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IN SEARCH OF A BALANCE

System makers, Unamuno the Spanish philosopher pointed out, are like the Sergeant who, when asked how a gun was made, said that they first of all take a hole and then put the metal round it. There are some leakage points in all the systems and hence many branches and different aspects of philosophy. Yet the chaotic phenomena of life in order to be satisfactorily grasped requires that certain strains be put in a certain order, so that the arrangement may create musical effects.

The scribe has no claims on philosophy and only as a student of literature has a few stray ideas which will be put together in order to have an understanding of certain aspects of culture and literature.

It was just a chance that the study of tragic and comic dramas revealed two facts : One that the comic and tragic spirits emerged at more or less the same time and secondly, their effloresence came in the periods of great upheavals in human sensibility, on account of the emergence of new ideas which caused enormous rise in the level of human consciousness. This happened in Greece about the sixth century B.C. and in Europe, during the Renaissance, in the fifteenth/sixteenth centures A.D. This naturally must have caused the problem of a new adjustment in the social and cultural scene as well as in the individual existence of a person viz. in his conscious self and the unconscious.

Since the Renaissance, due to the rejection of metaphysics and the metaphysical order of the universe in the name of the new physical sciences, human life has been perpetually in flux. The day

to day emergence of ideas in different fields of scientific knowledge, which kept on changing the concept of the world and man's position in it, caused continuous change in the guiding and directing principles of human life, producing new conflicts and requiring new adjustments. The pain caused by such conflicts finds vent in the poetic expression "knowledge is sorrow" or as Ghalib puts it in his persian couplet :

دریغ آگاهی ، گر افسردگی گردد ، سر و برگش

زِ مستی بهره ، جز غفلت ، نه باشد هوشیاران را

In order to grasp the nature of this conflict let us coin two terms to pin point the conflicting forces, which require readjustment to make life harmonious and creative. The first may be termed as *Mother Principle* i.e. the creative, sustaining and nourishing force which, *objectively*, may denote earth and the natural environment, the external aspects of faith reflected in the living traditions, which produce the given social and cultural atomosphere and *subjectively*, all that is represented by the unconscious self—the instincts and emotions, imagination and intuition and the inner aspect of faith—in short all that forms the basis of creativity. The second term may be named as the *Father Principle*, to denote the guiding, controlling, disciplining force which objectively represents all the abstracts ideas, the laws, rules and regulations that give a shape and a pattern to our life, and subjectively the reason and the conscience, which governs and regulates our inner life—in short all that is termed as consciousness and the super-Ego.

In order to explain further what is said above, we will take an example from our common experience of every day life in the human family. The mother is responsible for love, affection, sustenance and nourishment, whereas the father controls, disciplines, regulates and directs the family life. Healthy, well adjustad creative life is possibie only when the child gets his proper share of love and care from the mother and guidance and direction from the father.

This phenomenon may symbolically be extended to the other domains of human creativity, knowledge, arts and culture. True creativity is achieved when the two principles, mentioned above, interpenetrate to produce a harmonious whole or synthesis, which in turn enriches human activity on different planes of culture and civilization.

The study of dramas, both tragic and comic, in the Greek period as well as in Renaissance, reveals the phenomenon of the basic conflict between *the Father* and *the Mother Principles*. The essence of comedy, we presume is creativity and that of tragedy is waste. The conflict in comedy is finally resolved and healthy creative life is restored. The conflict in tragedy, on the other hand, remains unresolved, ensuing in waste and barrenness. The hero of comedy ultimately over-rides the conflict, finds a new harmony and everything again goes well. The hero of tragedy, however, loses the balance, is either on the side of the *Mother Principle* or tries to live according to the dictates of the *Father Principle*. In one case it results in chaos ; in the other it leads to barrenness. In both cases the outcome is waste.

