

## E. F. SCHUMACHER: A GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED

"Man lives in the world."

### FOUR GREAT TRUTHS

#### (I) Great Truth about 'The World':

*The world is a hierarchical structure with at least four great Levels of Being (Ch 2):*

- (1) Mineral:  $m$  (matter)
- (2) Plant  $m + x$  (life)
- (3) Animal  $m + x + y$  (consciousness)
- (4) Man  $m + x + y + z$  (self-awareness)

We can destroy but not create  $x$ ,  $y$  and  $z$ .

#### Progressions between these (Ch 3):

From passivity to activity: physical cause - stimulus - motive - will

From necessity to freedom (inner space)

Towards integration and unity (creation of inner space)

From visibility to invisibility

This hierarchy is open-ended and suggests the possibility of higher Levels still.

#### (II) Great Truth about 'Man' - his equipment wherewith to meet 'the world':

The principle of 'adequateness' (*adaequatio*) (Chs 4,5), ie,

*The understanding of the knower must be adequate to the thing to be known.*

Bodily and intellectual senses (required for appreciation); what we perceive depends on the *faith* we bring to our observations. The challenge of life is to grow in *adaequatio* (and so, faith) which liberates the soul, enabling us to behold the higher Levels. (Ch 4)

'Science for understanding' ('wisdom') leads to enlightenment and liberation; sees nature as mother.

'Science for manipulation' ('science') leads to power; sees nature as enemy (Ch 5)

#### (III) Great Truth about man's way of learning about the world:

*The Four Fields of Knowledge* comparable to the four Levels of Being.

Combine two pairs: 'I' and 'the World' (including you)

'Outer Appearance' and 'Inner Experience'

(1) I - inner (World of freedom) (Ch 6)  
What is really going on in my own inner world? (What do I feel like?)  
Self-knowledge offered by meditation and the mystical traditions of the great religions.

(2) The world (you) - inner (World of freedom) (Ch 7)  
What is going on in the inner world of other beings? (What do you feel like?)  
Self-knowledge the indispensable precondition.

(3) I - outer (World of necessity) (Ch 8)  
What do I look like in the eyes of other beings? (What do I look like?)  
The essential accompaniment to inner knowledge of myself, requiring uncritical objective observation of myself, and altruism.

(4) The world (you) - outer (World of necessity) (Ch 9)  
What do I actually observe in the world around me? (What do you look like?)  
Distinguish the descriptive (eg botany, zoology, geography, biology) and instructional (eg geometry, physics) sciences. Proof is relevant only to the latter.

(IV) Great Truth about 'living' in this world:

*There are two types of problem, 'convergent' and divergent'* (Ch 10)

Convergent: only at lower Levels of Being, inanimate nature

Divergent: at higher Levels, eg Education: freedom v. discipline/obedience

Politics: freedom v. equality

Life generally: growth v. decay.

Society: justice v. mercy

Can be transcended by wisdom at the human level of self-awareness.

Life is a school for developing such faculties.

Art: entertainment v. propaganda; should serve to communicate Truth.

Tasks of man: (1) Learning from society and tradition: directed from outside

(2) Individuation (sifting knowledge): becoming self-directed

(3) dying to oneself (and so free): God-directed.

Good is what helps me and others along this journey of liberation. This entails

loving my neighbour by learning to love myself first

loving God by aiming at the Levels of Being higher than my own.

Martin Mosse, February 2008.