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THOUGHT, PRINCIPLE AND PRACTICE

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Thought, Principle, and Practice

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Although thought is a fundamental human activity familiar to everyone, there is no generally accepted agreement as to what thought is or how it is created. Thought is generally understood as the process of using your mind to consider something. It can also be the product of that process: an idea or just the thing you're thinking about. Thought can also refer to the organized beliefs of a period, individual, or a group. This word can also be used to describe a personal belief or judgment which you cannot prove or be entirely certain of. It may also mean as an opinion, preference, experience and the ideas or arrangements of ideas. Sometimes, as a verb, it is used as an act of producing thought or the process of producing thoughts. Thoughts are also understood as the result of either spontaneous or willed acts of thinking. Thought is the basis of human actions and interactions and understanding of physical, metaphysical and psychological realities.

Origin of thought and its processes are the subject matter of many academic disciplines such as, neuroscience, philosophy, artificial intelligence, biology, sociology and cognitive science.

Practice (*praxis*), according to Aristotle, involves thinking, but always with an aim to desired actions, whereby humans cause change or movement themselves for their own ends. Any human movement which involves no conscious choice and thinking could not be an example of practice (*praxis*) or doing. It means practice, for Aristotle, referred to activity engaged in by free men. Aristotle held that there were three basic activities of man: *theoria*, *poiesis* and *praxis*. There corresponded to these kinds of activity three types of knowledge: theoretical, to which the end goal was truth; poetical, to which the end goal was production; and practical, to which the end goal was action. Aristotle further divided practical knowledge in to ethics, economics and politics. He also distinguished between *eupraxia* (εὐπραξία, "good praxis") and *dyspraxia* (δυσπραξία, "bad praxis, misfortune").

Realm of action and practice is vast as it covers almost all aspects of life and human relationship. Family and friendship, professions and institutions, governments and police, academics and technology, domains of creativity and religion, and culture and traditions, all spell out the huge net work of which an individual can be conceived as a node.

The place an individual occupies in this network determine her or his relationships and as a consequence of these relationships her and his rights and duties. Rights and duties involve rules and principles. These rules and principles are embedded are given their content by conventions determined by culture and tradition of a given society.

The important point often missed is the fact that these conventions are not fixed and final. Trade and commerce, economic or political hegemony, means of transport and media create an influence in different cultures, which bring about new pressures and demands. They necessitate a fresh need of re-thinking of the guidelines from conventions. The content of rules and principles demands fresh reflection.

Apart from these aspects untamed human nature, passions and temptations and aberration of ego, determine competition amongst individuals and their clubs and groups which may turn out to be either constructive or destructive.

Ethics is supposed to be a study in search of valid and acceptable norms, standards, or principles which may guide our actions in right direction. As is well known none of these term is beyond debates and controversies. These debates and controversies are around the questions relating to the nature of the principles, the content of such principles, the source or origin of these principles, and the considerations which would justify them. Whether such principles are already given and one has only to discover them, or they are framed by human beings themselves, is one of the basic questions in this respect.

Apart from core ethical studies new contexts have generated new signification of ethical thinking. Studies in the language and logic of ethical concepts and thinking known as meta-thinking generated

truthdimensional approaches. The result of positivism in meta-ethics led to defense and resuscitate ethical thinking in different ways.

Concern for ethical rules and behavior needed a place in numerous practical and policy domains, such as medicine, trade, politics, technology and bureaucracy. One might say that besides purely theoretical academic confines ethics was brought in to living context.

It is obvious that the character of a principle is such that it would cover a certain domain of actions, even that of thoughts, which any individual may accost in her or his day to day life. By its very nature a principle cannot be in specific command or recommendation relating to a specific thought or action. Here lies the fundamental problem, 'how shall I apply the principle in this situation.'

There is prior requirement of clarification. Whether I clearly understand what the principle is? Do I understand the intent of the principle? It is generally noticed, that in most cases, the interpretation preferred is the one which would suit the interest of the doer. As it is remarked, satan would quote the bible to his advantage. Thus, a principle may be interpreted in more than one ways.

Inner churning or deliberation before deciding to act becomes a difficult exercise. This becomes more complicated when the interests of the doer are at stake or there are two guiding principles which cannot be followed at the same time. Suppose the true principles are: 'always speak what is true' and 'save the life.' The situation is such that if the doer speaks the truth, then the life of someone gets into danger, and if she or he tries to save the life he would have to make a lie. Neither of them is acceptable. How the doer would decide?

Even before one would try to understand, what exactly is the intent of the principle, one has to be aware that there is such a principle. What would happen if one acts not according to a principle but what her or his self - interest dictates? In fact, one may take self-interest itself to be the guiding

principle. This raises the question as to the nature of the 'guiding principle.'

There is a saying, 'hathikedantkhanekeaur, dikhanekeaur.' This refers to hypocritical behavior. The speaker knows what is the intent of the principle, she or he broadcasts the principles from the rostrum, but, in his heart, considers it to be a strategy to gain support or following, while she or he, herself or himself does not go by such principles in her or his own life. Since we are concerned with practice, we cannot ignore hypocrisy by yielding to indifference to such cases thinking that what can be do.

This indicates that it is not enough to be aware of the principle only. Something more is required. There is yet another excuse which we use for rationalizing our wrong practice. 'Every body is doing it. Am I the only fool to be a man of principle?' or 'Well, this is the way of the world, and one has to be practical.' This suggests that mere awareness of the principle, knowing even its intent, even understanding how it is to guide us in a particular situation, are not enough to have a clean practice. Something more is needed. We suggest that the role of 'courage,' 'sacrifice,' 'suffering inconvenience,' and 'to be ready to pay the cost of freedom,' have also to be taken in into account.

This is the perspective in which thinking and discussion seems to be imperative and for which we wish to invite the views of our proposed invitees.