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REDUCE THE EXCESS USAGE OF NATURAL RESOURCES THROUGH SELF EXPLORATION

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ABSTRACT

If we look around, everything that we see can be put into one of the following four 'orders'. Material order (soil, water, air), Bio/plant order (grass, plants, trees, flowers, fruits), Animal order (animals, birds), Human order (human beings). Let us look at the first three orders namely the material, plant/bio, and animal order. We can easily see that they are interconnected, fulfill each other and coexist with each other. It is clear that the above mentioned three orders are fulfilling to each other. When we look at the connectedness with human beings, we find that each of these orders fulfilling to the human order. This can verify looking at the multiple uses we are drawing out of these entities. We humans also have a natural acceptance to be mutual fulfilling these three orders. However, we are not able to ensure this mutual fulfillment. We are dependent on the material order for soil and mineral and metals, but only end up polluting the soil and depleting the fossil fuels, we are dependent on plants for our food and holding together the larger ecosystem, but we have destroyed forests and destroyed multiple species of plants and herbs, we are dependent on animals to carry out our products and transportation activities, but have made many species of animals extinct, and are today now for our cruelty towards animals. We thus see that the three orders besides the human order are in harmony and are fulfilling to the human order. However, we as humans have not yet understood and learnt to live relationship of mutual fulfillment with these three other orders. This is because we have not understood the harmony that exists between these orders. We have not even understood our own needs properly, nor have we understood harmonious ways to fulfill our needs. Consequently we disturbed ourselves and also the balance amongst the other three orders. The effect of this harmony is now affecting our lives in the form of disease and meltdowns. If we explore our natural acceptance, to find that we want to live harmoniously with nature. This is important for our own happiness. This is an undeniable and a very significant relationship for each one of us. This is a relationship we need to properly understand.

Keywords: self exploration, harmony, continuous happiness, mutual fulfillment.

INTRODUCTION

The basic human aspiration of every human being is continuous happiness and prosperity. Exploring the meaning of happiness is to understand and live in harmony at all levels of living. If we look around, everything that we see can be put into one of the following four 'orders'. Material order (soil, water, air), Bio/plant order (grass, plants, trees, flowers, fruits), Animal order (animals, birds), Human order (human beings).

Material order: the big land mass of the continents, gigantic water bodies like ocean and seas, mountains and rivers, the atmosphere above, the heaps of metals and mineral below, the dense gases & fossil fuels deep

below the surface of the earth- all fall into the material order. In fact, if we look around beyond the earth, the material order is visible even in the form of stars, planets, moons and several astronomical bodies.

Plant/bio order: our land mass is covered with grass and small shrubs and they form the lining on the entire soil, shrubs, plants and trees form huge forests along with the flora in the ocean. All of this is the plant/bio order.

Animal order: animals and birds form the third largest order and we call them the animal order.

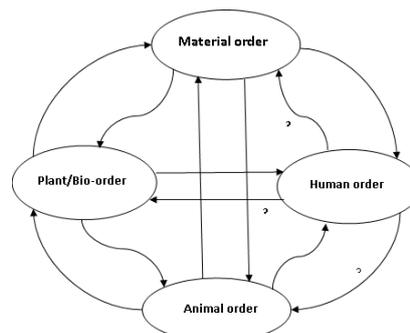
Human order: humans are the smallest order and they are referred to human order.

Inter connectedness and mutual fulfillment: let us look at the first three orders namely the material, plant/bio and animal order. We can see that they are inter connected each order is connected to each other order. And the relationship between these orders is in such a way that they all fulfill each other and coexist with each other.

Material order and plant/bio order: the material order provides the nutrients to the plant/bio order in the form of soil, minerals etc. while the plant order decays and forms more nutrient, thus enriching the soil. The plant/bio order also decays to substances like oil and coal, which are stored deep within the earth as protection against the heat from the molten core inside the earth as well as the heat from the sun(today, this is the material we are removing and using as fuel). Plants help move the nutrients through the various layers of the soil. The roots of the plants hold the soil together and prevent the soil from erosion. Plants produce oxygen/carbon dioxide and thus help in the movement of the material order. Thus plant/bio order and material order naturally exist in a relationship of mutual fulfillment with each other. They also co-exist. They do not deny the other. There is a mutual interdependence and co-existence we can see here.

Material order, plant/bio order and animal order: the material order provides the basis for movement of all animals, birds and fishes. Water, oxygen and other gases are necessities for both plants and animals. At the same time, the animal order helps enrich the soil with its excreta and this excreta helps the plants with nutrients. The plant/bio order provides food for animals, birds and fishes. The animal order helps in pollination of the flowers of the plant/bio order. The relationship across all three orders is naturally one of mutual fulfillment none of these orders denies the other.

