

**“For man, when perfected, is the best of animals; but when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all” – Aristotle Politics**

## **The Thinking Man and his End of Perfection**

Man is the thinking animal. How is he by nature? If rationality is acquired by human beings or even if it is innate to them, it seems that man acts on highly dispositional ideas rather than knowing what is good by necessary propositions. But this observation in behaviour doesn't mean that man doesn't derive his thoughts from the objective reality. The issue about man being different at the state of nature and acquisition of 'perfection' directly either disproves man's unrestrained and unfounded thinking or it necessitates the need of justice and law in an interventionist sense of it. Aristotle argues that man is perfected by presence of law and justice; this acquired understanding is what makes human thinking which is animalistic otherwise. Also by adding man to be the worst of animals he marks the man's consequences of man's actions as that which are most potent to be creating conflict. I disagree with the fact that man is necessarily savage and irrational by nature. I would also argue upon the fact that the process of perfection in thinking is what creates disciplinary bodies and this very idea of perfection is human by all means- it follows from human idea of reality. I would also discuss the nature of law and justice and possible consequences in absence of a force that acts as a drive to perfection

### **State of Living of Man**

It seems very obvious to say that man is born at the state of nature. But does it ever happen that the state of living of an individual doesn't change? A person thinks to trace patterns in nature for the practical purpose of understanding and of wanting to know. The only seen implication of being at the state of nature is to become non-thinking and thus non-acting. So claiming that man after birth doesn't *feel* the need of acting is not true. The state of living of man is constantly changing; the change is because of a particular choice man makes but can he can never maintain a constant state of life by choosing not to act. Therefore what kind of changes does man want? They are his very natural desires to aim for a better state of living. Ludwig von Mises in his human action theory states that human action is always rational; the content of that action can be irrational. He also says that satisfaction is the end of every action that implies acting to achieve a better state than the present one. Therefore if such an end is equated with having a better life why is it so that this 'better' may or may not be good? If that is true, then we allow the possibility that ideas of perfection may not be coherent with a set of beliefs that accept the possibility of animalistic thinking. Thus the necessity of authority does follow from that.

### **Law and Justice**

1. Continuing from the last point, I would say that presence of law and justice is presence of authority. The ontological existence of law and justice is not more than conceptual knowledge human beings have about it. So what is meant by the presence of the law. is an authority [the state] that through imposition of laws [here the dictating rules] because such laws are coercive in nature. E.g. if there is a law that it is illegal to murder, it is not impossible to murder because there is law nor is it that people wouldn't commit that crime of murder only because of the law. The necessity of law instead is such that all individuals will accept the idea of freedom in every sense of it and therefore not violate others' freedom. A person who holds a particular belief should not be driven to any action because someone else holds a different belief. The very fact that he holds is belief is his freedom of choice and if that exists different men can hold beliefs opposing his own. If then, he is driven to action because of this intolerance; the law comes in as a protector of freedom- not just the other person's freedom, but the idea of it. This law aims at achieving a state of the society wherein every man is free to act in order to achieve the end of satisfaction.
2. What caused this idea of law was that every human has natural rights. The rights are not just in the negative sense of it, but right to think and act freely. Thus if set of regulations/ rules that compose the law are coercive in nature, then law cannot be so, because advocating and upholding the idea of freedom cannot be achieved through restraining freedom.

3. The nature of justice is understood to be an arbitrator. What is just i.e. justified because 'that is the way things ought to be', therefore leads to invalidity of the conflict between two individuals as one of them is right. What is 'just' is clearly the human understanding of world. It is derived from man's objective thinking and not his dispositions. The morality behind actions is to be evaluated while rendering justice and idea of morality is universal if not the codes. How does understand justice? In the Indian philosophy of logic the concept of justice is explained by Nyaya, it literally means the process of taking to or reaching a point. This point is a judgment that is logically valid on account of its infallibility. Nyaya is process of reasoning that involves evaluation about every supportive fact [sapaksha], counterevidence [vipaksha] and necessity of inference [in similarity of content in hetu (proposed proof) and upanayan(proof)]. Applying this to the political sense of justice, the power of justice prevails because it settles conflicts by setting up a body that arbitrates to allow a rational person go by his actions and stop irrational thinking of others from infringing on his freedom.

Law and justice both exist as authorities of a state and function only as a protector and not as drive that independently establish an idea of perfection.

