

BASIC PROBLEMS OF HUMAN AND THEIR SOLUTIONS



Man faces many things in life and with none of them can he deal properly unless he forms an opinion about the nature or condition of that thing and his own relationship with it. Right or wrong, an opinion has to be formed about everything and until such an opinion is formed no man can decide what behavior and what attitude he should adopt towards a particular thing.

This is an experience which is a part of your daily life. Whenever you meet a person you want to know: Who is he? What is his position and status in life? What are his personal qualities? What sort of relationship subsists between both of you? You cannot determine how to deal with the man to the aforesaid questions. In the absence of all such information, you nevertheless have to form a conjectural opinion on the basis of appearances and whatever conduct you adopt towards him is controlled by the opinion so formed.

The correctness or impropriety of your behavior towards these things is dependent upon your right or wrong opinions you have formed about them. The validity or fallacy depends on whether you have formed the opinion about them on the basis of knowledge, conjecture, whim or observation through senses. A child, for instance, sees fire and on bare observation through senses forms the opinion that it is an attractive, glaring plaything. This opinion leads him to the act of stretching his hands to hold the fire. Another man sees the same fire and through conjecture or whim comes to the conclusion that it embodies in itself some attribute of Divinity or, at least, it is at an emblem of Divinity. On the basis of this conclusion, he determines to bow his head in supplication before the fire, thus signifying his relationship with it. A third man looks at the fire. He begins to investigate into its nature and properties and through knowledge and research arrives at the conclusion that fire can bake burn or heat things. He further forms the opinion that his relationship with fire is like that of master with his servant. Fire, in his opinion, is neither a plaything nor a deity. On the other hand, it is a thing which can be pressed into service for cooking, burning or heating purposes, whenever the need arises. Among the foregoing different attitudes, those of the child and the fire worshipper are definitely based on ignorance. Experience negates the child's opinion that fire is a plaything. The opinion of the worshipper of fire that fire is God or an emblem of godhood is based upon whims and caprices rather than on any proof furnished by true knowledge. In contrast to both these opinions, the attitude of the man who regards fire as a useful agent in the service of man is a scientific attitude as is based upon knowledge.

THE BASIC PROBLEMS OF LIFE

The Opinion and Attitude of Man towards Life

Keeping this premise in mind let us divert our view from the details to the fundamentals. Man finds himself living on this planet. He possesses a y which is endowed with divergent potentialities. A magnificent expanse of earth and sky lies before him. This universe contains an endless variety of things and man has the power to press all those things into his service. Man is surrounded by countless millions of other human beings, animals, plants, minerals and his life is inextricably linked with all these things. Is

it possible for you to imagine then that man can adopt a mode of dealing with these things without first forming an opinion about his own self, the nature of things which surround him and the position in which he stands in relation to those things? Is it possible for a person to adopt a way of life without determining: Who am I? What am I? Am I responsible or irresponsible? Am I independent or subordinate to someone? If I stand in a subordinate position who is my superior and if I am responsible, to whom am I accountable? Has my worldly existence any end, and if it has, what is it? Similarly, is it likely that a man can on the whole adopt an attitude towards this universe until he arrives at certain definite conclusions about the nature of the system of this universe and his own position as a part of this system?

It is impossible to adopt an attitude without forming an opinion about all these matters. As a matter of fact, every, living man, consciously or sub-consciously, holds certain opinions--nay is constrained to hold certain opinions--about these questions of life; for without this opinion he cannot move even a step in this universe. It is not essential that every man might have deliberated in a philosophical manner upon all these questions and might have arrived at certain conclusions about each and every matter after detailed investigations. Nay, most men have no definite idea apt these questions, nor do they consciously exercise their minds over them. Respite all this, all men do form some sort of a negative or positive opinion about everything and the attitude of every man towards life is inevitably controlled by the opinion he has formed.

