

ONE WORLD*

I

In this paper I wish to arrive at a certain philosophical position regarding man's relationship to the world by means of a conceptual analysis of two perspectives or points of view. I think this distinction is grounded in our experience and discourse and so has several possible implications for social and moral philosophy. Such social and moral implications are sure to have different meanings in the two perspectives. I feel that taking the distinction with philosophical seriousness would result in a social philosophy with its basis in some kind of humanism, which would involve the notions of intersubjectivity, power, freedom and action. This pattern of analysis, I hope, would help us grasp the interrelationships between these concepts and their significance in human context. I shall be content if the thought presented in the paper takes us to the threshold of a new understanding of humanism and also suggests conceptual models for understanding these possibilities. Finally, I would like to examine, in the context of Man and the World, the Sarvodaya model, for I believe it presents a genuine alternative although this alternative has not usually been taken seriously so far, in the understanding of human relations.

I may begin by postulating two concepts of the world, one I regard as astronomical and the other as social. The astronomical concept is an absolutely objective concept. According to this concept, the world consists of the different celestial bodies in the galaxy and outside, and the world or the universe would exist whether or not man exists. To use philosophical jargon, this is the cosmocentric view of the world. But sometime, man's cosmocentric world

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also increases or decreases depending upon his power to conceive, argue, theories and perceive. Thus, for an ordinary man, the world may consist of his town or his country. It is this concept of the world which I call the geographical. The geographical concept of the world is only a sub-case of the astronomical concept of the world. The geographical concept is, of course, modified by human ideas. Nevertheless, human engineering plays very little part in analysing this concept and ordinarily, we believe that our earth will remain very much as it is, whether or not man lived on it. For an ordinary man even in the geographical concept of the world, the objectivity of the world is kept in tact and he in fact is not aware of his intervention in the making, creating, or appreciating of the world.

As against this, the astronomical-cum-geographical concept of the world, there arises the social concept of the world, and this I regard as an anthropocentric concept. The whole human world, his social organizations, the cultural patterns that he evolves, the beauty patterns that emerge out of his mind, the architectural designs, the scientific inventions and discoveries, the variety of food that he creates and the buildings and minars that he builds, the industrial progress which envelopes his whole world and even the names of things including his own are due to this anthropocentric concept of the world. Unless there was human intervention, there will be nothing but some world, some X about which it would not be possible for us to talk. Our very identity or indentification starts with naming and the world that we construct, is likewise a human world, though humans may not always be aware of this world. This is partly objective but partly intersubjective and it may restrict itself to a person or two or may partly or wholly overlap the geographical concept which is concerned with the globe or even transcend that concept and envelope the astronomical concept, in trying to measure it and in making calculations about it.

I may, however, point out that these two concepts are intertwined

with each other, and cannot be separated. As a matter of fact, I must confess that even the anthropocentric concept of the world is finally included in the cosmocentric concept of the world, since man and his actions are also part and parcel of the things of the world. Man may create other things but he himself is a part of the world process. His existence is pre-supposed before his confrontation with the world. However, in practice, when we talk of the world, our context is this 'man's world' and with the growth of knowledge of man, this world also continues to grow. In fact, I may be allowed to say that the anthropocentric world, which really matters to us, is an ever-growing construction of the astronomical world. It is with the growth of this man's world, that man's concepts also grow. In fact, it is a paradox that as man's world grows, and man acquires more and more knowledge about this world, and the laws of the world, in one sense the boundaries of the cosmocentric world shrink. In the past, it was not possible for a man in Varanasi to go around the world in 24 hours and come back to Varanasi to give lectures in the University the next day. This is why the mythical story of Gautama became important and interesting. Lord Brahma who had decided to give his daughter to one who went around the earth thrice in three hours, gave away his daughter to Gautama in preference to Indra, Surya and Candra. This was in a way, a recognition of the fact that unlike the celestial gods, man with his brain could work out more miracles. It was also the recognition that it was man who constructed his own world over the astronomical world. But this great power of man strangely creates a paradox. As his knowledge of the world grows, the world shrinks in the sense that it makes more and quicker means of communication possible. But in trying to have mastery over the astronomical world, there is a possibility of his losing mastery over himself. We also see that the distance between man and man has increased more and more during all these ages, resulting in strifes, world wars and class-wars. It means that although, intelligence can solve the

astronomical or non-human problems, it does not solve the human problems.

