

Jose Thadavanal
DVK, Bangalore

LIFE AND ITS VALUE PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Most observers of human nature recognize an inner tension in man – the tension between the good and the evil in him, the tension between man's striving for the sublime, on the one hand, and the animal impulses in him that are thought to be part of his evolutionary heritage, on the other. St. Paul, speaking from his own experience, referred to this puzzling phenomenon in his characteristic spiritual language:

I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?¹

Robert Louis Stevenson, in his famous novel *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, expressed the same idea in a more dramatic way. In the novel, Dr. Jekyll speaks of "a perennial war among my members"² which has reference to the co-existence of the good Dr. Jekyll and the monstrous Mr. Hyde within the same person. Stevenson's psychological and moral tale of two mutually-opposing natures existing within the same person, the unresolvable clash between these two natures, and the final solution that was discovered, viz., compartmentalizing the two and giving each its due, has thrilled and inspired millions ever since the creation of this fascinating story.

Among the psychologists who have attempted to analyse human nature, some see man as a bundle of complex animal impulses whereas others view him as a sublime being with a great deal of growth-potential. In between these two groups there are those who,

1. Rom. 7:15, 19, 24.

2. Robert Louis Stevenson, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (New York: Arco Publishing Company, 1964), p. 78.

taking a middle path, hold that human behaviour is almost infinitely malleable. While Sigmund Freud and the psychoanalysts have given us a rather dark and pessimistic picture of man, the humanistic psychologists, taking the opposite position, give an optimistic and positive picture of man. The behaviourists, basing themselves on the principles of learning by conditioning, hold that man is born neither good nor bad; he becomes what he is through *learning*. Here the human mind is viewed as a *tabula rasa*; man makes it good or bad depending on what he does to it. Here one is reminded of the well known statement of John B. Watson, the founder of behaviourism:

Give me a dozen healthy infants, well formed, and my own specified world to bring them up in and I'll guarantee you to take any one at random and train him to become any type of specialist I might select - doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant-chief and, yes, even beggar-man and thief, regardless of his talents, penchants, tendencies, abilities, vocations, and race of his ancestors.³

Rousseau, taking a similar position more than two centuries ago, believed that human nature is basically good; it is the environment that makes man bad. Referring to man's ability to corrupt and disfigure things, Rousseau wrote: "Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things; everything degenerates in the hands of man . . . He turns everything upside down; he disfigures everything . . ." ⁴ B. F. Skinner, the most prominent spokesman of behaviourism in contemporary psychology, has vigorously argued that through the application of operant conditioning techniques we can create the ideal society.⁵ His method, known as "social engineering," consists mostly of reinforcing or rewarding socially desirable behaviour through an elaborate system of incentives and rewards. While Watson's behaviourism emerged as a "scientist's revolt against the then prevalent psychodynamic psychologies, the humanistic

3. John B. Watson, *Behaviorism* (Rev. ed.) New York : W.W. Norton, 1930 p. 104.
4. Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile or On Education* (ET: Allan Bloom) (New York: Basic Books, 1979), p. 37.
5. Burrhus Frederic Skinner, *Science and Human Behaviour* (New York : Macmillan, 1953), *Walden Two* (New York : Macmillan, 1948), *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (London : Penguin, 1973).

psychology of Abraham H. Maslow and others developed as a reaction against the other two systems, and so is known as the "third force" in American psychology.

I

The Pessimistic Outlook of Psychoanalysis and Ethology on Life and its Value

The most prominent among those who have painted a dark and pessimistic picture of man is undoubtedly Sigmund Freud. Freud is said to have "revolutionized" man's understanding of himself with his penetrating insights and revolutionary theories. Psychoanalysis, the psychological system that Freud developed, fell upon the world like a bomb, and the shock it created was so tremendous that many thought that under its impact the whole human society and many of its values, traditions, and institutions would undergo drastic changes. Freud's theories, which he developed and modified during a long career of nearly fifty years, are based on the observations he made in his clinical practice and the insights he derived from them. Naturally, many fault him with the adoption of the wrong methodology because his theories are the fruit of case studies in psychopathology, and not the result of analysing the life and thought-pattern of normal, mentally-healthy people.

The cornerstone of psychoanalysis is the concept of *unconscious motivation*, and the major tenet of this system is *determinism*. Although the existence of an unconscious in man was postulated even before Freud, it was Freud who, with his many detailed studies of the human psyche, firmly established this as a serious concept. Freudian determinism is the belief that our behaviour is strictly determined by forces that are beyond the control of our conscious mind. That is to say, our behaviour is determined by a preceding cause, which is a mental cause, and usually unconscious in nature. As mentioned earlier, Freudian theories and principles are in the form of postulates. As his theories and conclusions are not based on experiments, they can not be directly proved. In other words, since his theories can not be validated experimentally, one may either accept them or reject them. His idea of causation is one such general principle which he postulated. In forming the idea of causation Freud was in fact influenced by the developments of his

period. Freud lived and worked at a period when giant strides were made in the natural sciences. The principles of causation and determinism are important in the natural sciences. Naturally, Freud, as he believed in the evolution of the human mind and believed that man is part of the animal kingdom, assumed that human behaviour is no exception to the general principle of causation.

