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Osho's Vision of Healthy Humanity: A Study of *Ardhanariswaram*

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Throughout the centuries, however, women's strength and her attributes instead of being praised for itself, have been largely ignored, taken for granted, or outright exploited to the benefits of man. Despite much advocacy of women's rights, they have not yet achieved the power to influence and control their own courses of life. Their efforts to overcome impediments to freedom and equality have made very little inroads in raising the human consciousness worldwide, making their vision even more elusive.

The present century has the potential in achieving equality for woman, but only if they become acquainted with what Naomi Wolf calls- the "the historical self-awareness". Women are today at a turning point, "an open moment" as called by historians, which can open doors for an arrival of a completely metamorphosed wholeness of a society. A lot more women are shining at professional levels of great diversity- from Aerospace to Business, Corporate leadership to Politics, Sports to Science and Technology. Nevertheless, what would really determine the outcome of their marching forward is the stratum of historical awareness without ever losing the sight of it.

The word "*Feminism*" is often seen as taboo; and yet, does it really matter if one calls oneself as "*feminist*"; if one is really living *feminism*? Feminism need not remain just a label; it must become *a way of life*. This, however, is possible if women don't become indifferent to their role and responsibility towards history. Dissent and disagreement shown by women across the whole spectrum of human life need not be a reactionary phenomenon, but rather a healthy sign of diversity and strength.

Shirley Mac Lane said at the *1992 Ecological Global Forum* at Rio de Janeiro that approached to our environmental / ecological problems is left-brained, it is dominated by male mind. The male mind is based on conquest, achievement – at any cost; success at any rate. Mac Lane instead called for more of the feminine spirit – intuition, patience, foresight, softening, caressing and nurturing. She suggests women to be involved and engulfed emotionally without even a sense of being embarrassment for it. She said, "We should not have to apologize for feminine feelings. It is time for these feelings to be recognized". She spoke of the feminine crisis and need to "make the jail break from the male, an attitude based on left- hemisphere."

At present, women have now a responsibility to save the planet earth because both feminine crisis and ecological crisis have coincided globally. Having the attribute of becoming a Mother, women can understand and relate with the problems of the Mother Earth. She can easily resonate with the pain of the Mother Earth than anyone else can. In this respect the Chinese mystic, *Lao Tzu's* insight into ecology is

worthwhile. He says: “The nature of existence, the environment around us is more like a female”. He is not giving a slogan for any particular ideological movement. He is actually pointing at a certain quality; he calls it the “creative principle”- like Earth, a woman is a creative principle, the most marvelous being in the universe.

A more sustainable and realistic vision related to women and their contribution in the evolution of human consciousness can find its ideal manifestation in recognizing the kinship among feminism, ecology and the inner transformation. In bringing the transformation in the whole gamut of women’s lives, the perception supported by modern science, philosophy and *no-mind quest* is requisite where meditative awareness; healing power and ecological responsibility come into dynamic interplay transforming individual as well as collective consciousness. Despite the much talked about “women’s liberation”, the fact is that women are seriously and systematically discriminated against almost universally.

The example of such discriminations abound in terms of education, employment, salary, opportunity for higher positions but especially in terms of extending simple courtesy and respect. It is ironic, that, since infancy, along with female, the male also depends for protection and nourishment upon one woman or another. Ordinary common sense would, therefore, dictate that such an important person be given an important place, due respect and a special cogitation in the overall scheme of life. But that does not seem to be the case. What does emerge, however, is ambivalence on the part of man in his attitude toward woman. It seems we have not yet evolved into an understanding that we should know what a mother is all about. Even a small baby has something of the motherliness in her though in a seed form.

The strategy of man has been to keep her stuck in the image created by own vested interest – whether as a *grihalaxmi* or as his property. First, man convinced her into seeing herself within this framework, and subsequently, the woman got so conditioned to seeing herself accordingly that she couldn’t perceive herself differently. She complained, she cried; she begged for relief but never dared to get out of the imprisonment of her image. So, first the man was conditioned to perceive women in a certain way, and then the woman too got conditioned to perceive her on the same lines and accepted it without any hope for a better life.

Concerned with women’s plight several reformers in India, for example, came forward, but they came with the assumption of helping the “weaker” gender. Whether it is an issue of child marriage, widow re-marriage, or any other form causing women to suffer, they sincerely tried to help. Their help, however, was extended within the same parameters of religion, caste, morality, ethics, social norm – they gave protection and shelter to the suffering women but not freedom from suffering.

