

Science and human welfare

Man lives in two worlds – the world of matter and the world of spirit. The scientist indeed is the ruler of the world of matter which is completely under his dominance. But the latter is altogether beyond his sway. The scientific mind seems quite helpless in the world of spirit which is of vital importance for human life, his interrelationship, relationship with nature, spiritual rituals and ways of being which form an essential and important part of his life. Moreover, there are large lacunae in clearly understanding man's relation with God and nature. There are fundamental queries of birth and death, sin and virtue – which science is unable to explain and these form an integral part of human life. These finer mysteries still remain far beyond the reach of human mind and are likely to continue to remain so.

It is true that science encourages forward looking and active temper of mind. It helps in removing the cobwebs of superstition, dogma and ignorance. It provides insight into the complexities of life and outer space, but unsupplemented and uncorrected, it gives an inadequate view of the world. The human mind envisages endless possibilities to unravel the mysteries of this world and beyond with constant support and funding in billions. India also is striding towards becoming an innovative superpower within this century. It sounds extremely wonderful and fascinating. The scientific manpower in India is estimated to be three million, with its nationals leading the world in cutting-edge technology. But in spite of this potential resource the other side is that there are many who lack access to basic life care, education and amenities. For 63 years (1947-2011) we have been celebrating Republic and Independence Day. However, in spite of having the maximum number of medical and dental institutions which provide a large number of medical scientists, India's health system is under constant burden of infectious diseases. A large section of the society lives in poverty and many die of hunger, malnutrition, infectious diseases like TB, HIV-AIDS and also due lack of basic care and basic healthcare which is their fundamental right. What to talk of the oral healthcare which is considered far below satisfaction. All these scientific advances, achievements by the scientific



mind, are of no worth to these underprivileged. How do we bridge the gap, provide for all, educate and provide for meaningful existence? How do we accomplish this mammoth task? The scientist with all his logic and objective enquiry is not capable of achieving it. That is where the world of spirit enters. For is it not the undying devotion towards God, spiritualism, the undying human spirit that provides for the existence of these marginalized sections? The coordination of the different branches and sub-branches of knowledge and its application to human welfare is the main function of man's life.

It is, therefore, with the temper and approach of science allied to philosophy and with reverence for all that lies beyond that we must face life. The research advancements and benefit of science exists only when it percolates downwards benefitting all. Thus we may develop an integral vision of life which embraces in its wide scope the past and the present with all their heights and depths.

Human welfare should be the ultimate goal of science, because in the end are we not inhabitants of the same world whose actions affect fellow human beings?

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SG Damle', written over a horizontal line.

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