Freud held that even those things which seem to be nothing more than accidental happenings and therefore irrelevant in revealing a person's personality, such as slips of tongue and dreams, are in fact determined by hidden factors in the person's mind. Hence much of our behaviour is determined by unconscious motivation. This would imply a denial of human free will because even when we think that a certain act, word, thought, or decision is based on our free choice, Freud could demonstrate that it is the result of some hidden, uncontrollable factors in our mind and say that it was determined by unconscious motivation. Freudian determinism, therefore, robs man of his autonomy and dignity as it makes him a mere "slave" of forces that are beyond his control. In the Freudian scheme, the mind resembles an iceberg. Just as the visible part of the iceberg is comparatively small. So also the influence of the conscious mind on the behaviour of the person is relatively unimportant. The conscious mind, which corresponds to the larger but submerged part of the iceberg, forms the bulk of the human psyche. Its influence on the human person is far greater than the influence of the conscious mind. As the unconscious is *dynamic* in nature, it actively influences the person at all times - in his waking state as well as in his sleep. Man, therefore, is never free from the tyrannical influence of the unconscious on him.

Freudian pansexualism depicts man as constantly craving for instinctual gratification - directly and indirectly, and from birth to old age and death. As against the "psychosocial" development postulated later on by Erik H. Erikson and others, Freud saw man's development in terms of "psychosexual" development. Freud theorized *sex* and *aggression* as the two basic instincts that hold sway over the whole of human behaviour. Mental energy, asserted Freud, is sexual energy. He called this energy *libido*. And the price man had to pay for the creation of civilization and culture was the control of his sexual and aggressive impulses. Since the individual who

represses these two basic instincts would end up as a neurotic, neurosis is the price man has to pay for the development of civilization and culture.

Yet another unfortunate thing about the Freudian view of man is that, through his theory of infantile sexuality Freud put sex even into the life of the infant. Freud's conceptualization of the oral, anal, phallic, and latency stages in the development of an individual, with their numerous implications and complications, have been highly controversial. Even the contention that repressed impulses, especially repressed sexual impulses, are at the root of all neuroses has been much disputed. According to Freud, all satisfaction is sexual satisfaction, and the focus for this gratification moves from one body zone to another as the individual grows up. Thus, during the first year of its life the focus of gratification for the child is primarily the mouth, and the anal region dominates as the focus for gratification during ages one to three years. The oral and anal forms of gratification are substitutes for the real gratification which is sexual gratification and will take place only later in life. Christianity and the other world religions as well as all sound-minded persons see the child as the embodiment of innocence and beauty. Freud, on the other hand, saw in the child a "miniature adult" craving to "gratify" the adult cravings in substitute forms. Even the child's relationships with his parents, according to Freud, are governed by such curious and controversial things as *Oedipus complex* and *castration complex*. In the eyes of many, such theories reflect nothing but a distorted understanding of humans and human nature.

In formulating his theories, Freud was influenced by the developments in 19th century physics and biology, especially the Darwinian theory of evolution. Accordingly, he regarded man primarily as a complex energy system which endeavours to accomplish three things, viz., survive individually, propagate the species, and climb the ladders of evolutionary progress through transactions with the external world which includes, also, other human beings. Freud viewed man as a closed energy system which maintains its mental 'economy' through a series of checks and balances through which an equilibrium is maintained in the psychic apparatus. For instance, when the sexual energy or *libido* builds up in the organism it is given an outlet through the appropriate action, word, thought, dream,

or other means. When the release of energy is blocked either due to social constraints or due to individual inadequacy, the person becomes a victim of psychopathology.

As mentioned elsewhere, the Freudian view of human nature is *dynamic*. It assumes that the whole of human behaviour is the result of the interaction of the two basic instincts or basic drives in man – the *life instincts* and the *death instincts*. The life instincts are the creative forces in man. They are largely sexual in nature. The energy at the service of these instincts Freud called *libido*. The death instincts are the destructive energy in man. When the death instincts are self-oriented, the result is a "death wish," the urge to annihilate oneself and return to the original state of inorganic matter. When the death instincts are other-oriented, the result will be *aggression*. Empirical evidence for his theory of instincts is scanty. However, Freud, as usual, formulated these theories as a result of the insights he got from his acquaintance with the thoughts of other thinkers. Regarding the development of his theory of instincts, Freud says: "In what was at first my utter perplexity, I took as my starting-point a saying of the poet-philosopher, Schiller, that 'hunger and love are what moves the world.'"⁶

The psychoanalytic assumption that all human behaviour is determined by psychic energy and early childhood experiences has evoked much controversy. The influence of critical life events during the formative childhood years upon the later behaviour of the person is a major psychoanalytic position. A person's personality, held Freud, is determined by the time he is five years old. Freud traced many of the current problems of an adult to his childhood experiences and conflicts, especially experiences of a traumatic nature. Many of the early childhood experiences become part of one's unconscious mind, "moving" the person to behave in a manner so "irrational" that he himself may be at a loss in understanding the "why" of his behaviour.

