
UNIT 2 HUMAN’S RELATION TO THE REST OF THE UNIVERSE

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2.0 OBJECTIVES

- To explore the relationship of humans beings to the rest of the universe.
- To study different modes of living exemplified by the lifestyles of leavers and takers
- To offer possibility for a viable lifestyle based on a healthy respect for others.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit an attempt is made to show the relationship of human beings to nature. This unit is based on a distinction that Daniel Quinn, author of “Ishmael”, makes between Takers and Leavers. According to Quinn, Takers are the exploiters who use the world to their advantage. The Leavers on the other hand, live in this world and leave it for future generations. They are ones who have abandoned themselves to life and who befriend the earth.

2.2 THE BASIC PREMISE: HUMANS ARE MADE FOR THE WORLD

The Takers have been enacting a story for the past ten thousand years, based on the premise, “the world was made for man to conquer and rule, and under human rule it was meant to become a Paradise.” Even before the Takers came to the scene, the Leavers had been enacting many similar stories, but all based on a different premise: “Man was made for the world.” This implies that right from the beginning, everything that ever lived belonged to the world, including human beings. And that’s how it was possible that things came to be this way. And when we belong to the world and live according to this premise, we carry on the process of evolution. Or more correctly, we let evolution evolve in and through us. It may be noted that in the case of the Leavers there is a reversal in the vision of the fundamental premise of the story. Can we as Takers, or in general as living beings, ever claim that the world is made for us human beings – implying indirectly that it is created for us alone. Obviously, we have been told so many times that everything else is meant for humans. Today’s world-view is based on it. But the question is can it be really true? Does evolution stop with humans? Does it possible that millions and millions of galaxies were created for the sake of the tiny humans inhabit in one unknown corner of the Milky Way galaxy?

2.3 THE HOLY COMMAND: SHEPHERD AND GUARD THE WORLD

The Story that the Leavers have been enacting here for the past three million years, that is right from the beginning of humanity, is not a story of conquering and conquest. The command given to the Leavers is to shepherd and guard the world, to help the world blossom forth in its own way. Enacting it does not give them power to subjugate the others; instead it provides them with lives that are satisfying and meaningful to them. This is what we will find if we were to go to the People like the Bushmen of Africa, the Alwana of Australia, the Santals of Jharkhand, the Uraons of Chota Nagpur, the Kreen-Akrose of Brazil, and Navajo of the U.S. etc. Unlike the Takers, they are not seething with discontent and rebellion, not incessantly wrangling over what should be allowed and what is forbidden, not for ever accusing each other of not living the right way, not living in terror of each other, not going crazy because their lives are perceived empty and pointless, not having to stupefy themselves with drugs to get through the day, not inventing a new religion every week to give them something to hold on to, not for ever searching for something to do or something to believe in that will make their lives worth living.

Here the author emphasises an important point. The Leavers live this way not because they live close to the nature or have no formal government or because they are innately noble. This is simply because they are enacting a story that works well for people -a story that worked well for three million years and that still works wherever the Takers haven’t yet managed to stamp it out. So the holy command entrusted to the Leavers is that of guiding the destiny of the world along with all other creatures in it. Humans do have a special role to play, but that is definitely not one of domination or power. That is one of channelling and directing the life on the planet earth in its own course. They are called to be the stewards of the world, who are ultimately responsible to life itself.

2.4 THE PROFOUND DISCOVERY: THE MYSTERY OF THE WORLD

In this process of guiding the creation and themselves humans discover the profound mystery in the world. They are fascinated by the world. The world is truly a marvellous place. They are not masters of the mysterious universe, but stewards who have recognised the spontaneity, beauty, creativity and abundance of life in the world. They are the ones who feel one with the forces of nature, who wonder at the tiniest creatures of the world and who respond spontaneously to the glory of life. So they are truly open to the mystery of life and of the world. As mystery humans themselves are part of it. The search for deeper significance of the mysterious goes on and on, without ever exhausting the depth dimension of it. Unlike a problem which may be solved and a satisfactory answer found, the mystery of the universe invites, cajoles and reveals, without in any way enflaming the mystery itself. The mystery opens itself ever more and more to the magnificent beauty of being, without being defined away.

