

40. Our Problems and Their Solution

Our world is now passing through a very critical period; this crisis is felt in every department of human activity. Everywhere we find unrest, gloom, a mental tension as if in the face of an impending catastrophe. It looks as though the civilisation of which we were so proud is crumbling before our very eyes. People everywhere talk of peace, yet what they actually do is far from being conducive to peace; they seem to be helpless.

What is this state of affairs due to? It is really due to a fundamental change in the values in life brought about by the advancement of science. In the seventeenth century the present scientific attitude had its origin; Newton's laws of Mechanics tried to explain the universe purely in mechanical terms. Science thereafter developed along this mechanical line. The previous view, based as it was on God, a Plan and Purpose in the universe, and a moral order obtaining in the world, receded to the background. In fact, in the new view there was no need of a God or purpose or any moral order. Any question of right or wrong, good or evil was irrelevant. Every process of nature was only a sequence of cause and effect. This view gained ground. Premium was set on reason and intellect as the highest faculty of man; there was nothing beyond this.

Man himself was only an item in this causal sequence. Everything was predeterminable and there was no such thing as free will of man; he was only a cog in the great mechanism. From this it naturally follows that there can be no moral responsibility. Man was only acquiring knowledge and adding to his store of knowledge by new discoveries. This stress on the lower mind and intellect, ignoring as it did other higher and deeper aspects of human nature, has been mainly responsible for the existing state of things. Man added to his knowledge but lacked the

wisdom to use his knowledge properly. Knowledge is not Wisdom. As a poet would have it:

“Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
Have oft times no connection. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men;
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much.
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.”

It has, however, to be remembered that science had no idea of bringing about any such radical changes in the old views of God and religion; it was not out deliberately to create these conditions; it concerned itself only with its progress along its restricted path. Nor were all the scientists bent on creating this irreligion so to say. Some of them, Newton included, were religious-minded, and some were idealists. But their work and the theories they propounded produced this violent change in the world-picture, as an inevitable consequence. In the life of the ordinary man of intelligence religion and all it stood for ceased to play any part. The “Modern Man”, the legacy of this viewpoint, has been thus described by a poet :

“Love exists not and Intellect bites him like a snake,
For he has failed to subordinate Intellect to Intuition;
He has traced the stars in their courses
But has failed to pick his way in the domain of his
own thoughts;

He has got so-entangled in the mazes of his knowledge
That he is yet unable to distinguish profit from loss!
He has ensnared the rays of the sun,
But failed to illuminate the dark night of his life!”

But the achievements of science are remarkable; it has widened the vista of man's knowledge and increased his powers over the forces of Nature; it has added much to

the comfort of man; above all it has brought all humanity nearer by more efficient and quicker modes of inter-communication. As they say, the world has shrunk; we are aware of all that is happening in any part of the world—nay, in other worlds as well. While thus we have been brought together into closer contact physically, our minds are not working in amity, we are at loggerheads; and this is indeed the greatest tragedy of life! In the words of a poet :

“Here lies the tragedy of our race;
 Not that men are poor;
 All men know something of poverty,
 Not that men are wicked;
 Who can claim to be good?
 Not that men are ignorant;
 Who dare boast that he is wise?
 But *that men are strangers!*”

What has Theosophy to say to this condition of things? It has an explanation and a solution. The age of the lower mind with its analytical function is to end. Further progress along that line is not possible. Science is knocking at a blind wall, further advance along the purely materialistic line is impossible. If we have to tide over the present crisis and preserve all the knowledge we have gathered for the benefit of future humanity, our outlook must change; we have to recognise man as a spiritual being with various aspects in him that need to be evolved, that the intellect which made him so conceited is only one of these aspects, that we are on the threshold of a new era in which Love and Synthesis will be the guiding factors, that Knowledge has to yield place to Wisdom which is really a Synthesis of Love and Knowledge, and that all human relationships should be based on the Law of Brotherhood and Unity of Life. All life in this Universe is a Unity and we are all

linked together in one great brotherhood. This is a fact in nature. Unless the future civilisation is based on a recognition of this great Law there is no future for us and our civilisation will crumble to pieces. And already great thinkers in various fields of human activity have begun to glimpse this new ideal; scientists like Einstein, Eddington, Jeans feel the utter futility of the so-called scientific view. They feel that the so-called material world is a Great Thought, and the Thinker is a pure mathematician. The old concepts regarding matter, life and mind are being given up; it is found that matter can be converted into energy and vice versa.

As against the old idea of a purposeless world they begin to see a purpose and a plan. Here is what Dr. Kenneth Walker, Professor, Royal College of Surgeons, says in his book *Human Physiology*:

"Science is laying more and more emphasis on the oneness of life and on the interdependence of all living creatures. Life on the surface of the planet may be looked upon as a whole and not as an accidental collection of isolated individuals.....Life is essentially the same, whether it be the life of a flower or the life of a dictator.....Theological forms of thought are eschewed by all scientists, but it is impossible to study science without being filled with a sense of plan. Life on this planet cannot be an accident, the result of the interplay of blind forces. Somewhere there exists a plan, even though the limitations of the human mind make it impossible to grasp it. Life on the earth serves some great purpose and consciousness fits into some scheme."

There is to be a new revelation, not necessarily from outside, but from ourselves; the intuitional aspect, the love aspect in us must reveal itself more and more; the estrangement between the head and the heart has brought about

the present muddle; their working in harmony on the basis of Unity and Brotherhood will usher in the new civilisation; and with the dawn of that civilisation the present-day problems would have been automatically solved.