Different Solutions of the Problems of Life

Let us take a step further. All those fundamental problems of life the solution of which is imperative for the active existence of man are metaphysical in essence. The answer to these questions is not written on the horizon for every man to read on his advent into this World, nor is the answer self-evident so that everyone could comprehend it. It is due to this reason that there is no single solution upon which all men may agree. Men have always held divergent opinions on these questions and various men have found various solutions to them. The question now presents itself as to what are the possible solutions to these problems, what means have been adopted to solve them and what possible solutions emerge out of all these means.

- 1. one way of solving these problems is to rely upon one's senses and opinions about all matters should be formed on the basis of sensorial perception and observation.**
- 2. The second way is to derive a conclusion by means of sensorial perception aided by speculation.**
- 3. The third alternative is to put one's faith in the solutions to these problems offered by the Prophets of God who claimed to possess direct Knowledge of the Truth.**

So far, only the above three means of arriving at solution to these problems have been made use of and probably only these three ways are possible, in each of the above cases different solutions have been found by different means. Each solution gives rise to a particular attitude of mind and a particular pattern of morality and culture, which in its basic characteristics is completely different from the

attitudes produced by other categories of solutions. Let us discuss now the different solutions to these problems arrived at through different means and the attitude of mind produced by each solution.

First Solution - Sheer Ignorance

Relying exclusively upon his own senses when a person arrives at some opinion in relation to these problems, he, in a manner quite natural to this mode of thought, concludes that this entire system of universe is a result of mere chance. There is no cause or purpose behind this universe. It has come into being by itself; it is operating automatically; it will meet its end without producing any consequences. There is no visible master who controls the universe. Hence there is no master of the universe, and if at all there is one, His connection with man's life is nonexistent. Man is species of animals, whose birth is only accidental. It is not known whether somebody has created him or he was self-born. In any case, this question is not germane to our discussion. There is no sovereign being over man to whom he is accountable; there is no spring of Knowledge, no source of Guidance from which man may derive the law for regulating his life. Hence man is an autonomous being who is responsible to none. It is his own function to make laws and regulations, to devise means for expending his powers and to determine his behavior toward things existing around him. If man is in need of any guidance, he should resort to the laws of life of animals, the story of stones and the experience of his own history. Man is either accountable to himself or to the human authority which the society of men has imposed upon itself. The present worldly life is the only life and the consequences of all actions are confined to this world alone. Hence judgment as to what is right or wrong, useful or harmful and good or pernicious and what is to be adopted or rejected is based on the effects of actions produced in this world.

This is a complete ideology of life which deals with the fundamental problems of life on the basis of sensorial observations. There is a logical link and an intrinsic compatibility between sash strains of thought contained in this ideology. A person, therefore, who believes in this dogma, can adopt a fairly smooth and consistent attitude in life disregarding the fact that this dogma and the attitude produced by it are right or wrong. Now let us look at the conduct which a person adopts on the basis of this answer.

Characteristics of the Society built upon this Conduct

The distinctive features of the society fashioned by individuals bearing afore mentioned characters and personalities will be as follows

The basic principle of politics will be that sovereignty is vested in human beings, and individual, a family, a class, or the common people. The loftiest collective ideal considered feasible will be that of the setting up of a Commonwealth. This state will be governed by man-made laws. . All laws shall be made or amended according to human desires and experience of circumstances. Policies, too, shall be formulated and altered in deference to profit motive or personal expediency. In this state people who are stronger and excel others in cleverness, craftiness, lies, perfidy, callousness and wickedness will gain ascendancy by force. The leadership of the society and the reigns of authority will be in the hands of these people. Their book of constitution will enshrine the principle:

"Might is right and the weak are always wrong".

The whole edifice of society and culture will be raised on the foundations of self-interest. Increasing permissiveness in the satisfaction of one's lusts shall become the rule and standards of morality shall be so established that maximum freedom for the attainment of sensuous pleasures is guaranteed to everyone.

Arts and literature will be affected by this philosophy of life and will progressively reflect nudity and pornographic trends.

In the **economic** domain of life sometimes feudalism will hold sway; at other times capitalism will gain ascendancy and sometimes the working classes will establish the proletariat dictatorship through violent means. Equity, however, will not form part of any of these economic systems. The conduct of every individual in this society shall be dictated by the fundamental conviction that the world and all the wealth contained in it is a booty and all men are free to lay their hands on it at will and whenever the chance presents itself.

