if we have physical facilities but lack relationship, what will happen in the family? And if we have relationship in the family but lack physical facilities, what would be the state of the family? If we have relationship, we can earn together for the family, but if the relationship is not there, we will think of taking away the share of the other. Think, why the families are breaking today- due to lack of physical facilities or fulfilment in relationship?

When you explore on these issues you will get the answer as : [2] Relationship. It is clear that when we are talking of a ‘rich’ person, the problems are certainly more due

to lack of relationship than due to physical facilities. If we ponder over this for some time, it will also become clear that even for a 'poor' person, the problems are more due to lack of relationship than due to physical facilities.

Question 2: "How much time am I spending today working to ensure [2] Relationship, and how much time do I spend working for, or preparing to get [3] Physical facilities"?

- The *likely answer is*: we spend more time for [3] Physical facilities than for [2] Relationship! It becomes clear that we are not spending enough time in trying to ensure relationship, whereas the problems are more due to lack of fulfilment in relationship than due to lack of physical facilities! In other words, most of the problems are elsewhere, and we are trying to work at some other place in the hope that the problem will be solved!

From the above, it is easy to make the following inferences:

- We largely operate on the basis of assumptions today. These assumptions can be right, or they can be wrong, and we are mostly unaware of our own assumptions!
- Since we are not even aware that we have assumptions, we have obviously not verified these assumptions for ourselves. We haven't checked if our own assumptions are naturally acceptable to us. As a result most of our interactions with people and with physical facilities lead to problems.

Our Program: Understand and Live in Harmony at All levels of Living

The need for right understanding has become quite clear to us from the previous discussion. Let us now explore into what this 'right understanding' is. Remember, the need for right understanding is tied to our need for happiness.

In order to find out what this right understanding is, we need to find out the various situations or states we live in, on which our happiness depends. Why is this needed? The answer is simple. If we ignore any of these states or situations, if we have incomplete understanding of any state or situation we live in, then we risk becoming unhappy and uncertain in that state or level. In order to ensure happiness and its continuity, we need to make sure we cover all states and situations we live in.

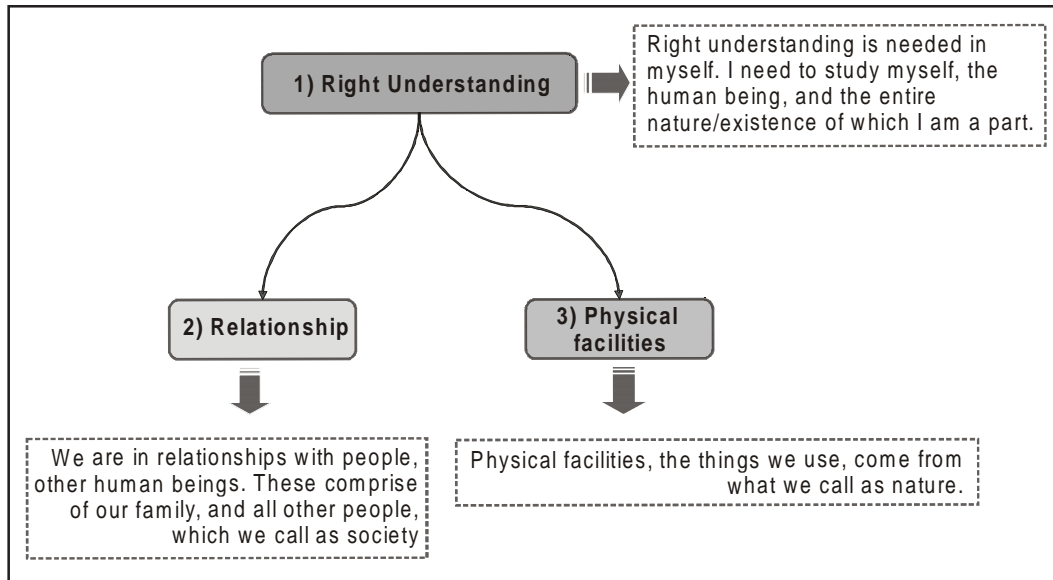
As humans there are several situations we live in. There are many aspects or levels to our living. It is an increasing expanse that starts with ourselves and expands to include things around us; namely, the people we live with on a daily basis i.e. our family, the larger society we live in, the nature we are dependent on, and then everything else, which we can call as 'existence' (existence means all that exists). Some of these we are aware of and of some we are not. Some of these we give significance to and to some we do not. But regardless of our attitude and awareness, we are in this 'totality' and live with this 'totality'.