Reviewing these theories one should say that the Freudian view of human nature, of life and its value, is one-sided and pessimistic. Freud could see man only from the angle of a materialistic world

6. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, The Standard Edition, James Strachey (ET) (New York: W.W. Norton, 1961), p. 64.

view. As his theories originated from the influence on him of such materialistic traditions as classical empiricism, the Enlightenment, and 19th century physics and biology, especially Darwinian evolutionism, probably nothing better or nothing higher could be expected from him. Taking man as part of the animal world, Freud postulated that the same basic drives of sex and aggression that govern animal behaviour are responsible for human behaviour as well. His inability to see man as a higher-order being, distinct from the animal kingdom and equipped with an intellect and a free will, probably "forced" him to assume that human actions are governed by the same laws that govern the behaviour of animals. Freud saw man only as a "biological" animal, he failed to see the "social" animal in him. That is to say, Freud failed to see the role of society and social forces, religion, and other social, political, religious, and human values in shaping human behaviour. He, again, failed to see man's creativity and the inherent urge to grow and actualize his potentialities. In these and many other ways, therefore, Freud demeaned the dignity of the human person and reduced him to the level of a mere beast whose only aim in life is the avoidance of pain and the gaining of pleasure. Thus, according to Freud, the only aim and purpose of life is the gaining of pleasure. As he put it, "... what decides the purpose of life is simply the programme of the pleasure principle. This principle dominates the operation of the mental apparatus from the start."⁷ It is a pity that Freud does not attribute to life any other higher motives-supernatural or natural.

Even the origin of the social order Freud explained in terms of sex and patricide. In *Totem and Taboo*⁸ Freud suggested that the head of each primitive horde was the tyrannical male, the "father," who possessed or "owned" all the females in the horde or tribe. The despotic primal "father" thus prevented his sons from having sexual gratification, and the fear arising from the actual or imaginary threat of being castrated by the "father" always haunted them. Even the death of the father did not offer the sons any hope because

7. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

8. Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*. In James Strachey (Ed.), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), Vol. 13.

at the father's death the youngest son took over as the tyrannical "father," and the same process continued. The frustrated and angry males finally rose in revolt against the "father" and killed him. The guilt of patricide forced the males to view the murdered father as *totem* and all the females inside the horde as *taboo*. As a result, murder was forbidden, and so was incest. They organized a brotherhood of all males, abolishing the tyrannical rule of the "father" for ever. Each male became the head of his own family, and this, according to Freud, is the beginning of society. Freud also asserted that culture meant inhibition and restraint. Restraining the two basic impulses of sex and aggression was the price man had to pay for the development of civilization and culture. When these impulses were held under restraint, psychopathology started. According to Freud, therefore, neuroses and the origin of the social order are closely related. Freud observed: "We can not escape the conclusion that neuroses could be avoided... if the child's sexual life were allowed free play, as happens among many primitive races."⁹ That is why a barbarian finds it very easy, in the words of Freud, "to be healthy, for a civilized man the task is a hard one."¹⁰ Every person, wrote Freud, desires to have a powerful and uninhibited ego, but "it is in the profoundest sense antagonistic to civilization."¹¹ Freud held that the biological character of the human species, viz., the prolonged dependence of the child on its parents, plays a role in the etiology of the neuroses because it is during this period that the family teaches the child to restrain his drives as a pre-condition for living in society.¹²

Freud was extremely antagonistic to the idea of God and religion. Since Freud's philosophy of life was materialistic and atheistic, God and religion had no place in the psychological system that he developed. So he approached the subject of religion with prejudice, and his attack on religion was vitriolic. Regarding religion as an "illusion," Freud held that underneath every religious feeling is a

9. Sigmund Freud, *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1949) p. 114.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*

craving for power and protection.¹³ He also depicted religion as a universal neurosis, and the believers as neurotics. Branding religion as an illusion, Freud attempted to tell the "true story" behind it. He held that religion has its roots in the ignorance and fear of primitive man. Freud argued that when he encountered the terrors of nature, primitive man experienced fear and helplessness. Out of this anxiety and helplessness he "invented" the idea of god and religion as a source of power and protection.¹⁴ Thus, when faced with a threatening universe, the primitive man comforted himself by shielding himself with the "power" of an "illusion" which in fact is nothing but the creation of his own unconscious mind. Since people have experienced in their vulnerable and helpless childhood years, and also in their adolescent years, the nurturing care and protection of their parents whom they perceive as loving, omniscient, and omnipotent, they imagine god as a superparent who will extend to them safety and security in a threatening universe. Thus man creates an imaginary deity, a divine father-figure, and surrenders himself before that "supreme power" with the belief that his safety and security are now assured and that all his needs will now be met. According to Freudian assumptions, people believe in gods expecting three things from them, viz., protection from the terrors of nature, the ability to get oneself reconciled with the cruelty of Fate, and receiving compensation for the sufferings which men have to endure in this life. Freud added that the believers regarded religion as a source of knowledge and in this regard religion competes with science.

