

Prout in a nutshell

Part -2



Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

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ROMAN SAṂSKRTA ALPHABET

Realizing the necessity of writing swiftly and of pronouncing the words of different languages correctly, the undernoted Roman Samskrta (Sanskrit) alphabet has been adopted.

Those not familiar with either the Devanagari alphabet or the Bengali alphabet, and those not familiar with Bengali pronunciation, please see the pronunciation keys starting on page x.

অ আ ই ঈ উ ঊ ঋ ঌ ঐ ঒ এ ঐ ও ঔ অং অঃ
 অ আ ই ঈ উ ঊ ঋ ঌ ল্ লৃ এ ঐ ও ঔ অং অঃ
 a á i ii u ú r rr lr lrr e ae o ao aṁ ah

ক খ গ ঘ ঙ চ ছ জ ঝ ঞ

क ख ग घ ङ च छ ज झ ञ
ka kha ga gha ṅa ca cha ja jha ṇa

ट ठ ड ढ ण त थ द ध न
ṭa ṭha ḍa ḍha ṇa ta tha da dha na

प फ ब भ म

Pa pha ba bha ma

य र ल व

ya ra la va

ya ra la va

श ष स ह ऋ

শ ষ স হ ক্ষ
sha śa sa ha kśa

অঁ জ্ঞ ঋষি ছায়া জ্ঞান সংস্কৃত ততোহং
অঁ ঞ ঋষি ছায়া জ্ঞান সংস্কৃত ততোহং
aṅ jña rśi cháyá jñána saṁskṛta tato'ham

a á b c d d́ e g h i j k l m ḿ
n ń ṅ o p r s ś t t́ u ú v y

It is possible to pronounce the Samskrta, or Sanskrit, language with the help of only twenty-nine letters of Roman script. The letters " f ", " q ", " qh ", " z ", etc., are required in the Arabic,

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Persian, and various other languages, but not in Samskrta.

" áa " and " áha ", occurring in the middle of a word or at the end of a word, are pronounced " í" and "íha ", respectively. Like " ya", they are not independent letters. When the need arises in writing non - Sańskrta words, "í" and "íha" may be written.

Ten additional letters in Roman Sańskrta, for writing non-Sanskrit words:

ক	খ	জ	ড	ঢ	ফ	য়	ল	ৎ	অঁ
ক্ৰ	খ্ৰ	জ্ৰ	ড্ৰ	ঢ্ৰ	ফ্ৰ	য়	ল্ৰ	ত্ৰ	অঁ
qua	qhua	za	í	íha	fa	ya	lra	t	aṅ

Publisher's Note:

Prout, an acronym for “Progressive Utilization Theory”, is a comprehensive socio-economic philosophy developed by the author from the beginning of 1955 until his passing away in October 1990. The author defined Progressive Utilization Theory as the “progressive utilization of all factors”, and those

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who support this principle as
“Proutists”.

Translated from original Bengali.
Meaning of Bengali words are given
in footnotes.

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[a compilation]

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Views of Other Faiths

The following are the important religions or faiths prevalent in the world at the present time: Buddhism, Shaṁkara [Darshana, or Philosophy], Pátaiṇjala [Darshana], [Kápila] Sámkhya, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Árya Samája and Marxism. These can be arranged

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into the following groups according to their similarities:

- (1) Buddhism and Shaṁkara Philosophy
- (2) Pátañjala Philosophy and [Kápila] Sámkhya
- (3) the Semitic faiths comprising Judaism, Christianity and Islam
- (4) Árya Samája; and
- (5) Marxism

The outstanding principles and beliefs of the faiths within each group can be discussed together,⁽¹⁾ except for those of the Semitic faiths, which are not discussed.

Buddhism and Shaṁkara [Darshana]

Ástika [theistic] Indian philosophies unanimously believe that *átman* [unit consciousness] is a continuous flow of *jiṇána* [knowledge of consciousness]. This is

called *vinána* in Pali. There is a continuous flow of *jiṇána*, or in other words *jiṇána* itself is a flow (*praváha*). Every object in the universe has its own flow and wave, or dynamic force. According to Hindu Yoga Darshana,⁽²⁾ *Paramátman* [the totality of all the unit consciousnesses] is an infinite flow of *jiṇána*.

*Ekaṁ jiṇánaṁ nityamádyantashúnyaṁ
Nányat kiṁcit varttate vastusatyam;
Tayorabhedo'smin indriyopádhiná vae
Jiṇánasyáyaṁ bhásate nanyathaeva.*

–*Shiva Saṁhitá*

[One eternal knowledge without beginning or end: there is no other supreme truth. And when the *upádhi*, or special power, of the *indriyas*, or organs, to receive or transmit inferential vibrations is suspended, and the external world and the internal world become fused into one, there remains only the knowledge of One Entity.]

Bhagaván [Lord] Buddha did not use the word *átman*, hence there was a difference of opinion among the *bhikśus* [Buddhist monks] after his death. Three conferences were held – at Vaishali, Puspapur and Patliputra – after his death to compile the *Tripitāka* [three groups of Buddhist teachings], and as a result the *Tripitāka* was compiled in the following three parts in Pali: (1) *Vinaya*, or the practical side; (2) *Sutta*, or the theoretical side; and (3) *Abhidhamma*, or the philosophical side. All these parts combined together were known as the *Tripitāka*, and were called the Buddhist *shāstra* [scripture].

Those *bhikśus* who patronized or supported the [strict] *sannyāsa mārگا* [path of renunciation] were not prepared to accept anything more than what was laid down in the *Tripitāka*, and hence they were called

Sthaviravádiis or Therávádiis⁽³⁾ [followers of the southern school of Buddhism]. Those who were influenced by Nyáya⁽⁴⁾ were called Mahásámghikas [followers of the northern school of Buddhism].

The word *páli* originated from *pallii*, which [in adjectival form] means *dehátii*, or "rural", "rustic" or "unsophisticated". As Bhagaván Buddha preached in the common language of village folk, Hindu pandits named his language *bhákhá* [colloquial language]. Pali was also known as Pátalii Bhášá [*bhášá* = "language"]. Common people could not follow Sanskrit, which was the language of the pandits only.

Later on the Mahásámghikas called themselves Maháyániis, and they called the Sthaviravádiis Hīnayániis. But the Hīnayániis called themselves Therávádiis. In India there

was no state backing for Hiinayána except during the time of [the rulers] Kanishka, Habishka and Vasishka, and hence Hiinayána could not flourish. Maháyána had state backing, and naturally had a larger number of followers. The philosophy of the Hiinayániis could only be preached in Ceylon [Sri Lanka], Burma [Myanmar], Siam [Thailand], Java, Borneo, etc., whereas the philosophy of the Maháyániis was propagated in India, Siberia, Japan, Tibet, etc.

There are four kinds of philosophical doctrine [discussed later in this chapter] among the Maháyániis. The reason for this difference of opinion is *átman* and its object. Bhagaván Buddha used the word *attá* in Pali for *átman*. The word *attá* is also used in place of "self". The *bhikśus* could not understand the sense in which Bhagaván Buddha used the word *attá*.

Charvaka: At the time of Buddha, *nástika mata* [the school of atheism] was predominant. Maharshi Ajita Keshakambali was the predominant pandit of the *nástikas* [atheists]. Most of the books of *nástika mata* were written in incomprehensible language, and so its propagation was not very widespread. Ajita Keshakambali believed in Charvaka, who propounded a materialistic philosophy. Buddhist philosophy is not a materialistic philosophy. The Charvaka school of philosophy believes in *caturbhúta* [four fundamental factors] only. This is also known as *dehátma váda* [the doctrine that the body is everything]. This philosophy accepts *caturbhúta*, namely, earth, water, fire and air, that is, *kśiti*, *apa*, *teja* and *marut* [respectively]. According to Charvaka, *caetanya* [consciousness] came into existence by the combination of the four *bhútas* [fundamental factors], just as mixing lime and catechu produces a red colour.

According to Charvaka, *paiñcama bhúta* [the fifth fundamental factor] is formed like this and does not actually exist. Charvaka Philosophy does not believe in *átman*, *Paramátman* or the Vedas. Hence Charvaka was termed *nástika*, because those who do not believe in *átman*, *Paramátman* or the Vedas are called *nástikas*.

Púrva Miimámsá: Púrva Miimámsá [Early Miimámsá philosophy] does not accept the existence of *Paramátman*. Maharshi Kapil, the propounder of [Kápila] Sámkhya philosophy, accepted *átman* and the Vedas, but he did not believe in *Paramátman*. The Śā́adarshana [six major schools of theist Indian philosophy] believes in the Vedas.

The following constitute the Śā́adarshana:

1. **Kápila Sámkhya**, which accepts the existence of *puruśa* [consciousness], *Prakrti* [Supreme Operative Principle] and the Vedas, but does not accept the existence of *Paramátman*.

2. ***Pátaiṇjala Philosophy***. Pátaiṇjala and Sámkhya believe in innumerable *puruśas* [unit souls] and *Prakṛti*.⁽⁵⁾ The creator of the universe, according to these schools, cannot be a *Mukta Puruśa*.⁽⁶⁾
3. ***Gaotama Nyáya***.
4. ***Kańáda Nyáya*** (Vaesheśika).
5. ***Jaemini's Púrva Miimáńsá***, which believes in *kriyá kańáda* [Vedic rituals]. Those who believe in this school accept the existence of heaven and hell.
6. ***Uttara Miimáńsá*** [Later Miimáńsá philosophy] of Vádaráyana Vyása, which believes in *Brahma* [the Supreme Entity] and the Vedas but does not believe in *átman* and *jagat* [the physical world]. This philosophy is commonly called Vedánta Darshana.

Baoddha [Buddhist] Darshana believes in all the five *bhútas* [*caturbhúta* plus ethereal

factor], while Charvaka believes in *caturtattva* [the theory of four fundamental factors]. Buddhism and Charvaka do not come within the purview of Śāṅkadarshana, and neither of them believes in the Vedas.

Pramāṇa [validation] is of three kinds, that is, *pratyakṣa* [direct perception], *anumāna* [inference] and *āgama* [authority]. Charvaka only accepts *pratyakṣa* as *pramāṇa*.

***Pratyakṣaeka pramāṇavāditayā
Anumānāe anaṁgiikāreṇa prāmāṇyābhāvāt.***

[Direct perception is the only valid proof of knowledge. As inference and authority are denied as valid proofs of knowledge, there is no other proof of knowledge.]

Buddhism accepts *karmaphala* [the reactions of action], whereas Charvaka does not. *Yāvajiivet sukhaṁ jiivet, nāsti mrtyuragocarāḥ.*

[As long as you live, you should live happily,
because there is nothing after death.]

* * *

*Yávajiivet sukhaṁ jiivet,
rñaṁ krtyá ghrtaṁ pivet.*

[As long as you live, you should live
happily. Even if you have to go into debt, you
should eat butter.]

***Na svargo ná pavargo vá naevátmá
páralaokikam;
Bhasmiibhútasya dehasya punarágamanaṁ
kutah.***

[There is neither heaven nor a transitory
stage between death and rebirth; there is
neither soul nor any kind of afterlife. Once the
body is burned to ashes, how can it come back
again?]

There is still another aspect of Charvaka Philosophy, that is, *dehāpariṇāma-vāda* [the doctrine of physical transformation].

***Caturbhyo khalu bhūtebhyo
caetanyamupajāyate;
Kiñvādibhyah sametebhyah dravyebhyo
madashaktivat.***

[Consciousness arises from action and interaction among the four fundamental factors of matter, just as red colour comes from betel leaves, lime and catechu when they are chewed together.]

In this respect Buddhist philosophy is better than Charvaka. Bhagaván Buddha said, *Attá hi attánam náthah* ["Attá is the master of all other souls"].

Buddhism: Why did India accept Buddhism? There are various reasons for this,

but the main ones are the following: First, the [Vedic] pandits never preached philosophy to the common people. They hated their language and called it *bhákha*. Secondly, at that time there was no eminent philosopher, or *tattvadarshii*. Thirdly, the people in general were not ready to accept the pandits. Fourthly, the *ácáryas* [spiritual teachers] of that age, Shrii Saiṅjaya and Shrii Gaya Kashyapa, could not convince Bhagaván Buddha [of their philosophical beliefs]. All these factors led to the widespread propagation and acceptance of Buddhism.

Buddhism believes in rebirth and transmigration of souls, so the question arises, who is reborn if there is no *átman*? This question became a point of controversy among the *bhikśus*, and later among the Maháyánii pandits.

Buddhism believes in *karmaphala*. If *karmaphala* is accepted, the question arises, who performs *karma* [action] and who gets the *karmaphala*? Therefore the existence of *átman* has got to be accepted.

Towards the end of Buddha's life, some of his disciples asked him about the existence of God. They asked two questions: "Does God exist?" and "Is it a fact that God does not exist?" In reply to both questions Buddha remained silent. As Buddha remained silent to both the questions, some of his disciples interpreted this to mean that there is no God. Another section of his disciples understood that God exists. Yet a third section came forward with the interpretation that there is God, but God is beyond the expression of *asti* ["is"] and *násti* ["is not"]; that is, God's existence is inexplicable. Actually, God is supramental.

