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“Intersubjectivity As a Dialogue for The Self Realization”

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ABSTRACT:

Philosophically, the Self-Realization is considered as the primary aim of human existence and human life. In this sense, the relationships are an inevitable aspect of self-realization. Human is a ‘being in the world’ at the same time ‘being with others or being with one another’. In our day-to-day life, we are facing different kinds of problems. Through the philosophical way of thinking, we can realize that, the root cause of each problem is our attitude of individual centred or ‘I-centred’. How can we overcome this problem? The answer is ‘Intersubjectivity’. Through the Intersubjective relation between ‘Ourselves’ and ‘the Other’, we can remove the I -centrism from us. Metaphysically, I am neither superior nor inferior to Other human beings and it also implies that Other is neither superior nor inferior to me. Intersubjectivity is the key to know ‘the Other’. It is the human ability to participate in the subjective state of ‘the Other’. In western and eastern traditions, we can see the concept of Self-Realization and the way for attaining it. We are ‘being-in-the-world-with-others’. Realization of ‘the Other’ is the realization of ourselves. Without ‘the Other’, I cannot exist. Interpersonal relations are dialogical in nature. Everyone is ‘the Other’ and no one is himself. I can find myself in the Other. ‘I-centrism’ is a problem, but ‘I am’ not a problem as well as ‘Other-centrism’ is a problem, but ‘the Other’

is not a problem. Through this paper, I try to present the philosophical nature of the 'Other and My Self' and the 'Role of Intersubjectivity to the human existence and Self-realization with special reference to the major thoughts of Gabriel Marcel, Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas.

Key Words: Human as a Being and Becoming, Self- Realization , I-Thou relationship, Intersubjectivity as a Dialogue, Responsibility and philosophy of hope

Introduction:

In this present world, every human being is characterized by dehumanization. Man is very much busy with himself. He has no time for 'the Other'. In this situation, the philosophy of intersubjectivity has a greater role in one's life. Everybody exists in a world of objects. If you seeing each other as an object, then humanity has lost relationships. Here, I-Thou relationship helps us to maintain good relationship through intersubjectivity. The 'Other' has a vital role in the formation of the Self. In other words, Self is formed on the basis of 'the Other'. All types of our personal identities formed on the basis of 'the Other' only. Without 'the Other', 'I' does not exist. Ultimately existence is the problem of human life. His full life and actions are for the existence. Generally, human is considered as a rational being, social being, political being, religious being, cultural being, etc. This differentiation is coming on the basis of their activities of life. But, 'Being' is in everywhere. 'Being' means, anything that is existing in this world. The major difference between human being and other beings is that, human only have consciousness about his consciousness. Actually, human is a being and at the same time, he is a becoming. Because, by born he is a human with a human species body. That body is existing in this world, so we are called him, he is a human being. In other sense, that being is formed through different levels of life by society, culture, education, religion, etc. So, 'the being' is constructed by Other (Other Beings). So, being is a becoming. Human is a being in the world at the same time being with others or being with one another.

The root cause of each problem which we are facing in our day today life is our attitude of individual centred or I-centred. Intersubjectivity is the human ability to participate in the subjective state of 'the Other'. I can understand 'the Other' only if 'the I' and 'the Other' have a common conceptual framework or a common platform. In this life, we have a responsibility. According to Emmanuel Levinas, responsibility as the essential, primary and fundamental structure of subjectivity. For him, responsibility as responsibility for the Other. Our relationship should have openness, reciprocity and deep sense of personal involvement. Human is considered as the supreme object of philosophical enquiry. We need a holistic approach to human life for better future of human existence. It is a dialogical or interrelationship approach between ourselves with 'the Other'. Intersubjectivity with the Other is the remedy to solve all the problems of our life.

Intersubjectivity – A Key To Self Realization

The methodology of philosophy is shifts from factual questions to foundational questions. First, we should observe the facts which we see in our day today life. Then, we should analyse the foundational questions behind the fact.

We can discuss two foundational questions here;

- a) Who am I?
- b) Who are You?