Material order, plant/bio order, animal order and human order: it is clear that the above mentioned three orders are fulfilling to each other when we look at the connectedness with human beings, we find that each of these orders is fulfilling to human order. This we can verify looking at the multiple uses we are drawing out of these entities. We humans also have a natural acceptance to be mutually fulfilling to these three orders. However, we are not able to ensure this mutual fulfillment. We are dependent on the material order for soil and minerals and metals, but only end up polluting the soil and depleting the fossil fuels; we are dependent on plants for our food and holding together the larger ecosystem, but we have destroyed forests and destroyed multiple species of plants and herbs; we are dependent on animals to carry out our production and transportation activities, but have made many species of animals extinct, and are today known for our cruelty towards animals.



We thus see that the three orders besides the human order are in harmony and are fulfilling to the human order. However, we as humans have not yet understood and learnt to live in relationship of mutual fulfillment with these three other orders. This is because we have not understood the harmony that exists between these orders. We have not even understood our own needs properly, nor have we understood harmonious ways to fulfill our needs. Consequently, we have disturbed ourselves and also the balance amongst the other three orders. This is the evidence when we see that we have pretty much plundered the body of the earth of all the heat absorbing materials like coal and oil and burnt these fossil fuels in our atmosphere causing a significant deterioration in the temperature regulation of our planet. We have significantly deforested huge forest masses and through it, altered the weather system of our planet our burgeoning cities have spilled huge amounts of industrial and human waste into the water bodies and even drinking water has to be now chemically treated before it can be consumed by humans. The air we breathe has become polluted; the food we grow has become chemically affected. The effect of this disharmony is now affecting our lives in the form of diseases and maladies

Recyclability and self regulation in nature:

There are several cyclical processes that we can see in nature. For example the cycle of water, evaporating, condensing and precipitating back to water giving the weather phenomena. The quantity of water on the surface of earth remains conserved by itself, no need for human intervention. We know the cycles of carbon, oxygen and nitrogen in nature. The cycles keep these materials self regulated on the earth. Breeds of plants and animals are similarly self regulated in their environment. In the forest, the growth of trees takes place in a way so that the amount of soil, plants and animals remains conserved. It never happens that the number of trees shoots up and there is a lack of soil for the trees! The appropriateness of conditions for the growth of both plants and animals are self regulated in nature keeping the population proportions naturally maintained. You will find that the population of grass, deer and tigers remains such that all continue. This phenomenon is termed as self regulation. You will appreciate that in a single breed of animals, the number of males and females generated through procreation is such that the continuity of species is ensured by itself. This happens with humans too, but in human practices has led to disproportionate numbers of men and women. Nature exhibits self regulation in various ways across the plant/bio, animal and human orders but we humans have disturbed it due to lack of understanding.

These two characteristics namely, cyclical nature and self regulation provide us with some clues of the harmony that is in nature these are visible signs we can see with our eyes and understand. But there is also more to nature that meets the 'eye'.

On the other hand, if we explore our natural acceptance, we find that we want to live harmoniously with nature. This is important for our own happiness. This is an undeniable and very significant relationship for each one of us. This is a relationship we need to properly understand.

The basic human aspirations- continuous happiness and prosperity:

What are our basic aspirations, what is it that all human beings basically want? Make a list of all that you want in your life and reasons for wanting them. You will find that there is a basic desire. You will find that each of your wants emerges from the basic aspiration to be happy. 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 is 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 through 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 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 contradiction being in consonance with our natural acceptance, being in harmony.

In addition to happiness, we also aspire for adequate fulfillment of our bodily needs, i.e. the needs for physical facilities. Physical facilities are the material things we use to fulfill the needs of the body. When we have enough of physical facilities, it gives us the feeling of the 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.

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 the 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 thought, 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. 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 it 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.

Thus, we can define happiness and unhappiness as

“To be in a state of harmony is happiness”

“To be in 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. Impact, all attempts to seek the continuity of happiness through sensory interaction only leads to more and more misery.

Prosperity: 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 TV, a mobile 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)

Do you think we quantify the needs for physical facilities? 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 is the availability with us, the feeling of prosperity cannot be assured. The 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?

Yes,

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 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 us 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. 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, however, one may try.

We see that today, we are generally unable to do this. We are busy accumulating wealth, but we do not 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.

Conclusion: 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 (organic farming, use solar energy, use biodegradable materials, planting trees) 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 of 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.)

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