The **education** system set up for the training of the members of this society will be based on this philosophy of life and shall reflect the same attitudes of mind. This system of education will impart to each successive generation the same notion of the world and man's place in the world which I have explained earlier. In all fields of knowledge information shall be so arranged and presented as to inculcate in the minds of the rising generation the same theories of life.

The Second Solution

Let us examine now the second method. The second method of solving the fundamental problems of life is to ***coalesce observation with conjecture and speculation and to arrive at opinions about life's problems through these means***. Three different strains of thought arise out of this method and each strain of thought produces a particular type of behavior.

(1) Polytheism

One school of thought believes that this universe is certainly subject to Divine control, but that there is not one God, but many. Different forces in the universe are being operated by the hands of different deities. Man's prosperity or misfortune, success or failure, profit or loss depends on the kindness or displeasure of a plurality of gods. The protagonists of this viewpoint have also made an attempt on the basis of their conjectures and speculations to identify these divine powers and those in whom these powers are vested. They have set up those things as gods which have caught their fancy.

Characteristics of the Polytheistic Behavior

The distinctive features of human behavior which bows out of than viewpoints are as follows:

Life full of Superstitions

In the first place, man's whole life becomes a target of superstitions. He believes that there are many things which exert a good or bad influence on his fortune through supernatural means. He arrives at this conclusion on the basis of bare, subjective: thinking; his belief is not supported by any proof of knowledge. The devotee of this faith, therefore, dissipates most of his energy in entertaining false hopes of good fortune or in imaginary fears of ill-luck. Sometimes, he pins his hopes upon some gray: for the accomplishment of his desires; sometimes he trusts that an idol will turn the wheel of his for fortune to a better end. All these things deflect his ideas and endeavors from the natural course and set him on an utterly unnatural course of action.

Endless Cycles of Rituals

Secondly, this viewpoint establishes a lengthy hotchpotch of worship, devotion, offerings, supplications and other rituals and caught in this complex web a large part of man's efforts and activities goes in vain.

Frauds committed by Impostors

Thirdly, the Protagonists of this philosophy of polytheism and supers on fall an easy prey to the wily tricks of fraudulent men. A man sets himself up as a king and claims descent from the sun, the moon and other gods. He thus makes the people believe that he is a god too and that the people are his bondmen.

A Life of Errors

Fourthly, this doctrine provides no enduring base for knowledge and art, philosophy and literature and culture and politics, nor do men receive from these imaginary deities any guidelines which may be followed in daily life. Man's connection with these gods is limited to the performance of a few rituals of devotion with the main end to solicit the favor and support of these deities. As regards the affairs of life, man is left to himself to frame laws and regulations and devise codes of conduct. Hence a society which believes in the plurality of gods virtually follows the same paths which I have described earlier in connection with the society which is guided by a faith based on sheer ignorance. The rules of morality, the code of conduct, the culture, the politics, and the system of economy, knowledge and literature are almost the same in both societies. There is, therefore, no difference in principle between doctrine based on, sheer ignorance and faith in polytheism.

(2) Monasticism

The second doctrine produced by coalescing observation with conjecture and speculation lays down that world is a Place of Torment and physical existence is constantly subjected to pain and torture. Soul is incarcerated in the body of man as a condemned prisoner. All sensations of pleasure, desires and physical needs which are the natural consequences of worldly existence are; in fact, yokes, and fetters in which man is enchained. The more man craves for the world and its things, the tighter grows the grip of these chains and severer torment shall lie in store for him. Salvation lies in renouncing all connection with the affairs of the world; to strangle all desires; one must abstain from all pleasure; deny all physical needs and demands of passion; purge the heart of all affections born out of kinship of flesh and blood,

and put this enemy (i.e. one's body and passions) through a sever trial of torture and hardship so that the soul is freed from the dominance of the body. In this ways soul shall become light and refined and will gain sufficient strength to soar in a state of 'Nirvana' to the vantage point of salvation.