These are two questions but answer is same, that is 'the Other'. In western and eastern philosophy, we can see the notion of Self-Realization. We are being-in-the-world-with-others. Realization of 'the Other' is the realization of ourselves. Man, and his different kinds of problems are central theme of humanistic philosophy. For a humanist, the humanity is the primary concern; he is living and working for the welfare of the whole (general welfare of the entire humanity). Humanism is based on equality, liberty and fraternity. Most of the existentialist thinkers concerned about human existence only. I-

centric attitude is the major problem of human existence. Self-realization is the highest good of life. Actually, all men are commonly share in the same objective world of experience. But every human being is distinct existent. In that sense, everyone's experience is subjective. According to Gabriel Marcel, individuals are distinct from one another as inhabitants of the spatio-temporal world of existence. Again, marcel reveals that 'I' as 'having' and 'I' as 'being'. That means, I, as having a body and other things. More than that, I am rather a being embodied existing in a situation comprising things and 'thou'-s or persons other than my being or myself. This realization brings persons closer to another person and grows a relation of fidelity among one with another. Each person is inseparable from the external world of beings (the objective ground of human existence). We can know, every human being is fundamentally a 'being-in-the-world'. Because of that he or she is inseparably related to all other persons and things of the world. It shows social interdependence of human being and 'the Other'. If a person is always open to other Beings, then he can never be a pure existent. In that context, he is intersubjective with other beings. A human being cannot exist in isolation from the rest of the world; He is being-in-the-world with one another. That means, "exists as a being which is necessarily preoccupied or concerned with 'the Other. Human's very existence is constitutive of his or her necessary relationship with all other persons and things. That means, one can exist only by being concerned with 'the Other'. We should be realizing the truth of existence, 'I am a man among many other human beings. This is the foundation of human intersubjectivity. In that sense, we can say that every human being is like an architect of his own life and other fellow being's existence. 'I' cannot exist apart from the 'Other' which is the condition of my existence in this world. The existence of the 'I' as the subject of 'the Other'. We are attaining our personal identities of this world in the presence of 'the Other'. There is no general human nature. Our all type of natures is constructed by our social relationships through education, religion, culture, race, language etc. That means we are fully conditioned. Human world is a complex one; the minds of each one is different from the other. We are responsible for ourselves and for

others also. We should consider the human race as a whole. Everything has to be humanized means each individual is required to be a human. We should consider our ancestors, present fellow beings and future generations also. So, the intersubjectivity with ‘the Other’ is key to attain Self-realization for everlasting.

I-Thou Relationship as A Dialogue :

The distinction between problem and mystery is the foundation of Gabriel Marcel’s philosophy. According to him, they are opposite each other. All personal realities are mysteries. In the mysteries, to bracket ‘myself’ is impossible. The relationship between ‘I’ and ‘the Other’ is not a problem but that is a mystery. For him, my body is constitutive my inner being, that means my body reveals who ‘I am’. Our body makes us as a being in the world. But, through the deep understanding, we can know ‘the Other’ makes us as a being in the world. Now a days, human beings are often disintegrated and divided on the basis of culture, colour, caste, religion, state, belief and so on ignoring the very fundamental communion between human beings through intersubjectivity. Our self, body and the world are not distinct spheres of life, but they are interrelated. Marcel again reveals, intersubjectivity is basically openness, that openness of one subject to another subject. I-Thou relationship is a way to self-discovery. For instance, if ‘I’ consider ‘the Other’ as a thou, ‘I’ can discover him as a free being, that helps me to discover myself as a free one. Through I-Thou relationship, we reach the idea of ‘We’. In another way, we can say that I-thou is derived from the ‘We’. It is a harmony between ‘I’ and ‘the Other’. The most important characteristics of I-thou relationship is that the ‘I treat thou as I treat myself’. This realization is the self-realization with ‘the Other’. Involvement and commitment are also the characters of I-Thou relationship. According to Martin Buber, I-Thou relationship is the main entrance to the world of inter-personal relationship and the world of authentic individual experience. Without any type of assumptions or preconditions, we should approach our ‘thou’. That means, it should be true dialogue