#### Man without Law and Justice

1. The understanding of man's state of nature and changes in that state, only imply the natural necessity of it and the possibility of irrational content of actions clearly go against perfection. What more, history has seen such instances of imperfection due to irrationality mostly in the absence of law and justice. E.g. when nations are at war they haven't come to terms with certain issues: let us say two nations have a dispute because they have no common laws and there is no judicial authority to make settlements. If they can make settlements themselves why would a war take place in the first place? A historicist approach would explain every such war by analyzing history to be a set of events that were caused by certain reasons. If this war for instance has already happened then the war W was caused by dispute D. If D has lead to W in history then W was necessary followed from D. Thus if wars are necessary out of clashes of interests then they are very natural.

2. Infringement on freedom takes by choice- if from the above example one nation makes an attempt to violate the other's freedom, that nation chooses to do so. Thus we need to refine our understanding of necessity; wars took place the warring parties choose that to happen, every choice of theirs necessitated them an their nature as humans wasn't sufficient as a cause. Immanuel Kant's idea of civitas gentium similarly assumes man having savage freedom at lawless state, which he gives up, to coercion, for achieving the state of nations. This state of nations is the law and is empowered to give justice. Here it is seen that man at the state of nature is savage. Therefore an addition to the basic understanding of imperfection mere inability to resolve conflicts is made to a desire to violate others' freedom. E.g. it has happened in the past that kings wanted to become emperors, their expansionist ideas were savage and didn't just come up as reactions. Mercantilism is a pre-classical doctrine in economics that upholds expanding a country's economic base by colonial control of neighboring territories that have the resources. Thus men thought of doing things that took them one step towards imperfection, that too not always in defence. Thus what Aristotle observes to be a tendency is true content-wise.

#### How is perfection achieved?

1. A historicist argument provides enough evidence to go about man's psychology and mark the inclination statistically [towards instances only originating from his own desire of infringement]. Therefore getting back to the point- what drives man? And what direction does it drive him to? As in from the topic, we need to find out if it's the direction of perfection. Perfection if entails the reason behind law and justice then it cannot simply be explained in terms of 'what not' or 'better than'. This state of perfection is that where an individual will have his freedom. Breaking this down to simpler implications of it- his choice is independent, nobody infringes on his freedom, he doesn't infringe on else's freedom as an acceptance of that idea. How will this be achieved- through the development of complete rationality? The human animal can achieve complexities in thinking because he has the

mental abilities of rationality. The Popperian animal achieves rationality through the following steps- knowing dead facts, being able to recognize agreements within them and point out contradictions in them. This process of being able to hold to a belief-system of ideas all coherent with each other do give out rationality in complete form. Thus man by nature doesn't pertain to animalistic logic. He achieves perfection by advocating rational ideas about things.

2. This process of perfection is a mental possibility to occur. Thus, as so in the instances, where man has not necessarily been perfect, he hasn't been necessarily imperfect either. If achieving perfection is an end then law is means to it. Rather the law or the justice making authority, do not entail nor do they necessitate the idea of perfection. Accepting an idea of perfection can be achieved through rationality. The very need of it is so human that a man who will be provided with an understanding of it cannot deny it.

3. When there is no law or justice, man is seen inclining towards imperfection because of his own drive and not the absence of law. E.g. a person wouldn't steal if lives in a lawless land unless he wanted to do the same for other reasons independent of law.

#### Natural Perfection Motive

Putting it all together, a man following a perfect course of action is not caused by law neither a man living in the lawless state aims for an imperfect course of action. But then what is the perfection motive? Is it natural to him? Saying that want of perfection cannot be a drive if man chooses to be in a state of nature, isn't sufficient to prove that his very motive of having that perfection is not natural- implying some individual can choose not have it. Man learns from the nature- here I mean what he knows to the objective reality and not the form of knowledge in which his understanding lies- every time he finds out that his dispositional understanding is faced with contradictions he feels the need to revise it. His actions follow from his sense of life that reflects his understanding of reality. Thus this perfection motive is natural and necessary to anyone who thinks and men think. Man might have irrational thoughts but he cannot turn off thinking as he needs to act.

#### Conclusion

- Man becomes perfect by achieving a higher degree of rationality. He wants perfection naturally because of his ability to have complexity in thought and its consistence in them and with actions following from that.
- Law and justice do not uphold humanity and freedom in any other way than that of a disciplinarian that stops violation of these two. The necessity of law and justice is not equivalent to necessity of set of rules or a judicial body that entail an idea of perfection and thus they do not act as a drive to men instead of man's own tendency to achieve a better state of living.
- When man is seen behaving irrationally- he is aiming at the end of perfection but he wouldn't reach there as he has a flawed understanding of how things are and thus the way he wants them to be fails and creates conflicts, thus putting light on his irrational side which is actually his underemployed faculty of thinking and not his primitive logic.

Therefore I do not agree with the quote that man by nature i.e. in absence of law and justice cannot have his own motive and means of achieving perfection. This, I think is very natural and is achieved by development of rationality which distinguishes man from other animals.