

Individual Growth and Society

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Abstract

Living in a group and forming a society are two different things. People who think together and organize do form a society. The potentialities of an individual self are such as are incapable of development without the help of others. In order to think together we need language. In this way spiritual contact needs a material contact. Social organization is therefore a main factor in building up a culture. It is to be remembered that the goal of life can never be material. Material is required only because it keeps the body intact. For spiritual advancement it is not necessary that renunciation is required. Our ancient scriptures emphasize upon the philosophy to enjoy the world with detachment.

Keywords: *Spiritual contact, legitimate interest, Bhunjitah , renunciation, paradise, attachment, detached “Walk together ,speak together and let your minds cooperate in the acquisition of knowledge”*

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Introduction

Rigveda

This verse emphasizes the necessity of working together i.e., in societies. Man is said to be a gregarious animal. There are other animals too which are equally gregarious. But living in group and forming a society are two different things. Man is the only animal who is social of the three things-the first two are symbolical while the third is fundamental. Cooperation of minds is the chief factor in the organization of a society. Ten thousand persons herded together make a crowd but not a society. Ten or twelve persons who think together and organize do form a society. When culture means the fullest growth of the seed- powers or potentialities of the soul, than why society is required. It is because the potentialities of an individual self are such as are incapable of development without the help of other-selves. The germination and growth of a seed depends upon manure, water, air, heat etc. It may not need the help of other seeds. But a self left alone, though in best material environment will remain undeveloped. If a man is left alone in an island where there is no scarcity of food, water, air or other physical requirements. His body must grow but his soul cannot grow. A man who is being given a solitary confinement knows what loneliness means. Inner spiritual developments needs contact with other spirits and as this contact is possible only through bodies, social organization involves so many physical things. In order to think together we need language. In this way spiritual contact needs material contact. But without spiritual contact, spiritual evolution of individual spirits is not at all possible. Bodily development involves assimilation of outer matter. But spiritual development means the invisible and intangible influence which one spirit exerts over another in refining it's inner qualities. Endurance, self control, love, pleasure etc are the qualities which need development. They cannot be developed singly.

Social organization is therefore a main factor in building up a culture. The question arises what is the place of the individual in the society

The question has often been raised whether individual interests are to be sacrificed for the interests of the society vice versa. In a well developed society, the interests of the individual should not differ from the interests of the society. The society is nothing apart from the individuals. A well organized society should take care of every type of interests belonging to any individual. For society, every individual and his or her every legitimate interest ought to be sacred.

This can be possible only if every individual thinks it not only his rights but also his duty. He takes care of others' interests as much as his.

A healthy body means whose limb is healthy. A person suffering from headache is suffering pain in his whole body. How can he remain immune if the body to which he belongs is not immune? There is reciprocity.

Diseases do exist in a body, but as long as they are in a negligible quantity, we can say the body is healthy. There is a limit after which we have to officially declare that a man is ill. Similarly social diseases in the form of individual selfishness or weaknesses may remain in existence in negligible quantity long before a society is officially declared to be bad and worth revolution.

But one should not lose sight of the ideal. Keeping the ideal in view is a spiritual process. The nearer the ideal, the more is the spiritual advancement. It is fighting against matter. It is the triumph of the spirit over the body.

It can be asked by the religious people that what is the value of renunciation when society is so indispensable for spiritual advancement?

Some people think that nobody can gain spirituality unless he renounces the world. But if this be true, what is the justification for the existence of the material world? It is to be remembered that the goal of life can never be material. Even the most materialistic Epicureans should admit it. People need wealth not for wealth's sake but for those things which wealth can buy. We need things because they keep the body intact. We need a healthy body not for the body's sake but for our own sake.

Again if material well-being is so very necessary for spiritual advancement, what is the value of renunciation? This question has been nowhere answered so well as in the Yajurveda—"Tena tyaktena bhunjthah"(Enjoy it detachedly). Bhunjathah means to enjoy according to the Vedas.

To explain it-it means can one afford to renounce the world. No one can leave a house in which he or she lives. It is the only changing one for another better or worse it is immaterial. One can forsake family kinship but cannot live without any kinship at all. No one can leave dependence upon others. An invisible type of dependence remains. The very society which we boast to have renounced still follows because everyone is a social being. No one can actually renounce the world.

But there are two ways of enjoying the world, one may be called attachment and the other detachment. Attachment is apparently supposed to be enjoyment, but it leads to misery. It is a sweet poison. Detachment is a hard pill to swallow, but leads to happiness. Between attachment and detachment are intermediary states. If a person tries to reach a beautiful place say paradise and the path which takes there is also very smooth what happens the hard things to enjoy the path to but the mind says one should reach the paradise in a calculated time.

The path is part of journey not the destination. One is allowed to pass on but not to stay. In the world, you see royal roads you are allowed to pass and not to tarry. If one tries to tarry, the constable at the post cries "Pass on". So the divine dispensation has put an invisible constable.

God made all things for enjoyment but enjoyment in the journey not in the destination. The charm has to vanish. Therefore the Vedas say, "Enjoy it detachably" i.e., enjoy it in such a way as if you are in a journeying mood. You enjoy and then leave it. Every portion of the journey is to be passed over. We come in contact with it and leave it. The contact is momentary not abiding. It is truly speaking a passing path and not a dwelling house.

If one tries to turn the path into a dwelling house surely the privileges of a passenger is being transgressed and must suffer further mistake. The punishment comes from within. The travellers love for the road is of a detached nature. He loves the road, but not to dwell there.

The world is full of pleasure for those who enjoy it with detachment but it is painful to those who enjoy it otherwise. For a deep contemplation human minds need a comparative seclusion, freedom from undue interference. This does not mean the quittal of the society, it means the avoidal of those elements which distract the mind.

Renunciation means the enjoyment of the worldly things in a detached manner. Concern with the world in a spiritual manner the world is a laboratory where the search of truth goes on which are of ultimate good to others. No one can forsake the world. The separation may be physical but the spirit contacts.

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