

UNDERSTANDING THE VALUES OF LIFE AND USING THEM FOR ATTAINING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN LIFE

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ABSTRACT: *Values and virtues are defined and their relationship explained. Because most values are products of several generations of humankind and experiences, that have stood test of time for their worth, they are often referred to as time-honoured values. There are the core values for individuals, families, societies, communities and nations, which are of extreme importance and must be assured in individuals and groups mentioned above for good success of life and sustainable development. These core values include these derived from spiritual values, which make other values possible and as such, have constituted “a must have,” for individuals, families, communities and nations. This group of core values, represented with the egg yellow in the figures, are described in this paper, as universal values. Besides them, are other equally important values that are in themselves a “must have” to attain outstanding success. These values are represented by the egg white in the figures. They together with the inner core values, make up the core values. Other important values are also listed for individuals, families, communities and nations. These are what are grouped as “other important values,” which are depicted with III in the figures. Values guarantee success in life. They add quality to life. They also add distinction and respect, not only for individuals, but also to families, societies, communities and nations. The universal values must be harvested from the spiritual environment, through kind thoughts, inspiring words and good deeds, which may have to include prayers, meditation in the word and service to God and others around us. With universal values assured, other values will follow suite, so also will success and recognition and all other good things of life needed for sustainable development by individuals, families, societies, communities and nations.*

KEYWORDS: Values, Virtues, Individual Personality Values, Spiritual Values, Family Values, Societal and Communal Values, National Values, Spiritual Environment, Sustainable Development.

INTRODUCTION

Values are defined by Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, as those things of life that are important. Kaushik and Kaushik (2008), deposed that values of whatever nature, are to transform people's mindset, attitudes and life styles. To attain these values, people need to be equipped with appropriate virtues, which the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defined as good behaviour or attitude that show high moral standards. In essence therefore, every

humankind aspiring for good success in life, must be imbued with the values of life, which they must have acquired through the virtues. Since every humankind would wish that they attain good success of life, besides the ultimate desire of every humankind, particularly believers, to translate from this world into a heavenly home, it stands to reason that every humankind must first know what these so-called values are and how they can be acquired in life. This is the focus of this first part of this paper, which has its latter part suggesting how these values of life can help individuals imbued with them, in accessing the spiritual environment for good success of life.

The Almighty God who created humankind as a 3-fold-being, of physical, social and spiritual being (Adeboye, 2013), made him over several ages of his sojourn on the planet earth, to evolve some things of life that are important, which are now called values. Humankind having tried these values for ages, now refer to them as **time-honoured values**. This implies that they have been tried over the ages and have never been found wanting. They in fact, have retained their worth and the respect people accord them. Besides, no substitutes have been found for them.

The truth is that there are values and there are values. However, among the diverse values humankind has assembled over ages, some are such that have attained some measure of prominence over others. This is because they are not only crucial in any effort to attain success, they are what make attainment of success with other values possible. They are what confers recognition on individuals. They are what make such individual unique personalities. They are what make such individuals reference point, in issues of human behaviour. They are what confer on such individuals names such as – the virtuous – what the Yoruba people will refer to as **Omoluabi**. Such values which are central to the success of humankind on earth, are usually referred to as the **core values of life**. They make success possible not only in individuals of humankind, but also in families, societies, communities and nations.

Individuals of humankind have their core values of life, that are often referred to as **core personality values**. So numerous and diverse are these core personality values, that many have reasoned that they may not all be attainable by any single individual of humankind. People however believe that a right mix of these values are important for outstanding success in life. These core values are not peculiar to individuals of humankind alone. Families have theirs, societies and communities have theirs, so also do nations have theirs. Even the religious missions have theirs.

Fig. 1 below, shows **the values of life**, represented with a bulky scotch egg, with the inner core of egg, the egg yellow, represented by I, while the egg white is represented with II, with the surrounding (outer fried material) represented by III.