Freud saw in religious feelings elements of regression to childhood - the desire to return to and live in the happy world of childhood again, loved and protected by a loving, omniscient, and omnipotent father-figure. In its early years the child is in the grip of narcissism which gives the child a feeling of omnipotence. As he grows up, he discovers that it is not he but his parents who are omnipotent. However, there reappears in him the need to feel omnipotent again which, he thinks, could be accomplished through

13. Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*. In James Strachey (Ed.), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: Hogarth Press, 1961), Vol. 21.

14. Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (*op.cit.*), *Civilization and Its Discontents* (*op.cit.*), *Moses and Monotheism*. In James Strachey (Ed.), *The Standard Edition*, Vol. 23.

a reunion with the omnipotent. Hence he creates deities. Through a *union* with the deity he gets the feeling of *power*; by *surrendering* himself to the deity he obtains for himself the *protection* and *nurturing love* of an omnipotent father-figure. Thus ultimately the religious man, through a regression to childhood, ensures for himself again the "good old happy days" where he enjoyed parental love and protection. According to psychoanalytic theory, therefore, religions are created to serve the purpose of fulfilling certain basic *psychological needs* of man as well as to ward off *anxiety*. Hence Freud's assertion that all religions are based on the "illusion" that there is a deity who is a loving father, who will love and protect all the members of the group as a father loves his children.

Is man a born killer, or is his aggression the result of learning and provocation? In other words, is man's aggression biologically determined or is it socially induced? Of late, some psychologists and distinguished ethologists¹⁵ have started viewing man as innately aggressive. Aggression, they argue, is part of his genes - it is not learned, nor can this trait be removed from human nature. Pointing out that man is the only animal who kills *systematically*, they contend that man is *inherently* a killer. Again, man is the only animal who kills members of one's own species on a large scale. Ethologists like Konrad Lorenz¹⁶ Desmond Morris,¹⁷ and Robert Ardrey¹⁸ argue that man is innately a killer, that the aggressive drive in him is "fixed" because it is part of his evolutionary heritage. According to this view, the reason why man cannot control his aggressive behaviour is that it is a deep-seated instinct in him. Whether man is provoked or not, this instinct will seek expression through aggressive behaviour. Aggression, therefore, is not learned, nor is it the product of environment; it is built into the very system of man and animal. Man has always been an aggressive animal and he will continue to be so; no amount of education, or social, political, or economic reforms, or other forms of environmental manipulation can remove it from him, argue these ethologists.

15. Ethology is related to psychology in that both study the *behaviour* of man and animals.

16. Konrad Lorenz, *On Aggression* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966).

17. Desmond Morris, *The Naked Ape: A Zoologist's Study of the Human Animal* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967).

18. Robert Ardrey, *The Territorial Imperative* (New York: Dell, 1971).

A special feature of the contemporary ethological views of man is that it attempts to explain man's behaviour in terms of his evolutionary past. Man's behaviour, accordingly, is judged in the light of its "survival value" and other evolutionary concepts. Recognizing a continuity with the animal world in man's body and physiology, these investigators also identify a similarity between animal behaviour and human behaviour. In animals, however, there is a built-inhibitive mechanism to prevent aggression against one's own species. Since man was not equipped with great teeth, claws, or horns like other animals, originally there was little need for such an inherent inhibitive mechanism in man. However, when man, with scientific and technological development, acquired the power for mass-destruction of his own species, the absence of an inhibitive mechanism in him proved to be fatal. What is worst is that, in the case of man, there takes place a more deadly form of aggression than fighting between individuals - fighting between groups - which results in the death of thousands or millions of people as in wars. It is also pointed out that in most cases of aggression, reason and free will are of no power in directing man's behaviour; it is rather the instinct that totally controls his behaviour. According to these ethologists, therefore, there is only one explanation for man's aggressiveness, viz., the *evolutionary explanation* which holds that it is an innate behaviour. Since man has more or less conquered his enemies in nature, including the animals, the instinctive aggressive drive in him forces him to see other human beings as the major threat to his safety and security and happiness. This explains why man's aggressive urge and the 'survival value' inherent in it usually makes other human beings its target. Thus man's evolutionary heritage makes him prone to a 'fixed action' like aggression, the common target of which is neither animals nor nature but human beings themselves. Man, therefore, has an aggressive heritage in the sense that he has acquired it through his genes and the aggressiveness in him is controlled by his brain structures and brain functions as it was revealed through the electrical stimulation of the *limbic system* of the human brain in the laboratory. Electrical stimulation of this part of the brain leads to aggressive outbursts in man and animal. Critics of the above theory, however, worry that if aggression against other humans is really a part of human nature and if it is constantly seeking expression in individual and mass actions of destruc-

tion of human life, then the future of the human race is bleak ; mankind has little hope of survival.