The Effects of Monasticism

The characteristic features of the human behavior produced by this doctrine are these:

Individualism instead of Collectivism

In the first glare, this doctrine changes all human tendencies from collectivism to individualism and from culture to be wilderness. Man turns laic facie from the world, floes from all responsibilities and non-cooperation and renunciation of all personal relations becomes the hallmark of his life. In short, he adopts negative moral values.

Good Men become Hermits

Secondly, this doctrine impels good men to renounce the world and go into seclusion in order to attain salvation. This pages the way for wicked men to take the reins of authority in all worldly matters into their own hands.

(3) Everything is God

The third viewpoint which emerges out of a coalescence of observation and conjecture holds that man and universe are unreal. They have no real existence of their own. In facts there is one being who has created all these things as a manifest of His Own self and the same being is working inside them. If we go into its details we shall find maps ramifications and myriad aspects of this doctrine, yet there is one strand of thought that terns through all of them: all things are mere shadows of one single Being, only this Being exists, all else is illusory.

These three concepts, like the first one, are based on Ignorance and the kind of human behavior which flows out of these concepts is also characterized by sheer Ignorance. None of the above concepts is substantiated by proofs based on knowledge. As a matter of fact, a variety of concepts has been formulated on illusory and conjectural grounds. Experience denies the validity of these concepts. If any one of these doctrines were valid, its practice would not have entailed bad consequences. If you observe that whenever and wherever it is taken, a thing causes pain in the stomach, you rightly infer from this experiment that this particular thing does not agree with the anatomy and temper of the digestive system of man. In the same manner when it is an established fact that the doctrines of polytheism, monasticism and existentialism have by and large caused mischief to humanity, it is a positive proof that none of these doctrines is compatible with Reality and, on this basis, all are invalid.

The Third Solution – Islam

Let us now turn to the third course of action which is the last resort in formulating a viewpoint about the basic problems of life. This course of action is to put our faith in the solution to these problems offered

by the Prophets of God. The matter may be explained by taking the example of a man who finds himself in a strange land. He has absolutely no acquaintance with the land. He seeks information from a man and goes around the land under his guidance. Whenever you are confronted with a problem of this nature your first Endeavour is to search a man who claims to know the way. Your second concern is to satisfy yourself about the reliability of such a guide on the basis of circumstantial evidence. Finally, taking him as your guide, you set out on your journey. When it is established by experience that the information provided by him has not misled you, you are convinced that your guide possessed the requisite knowledge and that the information supplied by him about that place was true. This is a scientific method. In the absence of any other scientific method, this one is surely the only correct method of formulating one's viewpoint.

Now look! The world is a strange place for you. 'You have no knowledge about its reality. You do not know how the world is regulated? You are not aware under what system of laws this great `workshop' is operating. What is your own position in this world? And what is the proper attitude you should adopt towards the world? These are the questions the answers of which you seek. In the first place, you conceived the opinion that what is visible is real. You acted according to this viewpoint, but the result was a fiasco. Subsequently, you formed various opinions on the basis of conjecture and supposition and acted upon each of them, but in every case the experience was negative. After all this, the final course left for obtaining true guidance is to turn to the Prophets of God. The Prophets claim to possess correct knowledge. On a deep inquiry into the ways of their lives, it is revealed that they are very truthful, trustworthy, pious, selfless and sound-minded beyond any shadow of doubt. Evidently there is sufficient ground for believing in the truth of their claims. It remains to be determined, however, that how far their information in regard to this world and man's position in it is valid and whether or not any practical evidence is forthcoming which gives a lie to their claims? Further, how far the information supplied by them succeeded in experience? If upon scrutiny the outcome of all these inquiries is in favor of the Prophets, we should put our trust in their guidance and adopt only that course in life which is in accordance with their instructions.

As I have said earlier, in contrast to other methods based on Ignorance, the basis of this method is scientific. If a man bows his head in compliance to this knowledge; when he gives up obstinacy and conceit and acts according to this knowledge and if he limits his actions within the bounds fixed by this knowledge, it is dais method which is termed as "Islamic Method".