We may take as an axample the story of 'Oedipus Rex', the famous Greek drama, which gave Freud his concept of Oedipus Complex. Oedipus was destined to kill his father and marry his mother. Consciously he flees away from his destiny but unconsciously is caught by it. He kills his father and marries his mother. The pattern of the conflict between the *Father Principle* and the *Mother Principle* is obvious. Symbolically Oedipus chooses to live by the *Mother Principle* alone, hence the tragic waste. The same pattern is revived in Shakespeare's drama Macbeth. Macbeth is induced by the three witches and Lady Macbeth (Mother Symbol) to kill Duncan, the King (Father Symbol). Macbeth overwhelmed by the inducement kills the King and becomes king himself. The nature of the conflict here is the same as in Oedipus and Macbeth too chooses to live by the *Mother Principle* alone. In his Hamlet,

Shakespeare reverses the pattern, although the nature of conflict remains the same. Hamlet, the hero, chooses to live by the ***Father Principle***. He hates his mother, who he thinks to be guilty of infidelity and sides with his ghost father (symbolically representing abstract reason—***Father Principle***). Hamlet's philosophic nature, his insensitiveness to love and his calculated actions—all lead to the fact that rejecting the ***Mother Principle*** he preferred to live by the ***Father Principle*** alone.

As a student, the scribe came across lot of criticism discussing the problem of delay in Hamlet. Macbeth, however, was considered to be a fast moving play and in this context it was compared to Greek tragedies, which were equally fast moving. Now if we compare Macbeth with Hamlet, one fast moving and the other slow moving, the rushing hero Macbeth with the delaying hero Hamlet, we can mark the difference by suggesting that Macbeth was motivated by his on-rushing emotions whereas Hamlet calculated his steps as he was guided by reason and slow pacing thoughts.

We can also find a pattern in all Shaksperean dramas on the basis of the conflicting *Mother* and *Father Principles*. There are conflicts which are resolved and the plays end up in comedy. (first phase). There are serious conflicts which remain unresolved and they produce tragic waste. (second phase). Then there are serious conflicts which are finally resolved and such plays arc called dark comedies or tragi-comedies (the third and the last phase). They end up in a final re-union or harmony between the aforesaid confiicting principles.

The same phenomena of the two conflicting principles can be seen throughout the famous folk tales of the Punjab and Sind, which form the contents for great poetic expressions and are the integral elements of the life patterns of these regions. The given cultural arena of these tales, barrcn on the one hand and chaotic on the other, depicting the tragic waste, is suggestive of the fact that the

Father and the Mother Principles do not harmonize for giving vent to the creative possibilities.

The phenomena, discussed have with reference to a few examples, can be observed in novels, could it also help us in the observation of the creative aspect of life on a cultural plane? Why not—Literature and other art-forms are said to be the mirror of life and we can certainly make use of this method of analysis in observing and assessing the real life situation.

An analysis of the cultural history of the Muslims of the subcontinent would prove that there were times when people were governed by a philosophy of life which synthesized the two aforesaid principles, resulting in great creative expression in every phase of life. It was the metaphysique of "Wahdat-al-Wajud", which harmonizing the two principles enabled man to live a full creative life.

It was only with the advent of the forces of abstraction, inductive logic and rationalism, literal interpretations and superficial logical reasonings, that the symbolic and metaphoric interpretation of the universe and the metaphysical relationship of God—Man—Universe—was undermined. In other words it was the triumph of the *Father Principle*, Once it was triumphant, the wholeness of the metaphysical approach to life was fragmented. The falling apart of the two principles and the domination of one over the other made the modern cultural history, which is now the battle ground of the two principles. The dominating *Father Principle* creates barrenness; the dominated but revolting *Mother Principle* produces chaos. Creativity suffers both ways.

The episode of the birth of Adam in the holy scriptures his scriptures, his superiority over the Angles in terms of knowledge, is suggestive of this very important fact of the creative aspect of man. God Almighty commanded the Angles to bow down before Adam. All the Angles, except Satan did it, in recognition of the creative knowledge which God, in his grace, had bestowed upon Adam.

Here a very important fact should always be borne in mind—that Adam at this moment was not a man viz. a male figure. Eve too was contained in him. He therefore combined in himself and represented both the principles of creativity in complete harmony. He was thus a creative being in the image of God, which was certainly a definite superiority over the Angles. Eve's creation from the left rib of Adam came at a later stage, which apparently was the first paradox, the resolution and synthesis of which is the basis of all creativity.

In the absence of a life philosophy that ensures the synthesis or resolution of this male-female paradox or in our terms in denying the harmony of the *Father and Mother Principles*, life will produce barrenness and the complementary chaos, as is the phenomena that exists in different aspects of our life today.