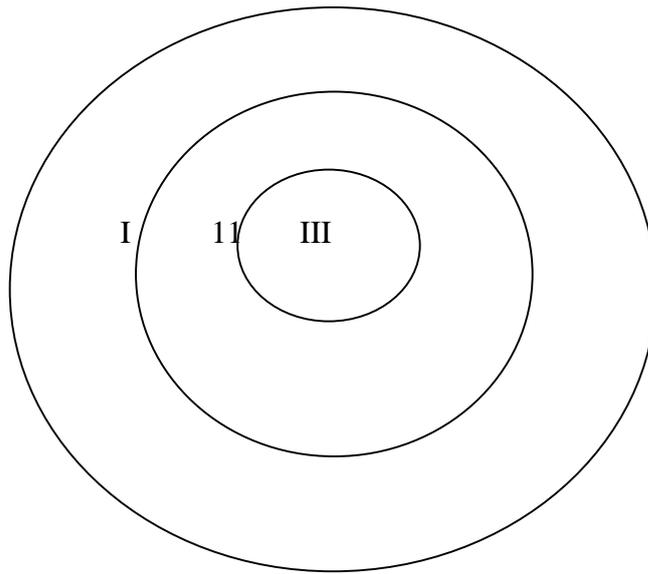


Fig 1: The Values of Life

In Fig 1 above, I, II and III, represent the TIME-HONOURED VALUES, with I & II constituting the CORE VALUES, while III represents OTHER IMPORTANT VALUES OF LIFE.

Fig 2 below, shows the relative importance of the diverse values of life.

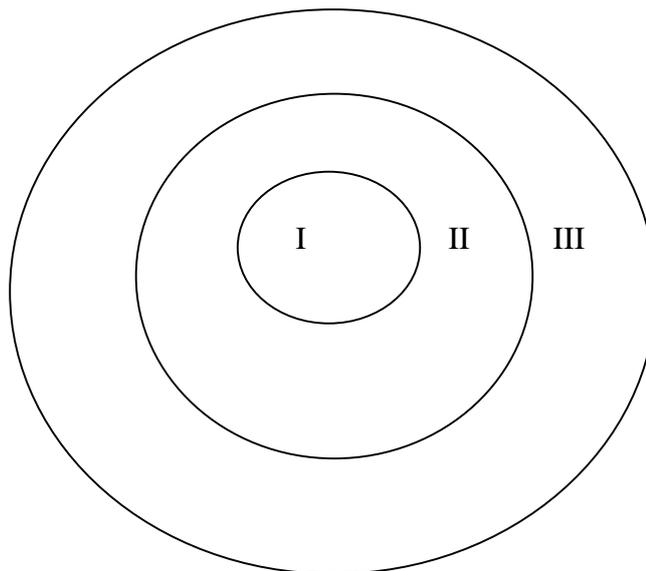


Fig 2: The Diverse Values of Life

- I: represents the INDIVIDUAL PERSONALITY VALUES
- II: represents the FAMILY VALUES, the SOCIETAL AND COMMUNAL VALUES and the NATIONAL VALUES

III: represents Other IMPORTANT VALUES of life, with examples of such values being appropriate attitudes, abstinence from indecent social habits and abstinence from criminal activities. Others include the value of impact, cultural values, traditional values, ethical values, environmental values and aesthetic values.

The remaining part of this paper, is devoted to examining other core values of life.

The Core Individual Personality Values

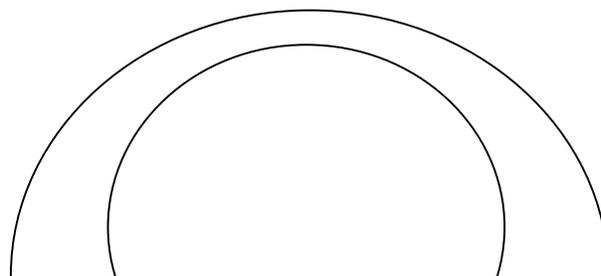
The important core **personality values** are listed by Fatubarin (In Press), to include the following:

- i. Personal discipline;
- ii. Personal integrity, honesty, trustworthiness and reliability;
- iii. Hard work, diligence and industry;
- iv. Perseverance and resilience;
- v. Contentment;
- vi. Self-control and self-restraint;
- vii. Transparency, accountability and probity;
- viii. Positive attitude, focus and determination;
- ix. Emotional stability;
- x. Amiable sociological disposition;
- xi. Dependable followership and responsible leadership.