*Yato váco nivarttante aprápya
manasá saha;
Ánandaṁ Brahmaṇo vidván má vibhetti
kutashcana.*

[Brahma is the One from whom words and mind return disappointed, after failing to fathom Its depths. But one who has known the blissful nature of Brahma is not afraid of anything.]

There are four sections in

Buddhist *Máyávāda* [the Buddhist doctrine of illusion]:

- 1) *pratyakṣa váhya vastuvāda* [the doctrine of direct perception of external matter],
or *saotāntrika darshana*;
- 2) *ánumeya váhya vastuvāda* [the doctrine of inferred perception of external matter],
or *vaebháśika darshana*;
- 3) *sarva shúnyavāda* [the doctrine of nihilism],
or *mádhyamika darshana*; and

4) *kṣāñika vijñānavāda* [the doctrine of transience], or *Baoddha yogácāra*.

Pratyakṣa vāhya vastuvāda accepts the universe as infinite, that is, *anādi* [beginningless] and *ananta* [endless]. When caetanya becomes ālayiibhūta [objectivated], then it becomes jñāna. (That which has the qualification of becoming an object is called ālaya.) The outward world is transitory, but, due to rapid movement (*saiṅcara* or *pratisaiṅcara*), it appears to exist constantly. (According to Hindu philosophy, *saiṅcara* means "to go away from Brahma" and *pratisaiṅcara* means "to come near to Brahma"; that is, *saiṅcara* means the *vikarṣāñii* shakti [centrifugal force] of Brahma and *pratisaiṅcara* means the *ākarṣāñii* shakti [centripetal force] of Brahma.)

Ānumeya vāhya vastuvāda accepts that the waves of jñāna are a permanent entity (*sattá*). There is the external world, but it will

never be realized. When the waves of consciousness (jñána) come, the mind takes a form according to the saṁskáras [reactive momenta] of the citta [mind-stuff]. The formations created in the mind are taken to be satya [reality]. When jñána comes in contact with á lambana,(7) citta takes a formation. They take the outward á lambana as the material realized.

Sarva shúnyaváda is also called mádhyamika darshana. It was propounded by Shrii Nágáruñja. He did not accept the páñcabhaotika world [the world of the five fundamental factors]. The external world which we see is Máyá.(8) This philosophy is similar to Shankaracharya's philosophy: Brahma satyaṁ jaganmithyá ["Brahma is the only truth; the world is an illusion"]. According to Shankaracharya, the universe has been created out of nothing, and it is like a dream and nothing

more. Bháva [something] has been created out of abháva [nothing]. This school of philosophy accepts only the present and ignores the past and the future. It also says that the universe will merge into nothing.

Kśāñika vijiñānavāda does not accept the existence of the physical world. Here everything is internal. Even *ā lambana* is internal. Whatever is seen in this physical world is *pratikriyá* [the outer projection] of the internal *ā lambana*. *Ātman* is the collection of the "I" feelings. It is not a continuous flow but appears to be so on account of the quick succession of its creation and destruction.

During the age of **Bhagaván Shankaracharya**, there was no outstanding philosopher (*tattvadraśtá*) among the Buddhists. Among different sections of the Buddhists' schools of philosophy, a serious

dispute was going on. At that time Shrii Mañdana Mishra was the only pandit who believed in *sarva shúnyaváda* and was also a *kriyá káñdii* [follower of Vedic rituals]. He had to debate with Shankaracharya and was defeated.

According to Buddhist philosophy, there are four noble truths (*satya*) which are called *caturárya satyam* (*caturájja saccam* [in Pali]). They are as follows: 1) *duhkha* [suffering]; 2) *káraña* of *duhkha* [the cause of suffering]; 3) *nivrtti* of *duhkha* [the cessation of suffering]; and 4) *upáya* of *duhkha nivrtti* [the path leading to the cessation of suffering].

The *vikrti* [distortion] of *dukkhaváda* [literally, "the doctrine of pessimism", i.e., the four noble truths] became *atisukhaváda* [the doctrine of ultra-hedonism]. *Atisukhaváda* was prevalent in Bengal, Assam and Tibet.

[According to Buddhism,] *duhkha* is *árya satya* [the absolute truth]. This is a wrong interpretation as it is the *mánas* [mind] only which experiences *duhkha*. Thus *duhkha* can only be a relative truth; it cannot be the absolute truth (*árya satya*).

Shamkara [Darshana]: Shankaracharya was a Shaeva Tántrika [practioner of Tantra who followed Shiva], and that is why he did not go against *tantraváda*⁽⁹⁾ [the doctrine of Tantra]. He believed in *Nirguña Brahma* [the Non-Qualified Supreme Entity] only. To some extent his ideas fall in line with the theories of Baoddha [Buddhist] *shúnyaváda*. He did not believe in the existence of *jagat*, or the physical world. He accepted *guñánvita Máýaváda* [the doctrine of qualified illusion]. Due to his influence Buddhist Tantra disappeared, but in Hindu Tantra [some Buddhist] gods and goddesses still remained.

Even today the goddesses of Buddhist Tantra, such as Tára [a Chinese goddess], Manasá (the goddess of snakes), Shiitalá [the goddess of smallpox], Báráhii [the goddess of wild boars], etc., are being worshipped by the common people out of fear.

The *shúnyavádiis* had a great influence during the time Shankaracharya was preaching. Shankaracharya accepted Uttara Miimámsá as propounded by Shrii Vádaráyana Vyása.

Shrii Shankaracharya discussed the following subjects with Buddhist philosophers: The *shúnyavádiis* said that the universe came out of nothing and will go into nothing, everything being a dream. This was questioned by Shankaracharya, who said that even if the universe is nothing or a dreamland, there should be someone who witnessed the dream. The *shúnyavádiis* replied that there was no

dreamer. The universe is an illusion (*bhrama*), just as a rope mistaken for a snake is an illusion. Shankaracharya said that this could not be possible. The *shúnyavádiis* said that this could only be understood through sadhana, while Shankaracharya said that it was not possible to have a dream without a dreamer. If the universe is an illusion like mistaking a rope for a snake, there had to be something like a rope which could be mistaken for the universe. Without a rope it would not be possible to mistake it for a snake. Besides this, there must be a person to make the mistake; similarly, there must be someone to have the illusion of the universe. This means that there must be some other entity to realize it.

The *mádhyamikas* [*shúnyavádiis*] said that nothing does not actually mean nothing (*shúnya*) – what you call *Brahma*, we call nothing – so the illusion of the universe is *Brahma*.

*Yathá shúnyavádinám shúnyam;
Brahma Brahmavidámstathá.*

[As *shúnya* is to the *shúnyavádiis*,
so *Brahma* is to the *Brahmavádiis*.]

To this Shankaracharya replied that it means that both the one who sees and the object which is seen are an illusion; and where there is no one to see, who will mistake a rope for a snake? The *shúnyavádiis* could not answer.

The *kśāñikavádiis*' answer to Shankaracharya's question was that the illusion is always *kśāñika* [transient]. Shankaracharya's question on this was that, according to him, *Brahma* was *anádi* and *ananta* but that the *kśāñika* entity comes in a moment and disappears the very next moment, so where does the *kśāñika* entity come from? Something must certainly exist between the span of creation and

that of destruction. The *kśāñikavādiis* replied that it is destroyed with the creation.

Shankaracharya replied that this shows that there is no existence. The *kśāñikas* felt defeated, but they still replied that the existence was negligible. This was not a satisfactory explanation.

The pandits of *pratyakśa váhya vastuváda* and *ánumeya váhya vastuváda* also argued for their philosophies, but no one could withstand the questioning of Shankaracharya, hence all four sections of Buddhism were defeated by Shankaracharya. After their defeat they made friends with Shankaracharya and accepted *kulakuñḍalinii tattva* [the concept of raising the latent spiritual potentialities in human beings], and as a result [transformed] *Baoddha yogácára* [*kśāñika vijñānaváda*] came into existence.

There are several defects in Shankaracharya's philosophy. According to Shankaracharya the universe is based on a fixed object influenced by *Máyá*; the fixed object is called *Brahma*. There is an illusion in mistaking a rope for a snake. Now the question arises, who has the illusion of [i.e., mistakes a rope for] a snake? One who already knows about snakes. If there is an illusion of *Brahma* for the universe, it means that the real universe is somewhere else. Thus the theory *Brahma satyaṁ jaganmithyá* is defective. This is a wrong interpretation given by Shankaracharya. Buddhists did not question it and hence it was accepted at the time.

Shankaracharya does not believe in *jīvas* [living beings] and *jagat*. Then the question arises, for what [or whom] does the illusion exist?

*Aśtakulácalasaptasamudráh
 Brahmapurandaradinakararudráh;
 Na tvaṁ náhaṁ náyaṁ lokah vyartham
 kimarpi kriyate shokah.*

[The eight great continents, the seven vast oceans, Brahmá (the Creator of the universe), Indra (the lord of energy), Súrya (the sun-god), and Rudra (the god of death): all these are unreal. Nothing exists, neither you nor I. So why do you vainly consider anything to be your own and increase the bondage of your attachment?] The universe has not been created and hence there is no *Saguṇa Brahma* [Qualified Supreme Entity]. Shankaracharya believes only in *Nirguṇa Brahma*. Shankaracharya says that the universe is like a dream and the dreamer is also *Brahma*, as he did not believe in *jīvas*. When *Brahma* is *nirguṇa* [non-qualified] how can He see, as seeing is also a quality. This was forgotten by Shankaracharya.

Again, according to Shankaracharya, everything that is seen and experienced is due to the influence of *Máyá*. This means *Máyá* is also an entity, which *advaetaváda* [monism, or non-dualism, a key theory of Shaṁkara Darshana] cannot accept.

Shankaracharya believes in the necessity of sadhana, but who will carry out the sadhana when the existence of *jīivas* is not accepted?

When Brahma is anádi and ananta, why should Brahma be influenced by *Máyá*? When the universe is created by the influence of *Máyá*, how is it that Brahma remains nirguṇa? *Máyá* is a greater force than Brahma as *Máyá* influences Brahma.

Again, Shankaracharya says that there is no such thing as *Máyá* exactly, rather *Máyá* Itself is an illusion. A person in the desert sees water, houses, trees, etc., from a distance, but actually

there is nothing. In the absence of *jñána*, the person experiences an illusion. When there is *vikára* [transformation] in *Brahma*, how can the universe be an illusion?

Shankaracharya says that where there is *Brahma* there is *Máyá*. Then the question arises, is *Máyá* nothing? If there is no *Máyá*, how can It influence [Brahma]? To overcome this Shankaracharya says that *Máyá* is not even nothing, It is inexplicable (*anirvacaniiya*). Again the question arises, who created *Máyá* if *Brahma* did not create It? Then *Máyá* becomes *Saguña Brahma*.

Shankaracharya was able to defeat Buddhist philosophers only by a display of words. The *Máyá* of Shankaracharya is not the *Prakṛti* of Ananda Marga.

One of the greatest critics of Shankaracharya's philosophy was Jayanta Bhatta, the author of *Nyáya Maiñjarīi*.

Pátaiñjala [Sámkhya] and [Kápila] Sámkhya

1. Both believe in the existence of many *puruśas*.

2. Both believe that the universe is created by *Prakṛti* for the satisfaction of these *puruśas*. This is not logical because no *bhoga*, or satisfaction, is possible without the existence of mind. *Puruśas* do not have mind and they cannot be satisfied by the creation of the universe by *Prakṛti*.

3. Both believe that *Prakṛti* is not within *Puruśa* but is a separate entity. This is also illogical since *Prakṛti* is only energy, or the *shakti* of *Puruśa*, and like the *dáhika shakti* [burning capacity] of *agni* [fire], *Prakṛti* cannot be a separate entity.

These philosophies are called *dvaetaváda* [dualistic] because they believe in two separate entities: *Puruśa* and *Prakṛti*.

4. In [Káṇḍa] Sámkhya there is no God, hence it is called *niriishvaraváda* [the doctrine of atheism], while Pátanjala [Sámkhya] believes in God but does not believe in *Brahma*, therefore it is called *seishvaraváda* [the doctrine of theism].

5. Idol worship is supported by both these philosophies.

Árya Samāja

1. It believes that *jīvas*, *jagat* and *Brahma* are all *anádi*. This only shows that *jīvas* and *jagat*, like *Brahma*, do not need any further progress, all the three being *anádi* alike. This is unacceptable because it leaves no necessity for sadhana which is the *dharma* of every *jīva*. Also, it does not explain the reason for action and progress in the universe.

2. It believes in *yajñas* [ritual sacrifices] not as *karma*, but as a form of worship. *Yajña* means *karma*, but in Árya Samāja it means offering to Agni in a particular form. There is no rational meaning in performing such *yajñas*.
3. It also believes in *pralaya* [the annihilation of the world], which is irrational, since *jīvas* and *jagat* are *anādi*, and as such there is no place for *pralaya*.