Intelligence leads to alienation and man not only forgets that other humans are like him, but some times his own personality and actions are split into two or many parts. Marx pointed out that with the industrial revolution man got alienated more and more. Even the present century writers like Marcuse accept this thesis of Marx's.

It means that with the growth of man's knowledge, and with the physical facilities of communication, the real communication between man and man gets blurred. To my mind it appears that if our aim is to achieve one World-one human world, then we must strive to have clear communication amongst men and arrive at complete or atleast better understanding of man himself. It means that each one's privateness, which is the creation of a separate world, should give way to publicness and thus create a cemented world. In fact in one sense of the term, man continuously strives to create such social forms; but it is equally true that he has failed in his attempt. It will, therefore, be necessary to see what he has done till now, where he has failed and whether the *past failure* can show us any way out.

II

When man works on the geographical or astronomical world, the geographical or astronomical world neither increases nor decreases; it does not grow. This is expressed by the physical law that the quantum of matter or energy in the universe is constant. But what really changes is the meaning of these things which are present in the natural world. A chair is a piece of 'wood', arranged in a particular manner. The house is an arrangement of particular stones and bricks. But they function in a different manner for man. A log of wood and a chair have a different meaning for a beast, an uncivilised man and a civilized man, The meaning, or purpose of

things is more important on account of the relationship that man has with the things or rather men have with other men and the things. In fact, I may be allowed to say that it is not the structure which determines the functions of social institutions. It means that value, meaning or purpose of everything that exists in the world is determined by the use they have to human beings. Their meaning is determined by the relationship between man and man. It follows that the meaning of everything in the world is correlative to the relation of man and man. It also follows that in final analysis when we talk of the world, it is not the geographical or the astronomical world, but the world determined by relations, amongst men and men, the world determined by human relations, that we are looking about. This anthropocentric world is a construct over the cosmocentric world and it takes various forms, social and political, giving rise sometimes to States, Kingdoms and Empires. But it must be remembered that the world in these forms is a function of a certain geographic area and an individual in the form of a community. If there were men on other planets, and if communication between them had been as easy as it is on this planet, then the human world would have consisted of the different astronomical area and their human function. The proximity of land and atmosphere and the easy communication on the land (or sea) make the world one. Possibilities of faster communication makes the parts of the world shrink and come closer and closer. But although the parts of the world shrink, if the human relations deteriorate, either on account of internal conflict of one society or on account of external conflicts among societies, our human world would break into many. It, therefore, follows that the nature of the human world would be determined by the type of community man is able to bring about. At this point, it is necessary to distinguish different institutions which man is able to create. The concept of human community is different from the concept of such institutions. The Army, for example, is a kind of military institution and political power which

sometimes takes the form of government is another such human institution. But neither the army nor the political power would be able to realise all over the concept of the one world. Army and political power may create one State all over the world for sometime, though that too is rather doubtful. For when the army and political power create one State, it brings men and men together by artificial force. The equality of man, which according to me is pre-supposed in every ethical theory, is lacking here. It is based on hierarchy. Here again there is a paradox. Physically two men are not equal. Man and woman are definitely not equal. But ethically, they are to be regarded as equal and this equality is to be accomplished through the complimentariness of different individuals. When a certain state enlarges itself, so as to occupy the whole geographical area, this is not achieved. It would not be the state of man's longing. There was a book written by Wendel Wilkie, a former Vice-President of the U. S. A. The book was called *One World*. But the book largely was concerned with one state and such a state would not give us the real one world. The politically bringing together of different units does not give us one world. On the other hand, functioning of different units, if these units have cooperation with one another, *unity of purpose*, love which binds in a humanitarian way, ⁽⁴⁷⁾ ~~we~~ achieve this notion. Although such a world appears to be geographical at different points, it is possible to conceive that the world is one. Before I proceed further, I may state that this concept of world was emphasised by Gandhiji when he talked of Sarvodaya. It clearly indicated that Sarvodaya did not mean the combination or unity or cooperation of all material bodies. This is not possible. It means the combination or unity, or cooperation of sentient human beings.

It should, however, not be supposed that such a world is a community of spirits having no relations whatever to the geographical area. A geographical area is definitely one of the important constituents of such a community. But distance in space is not of

much significance. What is necessary is to understand that there must be communication between individuals. It is not possible to conceive of such a world where human beings are windowless monads. One windowless monad will constitute one world. But if the world is to consist of many men, then the many men should form one world and this is not possible without cooperation among them. Whether the monads are one or many, if communication is denied, the concept of one world would not be realised. For what is denied is the possibility of human construct, and if the many monads are to operate in a systematic manner like soldiers in an army, we will have further to postulate a principle which will be external to them—the principle of pre-established harmony which will allow their behaviour as similar though internally unrelated; such a world ^{would} be a system of parallel behaviours. This is conceiving the world in a mechanistic fashion. Here two models suggest themselves to me.