II

The Positive Outlook on Life: Humanistic Psychology

With regard to their outlooks on man, psychoanalysis and humanistic psychology are poles apart. If psychoanalysis and ethology present a pessimistic picture of human nature, at the other end of the spectrum are those schools and movements in psychology which view man positively and optimistically and see him as an organism with immense growth-potential. The humanistic movement, often referred to as the "third force" in American psychology, has today become a force to be reckoned with. It aims at liberating the study of man from the clutches of the other two "forces," viz., behaviourism and psychoanalysis. The pioneers of humanistic psychology are Kurt Goldstein, Abraham H. Maslow, Charlotte Bühler, Carl R. Rogers, Roberto Assagioli, and others. Psychologists like Gordon W. Allport, Harry Stack Sullivan, Rollo May, R. D. Laing, Fritz Perls, Erik H. Erikson, Erich Fromm, Karen Horney, Viktor Frankl, and others also have contributed significantly to the origin and development of humanistic psychology and the human potential movement. Growth-oriented themes are an important aspect of the writings of Jung and Adler as well. Gestalt Psychology, Existential psychology, and Transactional Analysis are other modern systems which have a positive outlook on man.

These schools over and over again emphasize the primacy of the person and the uniqueness and the infinite value of every individual. The healthy, fully - functioning person lives happily and fully aware of the richness of his experience. Life is experienced as fresh and rich every day. The person finds fulfilment in acts of love, kindness, creativity, and so on. He strives for values like truth, beauty, justice, and so on. A fully actualized person has a sense of oneness with humanity - he takes as his own the joys and sorrows, and the gains and losses of humanity. Unlike in the psychoanalytic and ethological models, persons are seen as capable of acting with responsibility; they know how to make responsible use of their freedom and choice; they do not behave merely as slaves of unconscious motivation or certain innate instincts.

Most of these schools acknowledge the primacy of *experience*. Carl Rogers, for example, emphasizing the centrality of experience in man's life, wrote:

It is to experience that I must return again and again; to discover a closer approximation to truth as it is in the process of becoming in me. Neither the Bible nor the prophets – neither Freud nor research – neither the revelation of God nor man – can take precedence over my own direct experience.¹⁹

Rogers thus gives paramount importance to one's own experience and regards it as the basic source of truth. Accordingly, the other acknowledged sources of truth like religion, culture, custom and tradition, dogma, and moral and ethical systems may not always serve as the right basis for determining truth. These traditional sources of truth may betray man, but his own *experience* will never betray him. The "core assertions" of Rogerian and other humanistic systems are, therefore, strongly experiential, individualistic, and relativistic. Echoing the same old Protagorean humanistic position, it implicitly and explicitly states: *experience* is the measure of all things.²⁰ We shall now briefly discuss the wholeness – oriented vision of some of the leading figures in this area.

Undoubtedly the most eloquent advocate of the concept of the immense growth-potentialities in man is Abraham H. Maslow. Maslow's psychology, a typical example of *humanistic psychology*, has contributed greatly to the human potential movement. Through his many writings, especially through the two influential works, *Motivation and Personality*²¹ and *Toward a Psychology of Being*,²² Maslow has worked tirelessly to free psychology from the pathological model of psychoanalysis and the mechanomorphic model of behaviourism. Describing behaviourism and psychoanalysis as the

-
19. Carl R. Rogers, *On Becoming a Person* (Boston, MA.: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), pp. 23-24.
 20. Cf. Paul C. Vitz, *Psychology as Religion: The Cult of Self-Worship* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1977).
 21. Abraham H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper, 1954).
 22. Abraham H. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, 2nd ed. (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1968).

first two forces, Maslow calls humanistic psychology as the "third force" in American psychology, meant to add the holistic and the creative dimensions which the other two systems badly lack.

Maslow considers the emergence of the humanistic trend in psychology as a great revolution, with significant and far-reaching positive results for humanity. He considers it as "a revolution in the truest, oldest sense of the word, the sense in which Galileo, Darwin, Einstein, Freud, and Marx made revolutions...."²³ Maslow is convinced that this new Weltanschauung will lead to "...effective, virtuous, satisfying work which can give rich meaning to one's own life and to others."²⁴ What's more, Maslow sees signs of the humanistic psychology progressing into a still higher realm. He finds in the new developments, a still "higher" Fourth Psychology, the transpersonal or transhuman psychology, the hope of the future.²⁵ Maslow contends that since the new theories are offering a new vision of man, of his capacities, potentialities, and goals, we can expect new results because they are based on new conceptions of human nature and new ways of helping him become what he can become and what he needs to become.²⁶