Marxism

1. It believes in an equality among human beings which is only theoretical and not possible in practice because no two individuals are alike, hence they cannot be equal.
2. This faith finds its field of activity in the exploitation of poverty, hence it can only thrive in poverty-stricken areas.
3. It has no tolerance for other religions or organizations.
4. Its goal is purely imaginary equality.

5. This faith exists on violence only.⁽¹⁰⁾

1957, Jamalpur

Footnotes

(1) This discourse was compiled from classes given to a select group of *táttvikas* (those trained in elementary philosophy), hence the outstanding principles and beliefs of the important faiths were given little or no explanation by the author. –Eds.

(2) *Darshana* literally means "philosophy". Hindu Yoga Darshana – one of the *śāḍādarshanas*, or six major schools of theistic Indian philosophy, discussed later in this chapter – is also known as Pátaiñjala Sámkhya. –Eds.

(3) The roots of both these words mean “unmoving”. –Eds.

(4) According to Nyáya philosophy, *jīivas* (living beings) and *Parama Puruśa* (Supreme Consciousness) are separate entities, and

neither attracts the other. Both schools of Nyáya philosophy – Gaotama Nyáya propounded by Shrii Gaotama and Kańáda Nyáya propounded by Shrii Kańáda – believe in Vedic rituals and are divorced from practicality. –Eds.

(5) Elsewhere the author has said: "Thus the chief contention of Sámkhya philosophy is that there are many *puruśas* but only one *Prakṛti*." ("Vraja Kṛśńa and Sámkhya Philosophy" in *Namámi Kṛśńasundaram*, 1996) –Eds.

(6) *Mukta Puruśa* here means Consciousness which has not been bound by *Prakṛti*. –Eds.

(7) *Álambana* literally means "support", that on which something else depends. It is sometimes used to refer to *Parama Puruśa*, who is the ultimate shelter of everything. Here it apparently refers to objects of the physical world. On such objects depend formations of the *citta*, from which we can infer the existence of the physical objects themselves. –Eds.

(8) Creative Principle, *Prakṛti* in Her phase of creation. One aspect of *Máyá* is the power to cause the illusion that the finite created objects are the ultimate truth. –Eds.

(9) For further discussion on Tantra, see *Discourses on Tantra Volume 1*, 1993, and *Volume 2*, 1994. –Eds.

(10) For a more detailed critique of Marxism, see "Defects in Communism" in Volume 4. –Eds.

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Social Psychology

For the existence of human beings in society, the following fundamental factors are necessary: **(1) unity, (2) social security and**

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(3) peace. What is actually required under each of these fundamentals is discussed below.

Unity

Unity among the members of any society or social structure is absolutely necessary, otherwise the structure will start disintegrating. Lack of unity among the members of society because of **too much self-interest** in the individual members, the **formation of groups for economic or social advantage**, and the **lack of understanding of others**, act not only to bring about the downfall of society, but also can wipe it out completely from the face of the earth. **Instances of many groups and empires disappearing altogether are not rare in the little-known history of this world.**

The problem, therefore, is the preservation of unity in society. Unity in society will be ensured if it is possible to enthuse the members of society with the following: a common ideal, **a casteless society, collective social functions, and no capital punishment.**

A common ideal: It is often heard that a particular country was never so united as during war. This is partly due to love of one's motherland, but more importantly, it is due to all the individuals having a common ideal: facing the perils of war. This common ideal is, however, a very temporary phenomenon and disappears when the dangers of war diminish.

In Ananda Marga the seed of a common ideal is sown from the very beginning of a child's life. At the age of five, when the child has acquired only a preliminary understanding of his or her surroundings, he or she is given the

idea of *Brahma* [the Supreme Entity]. The entire society of Ananda Marga is thus founded on a **common ideal or goal – *Brahma***. This foundation will never be lost like the dangers of war. Such an ideal will not disappear like the common ideal of facing the dangers of war; so the unity in a society founded on the ideal of *Brahma* will be everlasting.

In Ananda Marga, even in the economic field, there is a common ideal, as **the whole property of the earth is common property and is to be shared by all members of the society**. This is instilled in every member by reciting the following *shloka* [couplet] at the commencement of every function held by the members of Ananda Marga:

***Saṁgacchadhvaṁ saṁvadadhvaṁ
saṁ vo manáṁsi jánatám;
Devábhágaṁ yathápúrve saṁjánáná upásate.***

***Samánii va ákútiḥ samáná hrdayánivah;
Samánamastu vo mano yathá vah susahásati.***

*[Let us move together, let us radiate the same
thought-wave, let us come to know our minds
together,
Let us share our wealth without differentiation,
like sages of the past, so that all may enjoy the
universe.
Let our aspirations be united, let our hearts be
inseparable,
Let our minds be as one mind, so that we live in
harmony and become one with the Supreme.]*

Love for all – the ideal of the whole of
humanity being one family, utilizing all the
property of the world as one unit – coupled with
the idea given to all those participating in the
Námakaraña [baby naming ceremony] that the
social, psychic and spiritual upbringing of the

child is the common responsibility of all – provide an undying common ideal.

A casteless society: Caste is another important factor which disrupts society. The evils of the caste system are nowhere better known than in India. **For unity in society, there should not be any small groupings within the society claiming economic and social privileges.**

In Ananda Marga, where "love for all" and "humanity is one family" are the guiding principles, and where individuals identify themselves as *jīva mátra* [living beings like any other], **a casteless society is the only society which can exist. In all the social functions in Ananda Marga, the prominent guides and workers are *guru bhái* [disciples of the same guru] and **not *játa bhái*** [members of**

the same caste] as is the prevalent custom. From the very beginning of a child's life, that is, when his or her worldly identity is established at the time of the Námakaraña, up to the Shráddha Kriyá [funeral ceremony], when his or her worldly identity is lost, the persons participating in all the functions as guides and workers are only *guru bhái*, and may be from any caste.

This, along with the common goal of *Brahma*, inspires the formation of a society where individuals identify themselves as *jīva mátra* and do not belong to any particular caste, creed or sect.

Also, no family is debarred from taking part in our social functions because of the fault of a member of that family. With this the chances of the formation of a society of outcaste families are eliminated.

In such a society, where belonging to a particular group or section is not necessary for marriage, for learning the Vedas, or for making efforts to achieve anything, the formation of castes is not possible. In Ananda Marga, where the upbringing of every child is a combined responsibility, where the whole property of the universe is to be collectively utilized, and where there is no caste bar for spiritual practices, the formation of castes for social, economic or spiritual reasons is not possible.

Collective social functions: Many of the ills of society develop because people do not care to know other members of society. This may not only mean ignorance of the condition and difficulties of others, but also leads to intolerance and a lack of interest in the affairs of the other members of society. Common social functions bring different members of society together and are therefore a great unifying force.

By performing certain functions collectively, all the members are engaged in doing the same thing for some time, and this brings about a feeling of unity and interest in others.

In Ananda Marga such common social functions are especially encouraged. *Milita snána* [collective bathing] and *dharmacakra* [collective meditation] provide grounds for common social functions in the physical, psychic and spiritual fields. Common participation in such functions is a very great unifying force. The participants in such functions will have no intolerance for each other, and will instead get more united. Such functions are, therefore, a great unifying force.

No capital punishment: Capital punishment⁽¹⁾ brings about deterioration in society and stops further progress of the individuals on whom capital punishment is

inflicted. Such individuals⁽²⁾ form sects or groups which become the lower or discarded groups of society, and give rise to discord and disruption in society.

In Ananda Marga capital punishment, whether social or physical, is not permitted under any circumstances. The only punishment permissible in the Marga is disallowing a defaulter to take part in social functions for a fixed period. After the period is over, the individual starts taking part in all the functions as usual. No dependents are to suffer the punishment inflicted on such individuals. This punishment leaves no mark on the individual after the period of punishment, as does outcasting a family or even imprisonment.

The other punishment specified is to bring to the Marga, that is, to show the right path to,

ten persons before the individual is allowed to attend social functions.

Punishments of this type are corrective and, instead of retarding individual progress, give more chance to the individual to correct his or her conduct and to adopt correct pursuits during the period of punishment. As these punishments do not leave a permanent mark on the individual or the family, they do not bring about discord and disunity among the members of society. On the contrary, those undergoing such punishment are employing themselves in better pursuits than in their normal life by making efforts to show the right path to ten people. They are thus not only improving themselves, but are also making efforts to improve society, and are bringing about more unity in society.

Social Security

Lack of security in society leads to the disintegration of society itself. Any society where security against injustice is not provided to individuals cannot exist for long. Lack of security in society also arises because of indiscipline. If the laws of society are not obeyed, social security will not be possible. The most important requisites for social security, therefore, are that there should be no injustice and that there should be strict discipline.

No injustice: If security in society is to be maintained, there should be no injustice, whether economic, or because of the sex or race of a person.

Economic injustice is usually the result of lack of appreciation for the dignity of labour.

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Trade-wise distinctions⁽³⁾ in society lead to economic injustices.

In Ananda Marga it is laid down that it is better to work as a sweeper and earn one's own living than to be dependent on others for one's livelihood. If such importance is given to one's own earning and living, many economic injustices will cease to exist.

Economic injustice also comes about because of the hoarding instinct in individuals. People want all property for themselves only. If they only felt that property should be shared by others also, many economic injustices would not be committed.

In the Marga all the property of the universe is to be considered as common property and has to be utilized jointly. This idea leaves hardly any scope for economic injustices.

Another form of injustice in society is discrimination based on sex. Instances of one sex being considered inferior to the other are very common. Women in a considerable area of the world are considered to be the private property of men, meant for their pleasure only. In many other, so-called advanced, countries of this world, women do not have the right to vote in the general elections held by the government of the country. In other countries women are considered unfit to take part in spiritual practices.

In Ananda Marga both men and women have equal responsibility. In the manner prescribed for marriage in the Marga, both the man and the woman have to take equal responsibility. In Ananda Marga there is no bar on women being entitled to spiritual practices. Women and men are considered to be on the

same footing, and there is no question of men considering themselves to be superior to women.

Members of a particular race who consider themselves superior to others also very frequently inflict injustices on other sections of society. The expulsion of the Jews from Germany by Hitler's so-called superior Aryan race is a glaring example of racial injustice in society. In this country, also, injustices on Harijans by the so-called superior races have caused a tremendous amount of disruption in society. To obviate this type of social injustice, the first attempt should be to do away with racial distinctions in society.

In Ananda Marga the first step that one takes is to forget one's race or sect – to no longer identify oneself with one's race, caste or sect – regardless of whether it was superior or inferior.

Racial prejudices figure very prominently in social functions based on racial considerations. In [Ananda Marga] collective functions members of all races, castes or creeds take part as equals. Community or caste, race or nation, is often the main consideration in arranging marriages, etc. In the Marga there are no such considerations. In the Marga these petty differences among human beings are not given any importance. In the Marga the seeds of an ideal humanity are sown from the very beginning of life, and humanity as a whole is considered to be one family belonging to the race of *jīva mātra*. In such a society injustices due either to economics or to sexual or racial considerations will be unknown.

Discipline: Lack of discipline in a society has often been seen historically to be the main reason for the extermination of that society. Indiscipline in some members of a society may

make the peaceful existence of other members impossible. Discipline is, therefore, absolutely necessary for the preservation of society.

Indiscipline in a society arises when some members think that the laws of the society are wrong. If their thinking is confined to thinking and arguing only, and does not lead to breaking the laws of the society, there will be no indiscipline. In order to maintain discipline, the laws of a society should be rational and capable of change from time to time according to the development of the society, then alone discipline can be preserved.

In the Marga anything which is not rational has no place. When reason is given so much importance and change due to reason is accepted, all chances of dissatisfaction leading to indiscipline are eliminated. At the same time, in the Marga reasoning or arguing comes only after

obedience. This ensures discipline in society. If, after obeying the laws of society, one feels that they are wrong, one has every right to argue and have the laws changed, but argument before obedience leads to indiscipline.

In a society such as the Marga, which is based on rationality alone and not on prejudices, there is no chance of indiscipline creeping in and undermining the social security of individuals.

Peace

Psychic equilibrium is peace. It is therefore to be seen what brings about psychic equilibrium and what disturbs it. Spiritual practices will bring psychic equilibrium, and a belief in superstition will disturb it. Hence, for the preservation of peace, spiritual practices and fighting against superstition are necessary.

Spiritual practices: Relief from *duhkha* [suffering] is the main desire, and without the fulfilment of this desire peace is not possible. This remission is called *nivrtti* [the cessation of suffering]. *Nivrtti* is of two types: one is called [sámayikii] *nivrtti* [the temporary cessation of suffering], and the other *atyantikii nivrtti* [the permanent cessation of suffering]. One thing which helps in getting remission, or *nivrtti*, is called *artha* [that which provides temporary liberation from mundane desires]. But *artha* is purely physical, so it can bring only physical and temporary remission. For everlasting freedom from *duhkha*, *Paramártha* [that which provides permanent liberation] is the only remedy. *Paramártha* does not bring only temporary remission, but everlasting freedom from *duhkha*. *Atyantikii nivrtti* can be obtained only by *Paramártha* which relieves one of all *duhkha*: physical, mental and spiritual.