2.5 THE HUMAN TASK: LIVE THE PARADISE HERE ON EARTH

The call of the Leavers is not to make the earth a paradise. To some extent at least, the earth is, they assume, already a paradise. Even within the limitations imposed by the earth, they are called to live according to the law of life. To follow the law of life does not mean that we need to be slavishly obeying the laws of life; it means that we understand and act accordingly, not against it and not even totally bound by it. The law of nature or the law of life enables them to make life on earth a truly human one: a paradise on earth. To live the paradise on earth, what is needed is not to struggle to improve the world, but to discover spontaneously and playfully the beauty of it. It is not to deny the “sufferings” or even “evils” in our daily life. They are intrinsically part of the world and of nature. And as humans we need to “face” these sufferings. But the way to face these sufferings is not to revolt against the world. Revolting against life will only aggravate the sufferings that humans face. The way to face and reduce (if not to eliminate) is to follow the rules of life and to live accordingly and creatively, just like we can fly by following the laws of aerodynamics, creatively. Therefore as humans, the Leavers are called on to realise and live the paradise here on earth. They are not called to create the paradise on earth but to accept it: creatively, critically and constructively.

The Takers’ world-view is quite different. According to them in the world of the Leavers it is always twilight. We can visualise the following imagery from the Takers’ perspective. A man is scrabbling along the ridge at twilight. The man is short, thin, dark, and naked. He is running in a half crouch, looking for tracks. He is hunting and he is desperate. Night is falling and he has got nothing to eat. He is running, running and running, as if he were on a treadmill. It’s a treadmill because tomorrow at twilight he will be there running still – or running again, we do not really know. But there’s more than hunger and desperation driving him. He is terrified as well. Behind him on the ridge just out of sight, his enemies are in pursuit to tear him to pieces – the lion, the wolves, and the tigers. And so he has to stay on that treadmill forever. Forever one step behind his prey and one step ahead of his enemies. So the world now is not a paradise for the Takers.

The ridge represents the knife-edge of survival. The Leavers, according to the Takers, live on the knife-edge of survival and have to struggle perpetually to keep from falling off. Actually it's as though the ridge and the sky are in motion instead of him. He is running in place, trapped, going nowhere. In other words hunter-gatherers lead a very grim life. It is grim because it's a struggle just to stay alive. The Leavers or the hunter-gatherers no more live on the knife-edge of survival than wolves or lions or parrots or rabbits. Man was as well adapted to life on this planet as any other species and the idea that he lived on the knife-edge of survival is simply biological nonsense. As an omnivore, his dietary range is immense. Thousands of species will go hungry before he does. His intelligence and dexterity enable him to live comfortably that would utterly defeat any other primate. Far from scrabbling endlessly for food, hunter-gatherers are among the best-fed people on earth, and they manage this with only two or three hours a day of what you would call work – which makes them among the most leisured people on earth as well. In his book on Stone Age economics, Marshall Sahlins described them as 'the original affluent society.' And incidentally, predation on man is practically nonexistent.

2.6 THE PRACTICAL CONCLUSION: DISCOVER THE LAWS OF LIFE

Since there is something basically wrong with us humans, we cannot work out our own "salvation." We cannot save ourselves from this mad rush to death. So the Takers suggest that the only way to get out of it – if at all it is practical – is to seek some prophets who have been blessed with supernatural wisdom. Since humans cannot find true wisdom from anywhere else, the only ones who have special access to it are the prophets. So the only (one) way to save the world is, according to the Takers, to follow a prophet.

The Leavers do not understand this logic. They do not have prophets in their culture. They live in the hands of nature; they live according to and beyond (not against) the laws of nature. So according to them the remedy from the malaise of our human situation is to discover the laws governing life. That can be done not necessarily by prophets, but by searching for it in the community of life. If the law of aeronautics can be searched for by experts (scientists) and discovered by them, the laws of life should also be discovered by the proper experts (that is, by prophets or priests) and discovered by them. How we should live should not be based on some exotic precepts given to us by some weird cult heroes, but on the general principles of life discoverable from the community of life.

If we go to a tribal community, which is wretched, inhuman and lawless according to the Takers, we ask them: 'How can you live in this lawless manner? But the tribals object 'What do you mean lawless? We have a law, we follow it invariably and because we follow it invariably we have a highly successful society.' According to them following this law has made them a society that works very well. To devise a method for the discovery of the law we have to look at it from two sides. From one side of 'What is it that makes this society work?' and from other side I would be asking, 'What is it they don't do that makes this society work?'