III

The first I call funnel model and the second a net model. When we pour some liquid through a funnel, it goes through the smaller outlet of the funnel. Although the liquid may consist of several molecules and atoms, the behaviour of these different molecules is canalized and directed in one particular way. The separateness of the molecules or atoms is lost sight of, and they simply do not have freedom to behave the way they like and determine their way of behaviour. In the funnel model although the countries consist of many men, their manyness is completely forgotten. One man takes the supreme position and all other men behave as if they are different organs of that man. The status of other men is reduced to one lower than that of the slaves. All these men together form an organic whole and the movement of the organic whole is directed by the one man, whether we call him a patriarch, a king or a dictator. In a body, if each organ begins to behave independently, we call it paralysis. All the organs must be tuned to the

brain of the organism. In the same way, if the world is one organism, and if its manyness is not to be taken seriously, it means that the 'manyness' is harnessed to the desire of one person. Our Advaita concept or the philosophy of Spinoza could be regarded as a theory behind such funnel like concept of the world. And when, for example, communism says that it is the society which is primary or when some philosophers talk of the general will, they have such a thing at least potentially in their minds. In such a world there would be no freedom for the individuals and what a man should do or should not do would be determined by some super agency. Such concept of the world could flourish for some time but very soon it would degenerate and disintegrate the society. Such a concept of society was conceived by Plato in his *Republic* and a concrete expression of such concept is found in the cāturvarṇya system of the Hindus. Here, the four Varṇas are very clearly imagined as the four important organs of a man. The Brahmin is compared to the Head, the Kshatriyas to the hands and shouldars, the Vaishyas to the stomach and the Sudras to the legs. Each of them is accorded a certain function. The society is to be directed and intellectually guided by Brahmins, protected by Kshatriyas, stabilised by Vaishyas and served like machines by the Sudras. In theory, this appears to be a good proposition and a good division of labour, but in reality it destroys the freedom of every individual and turns man into machine. Although the Hindus did not have much industrial progress to their credit, they did succeed in turning the society into machine. This, of course, has disintegrated the Hindu society and the present problems of the Hindus are evidently due to such an arrangement. It is to regard one man as more important, more valuable, more privileged than other men. The same is the story of the Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Spain and in fact of every society wherever dictatorship has prevailed. The philosophy of Advāita Vedānta or Marxism can provide a theoretical background for such a rigid and unfree society.

As against this, we can think of society like the net of a fisherman. The net is in a way woven of several knots. The individuals in the society can be compared to these knots. They have a direct or indirect relation with every other knot through the connections supplied by the threads between one knot and another. There are holes which means that if we substitute an individual in the place of a knot, he would be able to breathe free air and move the way he liked. Nevertheless, he would be bound by every other knot and would not be able to fly like an uncontrolled kite. Here pluralism is recognised, the existence of other persons is recognised; the society is regarded as an association of separate and independent individuals. It is not oneness but it is a system of manyness. In the funnel like society I recognise others merely as a means to myself and so there is no place for morality. It is only my desire, my will which dominates. In the net like society, I have the same status as other individuals, other knots. The recognition of other persons as equal, gives rise to morality and social order and in its mature form it becomes democracy. Though we talk of democracy, such a democracy need not exist today, but the conceptual democracy may sometimes lead to actualization of democracy.

It may, however, be pointed out that even a net like society may degenerate into an expansionist society. The best instance of such a society is supplied by democratic England. The imperialist England behaved in a net-like manner so far as England was concerned. But her empire was not a common-wealth; it was a case of an exploitation as in every part of the empire the colonial people were used for the prosperity of the English people or the activity of the whole empire was canalized through one channel provided by the Empire. In such a society, the mother country and the colonies are treated in separate manner.

As against such a society, we can think of Sarvodaya which recognises decentralization and non-expansion.