One significant aspect of Maslow's research is that his conclusions and theories are based on studies of healthy models, not sick persons. Maslow criticizes psychology, especially psychoanalysis, for adopting the wrong line in the study of man. Psychology, according to him, has popularized a pessimistic, negative, and limited conception of man. Psychology has thoroughly explored the weaknesses and pathologies of man but it has unforgivably failed to study man's strengths, creativity, and immense growth-potential. Psychology saw man primarily as a sick, crippled, stunted, and "bad" organism, thereby failing to pay attention to the numerous positive qualities and possibilities in him. Maslow laments that "Contemporary psychology has mostly studied not-having rather than having, striving rather than fulfillment, frustration rather than gratification...."²⁷ To correct this deficiency, Maslow took upon

23. Abraham H. Maslow (1968), *op. cit.*, Preface, p. iii.

24. *Ibid.*

25. See *ibid.*, pp. iii-iv

26. Abraham H. Maslow (1968), *op. cit.*, p. 189.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

himself the onerous task of investigating the healthy personalities Maslow's ideal human beings are the self-actualizing persons. Maslow's psychology, therefore, is a "health-and-growth psychology,"²⁸ a "growth-and-self-actualization psychology,"²⁹ a "positive psychology,"³⁰ "orthopsychology" of the future,³¹ or "Being-psychology"³² because it "deals with fully functioning and healthy human beings and not alone with normally sick ones."³³

Maslow arranges man's needs in a hierarchical order. At the lower level are the *basic needs* or the *D values* (Deficiency Values) such as hunger, thirst, safety and security, love and belongingness self-esteem and esteem by others, and so on. At the higher level are the *metaneeds* or *B Values* (Being values) such as goodness, justice, beauty, order, unity, truth, aliveness, perfection, completion, simplicity, and meaningfulness. The metaneeds are growth needs and they lead to self-actualization. Once the lower needs have been met, the person proceeds up the ladder of motives to higher needs until he finally reaches the stage of self-actualization. According to Maslow, *all life is a striving toward its higher reaches*. Inherent in every living organism, most of all man, is the *growth e'lan*, the vital force from within that causes in the organism the impetuous onrush toward actualizing all its potentialities. Maslow stated that

Man demonstrates *in his own nature* a pressure toward fuller and fuller Being, more and more perfect actualization of his humanness in exactly the same naturalistic, scientific sense that an acorn may be said to be "pressing toward" being an oak tree, or that a tiger can be observed to "push toward" being tigerish, or a horse toward being equine.³⁴

Maslow always believed in "the existence of the highest values within human nature itself, to be discovered there."³⁵ Since all the

28. *Ibid.*, p. 215.

29. *Ibid.* pp. 189-214.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Ibid.*

34. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 170.

higher values are there in man's intrinsic nature, argued Maslow, society or culture do not have to teach him these values; merely allowing these values to develop naturally in him is sufficient. The so-called "evil behaviour" appears only when the natural unfolding or growth of man's intrinsic nature, which is basically good, is blocked or frustrated.³⁶

Now, who is a healthy, integrated person? Maslow gives the following as the objective characteristics of the healthy person:

1. Clearer, more efficient perception of reality.
2. More openness to experience.
3. Increased integration, wholeness, and unity of the person.
4. Increased spontaneity, expressiveness; full functioning; aliveness.
5. A real self; a firm identity; autonomy, uniqueness.
6. Increased objectivity, detachment, transcendence of self.
7. Recovery of creativeness.
8. Ability to fuse concreteness and abstractness.
9. Democratic character structure.
10. Ability to love, etc.³⁷

If the goal of life is self-actualization or Becoming, then the zenith of self-actualization generates in man the unique and most wonderful experiences that Maslow calls "peak experiences." A peak experience is the result of the culmination of the actualization of B-values or Being-values. Peak experiences allow the person to experience within himself the fulness of humanity and even transcend it. Maslow describes the profound intensity, depth, and significance of a peak experience as follows:

Of course, being in a state of Being needs no future, because it is already *there*. Then Becoming ceases for the moment and its promissory notes are cashed in the form of the ultimate rewards, i. e., the peak-experiences, in which time disappears and hopes are fulfilled.³⁸

36. *Ibid.*, pp. 167-70; 160-61.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 157.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 214.