These are the guides we have, to find the law we are looking for. The community of life on this planet has worked well for three billion years, but the Takers

moved away from them. There is a law that is followed invariably within the community and without this law the community would be indeed in chaos and would very quickly disintegrate and disappear. Man owes his very existence to this law. It is a law that protects not only the community as a whole but also the species within the community and even individuals. Leavers are more interested in what works well for *people* and Takers in what works well for *things*. So the Leavers accumulate knowledge preferably of people and of living beings rather than that of things and workability. While the Leavers seek wisdom the Takers are satisfied with functionality.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1) If Takers want to conquer the world, what is the task given to the Leavers?

2) Are the Leavers underfed and hungry?

2.7 THE TYPICAL ATTITUDE: TO BE IN THE WORLD

Takers take their role to stand against the world (*ek-sistence*) seriously. They find their identity in comparing themselves to the world and to the “lower” animals. Leavers on the other hand find themselves in the world, in the vast history of life and in its tradition. They find themselves primarily in the flow of life, in the process of evolution. Their characteristic attitude is not one of standing out; but one of standing along; or better walking along with. Therefore, they are first of all at home in the environment, in nature and in the community of life. Once they are at home in the world, they realise themselves as part of the world. They do grow and develop in the world and through the world. Unlike the Takers who pride themselves in standing out of the world, the Leavers are happy to be living in the rhythm (*rta*) of the world. They are tuned to the chirping of the birds, the wiggle of the waves and to the fondling of the breeze. They vibrate with nature and are elevated by nature (not from it). It is like sleeping soundly and calmly in the background noise of a heavy traffic. In the beginning one will find it extremely difficult. After few days, one gets used to it so much so that one

cannot sleep without the background of the traffic. Similarly the Leavers are not distracted by the activities of life, but are enabled by them. At the same time they do realise that they are not fully in and of the world. There is something in their spirit that makes them transcend the “material.” But this is not the primary aspect of their living. They see the “transcending” nature of themselves as the dance of life into the ever unfathomable mystery of being alive, human and divine.

2.8 THE EVIDENT CONSEQUENCE: VIABLE LIFE

Thus while they swim along with the flow of life, deviating from the course at times and directing the course at other times, they have demonstrated beyond doubt that theirs is a viable life style. The simple fact that they have lived as humans for about three million years and life still goes on in its full swing indicate the viability of their life style. It is true that sometimes some of the Leavers’ stories have disappeared. Some of the Leavers’ culture has been wiped out. But Leavers flourish in diverse ways. Disappearance of any one story does not lead to the disappearance of other stories, let alone that of the life in community in general.

This accumulation started when cultures began. Human culture began with human life which is to say with *Homo habilis*. All what they have accumulated passed to *Homo erectus* who were the heirs to this accumulation. They passed it to *Homo sapiens*. And of course heirs of *Homo sapiens* were *Homo sapiens*. The heirs of this accumulation were not the Takers, but the Leavers. Obviously because the Takers had a total break with the past at the time of the agricultural revolution. But there was no break with the past in the various people among the Leavers. The Leavers are still passing that accumulation along in whatever form it came to them. But then about ten thousands of years ago the founders of Takers’ culture said, “This is all shit. This is not the way people should live.” Leavers are always conscious of having a tradition but the Takers are cut off from the past with every generation.

Takers’ Mother Culture says that there is nothing in the past for us. ‘The past is squalid and dirty. The past is something to be put behind us, something to be escaped from’. This is how the Takers came to have cultural amnesia. It was assumed in your culture that the birth of man and the birth of your culture were simultaneous events. It was assumed that farming is just as instinctive to man as honey production is to bees. The people of the Taker’s culture thought by seeing the hunter-gatherers that they had degenerated from the natural life. The Takers forgot what they had been before they became agriculturalists. As far as the Takers knew, there was no ‘before’; Creation had occurred just a few thousand years ago and man the agriculturalist had immediately set about the task of building civilisation.

But, sometimes ancientness is a great validator among the Takers. But it is only for preservation sake. They esteemed the values and tradition of wiser, nobler ancestors and deplore their disappearance, but they have no interest in living the way those wiser, nobler ancestors lived. In short, Takers don’t want to adopt them for everyday living. But of course it was not Mother Culture’s teaching that everything from the past was to be discarded. Anything related to production was saved and that is why things came to be this way. Leavers also save information about production, but they save whatever works well for them. And

this is what they teach their children. But Takers teach their children how to make things. How to make more things and better things. They don't teach them what works well for people.