Although the rise of the modern feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s has broken some of the sociological and psychological barriers toward women in some countries, the impact of the movement appears to be losing its power when in its zealously women seem to want to be equal and similar to men. My emphasis in this paper is on the possibility of women’s issues ontologically raised and epistemologically concluded in connection with the enlightened insights of the 20th century mystic Osho. How he talked much about the total phenomenon from its genesis of how it went under the utter chaotic turbulence and turmoil to the feasibility of utmost blossoming and what

could be the possible remedies which can pave the path to women as being completely liberated.

The contemporary visionary and prolific author, Osho, totally disagrees with this kind of feminism. Women, in his vision, are neither inferior to men nor similar -- they are different. Even though in his progressive view he is all for woman's freedom and equal status, however, he also makes it clear that women have their own uniqueness, their own place, their individuality. He says categorically, "Drop the idea of the women's liberation movement, because they are also putting nonsense into your minds. Their nonsense is that they are trying to prove that men and women are equal. They are not -- and when I say they are not, I don't mean that someone is superior and someone is inferior. I mean that they are unique." (*Sermons in Stones, Ch.17, Ch. Title: The Poetry of the Feminine*)

So a brief introduction is requisite here to know about Osho in order to understand the flow of the topic and its consequent conclusion. Osho was born in Kuchwara, Madhya Pradesh, on 11 December 1931. Rebellious and independent from childhood, he insisted on experiencing the truth for himself rather than acquiring knowledge and beliefs given by others. He spent several years teaching philosophy at the University of Jabalpur. Meanwhile he travelled throughout India delivering talks and meeting people from all walks of life. By the late 1960s, he had begun to develop his unique Dynamic Meditation techniques. He felt that the modern man is so burdened with the archaic traditions of the past as well as the anxieties of modern-day living, that he must go through a deep cleansing process before he can hope to discover the thought-less, relaxed state of meditation. Based on his own existential experience rather than on intellectual understanding, he spoke on every aspect of life and on the development of human consciousness, and distilled the essence of what is significant of the spiritual quest of the contemporary man. Osho's talks have been published in more than 600 volumes, and translated into over fifty languages.

Osho has extensively talked about women and their development for the survival of a better world. His discussion regarding women has nothing to do with what goes on in the name of Women's Liberation Movement. His is very earthly and realistic view. The word for him 'feminine' is not to be understood only stereotypically but in its utmost feasible profundity which is arduous in comprehending when eyes are full of so many layers of past ideas and thoughts imprinted on our psyche.

The genesis of women being oppressed and suppressed by the male chauvinist social structure is, according to Osho, the natural disparity done by the existence itself. And that disparity is at the level of sex. Man is capable of one orgasm while women are capable of that of multiple ones, and man in reality does not have the patience to go through all the ways which can give a glimpse of ecstasy to the women which occurs at the peak of orgasm. So far as reproduction is concerned, there is no problem in it but for spirituality it is a must. "Every women can become an arrow towards godliness- her grace, her beauty, her love, her devotion can show you the way towards higher realms of being, greater spaces of consciousness. A woman is not only capable of giving birth to children, she is also capable of giving birth to the seekers of the

truth...”, says he. And for this very reason, he blows down every shackle created by man, society or anything else.

Being a man how it was possible for him to speak so dexterously about feminine psyche, he says, “I am not talking as a man. I am not talking as a woman. I am not talking as a mind at all. The mind is used, but I am talking as a consciousness, as awareness. And awareness is neither man nor woman.” Our body has that divisions, our mind too, because our mind is the inner part of our body and our body is the outer part of our mind. Our body and mind are not separate; they are one entity. In fact to say body and mind is not right; ‘and’ shouldn’t be used. We are bodymind, not even a hyphen between the two in the same way as Einstein used the term time and space together, for he discovered that they are not two; they are two aspects of the same phenomenon.

When the history of humanity is seen with naked eyes, it is found that man has tried to fly only with the one wing of the bird and that to deal the world with male attitude exclusively; and this is why he has utterly failed. Looking at history, Osho says: “My own vision is that the coming age will be the age of the women. Man has tried for five thousand years and has failed. And a chance has to be given to the women. Now she should be given the reins of all the powers. She should be given an opportunity to bring her feminine energies to function, to work. Man has utterly failed. In three thousand years, five thousand wars; that is man’s record.”