Maslow further observes that

The peak-experience is only good and desirable, and is never experienced as evil or undesirable. The experience is intrinsically valid; the experience is perfect, complete and needs nothing else.... It is just as good as it *should* be. It is reacted to with awe, wonder, amazement, humility and even reverence, exaltation and piety....³⁹

Another important representative of the growth-and-wholeness model is the Italian psychiatrist Roberto Assagioli. Although Assagioli began his career as one of the pioneers of Freudianism in Italy, he soon became disillusioned with the pathologism of psychoanalysis. Assagioli admits that the study of the psychopathological aspects of human nature has contributed greatly to the diagnosis and treatment of psychiatric disorders,⁴⁰ but the problem with Freud is that he totally neglected the higher reaches, the positive and growth-oriented dimensions, of human nature.⁴¹ To compensate for this shortcoming of the Freudian system, Assagioli developed a comprehensive psychology of the human person, known as *psychosynthesis*. Assagioli argues that psychosynthesis and similar systems as developed by Allport, Angyal, Fromm, Jung, Maslow, May, Proffoff, Rank, and others must be seen as a healthy reaction against the morbid aspects of Freudianism.⁴²

Assagioli believes that the drive towards growth, integration, and wholeness is a basic and normal urge of the human personality. He observes that man's inner powers are constantly seeking development, and then goes on to state that only through a development of his inner powers can man offset the dangers inherent in his "losing control of the tremendous forces at his disposal and becoming the victim of his own achievements."⁴³ Psychosynthesis has spiritual roots and it is very spiritual in its outlook and approach. Assagioli stated that while Freud was concerned only with an exploration of the basement of the human

39. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

40. Roberto Assagioli, *Psychosynthesis* (New York: Penguin, An Esalen Book, 1976), p. 35.

41. *Ibid.*

42. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

43. Roberto Assagioli, *The Act of will* (Baltimore, MD; Penguin, 1974), p. 6.

being, his concern was to develop all levels, especially the higher levels of the human building. His concern was the synthesis of all areas of personality. Hence, Assagioli insisted that the need for higher values, and for a spiritual life are as essential as the need for biological and social fulfilment.

Ideas of growth, fulfilment, and self-actualization abound in the writings of Carl Jung. Criticizing the pathological model of Freud, Jung stated that it is far more important to focus on the healthy, creative side of man. Jung said: "I prefer to look at man in the light of what in him is healthy and sound... Freud's teaching is definitely one-sided... Freud's is not a psychology of the healthy mind."⁴⁴ "A psychology of neurosis that sees only the negative elements," observed Jung, "empties out the baby with the bath-water."⁴⁵ Jung argues that life is growth-oriented, that in all human beings there is an inherent drive, a natural urge, toward wholeness, fulfilment and realization. He recognized that "The driving force... seems to be in essence only an urge toward self-realization."⁴⁶ Our task in this world, according to Jung, is just to do the things that will facilitate and speed up this natural process of developing the inherent potentialities and reaching the fulness of life. This process of actualizing one's potentialities and becoming one's own self was called by Jung as "individuation". In his own words, individuation could be translated as "coming to selfhood" or 'self - realization'.⁴⁷

Jung, however, was unhappy about the way people handled the great inherent potential in them. He believed that most people are actually not utilizing their potentialities, and are in fact carelessly wasting their inherent possibilities. He stated that "The art of life is the most distinguished and rarest of all arts... For so many people all too much un-lived life remains over..."⁴⁸ Jung, consequently,

44. Carl G. Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1933), p. 117.

45. *Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, Princeton, N. J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1967-), 16: 355.

46. Carl G. Jung, *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology* (New York: World, 1958), pp. 193-94.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 182.

48. Carl G. Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (*op. cit.*), pp. 110-111.

claimed that neurosis or psychopathology develops in a person only as a result of his resources remaining undeveloped.⁴⁹

Alfred Adler, placing man in the midst of a complex social setting, argued that man's behaviour is controlled by social forces and a powerful forward thrust, and not by inborn instincts. A major thesis of Adler's is that man constantly strives for superiority. This is the final goal of all life and this gives consistency and unity of purpose to all the actions of man. Adler, however, clarifies that 'superiority,' as it is used by him here, does not imply personal or social dominance or acquiring power, position, or prestige. 'Superiority' for Adler implies a striving for wholeness, for perfection, for self-actualization, for the complete realization of one's inherent potentialities. It is "the great upward drive" that seeks its fulfilment in becoming all that one is capable of becoming. Adler, describing this most fundamental urge in man, wrote: "The impetus from minus to plus never ends. The urge from below to above never ceases.... all these are but vague representations, attempts to express the great upward drive."⁵⁰

III

Actualizing Human Wholeness: A Sure Way to Enhance the Value of Life

In psychology, therefore, we find the clash between the pathological - mechanomorphic ethic, on the one hand, and the wholeness - self - actualization ethic, on the other. The wholeness psychologists contend that Freud gave us the sick half of psychology.⁵¹ Unless the healthy half is supplied, and emphasized properly, our notion of human beings will be both incomplete and inaccurate.⁵² Evaluating the pathology perspective versus the growth - and - wholeness perspective, one gets the impression that the former is rigid and incomplete, and has many flaws, whereas the latter is

49. See *Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, Princeton, N. J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1967), 16: 355.

50. Alfred Adler, "Individual Psychology." In C. Murchison (Ed.), *Psychologies of 1930* (Worcester, Mass.: Clark Univ. Press, 1930), p. 398.

