

Discoveries and Inventions of Man endangered his life

“LORD WHAT FOOLS THESE MORTALS BE”

Despite the premium which man places upon his discoveries and inventions, ideas and ideals, rationale and skill, he has not been able to touch even the fringe of wisdom. His inventions and discoveries have landed him in such a situation as has endangered his existence, shaken the foundations of the citadel of knowledge which he has been beautifying since ages. Some ideals are worshipped for a decade or so and then they rather pass into oblivion or are defaced beyond recognition. His rational approach has made him a cold calculating machine, with a human touch about it. His skill has perverted his ends; it is used in destroying and gaining mastery over others. Can we still say that a man is wise? Wisdom does not lie in knowing all or in knowing well, it lies in using knowledge well. A scientist, who makes weapons of destruction, a writer who instigates the people to revolt, a politician, who pushes the world down a precipice, a scholar, who dispenses knowledge that corrupts thinking cannot be wise. Like fools they consider their predecessors unwise, they pride over their achievements and triumphs though they profess to be better equipped, in terms of knowledge and experience, yet find themselves like rats in a blind alley. Their vision is limited not only by space and time but also by their incapacity to extend it into the misty future. So his wisest thoughts lose their relevance as the values of life undergo a change. Follies of the past seem to make man wiser but the wisdom of today may prove to be a folly tomorrow.

Modern man thinks that he is politically much advanced; rights of man have been upheld against the rights of the administrators and man is considered to be his own ruler. They say that they have the right to speak, right to think and right to live and the Governments are convenient devices to administer themselves. Democracy has taken us a long way from kingship and dictatorship-it is the history of an arduous struggle of man to enjoy freedom. Modern democratic Government is for the people and by the people-it stays till people want and acts as the people wish it to act. This is, some may say, the sweetest fruit of wisdom, the best product of accumulated wisdom of ages. Pope, the poet of the 18th century, brings out the foolishness of this wisdom when he says: “For forms of governments let fools contest, whichever administered best is best.” Thus the transition from kingship to democracy and then from democracy to kingship is natural. The son of a king, who is enthroned after his death, often proves to be unworthy of his office. It gives an opportunity to the courtiers to capture power.

They lead a luxurious life and go on imposing taxes to raise funds. The process brings a breaking point and the people revolt and install a popular leader as the head of the government. This is the birth of democracy. It is a government by the inexperienced and so incompetent persons. Consequently inefficiency, corruption, favouritism and nepotism are rampant. An extremely clever and competent person takes advantage of the situation and gives an efficient administration with one man at the helm of affairs. Dictatorship is born. If the dictator happens to be efficient, people would like his son to take the office. Thus it is the cycle of different governments, which completes its round. How can we say that democracy is the product of the saner self of man? Moreover under democracy people enjoy freedom in name only; freedom of thought is snatched by stuffing the mind with ready-made opinions through press and propaganda. People are fed with distorted information and an attempt is made to blur their vision. Can such people enjoy any freedom of speech? The democratic government moulds their opinions to suit its purpose still they believe that the Government is responding to public opinion. People in power buy votes, intimidate the electorate, make false promises and get elected, still a man in the street believes that he has elected his representatives. Is it not ignorance? Is it not folly? "Lord, what fools these mortals be."

Scientific advancement is another feather in the cap of man. He has harnessed Nature to his advantage, probed the mysteries of space and planets and has made tremendous progress in medical science. With technological progress we hoped to abolish war, poverty, hunger, disease, violence, waste and injustice. But in our effort to do so we have created a perpetual war of nerves, more poverty and hunger by reducing the purchasing power of money, more diseases by polluting the atmosphere and creating a strain, more violence by equipping us with powerful weapons of destruction, and more injustice by justifying it through racial and national superiority. Apart from it science has brought us to the brink of disaster: hydrogen and cobalt bombs will wipe the world out of its existence. Can we call it wisdom? If a creature prepares for its own destruction and claims to have achieved unparalleled triumphs should we call him wise? Similarly science claims to have made man rational, objective and detached. But humanitarianism has gone dry, aesthetic sense has come to an end, affection and love have been banished. Is it wisdom? Mad man leads the blind and we are not coming to any specific state of progress. Wisdom does not lie in knowing the veins in the wings of a fly but in making the veins of human beings stronger. If we reel back to the primitive ages we are fools sans reason.

Since long man has been trying to unravel the mystery that surrounds God, death and soul. We are bandied like a shuttlecock from one idea to another and

ultimately are led in the same wilderness from which they promise to lift us up. Many religious prescriptions have been tried but even the best stood baffled. Despite century-old investigations man's knowledge of God is as insufficient and inaccurate as it was. Death defies logic and what happens after death is still a mystery. Man knows that he is to die as others have died and the useless parade of passions, baseless desire for fame and limitless urge for power are to be rounded up with death. Despite this realisation man ignores the inevitable death. Is it wisdom? Not at all.

"Life is a tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury signifying nothing." Says Shakespeare. If there is no significance of this 'sound and fury' why should we indulge in it so seriously. We take pride in our success, build castles in air and on earth, subdue the enemy, accumulate money-but this pageant of life is unsubstantial and melts away soon. Still we never realise its labyrinth and happily do we demonstrate our involvement. We are so engrossed in its activities that we deliberately delude ourselves into the belief that life is not a vision or a dream. Self-delusion is perhaps the worst form of foolishness. Earthly life is not the terminus, it is merely an inn, a mile-stone of our journey but we never take it to be so.

Foolishness of the mortals has done harm to themselves and not to anyone else. Perhaps it dates back to Adam's folly of tasting the forbidden fruit or it originates in Satan's resolve to challenge the authority of God by fair or foul means. Whatever may be the genesis of the foolery of man it is certain that experience has not made him wiser, otherwise history would have never repeated itself. The adage, "to err is human" clearly spells out the futility of the claims of wisdom; if the steps to progress are still 'hit and trial' method, it is difficult to distinguish man from animals. But man, all his life strives for serenity that "sad lucidity of soul" in which he can catch up the beauty of human spirit.