While speaking of the coming age as the age of women, he has nothing to do with a physiological woman but a psychological woman. In this century, one of the greatest psychologists Carl Gustav Jung seems to discover a new thing which the East has known thousands of years before. He says that man in his own separateness is neither a man totally nor a woman does the same. A man is both man and woman, and a woman is both woman and man, for the simple reason that they come from both mother and father. So they inherit elements from both. Male part is dominant and female is dormant in Man; and female part is dominant and male is dormant in Female. And that’s why East has a concept of *Ardhnarishvaram* in his mythologies. But man has played a very shrewd game of politics which is very difficult to understand, for it has been executed at the utter most inner core of human mind. Because of which not only women but men too are suffering.

In this connection, Osho in his book *Ancient Music in the Pines* says: “Modern science has come to a very significant fact, one of the most significant achieved in this century, and that is that you don’t have one mind, you have two minds, your brain is divided into two hemispheres: the right-hemisphere and the left-hemisphere. The right-hemisphere is joined with left hand and the left-hemisphere is joined with the right hand, crosswise. The right-hemisphere is intuitive, logical, irrational, poetic, platonic, imaginative, romantic, mythical, religious; the left-hemisphere is logical, rational, mathematical, Aristotelian, scientific, calculative. These two hemispheres are always in conflict. The basic politics of the world is within you; the greatest politics of the world is within you. You may not be aware of it, but once you become aware, the real thing is to be done somewhere between these two minds.” He continues: “The left hand is concerned with the right-hemisphere; that is intuition, imagination, myth, poetry, religion. The left hand is very much condemned. The society is of those who are right-handed; right-handed means left-hemisphere. Ten percent of the children are born left-

handed but they are forced to be right-handed. Children who are born left-handed are basically irrational, intuitive, non-mathematical, and Non-Euclidian. They are dangerous to the society; the society forces them in every way to become right-handed. It is not just a question of hand, it is a question of inner politics; the left-handed child functions through the right-hemisphere. That, society can't allow, it is dangerous; he has to be stopped before things go too far." This is where Osho endeavours at suggesting about the proper blossoming of our intrinsic seed by becoming aware of the whole phenomenon.

In his book *God is Dead: Now Zen is the Only Living Truth*, Osho says that Western Existentialism is not in conformation with the reality of existence; it should rather be termed as "Accidental-ism" in human lives because of its intrinsic despondent tone. This western existentialism, in his opinion, has never known what Upanishadic Rishies and mystics like Krishna, Buddha, Mahaveer, Kabir, Dadu and others, felt in synchronicity with existence, oneness with it. In the same way, he says what is going on in the name of *Women's Liberation Movement* is not at all revolutionary; it is just reactionary. And reactions unexceptionally go astray. Labeling it as a liberation movement is not going to resolve anything. It is imitation; it is not liberation. He further irradiates it in his book *The Dhammpada: the Way of Buddha* and says: "Real liberation will make the woman authentically a woman, not an imitation of man. Right now that's what's happening: women are trying to be just like men. If men smoke cigarettes, the woman has to smoke cigarettes. If men wear pants, the woman has to wear pants. If they do a certain thing, the woman has to do that. She is just becoming a second-rate man. This is not liberation; this is far deeper slavery because it's created by women themselves. And when somebody else imposes slavery on you, you can rebel against it, but if you impose slavery on yourself in the name of liberation, there is no possibility of rebellion ever.

The antagonism shown by women should be properly dissected and diagnosed so that nothing ill-omen could happen. Since long ago, we have been creating so many dichotomies: the East and the West, the Black and the White and things likewise. Now things are blurred. There are no clear-cut distinctions anywhere. Now those dichotomized entities are getting amalgamated and hence East getting westernized and the vice versa. So there is a danger that East turns into a new West and the West into a new East. We have to understand and avoid these extremes to happen. And in this respect, Osho says: "This is one of the fundamentals to be remembered: if you make somebody a slave, you will be reduced to slavery ultimately, finally; you can't remain free. If you want to remain free, give freedom to others; that's the only way to be free...and if the woman is not free to be a really a woman, man will never be free to be a man either. The freedom of women is a must for the freedom of man; it is more fundamental than man's freedom."

