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Being Human in the Perspectives of Gabriel Marcel and its Relevance today

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1.1. Abstract:

This Article is emphasized on *being human in the perspective of Gabriel Marcel* and its relevance to the present Society. Being Human is an effective and essential value of every person to have one's life peaceful and harmonious. At times, he or she gets aloof and feels all alone at the time of crisis. Gabriel Marcel, the Existential philosopher once said that there is only one suffering and that is to be alone. His Philosophy expresses that "My Being" is the Transcendent dimension of my Life. Marcel was eminent for his visions on inter-subjectivity. He further articulated that by very nature itself my being is a being-with-others. It is our innate desire to be in communion with others. The goal of *Being Human* is to develop the concept of 'being-with-other' and help others to have proper understanding of *being human* by journeying through the philosophical thoughts of Gabriel Marcel such as inter-subjectivity, communion, fidelity, participation, values etc. He enlightens the sense of need of the being.

1.2. Key Words: Being Human, Inter-Subjectivity, Being-with-others, fidelity, participation, values, sacrifice and communion.

1.3. Introduction:

This Article on Being Human primarily explores the concept of 'Being' with others and having 'communion' with others.

The most mysterious creation of God is "Human Being". The Western and Eastern Philosophers have always been involved with the mystery of human being. We ourselves have mysterious question regarding our *Being*. Today, in the present scenario the question of who we are as being human, the place where we live, the meaning of our existence and our destiny has become severe and serious thoughtful to the people who are interested in knowing about their existence and who participate in their living at this universe. To understand the concept of Being Human, philosophers have dealt in different fields such as Philosophy, anthropology, psychology, biology and in such circumstances, Gabriel Marcel's philosophy of the human being becomes very much appropriate to the situation of today's world and to every kind of people in the world.

1.4. Philosophical Thoughts of Marcel:

The main thought of Gabriel Marcel was that human beings live in a broken World. He believed that the concept of *being* has been lost in the modern world which he expressed "*Man against Mass Society*". And the control of primary reflection is the increasing bureaucratization of modern culture humiliates their inner lives and their creativity to such an extent that people's individual identity is often directly tied to societal standing of their jobs and their potential for owning of the belongings. This leads human persons to alienation.

Marcel interprets about how the world is going on without having heart for the others in life. He says: 'Don't you feel sometimes that we are living... if you can call it living... in a broken world? Yes, broken like a broken watch. The mainspring has stopped working. Just to look at it, nothing has changed. Everything is in place. But put the watch to your ear, and you don't hear any ticking. You know what I'm talking about, the world, what we call the world, the world of human creatures... it seems to me it must have had a heart at one time, but today you would say the heart had stopped beating'. (Marcel, *Mystery of Being*, Vol.1 pp.26-27).

These vital interpretations of Marcel certainly make us realize to observe in what sense the world we live in today really is a broken world. He emphasizes to the world that the human Being suffers from the *loss of the sense of being and the sense of ontological dimension of reality*.

i. Being and My Life:

Marcel enlightens us about being by his very innate examples he experienced. His intellectual ideas and views would give us a broad understanding of our being and the sense of being with others. The discrepancy between my being and my life throws further light on the connotation of *Being*. In no way can it be said, I have my Life. On the other hand, Marcel in no way claims 'I am my Life' (as he did with I am My Body). Marcel's inquiry into 'my being' contrasts with the sense of 'my life'. Marcel holds that man uniquely has the power to withdraw from his life in order to evaluate it. Marcel elaborates his philosophy very concretely on different existential themes such as inter-subjectivity, communion, fidelity, participation, value etc., which include the issue of my being and my life.

ii. Inter-subjectivity

Marcel excellently throws light through his views on inter-subjectivity. He says that by nature itself my being is a being-with-others. It is our innate desire to be communion with others. He says that there is only one suffering and that is to be alone.

Marcel's understanding of 'my life and my being, Man is and not his life. This ambiguity arises due to his spiritual nature, his being is beyond the consciousness that he has of it. Neither we can conclude man is not his life. This clearly makes us to understand the need of being is beyond ourselves. This paves the way out of his innate experience and ideas about the *Being*.

Marcel tells us that the value that is grounded in Being and cannot be considered as separate from Being. For Marcel the valuable can be anything from a meaningful inanimate object or a word of God; but whatever it is, it must be related to a subject as another subject rather than as other. It belongs to the realm of the personal as opposed to the scientific or impersonal.

As we go through the Transcendent dimension of my life, Marcel speaks of I am and I am not, he is indicating a very fact. We are because we are in being; we are not because we have no complete hold on our being. The quest for being is not to be seen as a simple desire, but in the light of this metaphysical structure.

iii. Problem and Mystery:

One of the main concerns dealt by Gabriel Marcel is the dissimilarity between Problem and Mystery. According to Marcel, problem is a question which the self apprehends as something external to him and therefore it can be considered purely objectively without involving oneself. In short there is no personal commitment on the part of the subject. Problem deals with facts exterior to the inquiring subject. Problem is something thrown before me, something completely outside of me. A problem need not involve us, it does not matter who could as well approach the problem and reach for its solution. Not only one can observe the problem from all the sides, but also theoretically a solution can be given. The technological world where we live in, the situation of the life we face every day, makes every citizen ask this question and try to understand and recognize the mystery of each face of reality.

