Topic: The Basic Human Aspirations – Continuous Happiness and Prosperity

- Subject : **Universal Human Values 2 : Understanding Harmony**

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Happiness

- "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

Unhappiness

- 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

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

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

Prosperity

- 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)

"What is naturally acceptable to me?"

- Accumulating more and more wealth while feeling deprived,

OR

- Having requisite wealth and feeling prosperous

A Look at the Prevailing Notions of Happiness and Prosperity

- 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

A Look at the Prevailing Notions of Happiness and Prosperity

- At the level of the Society – growing incidences of terrorism and nasalism, 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.

Some Possible Questions/Confusions

- Generally when a discussion starts on the issue of happiness, certain kinds of questions or confusions usually emerge, some of which are listed below
- I will be bored of happiness if I am always happy
- I will learn and improve only if I am unhappy. If I become happy, my learning will stop

Some Possible Questions/Confusions

- I need to be unhappy to recognize that I am happy.
- We think of others only when we are unhappy. Thus it is important/useful to be unhappy so that one can help other
- Happiness and unhappiness go together, they cannot be separated
- Yes, I want happiness. But my desiring does not guarantee it. So, why talk of desire

Some Possible Questions/Confusions

- My happiness depends on the others. What can I do about it?
- We do not want happiness for ourselves, but we want to make others happy (while we may stay unhappy)
- Happiness is a small thing. We have higher aspirations, such as like contentment, peace, bliss etc.
- Do not bother me with such abstract notions as happiness.
- I have to live and deal with other things in my life

Summary

- Continuous happiness and prosperity are the basic human aspirations. This can be verified to be true by each one of us
- Happiness may be defined as being in harmony/synergy in the states/situations that I live in. Unhappiness is a lack of this synergy or harmony.

Summary

- Prosperity is a feeling of having or producing more than required physical facilities. Prosperity is a feeling; it is not just physical facility. It is to be distinguished from wealth. In order to be prosperous, we need to
- (a) identify how much is required
- (b) have/produce more than the requirement

Summary

- Lack of right understanding of happiness and prosperity has led us into a variety of problems at different levels of our living, be it at the level of individual, or family, or society or nature.
- We need to evaluate various questions and confusions that we are having on the issue of happiness