This *Paramārtha* can only be obtained by sadhana, that is, spiritual practices. For maintaining peace psychic equilibrium is necessary, and for maintaining this equilibrium freedom from all *duhkha* forever is necessary. Freedom from *duhkha* or *atyantikii nivrtti* can be obtained only from *Paramārtha*, and *Paramārtha* can be achieved only by sadhana, or spiritual practices.⁽⁴⁾

In the Marga spiritual practices begin when the child reaches the age of five. From the very beginning of a child's life, he or she is initiated into spiritual practices. With the advance of the child's life the spiritual practices also advance, bringing within their scope not only the mental sphere, but also bodily development.

The sadhana, or spiritual practices, of the Marga do not teach forsaking the world. They

teach the right and correct use of all property, crude or subtle. Our sadhana is a systematic and scientific method for physical, mental and spiritual progress and advancement by which permanent psychic equilibrium, and thus everlasting peace, is established.

Fighting against superstition:

The *svabháva* [natural tendency] of mind is to become like its object. Superstition of any kind – social, psychic or spiritual – influences the mind to such an extent that the mind, due to its worries, leads a person into trouble. The mental equilibrium of one believing in superstition is disturbed, and the result is that one not only loses peace, but one is also led to do some action which is detrimental to oneself. This only further strengthens belief in superstition. Any ordinary incident is magnified and attributed to some *durlakśaṇa*, or bad omen, by the believers of superstition.

It is only because of the mind's nature to become like its object that people see ghosts, which are purely the mental creation of those who believe in this superstition. If only these persons had the courage and mental strength to catch the ghost, they would very soon realize that their mistake was believing nothing to be something.

Such superstitions have not left any field uncontaminated. In the social sphere there is no dearth of superstitions. Witchcraft, discrimination against widows, etc., are curses in society only due to such superstitions. In the psychic sphere there are deep-rooted superstitions such as the belief in ghosts (*bhút*), etc. Not only this, but superstitions related to *shráddha* [funeral ceremonies], etc., have also bound down even the progeny of a person. In the spiritual field, also, ignorant people have

been forced to do many things only because of the deep-rooted superstition of heaven and hell. All these only disturb psychic equilibrium and bring about discord and worry in society. For the preservation of peace, the fight against superstition is of prime importance.

In Ananda Marga none of these superstitions have been given any place. In the social field witchcraft has been discredited as only a psychic creation of some *kusańskáarii* [evil] person. Widows have been given the same status as unmarried women, there being no restrictions on their dress, behaviour, living, etc. Exercising any influence on widows [to compel them] to adopt a particular pattern of life based on the social superstition of disallowing their presence in social functions, is strictly prohibited.

The psychic superstitions of ghosts, *shráddha*, etc., also do not find any place in the Marga. Ghosts are only imaginary, and performing *shráddha* by giving *dána* [gifts] to Brahmans to take a departed soul across the Vaetárnii River [the mythological river which must be crossed to enter heaven], is only a psychic misrepresentation inculcated from the very beginning. These ideas are not rational, and therefore believing in them is not correct. This is the view taken in the Marga.

The spiritual (religious) superstitions of heaven and hell and fear of God make individuals suppressed, and they lose their peace. Not infrequently fear in terms of such superstitions creates a very undesirable reaction in people, and thereby causes a loss of peace.

In the Marga spiritual practices are based on rationality. Fear and superstition do not have

any part in them. A systematic and scientific method of spiritual practices in the Marga leaves no place for these superstitions.

It can thus be seen that **an ideal society will come into being only when there is unity, social security and peace.** To provide for such a society, Ananda Marga is founded in ***Brahma*** as a common ideal. Unity in Ananda Marga is secured by evolving a casteless society where capital punishment is prohibited, and all take part unitedly in social functions irrespective of caste, creed or race. In such a society social injustice due to trade-wise distinctions, sex or race is not possible. Ananda Marga further strengthens society by refuting and discouraging all superstitions, whether social, psychic or spiritual, and by providing a systematic and scientific method of spiritual practices and codes for physical, mental and spiritual progress and

advancement towards permanent peace in an ideal society.

1957, Jamalpur

Footnotes

([1](#)) Capital punishment here means both social ostracism and punishment by death. –Eds.

(2) I.e., those ostracized by society. –Eds.

(3) The terms “trade-wise classifications” and “trade-wise classes” refer to the classifications or classes that developed because some individuals were more suited to certain types of work. (See the section Economic System in “Ananda Marga – A Revolution”.) Distinctions, i.e., discrimination, based on these classifications or classes lead to economic injustices. –Eds.

(4) For further discussion on *artha* and *Paramārtha*, see “Artha and Paramārtha” in Volume 3. –Eds.

Ananda Marga – A Revolution

Ananda Marga is a revolution. It is not only a spiritual revolution, but also an economic, social and mental revolution. The economic system, the social structure, the trend of thinking and the spiritual practices prescribed in Ananda Marga are not only new, but something quite different from the established ideas and practices in these spheres of life.

Ananda Marga is not a change merely due to the cycle of time, but a revolution – a radical change – in the true sense. Never before in the entire history of this world, or the universe, if that could be known to mortals, has a system of

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life embracing the economic, social, mental and spiritual spheres been correlated in a closely-knit society, as it has in Ananda Marga. In Ananda Marga a [*sannyāsii*, a renunciant] is as good a member of society as an ordinary family person earning his or her own living and maintaining his or her family.

If we take each one of these important spheres of life separately as depicted in Ananda Marga, we will see how they are radically different from all existing ideas on the subjects.

Economic System

Ever since the beginning of this world, the power to rule has been in the hands of one class or another.

In the beginning of the world, when it was inhabited by animals only, mere brute force

determined the capacity of a class to rule. For example, we find in the natural history of the world a period when enormous reptiles, the dinosaurs, ruled the world with the help of sheer weight and brute force.

The rule of brute force did not end with the animals, but continued even in the age of earlier human beings. Even after the advent of civilization, in the early stages the knights, rajas, kings and maharajas depended on and ruled with the help of their physical strength. Every other faculty on the earth was subordinate to physical strength.

With the passage of time, as mental faculties developed, physical force was replaced by the mental capacities of planning, forethought, etc., as the essential requirements of ruling over others.

With further economic development, money became important. The possession of money could even secure the use of the knowledge of the learned, and the courage and strength of the brave. Hence the authority to rule passed on to the moneyed class, the capitalists. The capitalists could not retain the authority to rule for very long as their income depended on the workers.

The toilers, who had neither courage and strength, nor highly-developed mental faculties, nor money, had to depend on one of the above three classes for their maintenance. The classes with physical strength or mental faculties could do without the help of the toilers, and as long as their rule lasted the toilers did not realize their importance. The capitalists could not produce wealth without the help of the workers; the worker thus became an essential requirement of the ruler.

The workers did not fail to realize this, and consequently we find their attempts to rule manifest in the shape of the communist movement of the present age. A close study of this movement will show that it is not backed by individual physical strength, mental development, that is, reasoning or statesmanship, or capital, but by a unity of workers who have only one quality, that is, to work. This quality of work can be directed towards violence for snatching away the capital and the other attainments of the other classes. But whatever their drawbacks, the cycle of events shows that power is passing into their hands.

Similarly, if Ananda Marga were only a development due to the cycle of events, the power to rule, according to it, should be vested in one of the classes. If the workers or

communists have outlived their utility, power, according to the ordinary cycle, should pass to the brave or to the statesmen, and Ananda Marga should have also aimed at this. In Ananda Marga this is not so. Ananda Marga does not follow any of the old patterns of economic life. The power to rule is not bestowed on any one class. In fact, in the Marga there are no separate classes. The Marga has done away with the age-old system of classifying human beings according to their trade or even their capacity.

The four classes which have ruled the world at one time or another are not of recent origin, but have been known ever since the beginning of humanity as *bráhmañas* [or *vipras*], *kśatriyas*, *vaeshyas* and *shúdras*. These trade-wise classifications developed due to individuals being more suited for a certain type of work. The classes so formed started the fight for power and

for their own comforts, and thus came the existence of one class ruling the rest. It would thus appear that the formation of trade-wise classes was a natural and logical development.

If that were so, how, then, would Ananda Marga be able to establish a classless society? Ananda Marga does not claim any achievement which is illogical, and hence a classless society, which would be illogical, cannot be achieved by Ananda Marga. The natural and obvious conclusion of those who do not know Ananda Marga will be that Ananda Marga is like many other societies of idealists and moralists who aim to establish a classless society. The attempt to establish a classless society by Ananda Marga is not confined only to those who are preachers of the Marga, or to those who understand the philosophy of the Marga and appreciate the necessity of a classless society; rather, every

member of Ananda Marga practises a system of living which leads to a classless society.

The revolutionary character of the Marga is seen from the very approach it takes to tackle one of the oldest vices of human beings: the vice of dividing themselves into classes for their own benefit. These artificial classes get logical backing from the fact that they have sprung up from the grouping together of persons of similar aptitude for the better utilization of their capacities. For instance, the learned and the statesmen combined together and formed the class of *vipras*. Similarly, the strong and the brave formed what is called the *kśatriyas*. The *vaeshyas* and the *shúdras* were formed in a similar way. Ananda Marga breaks all these classes, not by calling them bad, but by making all the members of Ananda Marga practise and develop the qualities of all these classes. For instance, the developed mind required

by *vipras* is necessary for every member of Ananda Marga. Even if one is a *shúdra* or a *vaeshya*, or a member of any other class, every person, after joining the Marga, has to work to have a developed and strong mind. Every person has to work to build a strong and healthy body. Every person has to work for a living. This has been given so much importance in the Marga that it is laid down that the work of a sweeper – the lowest form of work – is far more respectable than depending upon others for one's daily needs. Not only has earning money and having a balanced and dependable economic life been given importance, but even the lowest of all these classes, in whom people usually do not see any good, has been given equal importance. Every member of the Marga has to serve others physically. This is the work of the *shúdras*, or the workers. Followers of the Marga cannot develop themselves completely unless they can also perform this work

efficiently. In short, all the requirements of the four classes have to be mastered by each individual in Ananda Marga.

It is not only the mastery of these trades which is necessary, the regular practice of these trades is an essential duty of every member of Ananda Marga. Every individual thus becomes universally fit. One makes as good a *vipra* as a *shúdra*. Thus, no scope is left for an individual to leave others behind and form a special group.

A classless society is not aimed at in the Marga, but is evolved by practice. This approach, to break a society full of classes and sects, was never thought of before. The very classes which appeared as a logical development and evolution can be broken up by an even more logical method to form only one classless society.

Ananda Marga is, therefore, not an organization of idealists or moralists who preach a classless society, but a method – a system or a dharma – which leads to a classless society. It has not been formed as a result of cyclic changes in the economic sphere of the world like the evolution of communism, rather it is a radical departure from all existing economic practices or theories conceived so far. It is a revolution in the economic sphere of the world's life.

Social Structure

In the social sphere, too, both the means and the end adopted in Ananda Marga are revolutionary. They show a change which had never been conceived of before – a change which is not a cyclic change due to the development of the social habits of human beings. It is a change based on the fundamental characteristics of the

human mind, and hence it is a change which will last as long as the human mind lasts.

Human beings, from time immemorial, have been framing laws and rules to govern themselves so that the fundamental rights of each individual are secured and all the members of society can live peacefully. Such laws have been framed from time to time by the ruling class, and every such law clearly shows that the ruling class has framed the laws keeping their own interests as the uppermost consideration in their minds. For instance, in the *Manusmṛti*, the text of laws framed by Manu, it is stated that if a Brahman boy marries a Shúdra girl, he is to be punished by shaving his head and taking him around the town seated on the back of a donkey, while the punishment for a Shúdra boy marrying a Brahman girl is death. These laws were accepted only as long as Brahman supremacy

remained, and started being questioned the moment Brahman supremacy was removed.

Since Brahman supremacy there have been numerous lawgivers, and all of them have framed laws and rules to suit their own convenience. Some have placed allegiance to the king as the supreme duty of every member of society, others have placed the country or the state above the sovereign, while others have considered their religion most important. There is no one common bond in any of the numerous societies to keep all of them together. The laws for ensuring security are framed so as to provide security of varying degrees to members of the different strata of society, such as the difference [in degree of security provided] between the Brahmans and the Shúdras or that between the white Americans and the black Americans. Such laws, lacking a common bond, cannot lead to the existence of a peaceful and everlasting society.

Unfortunately, so far all lawgivers have done this, and the resulting society has been full of unrest.

The approach to tackle the problem of developing an everlasting society is revolutionary itself. The persons who are to build the society of Ananda Marga are not mere idealists and moralists. They are a group of classless, casteless, practical persons who do not only preach and meditate on the principles of classlessness, but actually practise them so as to be fit to be a member of any of the classes of the world, based on the individual capacities of human beings. With this background, they are bound together by the common bond of accepting *Brahma* [the Supreme Entity] as their common and foremost ideal. The ideal is everlasting, and equally important for any class of persons.