For the last more than one hundred years our politico-historical interpretation, of the period from 1707-AD (the death of Emperor Aurangzeb) onwards, has always been in terms of "decadence". Why? It is because we have associated creativity with *Power* (*Father Principle*). But this very period, with its so-called "decadence" experienced an influx of highly imaginative and intellectual activity in terms of philosophy, religious knowledge, language and poetry. It was this remarkable period which created a consciousness and definite signs of a national entity amongst the Muslims of the sub-continent. The rulers and the government machinery which wielded power was of course in a state of decay, but those who ruled minds and hearts were still eminently creative. It was a period which created values and ideals, consciousness and language and a great literature representing the spirit of a people, which ultimately formed the basis for the demand of a homeland for the Muslims.

It is not a fact that since the final loss of power in 1857, we had all along been in search of power? Yes—it is our power mongering, the grip of the *Father Principle*, that has been the deciding

factor of our fate during all the phases of our national and cultural life since the inception of Pakistan. In religion and polities, in education and administration and also in many other social and cultural aspects of life, what is considered to be valuable is power and status and not love and creativity (*Mother Principle*).

Ours is an age of waste—of course not the tragic one, which always gives some insight—but that of frivulous waste which results in meaninglessness and absurdity. It is an age of accusations and shifting responsibilities, of hollow words and superficial meanings, of waste of energy and slogan raising and of defacing and corrupting every truth once gave meaning to life.

Administrative Power, besides the power of money is most attractive and awe-inspiring for the majority in our social set up. Bureaucracy is the common place word symbolizing power. The statements of our political leaders invariably accuse Bureaucracy for all the ills of society. We all know that it weilds power, governs and administers but what about the political parties in general and their leaders in particular ? Are they doing anything worth mentioning on social, economic or cultural plane for the good of the people ? Is it not a fact that their basic motivation is the desire to capture power ?

No doubt that all human beings, psychologically speaking, have a natural inclination to be motivated by power. But they have a natural inclination of love motivation as well. A healthy social structure balances the two equally patent motive forces in order to produce individuals who are creative in different fields of activity. There are institutions where there is the need of the power motivation to have the upper hand and the love motivation as a comple mentary force to maintain a balance. In other cases, for instance in educational institutions, the reverse is true. Here love motive should predominate and power motive should serve the secondary role to maintain the balance.

The present day crisis in our educational institutions is not so

much the result of the politicalization of these institutions, but of the basic social tendency of power-worship. If the educational institutions are turned into the power weilding machines to serve the purposes of political parties (as is the situation today) the real cause of education, of producing balanced creative men—men with ideals and dreams of future flourishing creative life—will be lost for ever.

Bureaucracy, therefore, is not a class or institution ; it is rather the tendency of a mind to seek power without love as its balancing force. It is the product of a society mainly dominated by the *Father Principle*—authority, control, discipline, order etc.—abstract regulations for giving human life a pattern and a form, which is in our case devoid of all content (*Mother Principle*). This being the phenomena of our whole social life, it cannot be restricted to a particular institution.

Such a dominating tendency in our social life goes on strengthening itself even at the cost of the life-generating sources, sacred and valuable. Take for instance Allama Iqbal, whose poetry is full of the symbols of creativity and values and ideals of a good life. Most of the interpretations of his philosophy as well as poetry revolve round the elements of power. His emphasis on creativity, on the bleeding heart, on intuition and insight, on self-discipline and love, on self respect and polite behaviour—all this and much more is either ignored or under toned in order to make him fit in the present state of power motivation prevalent in our society for the present.

As we have analysed earlier, we can say that the *Father Principle* stands for fixity and rigidity, whereas the *Mother Principle* has an inherent tendency to change. It may appear to have a likeness to the old Greek thought of 'permance' and 'flux'. Yet the solution here is neither Platonic nor Aristotelian. We plead their seperate existence both objectively and subjectively. We also emphasize their harmony or intercourse for a creative productive act in all spheres of life.

I remember to have read a line in a lecture delivered by Agha Hasan Abidi, a reputed banking genius, to a meeting of the business executives, which I will quote here in my own words. Mr. Abidi advised the executives that while trying to change others, they must also be prepared to undergo a corresponding change in themselves. Here in this one sentence lies the essence of creativity. But can a society dominated by the ***Father Principle*** act on this advice? I hope not. Yet I can afford some optimism with regard to one particular class of our society—the teachers—and if only they start acting on this simple dictum, things can improve a lot.