51. Abraham H. Maslow (1968), *op. cit.*, p. 5.

52. *Ibid.*

open, optimistic, and more hope-oriented. *The growth-and-wholeness perspective supplies a forward thrust to human existence.* With the emergence of the humanistic orientation, a new frontier has been opened for man's living. This involves man's becoming aware of his immense developmental potential and the vigorous efforts to actualize these potentials in every realm of life.

Nature has deposited in man a spark. Man must keep fanning it so that the spark will grow into a flame of vital energy and vigorous creativity. Among all the animals man alone is incomplete, but nature has equipped man with the capacity to complete himself. The evolution of the body has more or less come to an end; it is the mind that is to evolve further now. The achieving of human wholeness, therefore, will be done through the growth in the person's mental and intellectual capacities. This has to be achieved in the context of the existential situation of man which is summed up by Ira Progoff as follows: "Man walks forward confidently toward ever new achievements, and all the while a sword of destruction is dangling over his head while a volcano of disturbance is slumbering within him."⁵³ As Erik H. Erikson notes, our culture is passing through a stage of collective identity crisis. Industrial revolution, world-wide communication, standardization, and mechanization threaten the identities that man has inherited from Previous generations for centuries, upsetting the inner equilibrium of man.⁵⁴ All these produce anxiety in him, and expressions of these are seen in the form of collective panics and in afflictions of the collective mind.⁵⁵ It is in this context that man requires a collective effort to save himself.

The only "projects" that can save man are those that aim at actualizing human wholeness. *Actualizing human wholeness must be seen as a sure way to enhance the value of life.* Efforts must be made, therefore, on individual and collective bases, to accomplish the above goal. Since pathology occurs out of un-lived lives and unused resources in man, every effort must be made to remedy

53. Ira Progoff, *Depth Psychology and Modern Man*, (New York: The Julian Press, 1959 and 1969), p. 4.

54. Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 2nd edn. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963), pp. 412-13.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 413.

this situation. The three things that can guide man in his quest for growth, wholeness, and self-actualization are *loving and caring*, *authentic values*, and *healthy religion*. Today psychologists prescribe *love* as the panacea to all the miseries of man. Only through love and through establishing caring and loving relationships can man create a new mind and a new body, a new heaven and a new earth. As Stella Terrill Mann has beautifully described, love is the healer of all problems of mankind, including loneliness, poverty, physical illness, spiritual sickness, the sick mind, old age, grief, youthful rebellion, war, and so on.⁵⁶ In fact, the very purpose of life is loving. In the words of Ashley Montagu, "the purpose of becoming and being" is "to live as if to live and love were one."⁵⁷ However, as Erich Fromm argues, loving is an art, and learning to love requires practice and dedication. One must not expect superficial love to do the trick. The love that can come to the aid of humanity is the love at a mature, deeper level.⁵⁸ Similarly, man requires *authentic values* and *healthy religion* to guide him in his pilgrimage to the "sacred shrine" of self-realization and wholeness. As Maslow cautions us, living without a system of values is psychopathogenic.⁵⁹ Maslow continues: "The human being needs a framework of values, a philosophy of life, a religion or religion-surrogate to live by and understand by, in about the same sense that he needs sunlight, calcium or love."⁶⁰ "Humans," agree most thinkers, "are biologically inclined to want to be good and to do good. The desire for virtue and to feel worthwhile is in their genes."⁶¹ Although every human being is recognized as a mysterious blend of the sublime and the mean, the spiritual and the carnal, the trend, today is to focus more on the positive, brighter sides of human life and to think in terms of leading it to its fulness.

Human life, indeed, is such a precious gift that it is a "crime" to waste much, or even a fraction, of it. Most people utilize only

56. Stella Terrill Mann, *Love is the Healer* (London: Harper and Row, 1974).

57. Ashley Montagu (Ed.), *The Practice of Love* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975), Introduction, p. 3.

58. Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving* (New York: Harper, 1956).

59. Abraham H. Maslow (1968), *op. cit.*, p. 206.

60. *Ibid.*

61. "A Summary of the Ethical Proposals of the Sequoyah Institute,"— A Philosophical Analysis of the Sequoyah Institute of Civil Values, Riverside, California: *Darshana International*, 138, Vol. XXXV, April 1995, No. 2, p. 77.

a fraction of their potentialities; they live only a part of their lives. William James, Herbert Otto and others estimate that for most people 90 to 95 percent of life is un-lived and the bulk of their inherent resources are wasted. They are thus treating their lives as a "cheap commodity". As Maslow, Jung, Erikson and others opine, many of the problems in people's lives have their roots in the un-lived lives of themselves. Of course, there are negative forces working in man, but much greater is the power of the creative forces working in him. Actively striving to actualize the inherent potentialities in him is a sure sign that he has taken life positively and seriously. Undoubtedly, it is also one of the most effective means to enhance the value of life.