The social laws of the Marga do not only make no distinction between one person and another, but ensure that both sexes have to share equal responsibility in life. All social superstitions, such as discrimination against widows, etc., are discarded. Not only are these superstitions discarded, but the fundamental principles of some of the existing laws of society, such as allegiance to the laws of society and state, take only second place, that is, after allegiance to *Brahma*. Capital punishment,⁽¹⁾ such as outcasting, or restricting widows or women in general from taking part in certain social functions, do not find any place in our society.

Ananda Marga forms a society in which laws have been framed always keeping in view the common ideal, and thereby developing the idea of the oneness of all humanity. This society is radically different from any existing society,

for it provides a society with a common bond where there is no distinction, whether of class or sex, where no one can be outcast or punished so that one may not be incapable of reforming oneself, and where no laws are framed keeping in view the interest of a few individuals only. In such a society, no one would be weak or downtrodden, and no one would allow oneself to be exploited by others. Such a society had been dreamt of and spoken of earlier by moralists and idealists, but never before has a practical approach to achieve it – as has been discovered by Ananda Marga by producing people who combine all the qualities of the different economic classes of the world in one individual – been conceived of by any of the numerous thinkers or lawgivers of the world.

Trend of Thinking

If Ananda Marga is a revolution in the economic and social spheres, it is a greater revolution in the mental and spiritual spheres.

All [Indian] philosophers and thinkers so far have declared the visible world to be unreal when compared to themselves. Ananda Marga takes a radically different view. According to the philosophy of the Marga, **the world is as real as one's knowledge of one's own existence.** At first it is difficult to imagine how far-reaching the effects of this radical change in the trend of thought can be. This approach not only gives the world the importance of human beings, but also makes the existence of the world essential. The world, or any worldly activity, is just as good a manifestation of the Supreme Being as human beings themselves. Hence Ananda Marga does not preach running away from the world, but makes it an essential requirement for every individual to be in the world. The idea of giving

the world equal importance is a revolutionary idea.

Ananda Marga makes no distinction between a family person and a *sannyāsii*. It needed the courage of a revolutionary to say so.

Spiritual Practices

All the religions of the world, whether present or past, have placed restrictions on the persons who are entitled to spiritual practices. In the Hindu religion also such restrictions are numerous. In almost all other religions there are restrictions as well. Ananda Marga has no such restrictions.

There is no need for a person to be a *sannyāsii* to learn spiritual practices which so far had never been taught to family people. Ananda Marga places no restrictions on the

members of a particular class, caste or sex for learning spiritual practices. The removal of such restrictions is a revolution. Never before had it been conceived that a family person, living with his or her family and earning a living, could achieve the ultimate goal, but the revolution of Ananda Marga has made it possible.

Everything we see is a manifestation of the Supreme Being, and so every work connected with It should be done with as much efficiency as the worship in other religions. *Brahma* is omnipresent, and one need not go to the Himalayas to find Him. The idea that whatever we do, see, hear or feel is *Brahma*, is a unique idea. Such a philosophy is a revolution, and is radically different from the philosophies evolved by the great thinkers of the world so far.

Ananda Marga is radically different from all concepts of philosophy, economics or social

thinking. It is not a change which has evolved as a result of the evolution of the human mind and its economic and social environments; it is a revolutionary concept of life altogether different from any of the present or past ideas. It is a change which is independent of the cyclic changes resulting from the passage of time. It does not preach or practise anything which is not new in both approach and practice. It is a revolution which makes life a reality and teaches adjustment in life, rather than giving up the world and leading a useless, secluded life. It prepares human beings who are fit for every walk of life, who do not make any distinction among their fellow beings, and who are joined together as a complete, big one. In Ananda Marga all humanity, nay, all living beings, *jīva mātra*, combine together in every walk of life as they sing:

***Saṁgacchadhvaṁ saṁvadadhvaṁ saṁ vo
manáṁsi jánatám;***

***Devábhágam yathápúrve saṁjánáná upásate.
 Samánii va áku'tih samáná hridayánivah;
 Samánamastu vo mano yathá vah susahásati.***

*[Let us move together, let us radiate the same
 thought-wave, let
 us come to know our minds together,
 Let us share our wealth without differentiation,
 like sages of the
 past, so that all may enjoy the universe.
 Let our aspirations be united, let our hearts be
 inseparable,
 Let our minds be as one mind, so that we live in
 harmony and
 become one with the Supreme.]*

1957, Jamalpur

Footnotes

(1) Here capital punishment means both social ostracism and punishment by death. –Eds.

Questions and Answers on Society – 1

1. Question: What are the psychological defects of materialism?

Answer: The dharma of the mind is to seek the infinite. The mind attains this goal by concentrating on a particular idea. As material objects are finite, those who seek to attain the infinite through material objects will eventually feel frustrated. They fail to attain bliss because no one can obtain or enjoy any wealth or material objects or objects of enjoyment in a way that will infinitely quench his or her thirst.

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Moreover, if those who try to satisfy their infinite hunger with material objects take this too far, their personal interests will come in conflict with those of other people, because in such a situation they try to accumulate excess wealth or material objects or objects of enjoyment by depriving others of the same objects, which are extremely necessary for the preservation of their existence.

Where there is nothing for people to think about except matter, continuous pressure will have to be applied to those people's minds to keep their thoughts away from this all-devouring hunger. People cannot bear pressure on their minds, so they refuse to accept it. If they see those who are applying the pressure relax their guard, these disgruntled people take to the path of *viplava* [revolution] or *prativiplava* [counter-revolution].

But by creating pressure materialism makes it appear as though the path of suppression of material enjoyment is the only path. So in materialistic societies or states people become ever-fearful and consequently one [i.e., people and/or the state] always becomes suspicious of others or depends upon armies of spies.⁽¹⁾ In the absence of spiritual ideas it is impossible to create a strong moral base. What appears to be morality in a materialistic society is merely an immoral alliance to protect individual interests.

In the absence of spiritual ideals true morality based on universal love cannot be established in society. Where the existence of *Ishvara*, the Creator of all, is not recognized, then, since no Universal Father⁽²⁾ is accepted, a sense of the fellowship of universal humanity also remains unattainable. Only spiritual ideals and spiritual desires can lead humanity along

the path of welfare. Universalism, Cosmic ideation and Cosmic bliss, unlike the material objects composed of the five fundamental factors, are not limited. Therefore humanity should be inspired to move along the path of spirituality; if they do not, they will achieve nothing worthwhile.

Social or external pressure will have to be exerted on those who do not accept spiritual ideology to keep in check their greed to appropriate the property of others. They will also have to receive proper education. However, it should be borne in mind that this pressure is not everything and that once people accept spiritual ideology this pressure will no longer be necessary.

People who believe in spiritual ideals but do not support the policy of exerting external pressure, or in other words, the application of

physical force, will find it impossible to achieve their goals, because in this world there are many people who are not prepared to listen to good words. Social or other types of pressure will have to be brought to bear on such people. Problems will never be solved by sitting around in the hope that one day their sense of righteousness will be awakened. Like materialism, spirituality based on this kind of non-violence will be of no benefit to humanity. The principles of non-violence may sound noble and quite appealing, but on the solid ground of reality they have no value whatsoever.

2. Question: Are caste distinctions absolutely valueless?

Answer: Nothing in this universe is valueless. In the age when science was undeveloped, when industries were essentially cottage industries, families used to work at the

same profession for generations. Children and grandchildren used to follow the same profession for many years, and as a result of their endeavours, made good progress. Therefore, in those days, it was not a bad thing to classify families on the basis of their profession.

However, today we live in a different age and professions are not the preserve of particular families. Due to the rapid expansion of technology, it is not easy to maintain the system of hereditary professions. As a result, social classification on the basis of profession is meaningless today.

Apart from this, even in the age when social classification by trade was justifiable, there was no necessity for distinguishing between different castes in terms of high and low.

3. Question: Can a single economic theory be adopted by all countries, at all times and for all strata of society?

Answer: No. Social ideals and systems should take into consideration temporal, spatial and personal factors as well as the all-round progress of the society. It may be that something which is quite useful for a particular time, place and person is totally worthless for a different time, place or person.

Society is not a static entity, but a dynamic one. The ideology which was formulated to meet the needs of a particular time, place and person and which was once considered beneficial, becomes backward and outdated when these factors change. Due to the progress of society, it is considered to be an anachronism in a later period. One cannot blindly cling to Marxism or

any other socio-economic theory, because any theory has value only for a particular time, place and person. After observing the effectiveness of a theory in a particular context, short-sighted people begin to believe in its eternal effectiveness. This is a total illusion.

4. Question: There is no alternative to Ananda Marga to sustain human beings in their joint endeavours. Why?

Answer: Civilization will develop when there is a united human society. The collective effort for survival is what keeps civilization alive. Society is a dynamic entity, and its survival is an indication of its inherent dynamism. When a group of people bound by the ties of a common ideology move together along a particular path, inviting others to join them and share their common joys and sorrows, theirs is a real movement; they are destined to be successful.

In this universe of rapid temporal, spatial and personal change, no single economic, political or religious structure can be the permanent answer to humanity's needs. This is because theories are born in a particular temporal, spatial and economic environment. People can move along the path of all-round welfare only, first, by accepting *Brahma* [the Supreme Entity], who is beyond time, place and person, as the goal of life; and, secondly, by continuing to perform all their worldly actions while moving along that path towards the Supreme.

Ananda Marga is that path of progress, and that is why Ananda Marga is the only alternative for the preservation of human existence and civilization. External, ritualistic so-called dharmas should not be called dharma but rather religion. They are subject to change and depend

on time, place and person. By manifesting distinctions within themselves and outside themselves (such as the differences among *vijátiiya bheda* [various species], *svajátiiya bheda* [the same species] and *svagata bheda* [different parts of one body]), religions, like other relative factors, have been the cause of the repression of humanity by creating dogmas, bloodshed and other such evils. Thus religion cannot bring peace to humanity.

11 September 1957, Jamalpur

Footnotes

(1) Here the author is referring to communist countries. –Eds.

(2) Elsewhere the author has said: “Parama Puruśa [Supreme Consciousness] is my Father, Paramá Prakṛti [Supreme Operative Principle] is my Mother, and the universe is my homeland.

We are all citizens of this universe.” (“Problems of the Day”, section 1.) –Eds.

Moralism

The inner spirit of the word samája [“society”] is “to move together”. That is, the vitality of society depends on two factors: its existence – a collective creation – and its inherent dynamism. The characteristic of an activating force is that it does not move in a perfectly straight line, rather its movement is rhythmic or undulating; and this rhythm or wave is not monomorphic but systaltic. The

force that moves society forward is also systaltic. When the nature of movement of individual life does not hinder the rhythm of collective movement of society, there remains the possibility of forming a society from the collective movement of numerous individuals – there lies the possibility of creating a universal intellectual structure inspired by the brilliance of sublime ideas.

If we try to judge the nature of something by analysing the inner spirit of the word used to describe it, we will have to say without hesitation that humanity has not yet learned how to build a “society” worthy of the name. Even to this day, people have only a very vague notion of the reasons for needing society, let alone of how to build a true society.

Movement means the active effort to destroy an existing structure and construct

another. The very effort to destroy old, worn-out systems gives rise to the possibility of creating newer systems and codes. It is wrong to infer that because a force is temporarily static after being attacked it is inert; it still possesses the potential to strike back. Of course the force under attack tends to absorb the striking force in an effort to survive, but it cannot do this successfully. I have already explained why. To retard the systalticity of the movement of the striking force is contrary to the characteristics of force. That is why vested interests cannot hold back the progress of society.

A careful study of the social history of the world will reveal that until now every attempt at prativiplava [counter-revolution] has not only caused enormous psychic and financial suffering and plunged humanity into the mire of gloom and despair, but has also lengthened the period of social contraction. This in turn, in the next

phase, has helped to accelerate the speed of the period of social expansion – has inspired the chariot of revolution to advance towards victory with greater momentum.⁽¹⁾

Does this forceful, dynamic movement manifest as a senseless whim, devoid of wisdom? No. In individual life the propensities of an underdeveloped mind appear whimsical to the external world, but in collective life, that is, in social life, there is no scope for whimsical movement. Nor would I say that dynamic movement is always inspired by wisdom. But I will say this: without wisdom, it is impossible to express dynamic movement.

The internal clash of forces provides the dynamic movement with constructive guidance. However, the amount of wisdom that is required to stop the erosion of the internal vitality of the dynamic movement is not manifest in all

individuals. There are some people who manifest a great deal of wisdom, but, reasonably speaking, no matter how much that manifestation of wisdom is criticized as being a relative thing, it has some special value of its own. The easiest way to determine this special value is to ascertain its efficacy in the field of application.

Now the word “efficacy” often raises a storm in the philosophers’ teacups, because both materialists and idealists argue in more or less the same way. Here I do not want to say much about the idealists, but I must say that the arguments of the materialists are to some extent contradictory, because the efficacy of something in the field of application can only be judged by a sound mind, and at the time of passing judgement the mind has to be kept above matter. Let me elaborate this point.