It is also believed by most people that a person who is aspiring for outstanding success, must be imbued with some additional values, such as a clear vision, a good focus and the determination, that should propel such a person to attain success on an issue on which one has developed a clear vision and on which one has adequately focused. It is the vision that will shapen the mission to accomplish a vision, on which one has focused appropriately.

Since humankind is by nature not designed by the Almighty God to live in isolation, an individual desirous of outstanding success, must work for and achieve other equally important values of life, that make an outstanding success have an equally outstanding meaning, such that will make one's joy not only to be full, but to make one truly fulfilled. Such additional values of life besides the core personality values, are the spiritual values, the family values, the societal and communal values and the national values.

Fig. 3: shows THE INDIVIDUAL VALUES represented as in fig1, with a bulky scotch egg, with the core of egg (complete with the egg yellow (I) and the egg white (II), surrounded by the outer fried flour material (III).



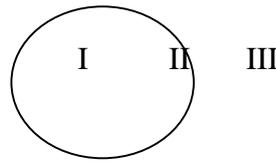


Fig 3: The Individual Values

- I: represents **key spiritual values**, which are also described in this paper as **universal values**. Examples are godliness, holiness and righteousness. Others are faith, love and hope. There are also other values, such as values of worship, peace and service.
- II: represents the **key individual personality values**. Examples of these being personal discipline, personal integrity, among others earlier listed in the paper under core individual personality. Values I and II above, constitute **the core values for individuals**.
- III: represents **other important values of life**, needed by an individual for outstanding success. These other values include the family values, the societal and communal values and the national values. Other equally important values that add quality to a person's life, include appropriate attitudes, abstinence from indecent social habits and abstinence from criminal activities. Others in this group, are the values of impact, ethical values, cultural values, environmental values and aesthetic values.

The Spiritual Values

The **spiritual values** are those values that are also known as **religious values**. Methodist Church Nigeria (2013), called these values the **Christian values** in their 2013 Calendar, in which this religious mission listed the values to include faith, love, worship, holiness, hope and peace. To this list is often added a number of other equally important values, prominent among which is the value of service. These values are made possible in humankind, because of their spiritual endowment – an endowment made possible by the Almighty God, that is not found among other living things. These values are of the special importance as the major driving force for other major values and on which all other values are built. They are values that constitute a “must have” for individuals, as well as families, societies and communities, as well as the nation. The values are referred to in this paper, as **universal values**. They are important as the values needed to access the spiritual environment, not only to make attainment of other values of life possible, but also to assure their sustainability.

Fig. 4: shows THE SPIRITUAL VALUES represented as done in the previous figures, by scotch egg, with a core of egg (again complete with the egg yellow (I) and the egg white II) and an outer flour material (III).

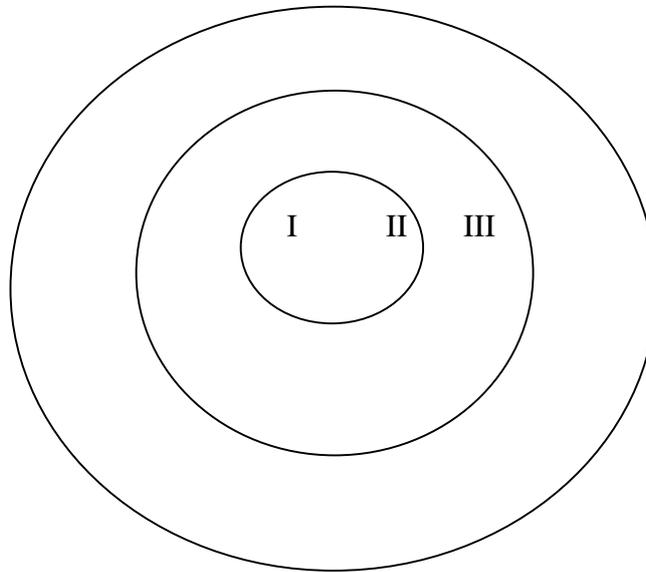


Fig 4: The Spiritual Values

I: represents the values of faith, hope, love and holiness

II: represents the values of worship, praise, peace and service

I and II constitute the CORE VALUES for the spiritual values

III: represents **other spiritual values**, such as prayerfulness, studying the word, meditating on the word, evangelizing, impacting others, among several other spiritual values.

