

being miserable is not miserable.

**Q.3.** Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow:

(5 x 4 = 20)

Knowledge is acquired when we succeed in fitting a new experience in the system of concepts based upon our old experiences. Understanding comes when we liberate ourselves from the old and so make possible a direct, unmediated contact with the new, the mystery, moment by moment, of our existence. The new is the given on every level of experience – given perceptions, given emotions and thoughts, given states of unstructured awareness, given relationships with things and persons. The old is our home-made system of ideas and word patterns. It is the stock of finished articles fabricated out of the given mystery by memory and analytical reasoning, by habit and automatic associations of accepted notions. Knowledge is primarily a knowledge of these finished articles. Understanding is primarily direct awareness of the raw material.

Knowledge is always in terms of concepts and can be passed on by means of words or other symbols. Understanding is not conceptual and therefore cannot be passed on. It is an immediate experience, and immediate experience can only be talked about (very inadequately), never shared. Nobody can actually feel another's pain or grief, another's love or joy, or hunger. And similarly no body can experience another's understanding of a given event or situation. There can, of course, be knowledge of such an understanding, and this knowledge may be passed on in speech or writing, or by means of other symbols. Such communicable knowledge is useful as a reminder that there have been specific understandings in the past, and that understanding is at all times possible. But we must always remember that knowledge of understanding is not the same thing as the understanding which is the raw material of that knowledge. It is as different from understanding as the doctor's prescription for pencitin is different from penicillin.

**Questions:**

- (i) ✓ How is knowledge different from understanding?
- (ii) ✓ Explain why understanding cannot be passed on.
- (iii) ✓ Is the knowledge of understanding possible? If it is, how may it be passed on?
- (iv) ✓ How does the author explain that knowledge of understanding is not the same thing as the understanding?
- (v) ✓ How far do you agree with the author in his definitions of knowledge and understanding? Give reasons for your answer.

Q #03

(i.)

Knowledge differs from understanding in that the former is situating an experience in a pre-existing context. ~~period~~ Also, besides its contextual underpinnings, knowledge is shareable and communicable with others. Whereas, understanding is a raw and immediate experience detached from <sup>the</sup> past. Moreover, understanding cannot be transmitted; and when it is it becomes knowledge of understanding. Thus, the two concepts are at variance due to their immediacy and communicability.

(ii.)

Understanding cannot be passed on because it is unstructured and mysterious. It is not a concept; rather, a feeling. And feelings can ~~be~~ but be felt. In this sense, <sup>i.e.</sup> understanding as a feeling, it is acutely personal and by definition, cannot be shared in its pure form.

(iii.)

Knowledge of understanding is possible only when understanding is given form of symbols or words. In other words, it can be transferred through the medium of language.

(iv.)

The author emphasizes that knowledge of understanding is in contrast to pure understanding using example of difference between two classes of antibiotics. The former, allied as knowledge, no longer retains <sup>from</sup> qualities of understanding: raw and immediate. In effect, the two types of awareness are separated by intervention of language - and lack of it.

(v.)

The author is right in drawing a line between knowledge and understanding. First, it is because knowledge is acquired and contextual mode of awareness; whereas, understanding is purely personal. Secondly, knowledge is indeed experiential and perceptive. However, author is too rigid in writing about their differences as she overlooks overlap between the two. Considering understanding as feeling and as an immediate response to a unique happening, it is affected by knowledge. The reason for this is because even feelings can be social constructs. For example, not every one looks up incidence of death as sad or painful unless one is living in a society which sees sadness and death as concurrent. Hence, even understanding, like knowledge, is affected by predetermined canons of reality: nothing is absolute in the two types of awareness.