IV

Although I have talked of a net model as different from the funnel model, at least some time and in some aspects, the funnel model is (or can be) imposed on the net model. Centralisation is the logical conclusion of funnel model and means the loss of freedom of some units. Usually, our society is a combination of centralisation and decentralization, freedom and bondage, funnel and net. Decentralization is itself an aspect of freedom and it is this decentralization which Sarvodaya preaches. It, therefore, stands for human society where the freedom of each individual is recognised and man is not treated either as a machine or any assemblage of matter. Of course, when we talk of man, we have to recognise two dimensions of man, the individual and the social. The individual dimension gives him freedom and the social dimension expects of him responsible behaviour, a duty towards others, the recognition that he by himself alone cannot stand in the world. He requires the assistance of other individuals as well, and therefore, every individual 'owes' to every other individual. As an individual, man can freely desire and increase his wants. As an organism he has only some limited needs necessary for his existence. In our language, many times we use the words wants and needs as if they are synonymous. It gives a feeling that men's needs are also infinite which is not true. If society is based on the individual dimension, then the social dimension will be suppressed and society will be governed by the theory of infinite wants. There will be no proportion arrived at between what man wants and what the universe gives him. Nay, one man may also want to kill other men, All this has happened in the capitalist world which preach laissez-faire economy. This has, of course, led to exploitation of other men, expansion of territorial powers and creating new markets for the exploitation of men. Of course, all these lead to contradictions. Everybody cannot fulfill the wants if they are infinite and if one man's fulfilling the wants is dependent

on other man's forgoing the same. Expansion of markets ultimately means satisfaction of one order wants for oneself by creating conditions for the fulfilment of other-order wants for other. This means that although we try to fulfil some order wants of other people we do not want them to fulfil the wants that we want ourselves to fulfil. This is exploitation. So, if one does not want to have exploitation, one would not be able to plead for the expansion of market. This would also mean that a larger number of population would have to be treated as unequal and that as soon as they get an opportunity, they would revolt against the establishment. As this has happened in history marxists think that capitalism is beset with its own contradictions. It really means that either we do not consciously recognise other individuals, or if we consciously recognise other individuals, we are not prepared to treat them as equals. We treat them only as a means, which further means that the propositions which hold about ourselves, we are not able to generalise and apply to other individuals as well. The concept of justice, in its pure form, cannot arise in such a society. It would not be a society where human beings are bound together by some human bonds, by a sense of justice and value. Sarvodaya recognises these pitfalls of the capitalist society and, therefore, wants to establish society on the basis of pure justice where each man is recognised as equal and where there is no hierarchy of equals and unequals. It is only in such a way that we can stop humanity falling into dictatorship. Otherwise in an industrial society which leads to capitalism and imperialism some form of dictatorship is involved whether you may consciously recognise it or not. In this concept of the world, world means recognition of different individuals as equals, bound by value, on the background of the astronomical-geographical world. The oneness of the world in one respect is given by astronomy and geography and manyness of the individual and individual freedom are added to it by the human world. This freedom is limited not by

physical hurdles but by human freedom itself, by creating human bondage, by creating relations. The net model is likely to achieve its perfection in such world. When Vinoba talks of Jaijagat, he has this kind of concept in his mind. In such a world, in one sense of the term, many worlds may be recognised; but these many worlds would not be contradictory to the one world concept. What would make them one world is free communication without any taboos.

I have said above of communication. It must be realised that the essential point of communication is publicness. Communication is denied in the world which consists of many but windowless monnds. Publicness means recognition of others and in its full import, recognition of others means, recognition of others as equal. In fact, this equality is embedded in our language, though it is artificially destroyed by us in our culture. As soon as we recognise that there is communication amongst men and that the communication is about things, it is also recognised that there will be continuous symbiosis of man and societies and the world represented by these societies would continuously expand human society. The problem, therefore, is not of one world which signifies a whole, a whole which is signified both by a geographical or astronomical world or the one given to us by the funnel model where one is the whole, where one has the value of 'all' and everyone else is equal to nothing. The problem is how to create one world which recognises 'all' and in my opinion it is possible only in a decentralised society which is suggested by the Sarvodaya concept. The problem of one world is the problem of cooperation amongst individuals. It is the problem of what Mahatma Gandhi called non-violence. There cannot be non-violence unless we recognise others. Non-violence has to be preached only if we recognise that there are others. It is a problem of community living of individuals. It is this concept which Gandhiji had in his mind when he talked of Ahimsā. The problem of one world, therefore, is not that of

unifying the different individuals into one world, but as, U Thant once pointed out, to stop the divisions of the world, into number of ways, economic, racial, and ideological. The concept of one world is the concept of the emergence of one community. It is not the concept of one physical world but the concept of one human world. This can be achieved only when man becomes aware of himself and becomes aware of others as equal to him.

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