

A WAY OF LIFE FOR THE MODERN MAN

There are many ways of living and as many as there are men. However broadly speaking there are two ways alone, one is to live according to Nature and the other is to live according to Spirit. Human life is not capable of adjusting wholly to the one or the other. By nature one may mean the uncultivated, ill disciplined, desire and instinct driven person. This has been one view from the earliest times. The other view about nature considers that it was a paradisiacal state of utmost equality of all men, out of which flowed the feelings of rationality of all men. In any case men did not seek liberty, for the community gave ample scope for harmony without it. Liberty comes in only when one wishes to equalize himself with others or seeks fraternity which he does not get from unequals. In any case, what we discover is that Nature has two faces, the face of strife and struggle for the elementary needs of life, and the other face that looks forward to an era of peace undisturbed by the other face.

When the face of strife and struggle was sought to be overcome by this ideal presented by the face of equality and fraternity, there arose what we call the period or age of nature and culture. Culture itself has been an unceasing struggle to enthrone the values of quality and

fraternity and freedom to arrive at this peaceful paradisiacal state. In other words, it is a continuous process of overcoming the forces of divisiveness with the power and force of the ideals of spirit which is the other face of Nature. Ancient Indian thinkers described this as the struggle of Para-prakrti or higher Nature against the force of the apara-prakrti or lower Nature. One may not straightaway equate this higher nature with God or the Absolute nor equate the lower Nature with the Earthy material which we are determined to yoke to human needs. They also helped us to understand that the Higher Nature is in a state of equilibrium, whereas the lower Nature is in a state of inequilibrium or disintegration and division. This is a state of Anarchy (as Mathew Arnold would say) whereas the former would be the state of perfection of Culture, culture itself being a process tending towards the higher Nature.

The modern man or rather man living in the modern world is placed in an advantageous position today than ever to meet the demands of our higher nature which we apprehend in the form of our ideals of civilization or spirituality. This is due to the fact that several religions have already prepared the grounds for the perception, cultivation and habituation to the ideals of religion and spirituality-each in its measures and also each in a broad sphere of taming the instincts of pugnacity, separatism, egoism and brutal way of living not only with one's own

family members but also with neighbours and aliens. Religious injunctions have prohibited many uncivil way of behaviour in or public life, but have moulded rather slowly the inner and personal life. In some cases it has been otherwise, in one's personal life one has indeed been restrained and self-controlled but in the mass or in public life many have run amok if not wild, unleashing the most reprehensible types of animal behaviour, of which even animals would be ashamed. The wars have shown how out of the environment of fear and revenge men have yielded to the temptations of inglorious behaviour. Man has not been able to transform his animal nature, sublimate it in any way except that by and large he has succeeded in enforcing criminal law and less successfully the civil laws. During the periods of national panic whether internal or external, these decencies have been suspended, though not the law of the jungle, yet man is untamed in parts, rational in a few, and the application of rationality in all spheres of human behaviour, personal or social, individual or collective has been tardy and perilous. Therefore has it been claimed that the two, the higher and the lower Natures, are dialectically opposed to each other even as been God and devil, and there is hardly any possibility of bringing about harmony between the two. Most religious wisely or unwisely have hastily fostered the oppositional view of these two natures, so much so they have vowed to

exterminate the lower nature, though the process they adopted to exterminate it have been precisely the manner of the lower nature. Higher brutality is but a lower one draped with the signs of the higher it is wolf in sheep's clothing, the brute in the robes of sainthood.