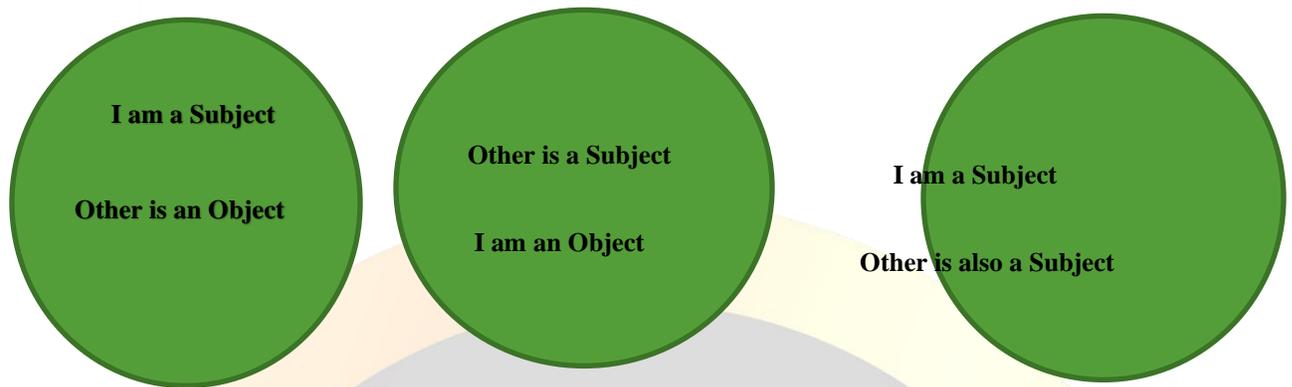
between 'I' and 'the Other'. Here, 'I' and 'Thou' have a shared reality. Buber expressed two types of relationship;

1. I-It relationship (here, one is considering 'the Other' person as a thing)
2. I-Thou relationship (here, one is considering 'the Other' person as a fellow being)

Here, we should think, what is the nature of 'the Other' person in my life? If I consider 'the Other' as 'It' that means, 'I' consider that person with an instrumental value. In other hand, if 'I' consider 'the Other' as 'Thou' that means, 'I' consider the other person with an intrinsic or unique value. In the words of Buber, 'There is no "I" taken in itself, but only the "I" of the primary word "I-Thou" and the "I" of the primary word "I-It". On the basis of this statement, we can say that no human existent taken in itself, but only the existent who constitutes being-with-others before being-in-the-world. 'I-Thou' relation is spoken with the whole being but 'I-It' relation never consider the whole being. I-It relationship concern to do with the satisfaction of some particular need, and that with which we are considered as an instrument only. So, we can say interpersonal relation is dialogical in nature. Emmanuel Levinas criticized traditional ontological view of human existence. 'The Other' is always existing in this world of perception. He says that ethics is the first philosophy. That shows that the ethical level of relationship with 'the Other' comes before the metaphysical level of existence (Being-with-others or Being-with-oneanother is before Being-in-the-world). Here, we can say, we are here because of 'the Other'. Without 'Thou', 'I' does not exist.

Intersubjective relationships are the only solution to all the problems of life; I am a subject to 'the Other', likewise 'the Other' is subject to me also. Here we can see all are subjects only. In this relationship, intersubjectivity helps us to make a bridge between two subjects, I and 'the Other'. For us, 'the Other' is an entrance into this world. Here, the notion of responsibility has a vital role. Self is not 'being-for-myself' but 'being-for-the-other'. So, I am being-for-the other-than-myself.

THREE TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS



On the basis of above diagrams, we can understand, the primary norm of relationship is, there should be a subject. The first diagram shows, I am a subject to the Other, but Other is an object to me. Here, I have attitude of I-centric and consider 'the Other' as a thing which is like an instrument for my existence. In the second diagram shows, Other is subject to me, but I am an object to 'the Other'. In this attitude, 'I' have an inferior position in the presence of 'the Other', 'I' think, I am an instrument for the existence of 'the Other'. The third Diagram is the solution to all the problems of our life; I am a subject to 'the Other', likewise 'the Other' is subject to me also. Here we can see all are subjects only. In this relationship, intersubjectivity helps us to make a bridge between two subjects, I and 'the Other'.