The Family Values

The **family values** include the universal values of faith, hope and love and others, such as service, peace, worship and holiness, which together make the inner core family values (I). Other equally important family values such as good family name and good home training, strong, character, sound values and good education, make up the outer core family values (II). The societal or communal values as well as the national values, make up other equally important values, which may also include some of the values earlier listed for individuals. Examples of these are appropriate attitudes, abstinence from indecent social habits and abstinence from criminal activities. Others include the value of impact and acceptable cultural and traditional values. Others still, include ethical values, environmental values and aesthetic values. All these combine to form the outer layer of the “scotch egg,” (III) in this diagrammatic representation.

Fig. 5: shows THE FAMILY VALUES, represented as with earlier figures, by a scotch egg with an inner core the egg yellow (I) and an outer core of egg white (II) and the outer flour material (III).

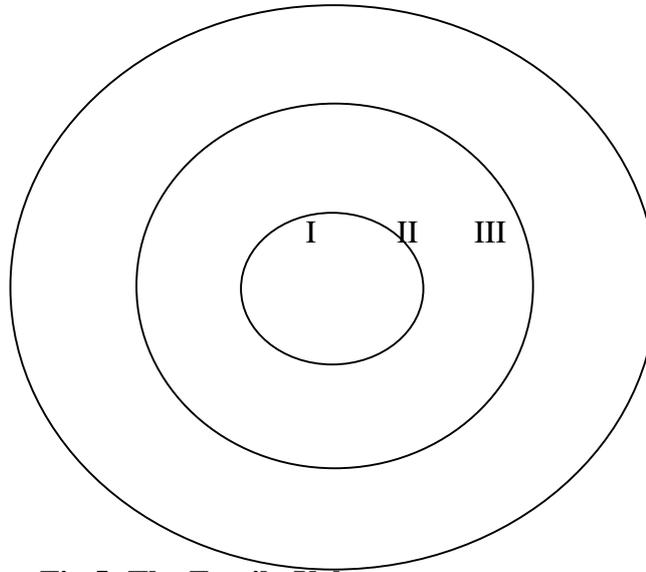


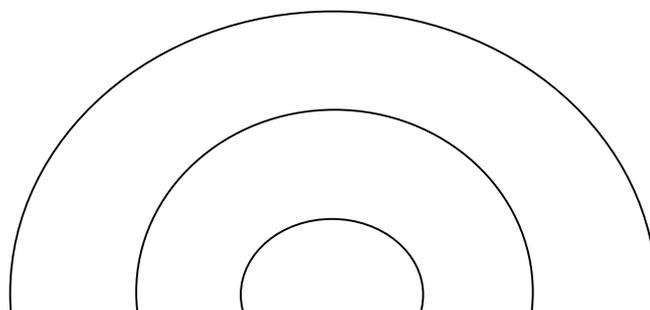
Fig 5: The Family Values

- I: represents the **universal (spiritual) values** of faith, hope, love, holiness, worship, peace and service.
 - II: represents **other important family values** such as good family name, good home training, strong character, sound values and good education.
- I and II as usual with earlier described examples, constitute the core family values.
- III: represents all **other acceptable values, such as** societal, communal and national values and all other values earlier listed as examples of other values for individuals in Fig.3.

The Societal and Communal Values

The **societal values** and the **communal or community values** go together. They can also be collectively referred to as **social values**. They are values deeply rooted in the universal values of faith, hope and love and others, such as compassion, tolerance, commitment and justice.

Fig. 6: shows the COMMUNAL VALUES, represented as with earlier examples by a doughnut, with an inner core of egg yellow (I) and an outer core of egg white (II), together with the outer flour material (III).



I II III

Fig 6: Societal and Communal Values

I: represents the **core spiritual values** (also known as universal values) of faith, hope, love, holiness, worship, peace and service.

II: represents **other core communal values** of compassion, tolerance, commitment and justice.