Matter is the be-all and end-all of materialism. To a materialist, mind has been created out of matter by a process of chemical transformation, and so it does not have any independent or special significance beyond its materialistic value. Who, then, is to pass judgement on the efficacy of something? Can we justifiably accept the mind as a judge when its very existence is in principle denied? And conversely, if the mind is elevated to the status of a judge, does materialism retain its validity? No, it capitulates to idealism.

There are many other contradictory arguments in the philosophy of materialism, but they are not relevant to the present discussion. However, I do not want to dismiss the world as illusory either, as do the flighty idealists. In my opinion, mind must be given the special importance it deserves.

Although the physical body appears to imbibe ideas, psychologists will surely agree that the mind is the receiver or perceiver of ideas. They will also have to accept that the appraisal of any object in the absolute sense is not possible unless we can find a yardstick – for all times, all places and all people – to evaluate the mind. In the vast multitude of relativities, how is it possible to determine an acceptable absolute measurement for all times, all places and all people? From a little analytical study of the functional differences between the subjective and objective parts of the mind, whether underdeveloped or developed, it is clear that the mind cannot maintain its unit identity without an object. Mind must have an object to contemplate. If that object transcends time, place and person, it will then be possible for the mind to perceive the temporal, spatial and personal factors from a broad angle of vision.

Only a magnanimous and pervasive mind deserves to be called the Macrocosm. The ideological component of the unit mind which provides the initial inspiration for the individual to attain that Cosmic state, is called “morality”. Every aspect of morality sings the song of the Infinite, even in the midst of the finite. In other words, or put more simply, I wish to say that those magnanimous propensities which help to establish one in the Cosmic state are the virtuous principles of morality.

Social life must take morality as its starting point – it must take inspiration from morality. Only then will society be able to put an end to the erosion caused by divisive internal conflicts and to advance towards victory. But before we can start work, we also have to understand the difference between morality and religion, or so-called dharma.

Dharma means the attainment of bliss or the endeavour to attain bliss through regular sadhana in the subtler spheres of one's nature. This blissful state is considered by wise people to be *Brahma* [the Supreme Entity], and by devotees to be one's very soul.

The word *dharma* is often loosely used for so-called religion. The reason for this is that the founders of almost all the world's religions propagated their respective doctrines among the common people, claiming them to be the messages of God [i.e., to be dharma]. These founders never followed the path of logic. Whatever their intention might have been, the result was that humanity lost its supreme treasure, its rationality.

In the Middle Ages some selfish people proclaimed to the backward masses, "I am the

messenger of God. Whatever I say is a revelation from God,” just to inject fear and terror into people’s minds. Was it beneficial for humanity to have such doctrines imposed on them in this way?

Almost every religion has claimed that only its followers are God’s chosen people and that the rest of humanity is cursed and bound by the chains of Satan. One religion has declared, “Our prophet is the only saviour. There is no escape from mundane sufferings except by taking refuge in him.” Another religion has declared, “I am the last prophet. Prayers must be said before God a specific number of times in a certain manner each day. Special animals must be sacrificed on particular days. These are the wishes of merciful God. Those who follow these injunctions will attain heaven on the Day of Judgement.” Yet another religion says, “Know ye, my son, thy God is the only God. All other gods

are false gods.” Just imagine, all these religions preach universal fraternity, and yet this universal fraternity is kept within the confines of their own community.⁽²⁾ Humanity gasps for breath at such preposterous claims of universal fraternity.

Carried away by the grandiose slogans of their respective religions, the followers of these religions have at different times whipped up a frenzy of communal⁽³⁾ hatred and indulged in orgies of genocide. Had their founders seen such sights, they would have hidden their faces in utter shame. Of all the bloodshed that took place in the Middle Ages, a major part was a natural consequence of this communal “universal fraternity”.

Directly or indirectly, religion encourages communalism. “Communalism” means a group [groupist] psychology⁽⁴⁾ based on religion.

In the distant past, long before the Middle Ages, so-called religions repeatedly tried to “show the light” to the simple, ignorant masses, and are still doing so today; and in the process they have in most cases created disasters. In fact, they do not feel any genuine love for humanity. The standard-bearers of these religions have never hesitated to use force of arms, wily intellect or financial power to gain some petty mundane advantage.

That is why I maintain that throughout history religions have proved to be flagrantly unworthy institutions, incapable of providing even the physical necessities of life, let alone spiritual salvation. By preaching disharmony, they have systematically prevented people from understanding that they are part of one integrated human society. And in support of their interdictions, they have cited many

irrational precedents – a load of mouldy, rotten, worm-eaten papyrus.

Religion tries to transform the human mind into a state of staticity, because anything static is easily exploited. However, inertia is the exact opposite of the nature of the mind. A knotty problem! The founders of religion wanted human beings to give up their dynamic nature, and out of fear or delusion, unquestioningly accept certain ideas as the infallible truth. To prevent their shallow knowledge from being exposed, some so-called religious teachers avoided answering people's questions by pretending to observe silence. This got around all the fuss of answering queries, and even gave the person the opportunity to appear sagacious. In order to stifle the inquisitiveness of the human mind, some of these charlatans even used to claim that an inquisitive nature is extremely bad.

Read any so-called religious book: one will seldom find anything resembling tolerance of the religious beliefs of others. I am not saying that one should accept whatever people say, but surely non-acceptance and intolerance are not the same. Why is there a mania for refuting the views of others anyway? If necessary, different views can be compared and presented in philosophical books. The philosophical and psychological loopholes in an argument may be pointed out without being disrespectful. But is the attempt to insult others indicative of magnanimity? In so-called religious books there is a greater tendency to refute the religious doctrines of others than to propagate one's own ideas. Observing all these machinations, genuine theologians cannot hold religion in high esteem.

Wise people say:

Yuktiyuktamupádeyaṁ vacanaṁ

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***bálakádapi;
Anyam trńamiva tyájyamapyuktań
Padmajanmanáh.***

* * *

“If a child says something rational, it should be accepted. And If the Supreme Creator says something irrational, it should be totally rejected.”

***Kevalam shástramáshrityam
na karttavyo vinirńayah;
Yuktihiina vicáre tu
dharmahánih prajáyate.***

* * *

“It is undesirable to accept something just because it is written in the scriptures, because if irrational sayings are accepted and implemented, the decline of dharma will be the result.”

The derivative meaning of the word niiti [“morality”] is “that which contains the principle of leading”. It is the starting point on the path of spiritual practices. But this is not the only significance of morality. If morality fails to provide human beings with adequate guidance about how to move towards perfection, it does not deserve to be called morality. As morality is distinguished by its capacity to lead and inspire human beings, it cannot afford to lose its dynamic nature by limiting itself to a specific time, place and person. Morality is a living force, the practice of which makes the mind increasingly contemplative, thereby establishing it in supreme subtlety, in supreme cognition. There is a state from which human beings cannot be led to some other state – the question does not arise. Morality is only worthy of the name if it can inspire human beings to reach that state.

Moralism is not the unrealistic dream of the idealist, nor is it the means of fulfilling the mundane needs of the materialist. Rather it is something that provides people with the possibility of merging their mundane objectivity into supramundane Cognition.

The spirit of morality will have to be instilled in human beings from the moment that they first start to learn the lessons of interaction. By interaction I mean social interaction. Viewed from this perspective, the mind of a child is the best receptacle for morality.

But who will impart moral training or education? Parents find fault with teachers, and teachers in turn argue that they cannot give personal attention to an individual child in a crowd of two or three hundred children. Although it is true that most parents are either uneducated or semi-educated, and while it is not

unreasonable to expect that teachers will be well-educated, it is not proper to place the sole responsibility for children's moral education on the shoulders of their teachers. Increasing the number of teachers in educational institutions may partially solve the problem of moral education, but the key to the solution lies with the parents themselves. In cases where the parents are unfit to shoulder this responsibility, the teachers and well-wishers of society will have to come forward and demonstrate their greater sense of responsibility.

Remember, humanity's very existence is based on morality; when morality leads human beings to the fullest expression of their finer human qualities, then alone is its practical value fully realized. The concerted effort to bridge the gap between the first expression of morality and establishment in universal humanism is called "social progress". And the collective body of

those who are engaged in the concerted effort to conquer this gap, I call “society”.

1959

Footnotes

(1) For an elaboration on how the systaltic force moves society forward through periods of expansion and contraction, see “The Kśatriya Age” in Volume 2. –Eds. [Footnote used in the *Prout in a Nutshell Volume 1 Part 2*, 1st edition, publication of this article.]

(2) “Community” and “communal” as used throughout this book [in the *Prout in a Nutshell Volume 1 Part 2*, 1st edition, publication of this article, “used throughout these volumes”] generally refer to religious communities. See the definition of “communalism” a few lines below. Also see “The Dangers of Communalism” in Volume 4. –Eds.

(3) For further discussion on group psychology, see “Service Psychology and Group Psychology” in Volume 4. –Eds. [Footnote used in the *Prout in a Nutshell Volume 1 Part 2*, 1st edition, publication of this article.]

Education

Parents⁽¹⁾ often allege that teachers do not teach anything worthwhile nowadays, but I do not feel that this is a very well-considered remark. In actual fact they are only making excuses in order to avoid their responsibilities. At the same time, however, I should add that most teachers demonstrate, through their

mental outlook or their actions, far less awareness of their social responsibilities than concern for their own interests. They do not devote even a fraction of the time and energy to building society that they spend making money by any means possible, such as by writing “made easies” [course summaries] or study guides.

Sometimes uneducated or semi-educated parents abuse their children, using bad language and beating them, but the behaviour of teachers is often far more despicable. In many cases, even after studying numerous books on psychology, they deliberately wound the sentiments of their students with their offensive remarks. Instead of trying to rectify the bad habits of their students, they assail their minds with caustic language. There are many teachers who hurt the feelings of students by ridiculing either their castes or their fathers' occupations, saying, “The plough suits you better than the pen, my boy,” or “You

had better join your father at the potter's wheel." Even today such utterances come out of the mouths of many teachers. If a student is ugly, there are teachers who will make faces and say, "Your intelligence is like your appearance" – not to mention the beatings and other kinds of physical torture. Even today we can observe that many teachers use fear tactics to compel the students to prepare their lessons. The day such teachers are so unfortunate as to fall sick and miss school, their students go into raptures of joy.

How many teachers try to awaken a genuine thirst for knowledge in their students? Some teachers say, "The education system is itself only a profit-making business. What are we supposed to do?" Can they escape their responsibilities with such remarks? Is profit-making education no education at all? Is there no scope for acquiring knowledge in such

education? Is it devoid of the seeds of welfare? And surely teachers cannot dismiss everything by saying, “How can we give attention to one child out of a crowd of two or three hundred?”

It must be the teachers’ responsibility to impart knowledge, teach restraint in social life, and give instruction about all the various aspects of collective endeavour, but the parents will have to take on most of the responsibility for the moral and spiritual education of the child. It should be the duty of society as a whole to ensure that the children of immoral and unrighteousness parents are brought up as virtuous citizens. If possible such children should be removed from the unwholesome environment of their parents.

The Role of Teachers

Before making further comments about the responsibilities of parents, it is necessary to say something more about teachers. The first point is that teachers must be selected carefully. High academic qualifications do not necessarily confer on a person the right to become a teacher. Teachers must possess such qualities as personal integrity, strength of character, righteousness, a feeling for social service, unselfishness, an inspiring personality and leadership ability. They are samája gurus,⁽²⁾ and for this reason it is not possible to accept just anyone as a teacher. Because teachers have an extremely important role to play, their professional standards must be very high.

Many people today recall the forest hermitages of ancient India, admonish starved or half-starved teachers for deviating from the lofty ideals of the past, and say that they should again live up to those ideals. Such glib talkers

ignore the fact that their high-sounding platitudes do not remove the pangs of hunger. A person who is constantly hungry thinks about food all the time. So if a teacher, under compulsion of poverty, works as a private tutor in four or five places and due to extreme fatigue fails to teach his or her school students properly, should he or she be censured? No, the teacher is not to be blamed at all. In many countries the cost of the monthly meat ration for the dog of a rich person exceeds the salary of a teacher. Under such circumstances how much social consciousness can we expect from the teachers? The salaries of teachers in every country should be on a par with, if not higher than, the salaries of public servants in the judiciary and the executive. It should not be forgotten that the sages of the past used to receive temple endowments, gifts of land and regular sacerdotal fees from the kings. They did not have to go from house to house as tutors to support their

families, because the government was directly responsible for solving their mundane problems. While it is true that such sages provided food and clothing to their students, the money for this came from the public and was donated out of reverence.

Simply raising the salaries of teachers, however, does not automatically mean that they will have the opportunity to create ideal men and women, because today in most countries of the world (where teachers generally have the opportunity to live fairly well) teachers nevertheless do not have the right to formulate educational policies. Rather educational policies are generally formulated by professional politicians, most of whom have perhaps no experience in education. If teachers are to be held responsible for building ideal men and women, they must also be given the right to

formulate educational policies, instead of being mere teaching machines.