As for the Leavers, each culture is an accumulation of knowledge that reaches back in an unbroken chain to the beginning of human life. Each of them is a way that works well. Each has been tested and refined over thousands of generations. After 5 or 8 thousand years of collective amnesia the Takers really didn't know how to live. But in that very same time period, the Leavers of the world had not forgotten how to live. Hence, the Takers and Leavers accumulate entirely different kinds of knowledge. The Takers accumulate knowledge about what works well for *things*. The Leavers accumulate knowledge what works well for *people*. But it is not for *all* people. Each Leaver tradition has a system that works well for them because it evolved among them: It was suited to their locality, climate, biological community, peculiar taste, preferences and vision of the world. And someone who knows what works well for the people has wisdom. We must note that the knowledge of what works well for production is what is valued in the Takers' culture. In the same way, the knowledge of what works well for people is what is valued in Leaver culture. What works well for production is the law of things, of matter. What works well for life is the law of the community of living beings.

2.9 THE MAIN GOAL: TO PROSPER WITHIN LIMITS

To hold that the Leavers live in harmony with nature does not imply that they are at the mercy of nature. They flourish much more than any other known species of animal kingdom. They have adapted to life on earth much more efficiently than most other species. In a natural catastrophe if humans were to disappear, many other species would have disappeared earlier. Though they are one of the best suited creatures to the environmental conditions of today, they do realise that theirs is still a limited existence. The hubris which has driven the Takers on the road to self destruction is absent among the Leavers. The Leavers realise their limit, though they may not submit to it all the time. At the same time they are not paranoid that the limit imposes some restrictions on them. The Leavers can give themselves to the gods, when their turn is over, when their energy is used up, when their role is played. They know very well that they are part of the play of life. They know very well that life is more important than they themselves.

That does not make them torpid and lethargic. While dancing with the rhythm of life, they go forward and exert themselves to excel in life. But unlike the Takers who are depressively paranoid, the Leavers can ultimately leave everything to destiny, since they are ultimately part of that same destiny (which is the divine). So they do prosper. They do excel. They do challenge life. They also know the general laws of life which limits them. They are aware that the only way to prosper in life is not to yield blindly to its laws, but to know the laws and live creatively within the larger laws of life.

2.10 THE RELIGION: TO LIVE IN THE HANDS OF GOD

Thus they know that they are not their own masters. They know that they are not responsible for the world. They know that they can afford to make some mistakes. They know that their destiny is dependent on the world, but not exclusively. So they can afford to relax themselves and live in the hands of gods. Since they themselves do not want to become gods, they are comfortable in the lap of a loving god, just as a child in the womb of her mother. They can also take risks and afford to be creative since basically they live within the general laws of life.

They do not feel the burden of the whole world on their shoulders. They do not have the “saviour complex” to save everything. They know that some things may be wrong with the world and they can afford to laugh about it. But they know ultimately everything lives (or dies) according to the laws of life, which they basically accept as part of their own existence. They realise that in the process of evolution, they became human by living in the hands of the gods. So they are far less anxiety-ridden than the Takers are. As people living in the hands of gods, the Takers believe, they do not have the knowledge of good and evil; they do not decide who should die and who should live. They do not determine the flow of life, though at times they do influence it. So they do not force all others to live the way they live.

The Leavers know that creation has not come to an end with *Homo sapiens*. They do know that the whole world will not come to an end even if they – unfortunately – come to an (unforeseeable) end. Such a view of the Leavers is intimately opposed to the Takers. According to the Takers’ Mother Culture, the agricultural revolution has a far deeper meaning than a mere technological event. The revolution is still in progress. Adam is still chewing the fruit of that forbidden Tree and wherever Abel is found Cain is there to kick him out. Our Mother Culture also teaches that before the revolution human life was devoid of meaning, it was stupid, empty and worthless. Pre-revolutionary life was ugly. It is very evident how thoroughly effective Mother Culture’s teachings are on this issue.

The question is, “Why was the agricultural revolution necessary? Takers believe in the revolution even when they enjoy none of its benefits. Hundreds of millions of people live in a most pitiable situation. Many are left homeless. Even then they believe profoundly in this revolution. Mother Culture teaches that there are many differences between Takers and hunter-gatherers. Seeing the life of hunter-gatherers Takers said, ‘This life of yours is not only wretched but its wrong. Man was not meant to be this way. So don’t give up. Join our revolution and help us and the world to transform into a paradise for man’.”