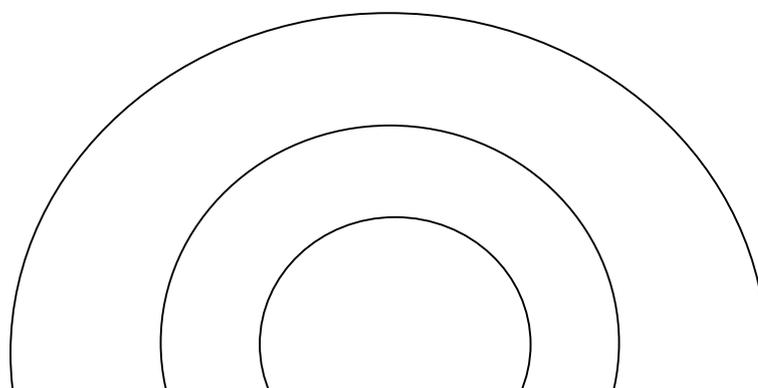
I & II constitute the CORE VALUES for the community

III: represents all other values, such as national values and other desirable values that societies and communities must imbibe among the individual personality values.

The National Values

The **national values** are those values which like the others earlier mentioned, are rooted in the universal values of faith, hope, love and peace together with others such as nationalism, patriotism, justice and service.

Fig. 7: shows THE NATIONAL VALUES, represented as done with other in fig1 to 5 by a scotch egg, with an inner core of egg yellow (I) and an outer core of egg white II, together with the outer flour material (III).



I II III

Fig 7: National Values

I: represents the **core spiritual (universal) values** of faith, hope, love, holiness, worship, peace and service.

II: represents **other important national values** of nationalism, patriotism and justice, among others. These other national values include appropriate attitudes to such issues as those of education, environment, security, corruption, violence, among others.

I & II constitute the CORE VALUES for the nation

III: represents all **other desirable values** that each nation must aspire after. Some of such values are found among those values earlier listed among the individual personality values.

It can be rightly claimed that the components of the main values outlined above for individual personality, the family, the society, the community and the nation, are self explanatory. As such, they may not require elaborate explanation in this paper. Besides, they are issues on which many religions base a lot of their ministrations on. Titles are also been produced to further underscore the importance of these core values of life and their importance in accessing the spiritual environment for good success in life and the sustainability of such success.

It must be mentioned that besides these core values of life, which individuals, families, societies or communities and nations need to access the spiritual environment for outstanding success in life, are other equally important values. These values which though are not in the core among the values individuals and groups need to attain good success of life, are important because they are targeted at certain issues of life, that also add up to contribute to outstanding success of individuals, the families, the societies, the communities and the nation at large. Most of them are within the group of what add value to the life of individuals, families, societies, communities and nations. They are what add distinction to the success an individual or groups of people may achieve in life. They are also what add to the core values to make for an eminent or all-round-personality in individuals, distinguished families, outstanding communities and nations.

These **other equally important values** include those of **appropriate attitudes, abstinence from indecent social habits and abstinence from criminal activities**. Others include the **value of impact, cultural values, traditional values, ethical values, environmental values and aesthetic values**.

The **value of appropriate attitudes** spells out those attitudes individuals must possess, that help to facilitate the acquisition of the core values of life to attain good success and make it easy for one to sustain such good success of life. The value of appropriate attitudes is targeted at such important issues of life as vision, focus, determination, godliness, prayers, giving and service. Others include positive interactions, personal appearance, neat environment, time consciousness, relaxation, recreation, exercises, rest and regular medical examination. There are also other important issues that enhance good success in life, which individuals must develop appropriate attitudes to. These issues include good education, savings and investments, reading, writing and elocution; insurance, the will and genetic counseling. Others, include the appetites, “things of life that glister,” marriage, sex, mentoring and role modeling.

All decent people, irrespective of their status in life and the youths in particular, must imbibe the **value of total abstinence from indecent social habits** of life. Many of these social habits have implications not only on the morals of individuals, their family members and their societies, but also on the larger community of the nation. Many also have implications on acceptability among decent people and many have implications on the health of individuals, their families and the larger society. Above all, many have implications on the ability of individuals to access the spiritual environment, for outstanding success of life. Most notable among these indecent social habits are cigarette smoking, hemp smoking, alcoholism, drug abuse, sex abuse, prostitution and indecent dressing. Others include tattooing, plating of hairs (by men), colouring of hairs and wearing of ear rings (by men). A number of others are of particular interest, because of their prevalence among youths in institutions of learning. Examples of these are cohabitation of opposite sexes, exploitation of students, bullying and use of foul language, breaking of bounds and bleaching of the skin. Others that are also found among youths include premarital sex, single parenthood, child abuse and divorce, among several others.