But we are intimately involved in a mystery. It is a sphere in which the distinction between what is inside and outside of me loses significance. When dealing with mysteries subjectivity matter, a mystery is one's own. I can *have* a problem—I can possess it—but essentially, I *am* a mystery, for my mysteries involve my being. Ultimately, to truly confront mystery according to Marcel, one must open themselves up to the avenues designed for this purpose—religion, art, and metaphysics.

1.5. The emergence of Being human in today's world:

Gabriel Marcel brings out the “phenomenology of a man is the incarnate interpersonal we are”. His philosophical anthropology begins as social anthropology: “existence is co-existence”.

Marcel in his writing about Broken World he very well articulates that individual is available for another. He also says that “it is possible to transcend the level of the self and the other; it transcends both in love and charity.... love as the breaking of the tension between the self and the other...” Marcel brings out the importance of being together for the welfare of the personhood. His context would be very appropriate to the today's world which is scattered by itself through their alienated thinking and indifferent attitude in order to possess the world for themselves. His analysis on Human Being gives the right concept on being human. This would pave the way for the human to find meaning in one's life and lead one's life having the concept of others rather being selfish. One can find the fullness in their being human and can fully alive through their collaboration and cooperation in relating with one another.

Thrust towards forward thinking for being human in today's world is very much needed; why because humans in every field are scattered and they must be brought to the circle of being human by changing their characters to be moral and spiritual.

Ethically one must concentrate on *Right action*, *Right Speech* and *Right conduct* that one should be aware of doing only good to oneself, the people and the world. One must be responsible for others in life. One must respect others and give them space to grow in their life.

Spiritually they need to be aware of loving others and giving one's hands to others. Marcel was an early supporter of what would become a major Sartrean existential tenet: I am my body. For Marcel, the body does not have instrumental value, nor is it simply a part or extension of the self. Instead, the self cannot be eradicated from the body. It is impossible for the self to conceive of the body in any way at all except for as a distinct entity identified with the self. That we are body, of course, naturally lends us to think of the body in terms of object. But individuals who resort to seeing the self and the world in terms of functionality are ontologically incomplete because not only can they not properly respond to the needs of others, but they have become isolated and independent from others. It is our active freedom that prevents us from the snare of objectifying the self, and which brings us into relationships with others.

i. Availability of human:

Marcel highlights two common techniques such as *disponibilité* and *indisponibilité*. These words—commonly meant as either “availability” and “unavailability”. Marcel articulates *disponibilité* as charity assured up with presence as the gift of oneself to the other. He means it total availability of the human. He considers it as total spiritual availability which would be pure charity of human with one's unconditional love.

ii. Relationship:

While I encounter objects in a manner that is technical and objectifying, the encounter with the other person offers another, unique possibility: I can have a relationship “with” another person.

The word “with” is meant its complete philosophical concept that corresponds neither to a relationship of separation and exteriority, nor to a relationship of unity and inherence. Rather, “with” expresses the essence of genuine *coesse*, i.e. of pluralism, of separation with communion (Marcel 1995, p. 39).

Marcel's reflections on being can only be seen in the light of ontological exigence—a need for the sense of being. We human Beings become failure when we don't recognize the need

of for the sense of being. According to Marcel, this need for being can never be fully grasped. "Being" is-or should be-necessary. Marcel approaches it in this way: "Being" is what withstands--or what would withstand-an exhaustive analysis bearing on the data of experience and aiming to reduce them step by step to elements increasingly devoid of intrinsic or significant value. "Being is not merely the object of the intellect. Being is grasped through its "presence" in me. It becomes "my being." For Marcel man is an "incarnate" being, living in an "incarnate" world. His sole freedom lies in response to his being. To deny being leads to absurdity and despair; to affirm being leads to transcendence and communion with being. From the affirmation of "my being" with "my existence" I become aware of my existential status in life and feel the urge to participate in this being. Experience now becomes an experience of subjects, of persons. It is through the encounter with other persons that Marcel finds the need of a transcendent Being. That being is God. Being is a mystery and is only accessible through participation.

The world today is fully corrupted and threatened as it advances with more scientific inventions. The technological implements have isolated man from other. Man is the most mysterious being which could not be unrivalled fully. The teachings of Gabriel the best way to keep everyone in communion, solidarity, and harmony. The context of Marcel on being human through his various books and dialogues and reflections gives insights for all to be human with our fellow beings. It is well articulated and explained by him that *being human among human beings* by relating with others which is very important concept to bring meaning to one's life gifted by THE BEING.

1.6. Conclusion:

To conclude one could say that Gabriel Marcel opens up a new horizon of philosophical reflection by his contribution to the philosophy and the humanity at large. It can be also assured that his reflection will be ever-living as it touches the concrete existential reality of the self in its interactions with other human beings in the world. His philosophy of being human becomes an eye-opener to us human beings to be with others, to be one among others and to be for others for the welfare of oneself and our fellow beings.

As we go through our article, it will be important to keep our basic sense of Being human in mind, as this attitude of being human toward other persons which responds to certain human needs. The practice of being human concerns a relationship with other people who are somehow in a position outside of our space in order to have space in our hearts for the people in need. What Marcel stresses us that the attitude of being human is to be actually

occurred and there must be a certain giving of place to another human in life. This would make us have self-respect and personhood.

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