Governments may submit their [social] and political needs to the teachers, but the teachers should be free to accept or reject the governments' proposals without interference. Of course, if the teachers do support any state policy, on the basis of national security or for the good of society as a whole, they will have to actively implement that policy, because the state will then have every legitimate right to their services.

I mention these things mainly because in our modern world, in those societies where democracy predominates, political factionalism has become a routine affair. In these circumstances it is but natural for every ruling party to try to influence the adolescent mind to further its party interests. But teachers should

not try to ingratiate themselves with so-called political benefactors. They should always keep higher ideals before them as they work. Those who are not teachers should not be allowed to interfere in educational matters that come within the jurisdiction of a school.

So far, we have discussed who has the right to determine educational policies, but the matter does not end there. In many countries we can observe in regard to school administration also that people are often given important posts as administrators only because of their wealth, while they themselves are, colloquially speaking, complete idiots. Their great wealth is their sole qualification. Such things occur only in countries where the state, for some reason, fails to carry out its educational responsibilities. Such wealthy school administrators often consider the educated teachers to be mere objects of pity. They put pressure on them in order to ensure

that their brainless, dull-witted children pass the examinations. They unnecessarily interfere in educational matters. When their children are taken to task, they angrily chastise the teachers. Such a situation is not at all desirable and does not encourage teachers to perform their duties conscientiously. In their poverty teachers, out of fear of starvation, “serve their term” perfunctorily day after day, or, as a result of continuous attacks on their virtue, one fine morning resign in extreme bitterness and set out in quest of some other profession. If teachers have to work under such conditions, how can they possibly have the strength of mind to keep a watchful eye on their students?

The Problems of Students

These are the problems of teachers. The students also have some special problems which many people choose not to consider.

I have already pointed out that it is improper to extort anything from students through undue pressure and intimidation. Intimidation appears to work to some extent, but it does not yield lasting results. Whatever students learn from their parents and teachers out of fear fades into oblivion as soon as the agencies of fear disappear. The reason is that their learning and their fear were inseparably associated, so with the disappearance of fear, the knowledge that they had acquired in the course of their education also disappears from the more developed parts of their minds. As soon as the bullying teacher leaves the classroom the students heave a sigh of relief. Within a few hours, whatever they had committed to memory starts growing hazy. Out of fear of failing their examinations students work hard, poring over books, and accomplish ten days' work in one hour. But after completing their examinations

and playing a game of football or visiting the cinema, they forget much of what they had learned, due to the absence of fear.

People in many countries throughout the world are painfully experiencing the detrimental effects of education through the medium of fear. Most educated people lose the abilities they acquired through education after they graduate from school or university and enter their field of work. If I were to assess the value of the education these people received, I would say that most of their time, ability and labour had been wasted or had been spent meaninglessly.

So as I was saying, it will not do to impart education through intimidation. A thirst for knowledge must be awakened, and, to quench that thirst, proper education must be given. Only then will education be worthwhile and develop the body, mind and ideals of the student.

Children are by nature most inclined towards play, so a thirst for knowledge will have to be awakened in children through the medium of play – children should be educated through play methods. Children are also by nature inclined to listen to fantasies and stories. Through stories children can easily be taught the history and geography of various countries, and they may also be taught the initial lessons of how to practise universalism in their lives. Children love play and stories almost equally, so in their case the two should be equally utilized.

The dream of the future first crystallizes in the mind of the adolescent. So adolescents should be taught, without indulging in narrow-mindedness, through the medium of idealism.

The minds of young adults are, however, somewhat inclined towards realism, so in their

case pure idealism will not suffice. In order to educate such young adults, a harmonious blend of idealism and realism is required.

Teachers must bear in mind that their students – whether adolescents, youths, old people or actual children – are, to them, all just children of different ages; and that they themselves are children like their students. If teachers distance themselves from their students or continually try to maintain a forced gravity, they will not be able to establish sweet, cordial relations with their students. The free and frank exchange of ideas is simply not possible unless a feeling of mutual affection is established. The lack of cordial relations causes many children to heartily wish for the death of either their severe teachers or their abusive parents.

The Education System

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In many newly-independent countries an attempt is made to recast the education system in a national mould. Without going into the merits of such attempts, it may undoubtedly be said that if these changes do not take into consideration the needs of the students, the education imparted may be nationalistic, but it cannot be humanistic. Like provincialism and communalism, nationalism is highly detrimental to the minds of children. Children's crystalline judgement power is to a large extent sullied by these sentiments. In newly-independent countries such perverted ideas as "Only my country's products are good; we need learn nothing from others," may be heard expressed at any time. Assertions such as "Everything is in the Vedas," or "The social system that the great prophet So-and-so commanded us to follow cannot be even slightly changed because it is based on the words of God," or "Such-and-such

country learned how to make aeroplanes by studying our country's Rámáyāña and Mahábhárata" are the results of the national, religious or communal rigidities that have been injected into the minds of the students.

When the propounders of an education system are obsessed by chauvinistic nationalism, they often, in the name of preserving the national character, try to keep the students of that country segregated from the rest of the world. It must always be borne in mind that the bonds that afford opportunities for mutual contact and understanding between people should never be weakened but should always rather be strengthened, for in this lie the seeds of collective welfare. In order to create a feeling of genuine collective welfare, extreme nationalistic zeal may have to suffer a little jolt, but intelligent people will have to absorb that

jolt and make a tremendous effort to overcome that prejudicial zeal.

I mentioned the bonds of human unity. Take, for example, the case of pre-Independence Pakistan or India. Although English came from overseas, it alone was responsible for forging a unifying link among the diverse population of India. Not only that, Indians were introduced to and became acquainted with the rest of the world population through the medium of this language. In those days Indian students who had a general knowledge of two languages – their mother tongue and English – would become eligible to enter the temple of knowledge. If today anybody in India tries to remove the English language, their efforts will be nothing but attempts to break that unifying link.

It is not proper, under any circumstances, to burden the young shoulders of students with

a heavy load of languages simply to satisfy the political whims of the leaders. Just imagine the fate of Sindhi-speaking students in Pakistan today [now Pakistan and Bangladesh]. How many languages do they have to learn? 1) Sindhi, their mother tongue; 2) English, the world language; 3) Arabic or Persian, the religious language; and 4) Urdu or Bengali, the national language, or both these languages if they want good jobs. In other words, as many as five languages are being imposed on the students. Are these students supposed to acquire knowledge or to stagger about carrying a heavy burden of languages? If, however, the nationalistic sentiment can be to some extent restrained, all the languages can be excluded from the syllabus except two: English and the mother tongue. If students study in or awaken their thirst for knowledge through these two languages, then in time, propelled by their own urge, they may learn not only the other three

languages, but ten or twenty more as well. In schools and colleges also, it is desirable to offer as many optional languages as possible. Such a policy is not likely to be criticized by anyone.

In order for people around the world to be able to communicate, a vishva bháśá [universal or world language] is needed, and the teaching and study of that language should be given equal importance in every country. If we consider the following three qualities of a language – that it should be widely spoken, be easily understood and be capable of powerful expression – English alone is qualified to become the world language. No one in the world should consider English to be the language of England alone, but should rather accept it with an open mind as the common language for the communication of ideas. Doing this will in no way harm any mother tongue.

If a false sense of prestige prevents any country from adopting the world language, it will certainly not add to the glory of the human race. It is not at all desirable for the people of one country to remain incomprehensible to those of another country. Of course in the distant future people may select another language to replace English as the world language, in accordance with the needs of their age; English cannot keep its position as the world language forever.

It is surely a great injustice to burden the shoulders of the young with the responsibility of paying off the whimsical nationalistic, communalistic or any similar prejudices of their elders. Adults should of course determine the type of education to be given to students to help them develop into worthy citizens in the future. Adults should not, however, be given a completely free hand in the formulation of

educational policies merely to allow them to give expression to their predispositions and caprices. The needs and well-being of the younger generation must be safeguarded.

Students go to school and sit for examinations in order to pass. Examiners should bear this fact in mind. They should not adopt the rigid position that “Only such-and-such percentage of students will be allowed to pass.” Examiners should take into account only the range of knowledge and the extent of the thirst for knowledge the students possess. They should not trouble themselves over students who omit to dot their “i’s” or cross their “t’s”. Nor do they need to addle their brains about how much lime has fallen from their betel leaf!⁽³⁾

The Ideals of Teachers

Having discussed teachers and the education system, something can now be said about ideals. The failings of the education system or the grievances of teachers should not be cited as excuses to avoid this subject.

Take, for instance, the psychological atmosphere within which knowledge is imparted to students. It is not [unusual] to see teachers who try to somehow extract the correct answer from their students without having either awakened in them the desire for knowledge or taught them how to acquire the necessary knowledge. There are also many teachers who would like to lecture only and be free of any further responsibilities. These are unpleasant truths, needless to say. Whether such conditions existed in the past or not is for historians to judge, and I certainly hope that they will not exist in the future, but it must be

admitted that such a state of affairs does exist at present.

(The unprofessional behaviour of a handful of teachers may be the reason why the whole teaching profession has become an object of ridicule. If so, I would say that those genuine educators – those who have even a little capacity to work or to make others work according to their own will – should deal very seriously with unprofessional behaviour. This is possible only for those who are directly engaged in the teaching profession, and not for school inspectors.)

Society will gain no lasting benefit if teachers force students to swallow knowledge like quinine pills instead of awakening the thirst for knowledge in the minds of young children, or for that matter in the mind of any student.

Speaking of ideals, yet another point comes to my mind, and that is the moral character and conduct of teachers. Many teachers demonstrate a flagrant lack of restraint over their language. There are also teachers who, after discussing the abuses and evils of intoxicants in the classroom, immediately go outside and start smoking. This sets an extremely bad example. If the teachers would just use intoxicants, without saying anything about them, it might not be so bad. But this approach naturally encourages the students to be undisciplined. They will think that the use of such things must be enjoyable, and that their teachers deprive them so that they can enjoy them alone.

In many educational institutions there are two or more factions among the teachers, and each faction tries to draw the students into its own camp. Such teachers try to generate a

feeling of disrespect in the minds of the students of their group towards the teachers of the other camps by speaking against them. As a result, ultimately a feeling of indiscipline is aroused in the minds of students. It is futile to complain about this and say, “Nowadays students don’t respect law and order.” Is it the fault of the students if those who are supposed to teach them discipline do not discharge that duty properly?

Many teachers and professors actively take part in politics; they often abuse their personal influence and use simple, idealistic young students as tools to achieve their political ends. How on earth can students learn discipline under such circumstances? Politics, at least politics today, is just an instrument for mutual mudslinging. In the political world such things as honesty, simplicity and a sense of discipline

simply do not exist. “Crush your adversaries by fair means or foul” is the creed of politics today.

The principal cause of indiscipline among students is an extreme obsession with politics. Other causes are clearly secondary, and result from the failings of a mercenary social system. The influence of the education system and the behaviour of parents, however, cannot be entirely discounted when it comes to awakening a sense of discipline or not.

I do not think that the interest some students develop in politics can be dampened by those who, for whatever reason, previously encouraged their involvement, no matter how strongly they may later advise them. At present the situation has come to such a pass that mere exhortations will have no effect. To solve this problem the entire education system will have to be reorganized. It is necessary to have a

thorough grasp of the psychology of students in order to be able to infuse a sense of discipline into their minds and impart proper education.

The Responsibilities of Parents

The mental outlook of children has already been moulded in a particular fashion by the influence of their family environment before they start school. No matter what or how much they learn at school, it is extremely difficult for them to free themselves from the influence of their family. Drawing on what they have learned in the family, the immature minds of children begin to learn about the world and understand it, and to receive ideas and master language so that they can express those ideas. Unhesitatingly they adopt their elders' way of looking at the world. Hence the primary responsibility for acquainting children with the world lies with their parents or guardians. Children will become

assets of society in the future to the extent that their parents or guardians discharge their duties properly.

I have no hesitation in saying that today's adults have not yet developed a scientific method of training children's minds. Even most so-called educated and refined people, let alone average adults, are either ignorant about or indifferent to the education of their children. Their ignorance may be pardoned, but how can we forgive their indifference? The family into which a child has been born will naturally have to bear the primary responsibility for the physical, mental and spiritual development of that child.

It can be said that ordinary people, like teachers, face many types of problem in their lives; in fact teachers' problems are only a reflection of larger social problems. It is quite

true that in the modern material world strenuous efforts to conquer the limitations of time, place and person are apparent everywhere. It is as if human beings are being forcibly dragged forward by the hair of their heads. Speed is the main consideration; whether any good is accomplished or not is a secondary factor. Thus different social trends are unable to maintain a harmonious pace in their forward movement. Some trends are far advanced in their development while others lag behind. This causes some parts of the social structure which were close together to move apart, and other parts which were once apart to come together, leading to the collapse of the entire structure. The thatched hut is still the same, but electrical wiring has been strung through it. The only food available is salt and boiled rice, but the ordinary old clay stove has been replaced by an electric “heater” [hotplate]. Such incongruities are now common in society.