A number of **important issues of life border on criminality**. They are worth mentioning as issues that youths and all people under whose care they are put, must be well educated about. They are issues all people aspiring for good success of life, must guard against. These issues are discussed in outline below as **criminal issues that people must develop value of total abstinence from**. These issues include the following: examination malpractice, cultism, internet fraud and “419”. Others include vandalisation, kidnapping, hooliganism and violence. There are also a number of others, such as hemp cultivation, drug trafficking, human trafficking, robbery, ritual killings, rape and child abuse.

Humankind as part of their all-round evolution in diverse spheres of life, has evolved the habit of living in groups, often described as populations or communities. In such groups, each member has one form of assistance or another he or she can render to other people within the group. Hence in such groups, the spirit of inter-dependence is fostered, since no one person is

an island to himself, no matter how much endowed he or she is spiritually, intellectually materially or otherwise. Since members of the groups in which human beings congregate are in diverse social strata, with some being the “haves,” while some are the “have-nots,” the need for one sub-group to prop up others, readily arises in any human community. It is the need to render assistance in any group to which one finds himself or herself, that has given rise to the concept of **impact**, which has now developed to a major value of life.

The **value of impact** is a major value of life, through which people can access the spiritual environment, to receive the blessings of the Almighty God. It is a value through which people can write their names in letters of gold, in the annals of history of a family, a community, the nation and even the entire world. It is also one way of leaving a lasting impression of one’s footstep on the sands of time. No impact is too small, nor any one too big.

The biblical narrative is replete with diverse forms of impact, too numerous to recount in this short write-up. The story of the good Samaritan is a good example of how one kind deed can save a life. The story of Jesus Christ, who paid the supreme price for the sins of humankind, is possibly the greatest form of impact, any one can make in the whole world. There is also the story of Prophet Mohammed and other prophets of the Almighty God, that have made millions to know the Almighty God, through their message and the way they lived. Impact can be made to have positive influence on people, institutions and places. Examples of people that can be impacted are one’s parents, one’s siblings, one’s relations, one’s societies, one’s community, one’s alma mater and the citizens of one’s nation. Examples of institutions that can be impacted, include the educational institutions and the places of worship. Others include diverse governmental and non-governmental organizations. Places that could be impacted positively, include our towns and villages, our local government areas, our States, the country and sub regions, such as West Africa and regions, such as Africa. The places can even extend to the whole world, as has been done effectively by some people through their foundations, their Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Centres.

Humankind has dissolved into diverse groups all over the world, with each group having their likes and dislikes, their preferences and other issues, relating to their ways of life. It is all these that have given rise to diverse cultures all over the world, with these cultures having evolved **diverse cultural values**. These cultural values embrace such issues as mode of dressing, mode of greeting, mode of eating and diet of the group and the group’s concept of an ideal personality. In recent times, cultural values have now extended to such issues as a culture’s attitude to things such as same sex marriages, lesbianism, homosexuality, bestiality, oral sex, anal sex and other similar issues, bordering on interactions between people of opposite sexes.

Closely related to the culture of people is their tradition, which is the sum total of their ways of life. Values have also been developed around diverse traditions of humankind. Such values are described in this paper, as **traditional values**. Traditional values are values built around the ways of doing things, by the people that share the same values in such things as marriage ceremony, naming ceremony, chieftaincy tradition, burial tradition and festival occasions. Others include tribal marks, dispute resolution, cooperative interactions, birth control and sanctioning of infidelity.

There are also the **ethical values**, which are values shared by different groups such as religious groups, professional groups and social groups. Different employments also have the ethics binding on the workers. Prominent among the ethics of employments are hard work and diligence, loyalty, among others.