In reaction to all the stern and crude behaviours done to women by men, women may fall in the same trap of so many stupidities which man consciously or unconsciously has been doing in the past. And it is why she is becoming antagonistic and moving onto the other extreme. At being questioned about his views on the concept of marriage between a man and a woman, Osho says: "It is the ugliest institution invented by man as it aims to monopolize a woman." The present marriage he is against. But he also talks of a real marriage which can make someone's life moving on

a different plane of which we seem to be absolutely unaware; and it is really possible. We should be reminded of Rishies in Our *Upanishads*. They used to bless a woman to have ten children and the eleventh child becomes her husband himself. These blessings were very much symbolic. They say that the love between a husband and a wife which begins from sex should gradually transform it into its absolute purity; it should ultimately result into a love of a mother and a son. And then marriage becomes a way toward spirituality. Osho in his book *The Ultimate Alchemy* (vol. 01) says: "Marriage is not sexual at all. We have forced it to be sexual. Sex may be there, may not be there. Marriage is a deep spiritual communion. When a child is born out of this intimacy, he can have a spiritual base. But our marriages are just sexual- just a carnal arrangement. And out of this arrangement, of course, what can be born? Really, romantic love is ill. Because you can't love many, you go on accumulating the capacity to love. Then you are over flooded and love is projected. So an ordinary woman becomes like an angel. An ordinary man becomes divine, looks divine, like a God. But when the flood has gone, and you have become normal, that you see that you have been deceived. He is just an ordinary man and she is just a ordinary woman. The romantic madness is created by our monogamous training. If a person is allowed to love, he never accumulates tensions which can be projected. So romance is possible in a diseased society. In a really healthy society, there will be no romance; there will be Love but no romance. And if there is no romance then marriage will be on a deeper level and it will never be frustrating. And if marriage is not only for love but for more intimate togetherness- for an "I-thou" relationship, you can both grow not as "I's" but as "we"- then marriage is really a training for egoless-ness. But we don't know that kind of marriage at all."

And this sort of love really brings responsibility. J. Krishnamurti, another mystic of twentieth century, says in his very famous book *First and Last Freedom*: "Love is not different from truth. Love is that state in which the thought process, as time, has completely ceased. Where love is, there is transformation. Without love, revolution has no meaning, for then revolution is merely destruction, decay, a greater and greater mounting misery. Where there is love, there is revolution, because love is transformation from moment to moment." But the problem is: Osho tells that "everybody has his own idea of love. And only when you come to the state where all ideas about love have disappeared, where love is no longer an idea but simply your being, then only will you know its freedom. Then love is God. Then love is the ultimate truth...love is eternity, if it is there, it goes on growing and growing. Love knows the beginning but doesn't know the end... (The Discipline of Transcendence, vol. 01; ch. 02) love is the process of alchemical change in your consciousness... (Unio Mystica, vol. 02; ch. 04). Love is the only thing that knows what freedom is. And "the freedom of women is going to be the freedom of men too. The day the woman is accepted as equal, given equal opportunity to grow, man will find himself suddenly free from the bitchiness that he used to feel from the woman. It is time we can create a world together, with men and women sharing their insights, their visions, their dreams. Because they are different, their dreams are different; their contributions to the society will be different. And if a society can be created in which men and women have participated equally, we will have the richest society that will be for the first time existing in the world at the global level.(*Sermons in Stones*, Ch.5, Ch. Title: Laughter – As sacred as Prayer)

And it should be remembered that the onus falls on the soldiers of both men and women so far as the growth of this sort of love is concerned. Because "...man and woman are two strings of one harp but both are suffering separate from each other. And because they are suffering and do not know the reason, they start taking revenge on each other." It is the greatest responsibility possible for both of them to be aware of all the unconscious dealings amongst them. "A woman", according to him, "is a mystery. Trying to understand her is futile. "In order to find her true potential," he says, "a woman should search within her own soul and rebel against any repression." Unless you have a rebellious soul, you are not alive in the true sense of the word.