Two ways were open, one that meant withdrawal of man from the society following the laws of the lower nature and the other was to struggle with the forces of the animal with the help of reason, dialectics, and bring about a mental change in social thinking. The former led to the cult of the monk and the monastery, in every religion, and the other to the academies, institutions of education, ashrams, viharas, where righteous thinking, higher rationality that showed the values of cooperative living, purposive self-control that brought about social change. Renunciation was tried to be yoked to educational techniques, indeed education was taken over by the monasteries and monk (sannyasins and fakira) so much so rationality was made to suit the monastic will. In fact with all the will to bring about a change in human nature by transforming its sensate and animal nature, it had inculcated the dogma or axiom of renunciation of social life or societal life as the sine qua non of spiritual liberty or freedom or even rationality. However with the enlarging of the spheres of activity of the monks, monk ethics and social psychology said to be ethics of a higher Nature or spirituality more and more began to take the

shape and form of the lower nature. As Shaw said the Christianisation of the barbarian only led to the unexpected result-the barbarizing of the Christian. No wonder the present self-revelations in political and national life all over the world has revealed most disturbingly this fact-that instead of eradicating corruption even the institutions pledged to do it have become subtle centres of spiritual corruption. This is one of the major factors disturbing the modern intellectual. It has unfortunately led to the conviction that human nature is by nature corrupt and despite heroic and martyric efforts to bring about lasting change towards divine life, it tends to revert to its animal basis as more secure for its continuance. The realistic hedonistic revulsions against the idealisms of the utopian monks and saints is one major characteristic of the modern mind in disillusionment.

Though the enthronement of rationality in political and social life is continuously being attempted, yet the results have been appallingly poor if not paradoxical. Where there is more reason at work the forces of irrationality have gained ground with simulacrum of reason.

The renunciation of argumentum baculum or War is of course a major triumph for the values of reason. The table might bring about more mutual understanding and secure some kind of peace. However not all are agreed on this procedure. It takes two to keep peace but only

one to break it. Thus we are compelled to go beyond the ordinary dilatory tactics of the round-table reason or parliamentary debate because self-interests dominate over true justice or reality or truth. Truth is not a compromise of standpoints, it is something that arises out of the intuition that develops and grows and is awakened into being through these processes. However human character demands a change of approach of attitude towards its own well-being. When this becomes the habitual way by being constantly chose as such, despite gravest provocations then we can conceive of a time when it could become universal.

The Modern man has been offered as I said many ways – the Gandhian Way of life, dedicated to non-violence and reasoning, a total abjuration of the ways of violence which he designated as animal reversion: the Aurobindonian Way of supramental Transformation which involves the bringing down a superior mind or super-mind into almost every human being so that he begins to think and act in terms of the laws of the supermind or cosmic consciousness: a way of life as expounded by the Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda order, taking up the service of humanity as the service of God in man. Other ways of life are also propounded so that man can live and move not as an alien in the world nor as a victim of cosmic and social circumstances, with which he finds it difficult to reconcile. Not all the poets

and martyrs seem to have any effect on the instinct of tyranny that works through all institutions without exception. The discovery of the soul of man or search for it has been an eternal one, it came to one person here and one person there in early times, but the problem is confronting every one simultaneously now.

Science has made this possible. What is there in a soul? Bernard Shaw's work on a Black girls search or Dr Jung's search by a Modern Man are not just theoretical propositions but critical situations of the modern man with his mind in torment wrestling with unknown forces that parade as solutions. The scientific pragmatic age has produced astounding problems of knowledge and technology and has made an earlier appeal to God almost impossible. We are today either atheists or agnostics. Man has been made to feel that within him alone lies his salvation whether there are gods or God. This dependence on one self on personal commitment to live rationally and peacefully with one's neighbours with the minimum of needs fully attained - not at all impossible as he thinks it - is absolutely the one thing that the modern man cares for. All else may be moonshine. The way of life according to science forward-looking, pragmatic and growing must be all sufficient to him. However the limits of science are found in the human personality itself - the serious problems of post-life or after death, the conscience within that seems to throw a

shadow of itself on the future after life. But these may be exceptional to some men at present, it was a very common problem or enigma in the past – in the lives of the monks and sannyasins or the escapists so to speak. This science has not yet been able to solve, not to speak of undertaking to face. The world is too much with us: death poses no problem for it appears to be solution to problems not only regarding oneself but also of others as well. Liquidation of opponents even like the liquidation of unfits would be as it has been a quick solution.