But our question still stands: How the life of hunter gatherers became wretched and shameful?” Takers would normally hold that, like animals, the Leavers have no control over the food supply, the most basic necessity of all. Takers firmly believe, “Unless we control our own food supply, we live at the mercy of the world. We cannot live at the whim of the gods, because that is not a human way to live. Though the world is full of food, there is no guarantee that the world is always going to be full of food. Without food we will die. Therefore we have to trust ourselves with our lives and that is the human way to live.”

Moreover, in the hands of gods there is no distinction between humans and animals. If we live in the hands of gods they give you what you need to live as animals, but not what you need beyond that, i.e., to live as humans. But how can that be? How can it be that the gods are wise enough to shape the universe and the world and the life of the world but lack wisdom to give humans what they need to be human? The assumption behind this way of thinking is: “These gods are incompetent gods. This is why we have got to take our lives out of their hands entirely. We have to take our lives into our hands. And therefore we have to plant our own food. Thus when we have more food than we need, then the gods have no power over us.”

2.11 THE MAIN CHARACTERISTIC: LIMITED COMPETITION

The world in this story is not a place of perfect peace and harmony. The Leavers cannot imagine this world to be a place of “peaceful co-existence,” where no harm is caused to anyone else. There is need and scope for the law of limited competition, which is the law of furthering of life. There would be general laws guiding the growth of life, laws derived from the community of living beings. Here humans will not play the role of annihilators but of fair competitors. True, humans are much better equipped than other animals in this competition for survival. But that does not give humans the absolute right to eliminate other animals or other human cultures. There could be sometimes scope for “erratic retaliation” to make the other aware of one’s own existence. Such a strategy of “erratic retaliatory” has been found to be viable and community sustaining from the beginning of life.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1) What is the religion of the Leavers?

2) Is there competition in the Leaver’s world?

2.12 THE UNIQUENESS OF MAN: TRAILBLAZERS

The Leavers affirm that the gods made human beings just the way they made “salmon and sparrows and rabbits for the world.” Apparently, this seems to have worked pretty well so far and there is no reason why it should not work for humans as well. Life is tremendously fascinating. After originating in the ocean it evolved and gradually became more complex. All sorts of creatures appeared on this planet. Some of them seem to be on the verge of attaining self-awareness and intelligence. So it’s definitely not just humans that gods are after. We were never meant to be the only players on the stage of life. Gods, it seems, intended to make a planet filled with creatures of different colour and size and various degrees of awareness.

And there is absolutely no evidence that things have come to an end with the arrival of man. The evolution proceeds naturally after the emergence of humans. Amazingly, humans are the first of these to realise themselves and to be aware of the process of evolution. Therefore his role is that of the trailblazer, the pathfinder. His uniqueness lies in the fact that he is the first to learn that creatures like humans have a choice: they can make the greatest choice of suicide: for themselves and for the whole living community. So human being’s role is to be the first. To be the first, without being the last. Our place is to figure out how it is possible to do that and to make room for all the rest who are capable of becoming what he’s become. So humans are called trailblazers for the rest of the living world. So the primary role of humans is to let the flow of life go forward and lead to its natural fulfilment.

2.13 THE MANY WAYS: DIVERSITY AS SURVIVAL VALUE

In the Leavers’ tradition the exclusive claim is not made that there is only one right way of living. Since other ways are acknowledged, space is given for other stories to be enacted and their communities can flourish in their own ways. Respect for diversity is encouraged. Diversity is seen as a survival factor for the community and is therefore prized highly. The problems emerging from plurality and diversity are tackled honestly and not denied and allowed to explode. Each society is encouraged to live in the way it prefers without canonising one particular way of life as the way for the rest of humanity. Each community discovers for itself that way of life which works best. The success of this way of life is affirmed by the existence of human beings for three millions of years without leading the whole community of life to doom.

The Leavers are never obsessed by the delusion that what they were doing was right and that everyone in the entire world had to practice agriculture and that every inch of the planet had to be cultivated. They said to the other Leavers who were leading a different story: “You want to be different from us? That is fine with us. That’s great. We wish to remain as we are. You be as you are, growing as you wish. We do not pretend to know which way is right. We just know what way has worked well for us. It would be nice if we both could help each other, when need arises.”