The views established in our psychic world regarding the different trends of life have so unnaturally diverged from one another that the naturalness of the human mind has been spoiled. Human beings have lost the capacity to think anything, but somehow pass their days with a lot of hollow, mechanical mental objects. The caravan of our social life thus rolls on.

So today parents may rightly say, “We have almost no vital energy left after exchanging blows and counter-blows with life. We have no chance to mould the minds of our children with the care and tenderness of our hearts. All the sweetness and finer sensibilities of our minds have been sucked dry by the harsh realities of life. How can we take care of our children? We cannot even provide them with proper food and clothing. How can we know what they are thinking? Do we have the time to understand

anything properly at all? We know children should be taught through the medium of play and entertainment, both at home and outside, but is it possible for us to do that? We even have to disturb our talented son at his studies to send him to the grocer's to buy salt, cooking oil, spices, etc. We know it is wrong, but there is no alternative, for keeping a servant is beyond our means."

There may be some truth in this, but it is not the point at issue here. In order to develop a healthy outlook, the most important thing children need is robust idealism. To impart this, parents require only two virtues: self-restraint and good judgement. Let us discuss good judgement first.

The method of extracting work by terrorizing the minds of children is not only made use of by a particular type of teacher, it is

also often still more harmfully practised by parents. They frighten their children, tell them lies, engage in scurrilous brawls before them, and deceive and torment them; but they still expect that some day their children will become respectable members of society – that their children will bring glory to their family name. When their children are reluctant to drink milk or sleep, they terrify them by invoking imaginary goblins or frightful ghosts. Children initially have no fear, yet a fearful panorama is played out before them. Through this practice the parents may achieve some temporary gain, but even if the children wait a lifetime, they can never be compensated for the harm done to them. Even when these same children attain young adulthood, the thought of ghosts will not leave their minds – ghosts will become their permanent companions.

When the parents are about to go on a trip or go to a show, or when they are invited to a pleasant function or a social outing, the children may start whining or nattering to accompany them. At such times many parents tell lies without a qualm; somehow they dupe their children and leave. When the children realize what has happened, they also learn to tell lies; and to hide their intentions or their actions from their parents, they gradually start lying more and more.

Parents deceive their children in many ways. By calling sweet things bitter and pleasant things unpleasant, they prevent their children from enjoying them. But by disregarding parental injunctions and prying inquisitively, as is the wont of human nature, children discover the truth. Then they realize that their parents have been deceiving them. As a result they start deceiving not only their parents, but their

friends and classmates as well. So it is abundantly clear that children are taught the first lessons in the arts of lying and deception by their own parents at home.

In a family it is natural that differences of opinion will arise among the adults; when they do, the adults should reconcile their differences considering each other's opinions. Unfortunately they often lack the requisite mental make-up to reach an amicable agreement – each tries to convince everybody else of his or her viewpoint without caring about the opinions of others. The result is an outburst of unreasonable obstinacy – the adults lose all self-control and behave in a gross and vulgar manner. The effect on the minds of the children is disastrous. Children thus learn obstinacy from their elders. If the mother or those with whom the children spend most of their time is obstinate, the neglected children will, in most cases, become noticeably

obstinate, and they will have to carry this psychic ailment around with them for a long time. If, on the other hand, as is sometimes the case, the wishes and desires (if they are not unreasonable) of children are fulfilled, the children will not have the opportunity to learn obstinacy.

In some families the parents have lost their peace of mind due to poverty or some other cause and oppress their children with or without reason. Naturally the children lose respect for their parents, which further aggravates family indiscipline. The parents have to put up with more unrest, adding to their lack of peace.

Parents who are middle- or high-level officials in the public works or police departments have to get work done through others or supervise manual labourers or

subordinates, so they often forget to talk sweetly. Some become accustomed to using abusive language, and some to issuing commands. Due to this their children do not have an opportunity to learn to speak with restraint. Such children suffer from a superiority complex, even within their circle of friends. In their future lives it will be extremely difficult for them to love people and create a congenial social environment.

Some parents may claim that it is impossible to maintain a balanced life in an age full of problems, where they are extremely busy with numerous activities. I maintain, however, that it is possible for an intelligent parent to avoid the mistakes I have discussed. If parents fail to carry out their basic duties, I am compelled to say that, although they live in society, they are guilty of encouraging an antisocial mentality. By encouraging their

children to develop a criminal psychology, they give unnecessary trouble to the police. The main point is this: for want of a little care, children are deprived of the opportunity to become complete human beings, even though they have a human structure.

Sáhityikas – the Teachers of Society

There is yet another section of society whom I cannot absolve from the responsibility of educating children. They are the sáhityikas.⁽⁴⁾ Actually sáhityikas are a type of teacher – they are the teachers of society.

Humans have a deep longing for things far away. No one is satisfied by things that are within their grasp. Even if the mind is satisfied, the soul remains dissatisfied. That is why the world of dreams is sweeter than the mundane reality. Sáhityikas catch an image of the

mundane world in the mirror of fantasy, which is why their literature easily attracts the human mind.

Such dream castles take on most importance in the minds of children. The more children get used to the impact of reality as they grow up, the more the dream subsides. People growing up want to bring the mirror of dreamland down closer to the mundane world, in order to see a reflected picture that is more like their own lives; but this would never occur to the minds of children. Children want to release their golden pegasus so that it will fly towards a coloured rainbow in the sky of their dreams. They want to run away to some unknown destination and play with the moon and the stars. Losing themselves in such fantasies, they surrender to the soothing influence of a lullaby and gradually fall asleep. Those sáhityikas who keep this peculiarity of the

child's psychology in mind as they write can easily win children's hearts. Their wise words and precepts will then be readily absorbed. That is why I call sáhityikas the teachers of society. If these teachers are conscious of their responsibilities, children may be brought back to the right path despite improper guidance at home.

Cheap detective novels, adventure stories and nationalistic or communalistic stories may attract youngsters, but they gradually deprive them of sound judgement.

The biographies of great personalities can attract youngsters if they are written in simple and attractive language. By great personalities I mean only those who work with the good of all humanity in mind. I am not thinking of a great Indian, a great Englishman or Englishwoman, a great Russian or a great American. In society,

however, there are few people who can claim to be worthy human beings. Because of their saṁskāras [mental reactive momenta], their fear or their deliberate pursuit of self-interest, people often want to divide human society. Such people try to impose their defective outlook on the minds of children through the literature about them, so that in the future these children will become their ardent supporters. Literary biographers must keep their pens scrupulously free from the influence of these non-humans (that is, those who should not be called humans but rather something else).

Nowadays some countries are propagating particular communal or economic theories which support intolerance; thus through perverted literature the minds of children are becoming contaminated. In the future these children may become the members of a community, or of a party which propagates a

particularism, but to what extent will they identify as human beings?

Radio

There is much scope for telling well-written, educational stories on the radio. Radio broadcasters can very easily delight the ears and minds of children with attractive and educational stories written by sáhityikas who have a knowledge of child psychology. If parents cannot afford radios at home, educational programmes can be broadcast at some scheduled time in schools, parks or even playgrounds.

However, the problems referred to above may remain unsolved if broadcasting networks are under the control of a particular party, because then the networks will be more interested in creating supporters to further the

interests of their party than in building people's character. Of course there is a way to avoid such an eventuality, and that is to entrust the management of broadcasting networks to boards of non-political, cultured educators.

Commemoration Ceremonies

Some time ago many educated sections of society around the world complained that the commemoration ceremonies held in their respective countries for their departed leaders and great persons were not being observed in a befitting manner. That is to say, these countries, by neglecting their revered personalities, were gradually losing their ideals. Such complaints may not be wholly unfounded.

Observing the manner in which these ceremonies and anniversaries are celebrated, however, I do not think that they have any value.

Unscrupulous Mr. Cutthroat Crook or Mr. Villainous Leech, who has no ideology at all, is invited, in the hope of his making a fat donation, to act as the president or chairman. The speakers, one after another, deliver high-sounding speeches in polished and literary language, often concluding with, "The time has come to reflect anew over the legacy that So-and-so has left us. Just delivering and hearing speeches will not do; his legacy must be translated into action. Then and then alone will this commemoration ceremony be worthwhile." At the end of the speech, looking proudly left and right, they ask, "Well, how was my lecture?" Evidently the speaker never meant to translate So-and-so's ideals into action, but spoke to solicit the approbation of the audience.

I have not said, nor will I say, that these commemoration ceremonies are totally useless. If it is the genuine wish of the sponsors of

anniversaries or commemoration ceremonies to give a practical shape to the ideals of a deceased person, the ideals should be given greater prominence in such functions and should be clearly presented to the public, especially to children, instead of reducing them to platitudes mouthed by dishonest speakers.

Pictures and Dramas

This can best be done through the use of pictures and dramas. The Rámáyána is more appealing and educational when presented in pictures than when depicted in books, because those who cannot read can thereby understand the inner language of the artist.

After pictures come dramas. In a well-written and well-acted drama the audience feels the living reality of each character. A favourite leader, a revered and distinguished personality,

is presented speaking to people, particularly to the children, in a congenial manner. Then the audience open the closed doors of their minds and enter into a free mental communion. So in my opinion no matter what the age of the student, a well-written and well-acted drama can do a tremendous amount of good, and can be a great asset to the spread of real education.

Cinema

Today the cinema seems to be very popular with people of all ages. As a result film technology will gradually rise to ever-greater heights of technical excellence. The opportunity provided by the cinema to establish good relations with people can be very well utilized for educational purposes.

Seduced by the bestial instincts hidden in the secret recesses of their minds, people

surrender to base propensities. But improvements in education and the social environment can help to bring this beast under control and make it obey their commands. To achieve this the first thing people have to do is to wage war against their animal propensities, which is no easy task. So cunning exploiters, by encouraging animality, are able to bring people under their sway.

The cinema industry suffers from this malady. This industry is controlled by a handful of business persons who make films according to popular taste and demand. While ordinary people naturally run after those films which in their ideas, language or visual images cater to their base propensities, such ideas, language or images instantly distort the ideals of the idealist beyond recognition. It is quite in character for purely commercial film producers to exploit these human weaknesses to their own

advantage, and this is exactly what is happening. Generally youngsters outnumber older people at movies marked “A” (“For Adults Only”). Sometimes the words “For Adults Only” are so alluringly displayed that young people feel even more attracted.

For the sake of social education, such a situation cannot be permitted to continue for a long time. If we have even the slightest intention of using cinema for the benefit of society, it has to be placed in the hands of non-governmental cultural bodies and not in the hands of business persons or the government. Because in countries where the cinema is under government control, the possibility exists of using the film industry more for party propaganda than for the spread of education.

A great drawback to the cinema when it is used solely for propaganda is that the beauty of

both drama and literature is not given the scope to fully develop – the cinema is reduced to the level of a megaphone, spouting forth party propaganda.

Giving experienced and competent directors the opportunity and the complete freedom to make benevolent cinema does not yield bad results. Rather it can spread joy and education simultaneously. This fact was fully substantiated by a film produced by the West Bengal government some time ago.⁽⁵⁾

Finally, I would like to say that those teachers, dramatists, actors, writers and radio artists whose help is essential to sow the seeds of true development in the minds of children and to ensure that these seeds grow into small seedlings, flourish, and bring forth foliage, flowers and fruits, must be freed from worldly worries so that all their energies and capabilities

can be completely and properly utilized. Nothing will be achieved if we repeatedly talk to them about the magnitude of their responsibilities without trying to solve their problems.

1959

Footnotes:

(1) Throughout this chapter, “parents” should be understood as “parents or guardians”. –Trans.

(2) Elsewhere the author defines samája gurus as follows:

“Samája gurus are those who lead the entire society by virtue of their extraordinary intelligence, deep wisdom, towering personality and leadership ability. Hence it can be easily imagined that this world has been blessed with

few such [samája gurus].” (“Vraja Krśńa and Sámkhyā Philosophy” in Namámi Krśńasundaram, 1997)

“In the history of our human society sometimes it so happens that a major portion of the people, [who used to get inspiration from their enviroment, cannot, due to the influence of antisocial elements,] get that inspiration. When such a situation is created, it is the duty of the nobler and better portion of the human race to guide others so that they may not feel any difficulty due to unfavourable environmental pressure. These people are the samája gurus.” (“The Phases of Human Approach” in Ánanda Vacanámrtam Part 30, 1996)

Also see “Samája Gurus and Sadvipras” in Volume 2. [Additional line used in the *Prout in a Nutshell Volume 1 Part 2*, 1st edition, publication of this article.]

–Trans.

(3) In South Asia chewing betel-nut and betel leaves mixed with lime is a popular practice. The metaphor is a common one in India, and refers to a negligible shortcoming which does not indicate a real defect. –Trans.

(4) There is no equivalent word for *sáhityikas* in English. *Sáhityikas* are those who write with the thought of the welfare of all humanity uppermost in their minds. –Trans.

(5) “*Pather Panchali*” by Satyajit Ray was partly financed by the West Bengal government. When it was released in 1955, it received great acclaim both from the critics and the public. –Trans.

The end

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