There are also the **environmental values**. These are values that are only known in the past, to people who are conscious about the importance of the natural environment. Of recent, the happenings in the diverse environments around the globe, particularly, the climate change, that has been rightly described as “**the greatest crisis ever faced collectively by humankind**” (Foley, 1991), have sensitized humankind on the need to place much value on the natural environment and its resources. These have now given rise to environmental values, which expect that humankind should among other things, value nature and accord it with some measure of respect, appreciate the environment, get thoroughly educated in it, protect it, conserve it and ensure that there is balance of nature, in the environment and between it and humankind. Doing all these are not only in the interest of such environment, as means of assuring its sustainable development, it is also of interest of humankind, who stands to benefit most, from the environment.

There are also **aesthetic values**, which are values that are built around the attitude of individuals to aesthetic issues. These issues are those relating to appreciating certain things in whatever form they are. Examples of things around us that are worth developing aesthetic values towards, include beautiful architecture, well designed landscape and green environment (made green by the plants around). Other aesthetic issues are related to beautiful works of arts, museum, monuments and galleries. Others include photographs, carvings and sculpture, palaces and sacred places. Still among beautiful things worth developing aesthetic values towards, are zoological gardens, biological gardens, splendid dams and facilities around which recreation centres could be developed. Such facilities may include splendid springs, water falls and uncommon sights such as warm and cold springs. There are also others, such as mountain ranges, rock formations, caves, among others. Aesthetic values are values that cannot be quantified. They give internal satisfaction and joy to people who buy into them.

From the diverse examples of values, ranging from the core values and the other equally important values that are described in outline in this paper, it can be appreciated why certain values are described as core values, while others are not. It can be appreciated further, that the inner core values actually serve as the values that make the other values possible. They are truly indispensable for individuals societies, communities and nations, aspiring for outstanding success in life.

The Role of these Values of Life in Accessing the Spiritual Environment for Outstanding Success of Life

Our understanding of the spiritual environment, has enabled us to appreciate that all good things of life come from the Almighty God, who dwells in the spiritual environment. It has also been made clear that making these good things of life last for ever, which humankind refers to as sustainability, is within the prerogative of this Almighty God alone. It has equally been made

clear that every humankind has a spiritual component, through which he can explore the spiritual environment the way he likes, either for good or for bad.

The values of life are all good things every humankind should aspire to be imbued with. Through the universal values of faith, hope and love, together with peace, service and holiness, humankind can achieve other core values, which on their own, can assist in imbibing other important values of life. But then, humankind needs to explore the spiritual environment through his spirit being, to receive these universal values from the Almighty God, the Giver of all good things. If a person successfully harvests faith, hope and love along with service, peace and holiness from the spiritual environment, he will demonstrate this through his relationship with the Almighty God, his fellow human beings, his family, his community and his nation. This he can do through his kind thoughts, inspiring words and good deeds, manifested in diverse ways. These are to the Almighty God, labours of love, which He will not fail to reward. It is part of such a reward that makes being imbued with other values of life possible, depending on one's attitude to each of them. However, it can also be taken for granted that whoever is faithful to the Almighty God and has placed his hope on Him and has demonstrated his love for Him, will receive any thing one desires, be they other values or any other good things of life.

In conclusion, it is demonstrated in this paper, that the values of life are important for good success of life, for individuals, families, societies communities and nations. These values are also important in making sustainable development possible in individual humankind and groups into which people are found. It must also be stated that though the values of life are made possible by humankind, they are inspired by the Almighty God, as part of God's design to make humankind live happily on earth. They are also designed to enable humankind have God-inspired dominion over other creations. They are in particular designed by the Almighty God, to make humankind have a wonderful stay on the planet earth and later transit to a reserved apartment in heaven, if he does the will of God by imbibing as appropriate, all the values of life that make outstanding success possible in life.

It therefore behoves all individuals of humankind aspiring for good success in life, to make conscious effort to understand these values, extend such effort to acquiring them. Such individuals can acquire desired values through praying for them, reading about them, imbibing them and copying them from role models and mentors, who are themselves embodiment of these values. Having imbibed the values, efforts should continually be made to put them into use as often as possible, as a way of ensuring the total assimilation of these desirable values of life. Through doing this, others around would love to emulate these desirable values of life, as a way of attaining good success in life and assuring sustainability of such success.

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