Up till now the society is created by left-hemisphere and we can't discard its repercussions. In this century, the fact is that women have started becoming aware of the phenomenon- the state of oppression, suppression, misery, anguish- is absolutely all right. Perception of patriarchal chauvinism expressed in Virginia Woolf's *A Room Of One's own* (1928) and Simone de Beauvoire's *The Second Sex* (1949) transmuted into a political criticism with Charlotte Bronte's *Villette* which validates women's experiences. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) expressed a whole tradition of books by women 'silenced' by the traditional male canon. These are good attempts which must continue but it should be with great care. It is said, "Power corrupts and corrupts badly." But the question is not what corrupts but the one who is vulnerable to be corrupted. So it is not of that import who dominated in the past rather whether we have ever been able to create a person who can't be corrupted any more. The humanity we have created is so much unsystematic and perplexed that anybody- man or woman, black or white, East or West, Dalit or Brahmin- is going to dominate the other inferior to him or her if he gets the power. I am sure if women are allowed to function on their own without any inhibition, they are going to prove to be the worst. In the past days, Brahmins dominated sudras very crudely and sternly. But if there is any certainty that sudras will not repeat the same if they are given an opportunity to get the same power, privilege and prestige as Brahmins did have. What I wish to say is power + unconsciousness is equal to exploitation, destruction and domination. And if power has the potential to do the worst, it can execute undoubtedly the best, to touch the highest firmament of bliss, success and a new humanity which has not yet been possible.

Speaking on women's issues from its real genesis, Osho speaks of them as complementary of the one side of the coin and says: "I would like the women to become as feminine as possible, only then can she flower. And man needs to be as masculine as possible, only then can he flower. When they are polar opposites, a great attraction, a great magnetism arises between them. And when they come close, when they meet in intimacy, they bring two different worlds, two different dimensions, two different types of richness, and the meeting is tremendous blessing, a benediction." While irradiating the importance of women, he says: "The women can become of immense help in creating an organic society. She is different from man, but not equal. She has talents of her own which are absolutely needed. It is not enough to earn money, it is not enough to become a success in the world; more necessary is a beautiful home, and the woman has the capacity to change a 'house' into a 'home'. She can fill it with love: she has that sensitivity. She can rejuvenate man, help him relax."

In Osho Commune, there were people from all over the world almost from every field. Osho himself practically did what he has been saying regarding women. He put women in all the significant, powerful positions. He says: "...Man has tremendous capacity to do things, but he should not be the guide anymore. He is hung up in his head. That's why I said that all of my sanyasins are women- even those who physiologically, biologically are men. The moment they become sanyasins, they have accepted a new structure; they have put something above their heart. This is what I mean: that even men around me start learning feminine qualities. And feminine qualities are the only qualities worth having...then only can wars disappear. Then only can marriage disappear. Then only can nations disappear. Then only we can have one world- a loving, a peaceful, a silent and a beautiful world."

The dichotomy of both male and female needs requisitely a balance for a healthy society. Osho created a situation through his being and marvellous eloquence in which this balance could materialize itself between- the East and the West, Man and Woman, the World and the God. "The woman should search into her own soul for her own potential and develop it, and she will have a beautiful future. Man and Woman are neither equal nor unequal; they are unique. And the meeting of two unique beings brings something miraculous into Existence", says he. Khalil Gibran said, "Be like two pillars that support the same roof but don't start possessing the other. Leave the other independent. Support the same roof- that roof is love." And this was really a greater responsibility. In this way, Osho says: "When I use the word 'responsibility' I am not using in the ordinary connotation of being dutiful. I am using it in its real, essential meaning: the capacity to respond – that is my meaning. And the capacity to respond is only possible if you are conscious. But if you are fast asleep, how can you respond? If you are asleep, the birds will go on singing but you will not hear, and flowers will go on blooming, and you will never be able to sense the beauty, the fragrance, the joy that they are showering on Existence. To be responsible means to be mindful. Act with much awareness as you can find possible." And to be aware means: "Watch anything that is natural with serenity, and revolt against all suffering that is imposed by anybody. Whether it is man or woman; whether it is your father or mother; whether it is the priest or the professor; and whether it is government or society- revolt!"

At last, it is worth mentioning that the old concept of *Ardhanariswaram* in India was the inner balance of woman and man the bridge of which has broken. The excessive dominance of masculinity has tormented and made dormant the other equal valid reality. It is now to bring harmony between the two by paying much more accentuation to the discarded side of the coin—the feminine. But only then the transcendental reality and experiencing those states could be materialized where we see Osho's way being neither the way of the head nor the way of the heart. He says that the reality or the truth is behind both, and that is Consciousness. To attain this state of absolute awareness, as he opines, there has never been nor will be any other way than Meditation which is neither head nor the heart; it can use both in harmony. And only then can we translate what we have been bothering, pondering over since time immemorial into a concrete and tangible reality.

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