Most of the religious teachings also reveals this type of ethics, we are the keeper of our fellow beings. Love 'the Other' is the foundation of intersubjectivity. Everyone has a responsibility to the Other. But, the contemporary issues of the world show us, people are fighting each other on the basis of religion, caste, culture, belief, traditions, Colour, race, etc. That means, actually we are ignoring about the teachings of Sacred Scriptures. The lack of true knowledge leads us to darkness and consider our fellow being as an enemy. We should concern with 'the Other' prior to any type of activities. Ethics is the practical relationship of one to another. So, this relationship prior to ontology. Because of that, ethics is first philosophy of human existence.

Conclusion:

Today, man has become a stranger to himself. Everybody exists in a world of objects. Every one desires ownership, finding fulfilment in acquiring worldly possessions, priding ourselves of these possessions and seek refuge in them. The culture has taught us how to use the world as for self-gratification. The interaction with possession happens just to meet our fundamental needs. Unfortunately, this mentality has extended to our interpersonal relationships. In seeing each other as an object, humanity has lost relationships. In this situation 'I - Thou' philosophy and Self-realization with 'the Other' has a role to play. There are some social institutions in which I-thou philosophy must be practiced. Among the social institution, family is the basis unit of relationships. It is formulated by the intimate relationships made by members of the family. Nowadays even in a family, the nature of relationship has been changed by the various situations. An intimate and deep relationship was disappeared from the family. For example, parents fail to keep good relation with their sons and daughters. They do not know what their sons and daughters are doing. If this is the situation in family then it is very easy to guess the nature of relationship found in other social institutions such as religion, politics and so on. In every field, human give more priority for his individual satisfaction. The wellbeing of the public is not a matter for them. All these situations must change. It will change only when 'I-Thou' philosophy comes into practical realm. Gabriel Marcel and Martin Buber were made a tremendous leap by bringing personal and dialogical element in philosophy. The philosophy which dealt by Marcel and Buber affect the daily existence of man rather than remaining outside of it. In order to have an authentic communion with other individual, I-Thou relation is a necessary factor. Each individual wants to be independent but he must know that it is only through 'the Other' that he can realize himself. Love is the only factor by which such awareness is created in oneself. Love must be strong so as to promote mutual frankness in the interpersonal communion. Marcel and Buber tried to restore man's dignity as being in the world. According to them, man and society must be guided by the principle of human dignity, respect for the individual and

fraternal love. Buber and Marcel break out of a narrow individualism into a theory of inter-subjectivity. The inter-personal and intersubjective relations of which they speak still tend to be on the intimate and domestic level. They are relations between individuals. We can develop a sense of I- Thou relationship, universal responsibility, caring for others and for the coming generations. Emmanuel Levinas concept of 'the Other' is also shows the need of intersubjectivity or interrelationship. We should consider 'the Other' as a subject, not an object. If we consider 'the Other' as an object to us, then there is some amount of utilitarianism is working. In this world, everything should be subject to us. This shows that intersubjectivity between 'I' and 'the Other' is working there. And also, this shows that each one has a vital role in this universe. In this modern era, we can see the intersubjectivity between 'I' and 'the Other' in different spheres of life. For example, in bio-ethical notions of Blood donation, Kidney transplantaion, etc. That attitude is appreciable. It shows us, we are concerned about our fellow being's life. But we should Change our attitude of 'I-centric'. If it is removed from our life, then present life and future generation can be attaining and lead a happy and peaceful life with their co-existents. Finally, a profound change is possible only if all of us change our mindset. We mistakenly see a difference between Other beings and Ourselves. When we truly understand the 'I-Thou' relationship and intersubjectivity between 'I' and 'the Other' is an important part of our existence, there would be a fundamental shift in our mindset. So, in the light of 'I- Thou' relationship and intersubjectivity principle, we can lead a beautiful life with 'the Other' in this universe. In this sense, we can say that, 'the Other' is a hope of my existence, as well as I am the hope of 'the Other.

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