2.14 THE SIGNIFICANT CHOICE: LIFE

The crucial difference in the plot of the story takes Takers to death and the Leavers to life. Based on the above mentioned experiences we find that the Takers and the Leavers accumulate two entirely different kinds of knowledge. The Takers accumulate knowledge about what works well for *things* while the Leavers accumulate knowledge about what works well for *people*. But not for *all* people. Each Leavers culture has a system that works well for itself because it was evolved among them, it was suited to the terrain they inhabited, fit for the climate in which they lived, adapted to the biological community in which they lived, and was apt to their own peculiar tastes, preferences and vision of the world. And such a kind of knowledge is what is known as *wisdom*. And every time the Takers stamp out a Leavers' culture, wisdom ultimately tested since the birth of mankind disappears from the world beyond recall, just as every time they stamp out a species of life, a life form ultimately tested since the birth of life disappears from the world beyond recall.

2.15 THE DESTINY OF LEAVERS: TO REMAIN HUMAN

The Leavers have a modest destiny. They do not hope to become gods. They intend to leave the gods where they are, with the power over life and death. Since they flow with the stream of life, they do realise that one day they may be eliminated in the evolutionary process. They also understand that their role is to be the first, but not to be the last. So the clear implication is that Leavers will remain to be human: human to the last. So they may even vanish from the face of the earth, lending a helping hand to the process of evolution. So they have no ambitions to conquer the whole world; they do not even have the ambition of conquering themselves. Since they live in the hands of gods, they realise that gods have better knowledge of their destiny. They may totally be wiped out of the universe although they will defend against it, without surrendering meekly and passively to such a possibility. In this process, they are called to be humans.

2.16 THE MODE OF LIFE: A CELEBRATION

As time went on Leavers who were once hunter-gatherers slowly evolved and become herders. These pastors or herders come alive in the story of Cain and Abel. Daniel Quinn uses the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis to show the nature of the Takers and Leavers cultures respectively. What was happening along that border between the Takers and Leavers area was that Cain was killing Abel. The tillers of the soil were watering their fields with the blood of the Semitic herders. The Leavers were being killed off so that more land could be put under cultivation. This explains the mystery as to why God accepted Abel and his offering and rejected Cain and his offering. With this story, the Semites (the Leavers) were telling their children God is on our side. He loves us herders but hates those murderous tillers of the soil. To make it short, as a result of eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge that took the place of gods, however due to this misdeed the tiller people made the gods withhold from them the bounty that enables them live carefree lives which the Leavers continue to enjoy till today. Life as celebration was robbed from the Takers' culture.

One of the important reasons as to why and how the Takers came to be this way is that there was a total break with the past at the time of agricultural revolution. In the Takers’ culture there was no more the transmission of that cultural accumulation that mankind made during the first three million years of human life. But the Leavers are still passing that accumulation along in whatever form it came to them. For example, the Leavers save information about production-though production for its own sake is rarely a feature of their life. Among the Leavers, people don’t have weekly quotas of pots to make or arrow heads to turn out. They are not pre-occupied with stepping up their production of hand-axes. So, although they save information about production most of the information they save is about what works well for them. And this information they teach their children as part of their living tradition. Thus the Leavers peoples are always conscious of having a tradition that goes back to very ancient times. Thus the Leavers always have the sense of a past extending back to the dawn of time, while we see that the Takers that have the sense of history extending back to few hundreds of years only.

Thus among the Leavers, the Mother Culture explains and preserves a lifestyle that is healthy and self-sustaining. Among the Takers Mother Culture explains and preserves a lifestyle that has proven to be unhealthy and self-destructive. Therefore, when the Takers see life as a struggle, the Leavers see life primarily as a celebration. That is evident in the festivities and dances that are found in their culture. That is evident from the creative and spontaneous nature of them. That is apparent from the calm and serene way in which they face life and enjoy it. They are part of the flow of life. And life is the most splendid celebration ever.

2.17 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have idealized the lifestyle of the leavers and portrayed it as the ideal type of relating to the rest of the universe. We have seen the uniqueness of humans is that of a trailblazer.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1) How do you understand the unique role of human being according to the Leavers?

2) Is life a struggle?

2.18 KEY WORDS

- Erratic retaliation** : The act of retaliation or counter-attacking, which cannot be predicted. So there is an element of surprise and Quinn thinks that such a strategy will preserve peace among groups of cultures.
- Leavers** : Unlike the Takers, leavers are the majority of human beings who have existed right from the beginning of history, enabling a viable life-style and leading a more peaceful way of life, if not a technologically successful one.
- Takers** : A special term coined and used by Daniel Quinn, who symbolises the exploitative type of human beings, which harm the earth and destroy the future of humanity. They may symbolise the present humans whose life-style is non-sustainable.

2.19 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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