

The trouble with hum

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People today are intensely dissatisfied with their lives and the world they live in. Whatever may be their social milieu, whatever their work, their forms of recreation, complaints are frequently heard on all sides. If it is not the economic situation they blame, then it is political. If religious hypocrisy is not the main reason, some class is made to bear the brunt, as a scapegoat, for reproach, for the unfortunate situation in which we, the humanity, find ourselves. It never seems to occur to us that maybe most of the trouble is much closer to home—maybe, in fact, we ourselves are the trouble?

We are the richest generation that ever lived. No man ever stood on earth and looked up at the still sky with greater possession: the seas, the air, the very fabric of matter, is dealt with daily by us and we are gaining a greater mastery over them with each passing day. We explore the blue fields of heaven fill either with invisible melody and enjoy the wonders of the world sitting in our comfortable homes. And yet we are miserably dissatisfied and unhappy. There seems to be a cancer in our breasts that embitters the fruit of our genius and deprives us of peace of mind, of emotional stability and power to live at once either within our own complex selves or with our fellowmen.

The unilateralism of the Western civilization is rapidly

spreading to the farthest corners of the Eastern world and yet this colossal structure, with all the progress it has made, with all its advantages, all its facilities, thinks it fair to destroy us. At present, it casts the shadow of Frankenstein over us; our creature. Yet it may make us its creature and wreck both us and itself. Is it because in expending our knowledge and efforts to gain mastery over matter, to harness the laws governing it and channelise its powers, we have utterly forgotten that may be we humans too have a set of laws governing us and we have neglected our true natures and our relationship with the universe in which we find ourselves and which we are so busily engaged in exploiting. Somewhere there is a fundamental maladjustment.

We, who have everything, have in fact nothing! We have neither the sense of inner security our ancestors knew, nor the spiritual conviction enjoyed by the inhabitants of the so-called 'dark ages'. Use of excessive drugs, same sex marriages, promiscuity, incest, and the rampant sexual abuse, in the so-called civilized Western civilization that roves distractedly in the wilderness of desires clearly shows how far against the laws of nature have they gone. Out of sheer frustration, it is feared, they might ruin the whole world.

There never was time when people voiced more beautiful thoughts, had more wonderful

schemes, than we have today, but there never was a time when life was held more cheaply, when every human being was in greater danger of harrowing death or a miserable, insecure, barren existence, when all standards seemed to be more empty and useless, than today. This beautiful world has become a hell. If we do not think about it, it is because we don't want to.

Nature seems inestimably good to us. Even in the sleet and the rain and the snow, in the smelting rays of the tropical sun and the lush jungles, there is a balance and purpose vividly in contrast to our disordered, distracted, worrying method of life. At night, it seems an almost unbelievable anomaly that stars can shine so serenely down at the destruction of thousands of lives and homes; the birds can sing and twitter in the trees, just after the guns have been roaring, the sirens shrieking. It seems we are living in some horrible nightmare that must stop and find all at peace, in consonance with the great harmony of nature. Our earth spins on its eternal way, linked into the meshes of the cosmic plan.

Everything is law-governed and integrated in one great whole. "The Beneficent hath made known the Quran. He hath created man. He hath taught him utterance. The sun and the moon are made punctual. The stars and the trees

adorn. And the sky He hath uplifted; and He hath set the measure, that ye exceed not the measure, but observe the measure strictly, nor fall short thereof. And the earth hath He appointed for (His) creatures, wherein are fruit and sheathed palm-trees, husked grain and scented herb. Which is it of the favours of your Lord that ye deny? (Surah Al-Rehman- The Beneficent: 55:1).

Yet in the world of men we behold chaos, discord, vast discrepancies; boundless wealth, but misused and squandered; limitless power, abused and misapplied; tremendous organization, but working for destruction, for rule by force. The West can carry out research to learn from Quran, Angel and Torah.

Side by side with the most widespread idealistic concepts such as all men are brothers and must co-operate to build a system of international co-ordination, we see human society in the worst condition it ever was. And not the least cause for alarm is a certain callousness that has crept in to the hearts of men. A sort of bitter, old age cynicism which exists despite our warmer feelings of pity, sympathy and generosity.

There is a vast maladjustment in the world today. People are not living according to the laws that govern their human being. They are still inside, they are deformed, malnourished, under/ undeveloped.

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Naturally the result is chaos. Where there should be smooth plains, so to speak, there are rough surfaces; what should be straight is crooked; what should be calm is boiling with agitation. Everything goes against us, everything is contrary, all the issues are tangled, because we are not our own masters. Infact we are less than that, we are complete strangers to ourselves.

If an intelligent, dispassionate observer should visit our planet, he would probably be struck at once and most forcibly by the feverish activity going on here. Individuals and groups are in a mad rush, both physically, mentally and emotionally. It would almost be safe to say that there are no relaxed civilized people in the world. Is it because Bush has had an epiphani?

"History is not written in three or four figures but usually in single digits." Whether we recognize it or not, the fact remains that one single individual, or at most a handful of them, leavens huge masses. It is not necessary to change millions and thousands over night but hundreds will do. The reason for this is extraordinary teachability of man. All life is adaptable, pliable, ingenious but man is the most sensitive and receptive being of all.

He not only responds to strong stimuli, such as being suddenly taken from the wilderness and introduced into the civilization of the city, but he responds to subtle forces as

well. He registers kindness, refinement, harmony, even if he is one of the brutal members of the human race. It may not have the power to change him, if he is a mature person, but to some degree he registers it.

If Chinese have made such extraordinary strides forward in a few decades, it is not due to the fundamental change in the individuals of that vast nation, but due to two or three brilliant leaders and a handful of consecrated students. They discovered new ways of doing things and became the pacesetters of one of the most ancient and populous countries of the world. If China, illiterate for the most part, unindustrialized with a very low standard of living for the average man--- so low that it barely kept him from starvation--- has produced such an amazing miracle, why can't we in Pakistan (just a handful people), who are comparatively more enlightened, than what China was then, produce far greater miracles?

Can we not become the pioneers of the world reformation? The ideas offered here may only be taken as suggestions for a fly-wheel to this greater wheel of corporate life; as a move towards a centripetal action to offset this terrific centrifugal activity of ours; as a survey, however flattering and inadequate, of some of man's inner needs; a proposal for a course of spiritual hygiene, if one cares to think of it that way.