This is surely cynical solution. Religion promises that men enter a greater life after death and a more lovable world would be their new home. God indeed has been said to reign there. Whatever the religion it has been at pains to reveal that a good life, a life of virtue and character maintained through all kinds of trials will lead to a world of happiness and release or freedom from all the sorrows that befall the good here. We have come to regard that this hope is perhaps a sheer wish-fulfilment idealization. Have we any other? except to strive to make this world itself a godly world – but that is precisely the problem and challenge to the modern man. Short lived hopes just melt away when the lower nature quietly but ruthlessly has its way of shattering them.

The only way then open to us is to find out a method by which the lower nature can automatically be controlled and also reveal the future of man after his life is over.

Death may have its terrors but life has revealed it so much that we would rather welcome the regions of death. The spiritual way precisely promised to unravel this mystery. The past of many religions however has not provided a rational or even a reasonable account of it. Most ended in the dreams of the poet who merely extended the pleasures of this world thinking that he has sublimated it with profuseness. **Poetry is no substitute to realization.** It may not even be considered to be an expression of the genuine and authentic realization.

The technique of linking oneself with the core of Reality that embraces both the life and the death is perhaps the only way. Yoga is said to be the description of this process of linking one with that central Reality. So far in the history of Yoga the paraphernalia of preparations for this linking have been more ardently cared for than the actual linking itself. None of the so-called yogas or means of connection with God has actually brought about the same. Neither selfless works, nor deep thought processes or intellections, nor mere devotion helped. Nor have mere change of nomenclatures helped. Ritual mysticisms have not produced the results. The yoga today has been reduced to a theatrical operational method – so much so it has become the bye-word for self-hypnotisms or megalomaniacal behaviour. All sorts of supra normal miraculous things are claimed for it. This has been rather unfortunate.

A way of union with the Ultimate Reality discarding all these paraphernalia or miracle-mongering or claims will have better chance of bringing about a change of real attitudes or of consciousness itself. This is precisely what the new method of Rajayoga propounded by Sri Ramachandraji of Shahjahanpur has done. The process is scientific, verifiable, easy and simple. It is the special method by which the divine consciousness or ultimate thought force is transmitted into the heart of the seeker after union, that produces the illumination of both the here and the hereafter. This is transmission of the supreme or ultimate consciousness which is presumed to be the primal cause. It is that which makes both the birth and the death each of which is noted as the real to which one flies. It is that which makes for the transcendence of the dialogue between death and life which has been the source of play for some but misery for most. This transcendental thought-force called Prana or life itself is capable of bringing about the proper moulding of the lower nature in terms of its own nature which is the highest and thus confer on the human organism, inclusive of the senses and the mind a peace and calm. The goal is not just a kind of thoughtlessness or a feeling of Void or nothingness (sunyata) but the experience of real being beyond thought itself, individual, cosmic and even supra cosmic. This is possible because at the bottom of all this creation, this mind and ego are one

with that by which they all live and move and have their being, but which they know only unconsciously and grossly. Once the human organism is made responsive to this inner deep and fundamental Real Being by the introduction or ingression of the Ultimate then they become responsive slowly but surely to the Reality which has been uniformly experienced as the peace that passeth understanding and is verily Godliness. The Ultimate Being does not refute science or matter but makes it the vehicle for its own supreme functions which are of the highest Nature, Peace, Reality, Harmony and efficiency that does not bring down the return of the gross condition.

This is a method without dogma or ritual, a religion of the pure Spirit that does refute matter which is but its nether form.

It appears that this could be done with all human beings who feel the call of the higher nature and train themselves with the help of the persons who know this art of bringing down or introducing this highest Spirit into their hearts.