Let us see if we can find out the expanse of our living from the point we discussed earlier, which is, our need for

1. Right Understanding
2. Relationship
3. Physical Facilities

It becomes clear to us that our state of happiness or unhappiness depends on the above three aspects. If we have the '*right understanding*', then we can be happy in ourselves and work to, have fulfilling relationships with humans and mutual prosperity with nature. If we do not have the right understanding, then we have problems. Thus, our happiness depends on the fulfilment of these three basic requirements.

We can represent this as below:



Thus, we can see from the above that:

1. *Where* do we need the Right Understanding? We need this in ourselves. Hence we have to study ourselves.

Conclusion: We have to study ourselves

2. In order to ensure Relationship, we have to study and understand people and our relationship with them, i.e. we have to understand family and society.

Conclusion: We have to study Family, and we have to study Society

3. In order to ensure right use of physical facilities, we have to study nature, and our relationship with it.

Conclusion: We have to study Nature/Existence

These can be called as the 'levels of our living'. We live in all these 'levels'. Let us list them down and explore them:

1. living in myself
2. living in family
3. living in society
4. living in nature/existence

Thus, we can see that there are four 'levels' in which we live. At this juncture, you can ask yourself this question:

- *“Do I live at all these levels, or can one of them be dismissed or ignored?”*

You can also ask yourself:

- *“Is there anything more than this that I live with?”*

We find that as humans we live at these four levels and none of them can be dismissed or taken away. Also, nothing more can be added to these and together they comprise of everything we live with.

Let us now explore these different levels of our living:

1. ***Living in Myself***: We all have desires, thoughts, beliefs, imaginations and choices. This is the first level of our living. Before expressing ourselves in relations, we think, and whatever we receive from the other, it again passes through our internal processes. We refer to this as (our) Self. This inner world (or 'myself') co-exists with the body and together we refer to this as a 'human being'.

Most of the time, we see that we are busy in ourselves – making some plans, thinking about doing something, etc. We have to start with ourselves and study ourselves. This means to put effort to understand our own desires, our wants, and our behaviour. So far, we have ended up assuming things without really investigating into ourselves. We have read a lot of books, we have gone through years of silent and subtle conditioning about who we are, what we want and how we should behave, what work we should do, in short, 'how to live!' We have to begin 'knowing' ourselves and test our beliefs by passing them through our own natural acceptance.

2. ***Living in Family***: All of us are born to our parents and this is the family we are born to. This is the first web of relationships for each one of us and subsequently we live in more relationships that include our siblings, our friends and classmates, teachers and others. These are the people we live with on a daily basis, and we call this 'family'.

How I see myself, decides how I see the other and my relationship with another human, another person. If I can understand myself better and clearer, I am able to see the other clearer and better. And this understanding becomes the basis of my relationship with the other. When we understand ourselves, we can understand the other and this forms the basis of the relationship, harmony with the other. In order to ensure harmony in family and society, we need to understand the expectations in human relationships and whether they can be fulfilled.

3. ***Living in Society***: Our family is part of a larger group of people we live with where there are interdependencies around food, clothing, housing, services, health, education, justice etc. We live as a part of this human system. This is our society.

As we understand ourselves and our relationship with others in family, we also understand the other in society, and are able to fulfil our relationship with them.

4. ***Living in Nature/Existence.*** We are on this earth: with the grass, plants and trees, birds, animals and other humans surrounding us and we live in this large eco-system that we call nature. Regardless of where we are, our village, town or city, is within this eco-system or natural habitat. Our planet is surrounded by a larger system of planetary bodies and that includes the moon, the sun and the infinite stars and planetary systems that surround us. Our earth is a part of the solar system that co-exists with all that there is in this entire 'existence'. And then there is space between planets, even between you and the book right now! All these things present in space are together called as existence. 'Existence' means all that exists.

When we understand nature, we are able to engage with it in a relationship that leads to mutual fulfilment.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are the basic requirements to fulfil human aspirations? Indicate their correct priority.
2. "Physical facilities are necessary and complete for animals, while they are necessary but not complete for humans." Comment.
3. Critically examine our state today in terms of fulfilment of relationships and physical facilities. What has gone wrong according to you? What is the solution?
4. What do the abbreviations given as SVDD, SSDD and SSSS signify? Explain the reason for the state SSDD?
5. "Right understanding + Relationship = Mutual fulfilment;
Right understanding + Physical facilities = Mutual prosperity."
Illustrate the above with two examples for each.
6. What is the program to fulfil the basic human aspirations? Name the different levels of human living?
7. What is the difference between 'animal consciousness' and 'human consciousness'? Explain with the help of a diagram.