

MEANING IN LIFE

One of the assets a man possesses, which makes him different from an animal, is a better way of understanding the world around him. Animals do not understand the world in the way human beings do; nevertheless, they manage to live and survive as a species. The intelligence by which the animals are being guided is sufficient for them to survive; the survival instinct is the crown endowment necessary for an animal to live, have the young and to survive.

In the contemporary world we are being born into a functioning social system: parental home, neighbourhood, schools, community frameworks, jobs, government, and so on. We are being taught how to live, how to avoid dangers, we learn a trade or profession, then we have the young, and repeat the Nature-intended cycle. And although our lives are much more complicated than the lives of animals and our civilisation is much more sophisticated than that of the animals, from a certain perspective this difference is really not that big.

Nowhere in the above painted picture of the life of a person has he or she asked why they live this particular life, what is the meaning of their life. So far they have been just fulfilling the Nature's quest, which is to keep the human race alive. And, although many people would object to this notion, the fact is that the lives of these thousands upon thousands of people are mainly guided by their instincts. Some would argue that human beings are more sophisticated than that, that their brains are much larger than that of our animal ancestors, that they have created a complex civilisation, etc. But we need only to recall the colonies of bees, ants and many other species we observe, to conclude that they also have well developed social structures, and perhaps, in some cases, more purposeful and efficient than their human equivalents; they, too, in a sense, live purposeful lives.

Is the human species kingdom really not so different from the animal kingdom? No, we are not that different. First of all the animal dimension of consciousness is the precursor of our dimension of consciousness. So, despite having a greater potential for development than the animals, we always need to remember that our **base behaviour** is animal behaviour. The point of departure between the animal kingdom and us is the human ability of reflective thinking and what we, potentially the superior species, do as a result of possessing this ability. If we do not use the ability of reflective thinking, if we only fight for survival and follow the well threaded paths by past generations—we lead an equivalent of an animal life even if we happen to be well educated, wealthy or capable of using the latest, most sophisticated technology. In this context we lead an animal life, because we do not reflect (we have no time, we do not allow ourselves to have time to reflect or simply we do not wish to reflect) and know why we are here, and what is the purpose of our human life.

The twentieth century scientific work on the capacity of our brain often resulted in statements that human beings use 5 to 10% of their brain capacity; the rest is dormant. Some particular

areas are stimulated in case of special talents, in the genius of music for example, but generally over 90% of the brain capacity remains unused. So, perhaps the mystery of the human superiority over the animal kingdom lies in this remaining 90% dormant capacity of our brains and not necessarily in technological advances, as is generally perceived. And for those who strongly object such a notion that the development of technological gadgets is not necessarily a reflection of superiority of human potential, one could answer that the technological advances, however sophisticated, are and will always remain just tools for the improvement of the quality of life. These tools, however, do not answer important existential questions. Our ancestors have been developing tools from very simple, primitive tools in the Stone Age, through many improvements throughout the ages leading to today's technological machinery and processes. But we cannot perceive these advances in any other way than the development of tools for convenience. There is nothing more to it.

When we are born into our Earth reality, the first task of ours is to absorb everything around us and learn from our parents, families and communities how to live, how to function in many different situations. Religions of the world have served a very important role in providing a moral backdrop to our lives, in giving us a particular worldview, so that we could be equipped not only with tools but also with moral principles for our behaviour. What religions have provided for particular peoples have been serving as a collective worldview at some given time or age. Historically, however, all religious worldviews have, as a rule, degraded with the passage of time. The human intervention, inevitably led by the basic animal forces in the species, has always downgraded the potent original message, which has been woven through all authentic spiritual renewals throughout the history of humanity.

The deteriorating spiritual message always creates havoc among people and nations. Today we are again witnessing the rising power of IGNORANCE, which leaves millions of people confused, angry, aggressive, revengeful, and inevitably leading to a partial destruction of civilisation, which may now happen at any time. When the worldview becomes fragmented, disjointed and ceases to make sense to a lot of people, then the forces of destruction are being unleashed. Where there is no harmony—chaos descends on people, IGNORANCE takes hold and the destruction is at hand. Lessons of the World Wars of the twentieth century are going to be repeated, because this civilisation and its leaders continue to be too immature to understand that they **mistake the means for the goals**, that no matter how sophisticated our technology is, at heart we continue to be not much more than animals. We are not capable of creating a dialectic view of our future as a civilisation of evolving peaceful spiritual beings, which would embrace all people living on the planet. What appears to be the prevailing paradigm for behaviour in many parts of the world today is AGRESSION.

The survival of this civilisation is a very serious matter, which cannot be intelligently dealt with by people who have not passed a kindergarten stage in their psychological development; it cannot be successfully dealt by people who have no ability to reflect and find peaceful solutions—solutions which exist and would benefit the collective of nations, if adopted. If we, as an entire civilisation, could not stop wars in the last 2000 years, this means very clearly that, we did not understand the spiritual meaning of life; we just managed to lead the animal version of a human life. And although technologically increasingly sophisticated, our Piscean civilisation could not stop the cycle of violence; 'the record' of solutions to our problems got

stuck in the 'gramophone' of life at the point of aggression and wars. We have been arrested in our evolutionary development and currently we are not moving forward. So the question remains: what can be done to this seemingly intractable predicament of humanity? Is there any way to save this civilisation and not to continue the mistakes of the past?

Here we come to the issue of understanding the meaning of our lives and of using our unique and purposefully inbuilt capacity of reflective thinking. It is from this point of using our reflective thinking, in order to work for the good of civilisation, that we can become truly human and humane beings. We can embark on a peace searching journey actually envisaged for us as a species in the first place, because we have an inbuilt potential to become divine creators of life and civilisations, and not their destroyers. From the moment of comprehending our purpose of existence and of utilising the reflective thought processes, we can start exercising our abilities to think, feel and empathise with other people and with all sentient beings. In consequence, truly lasting solutions for peace, harmony and wellbeing of all can filter to our conscious thought. But in order to find solutions for a peaceful life we must first answer the question of the meaning of life. And now it is time to create another collective worldview. We need to create our story, and include our dreams, principles, strategies and plans. We must understand why we live and why we make this tremendous effort to go through life, what it means to succeed in life personally and collectively, what are we supposed to gain through life, and what it means to live a good life.

For those interested, there exists a vast store of knowledge left for the future generations by thousands of enlightened human beings living in the past. Every era produced a number of such deeper thinking individuals in many areas of the globe. Our contemporary records start as early as 5000 years ago (or according to some estimates 10,000 years ago) with the earliest Egyptian sacred temple writings. Other early civilisations such as Sumerian, Babylonian and Hindu also left many recorded treasures of human enlightened thought. The message left by the earliest Fathers of rational human thought has been repeated many times by their followers, and renewed again and again, all over the world. There is no shortage of enlightened writings. So far there has only been a shortage of people interested in such writings. And this has been a problem in our past.

No community can survive in a long term without a story, without a worldview, without a spiritual basis of its existence. In every community there can be found people, who are more mature in their thinking than an average person; people, whom others trust; people, who tend to be altruistic and do a lot of work for the common good. These are the people who can lead the community forward, towards increasing blessings of the future for everyone. Those who follow today should not feel discouraged or 'left out'; they can become the leaders of tomorrow; they must use the opportunities presenting themselves to learn from the current wise men and women how to respect all life, how to promote cooperation, cohesiveness and trust in the community, and how to teach others to become leaders afterwards.