Prout in a nutshell
Part -3

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

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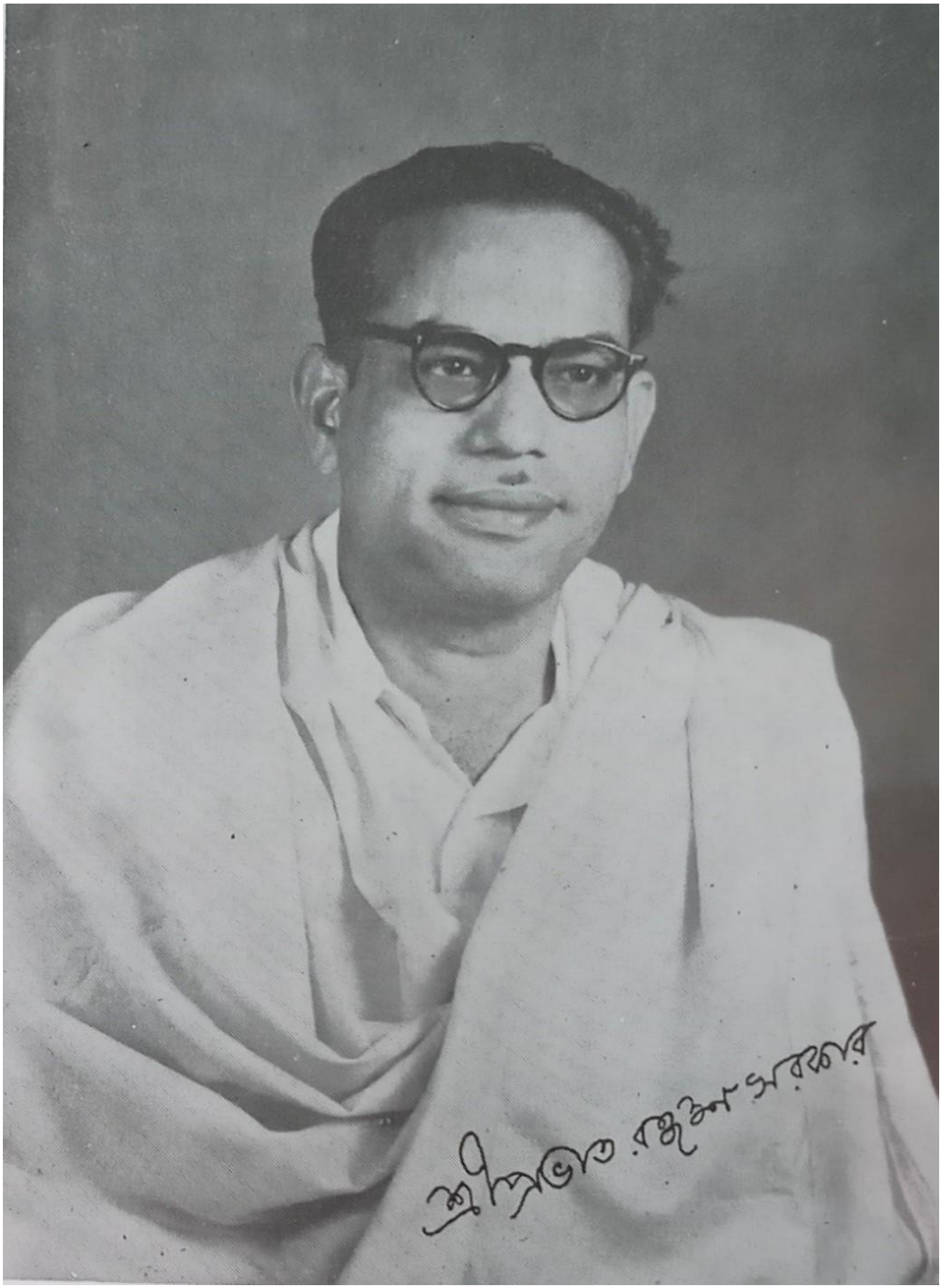

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

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ROMAN SAḾSKRTA 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	ৠ	ঌ	ৡ	এ	ঐ	ও	ঔ	অং	অঃ
অ	আ	ই	ঈ	উ	ঊ	ঋ	ৠ	ঌ	ৡ	এ	ঐ	ওঁ	ঔ	অং	অঃ
a	á	i	ii	u	ú	r	rr	lr	lrr	e	ae	o	ao	aḿ	ah

ক	খ	গ	ঘ	ঙ	চ	ছ	জ	ঝ	ঞ

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ক	খ	গ	ঘ	ঙ	চ	ছ	জ	ঝ	ঞ
ka	kha	ga	gha	uṇa	ca	cha	ja	jha	iṇa

ট	ঠ	ড	ঢ	ণ	ত	থ	দ	ধ	ন
ট	ঠ	ড	ঢ	ণ	ত	থ	দ	ধ	ন
ṭa	ṭha	ḍa	ḍha	ṇa	ta	tha	da	dha	na

প	ফ	ৰ	ভ	ম
প	ফ	ব	ভ	ম
Pa	pha	ba	bha	ma

য	ৰ	ল	ব
য	র	ল	ব
ya	ra	la	va

শ	ষ	স	হ	ক্ষ

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श ष स ह क्ष

sha śa sa ha kśa

अँ ज्ञ ऋषि छाया ज्ञान संस्कृत ततोऽहं

अँ ज्ञ ऋषि छाया ज्ञान संस्कृत ततोऽहं

aṇ jiṇa rśi cháyá jiṇána saṁskrta tato’haṁ

a á b c d ḋ e g h i j k l m ṁ
n ń ṇ o p r s ś t ṫ 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.

" ऺda " and " ऺdha “, occurring in the middle of a word or at the end of a word, are pronounced " ऺr” and “ऺrha ", respectively. Like " ya", they are not independent letters. When the need arises in writing non - Saṁskrta words, "ऺr” and “ऺrha" may be written.

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

क़	ख़	ज़	ड़	ढ़	फ़	य़	ऌ	ৎ	अँ
क़	ख़	ज़	ड़	ढ़	फ़	य़	ऌ	त्	अँ
qua	qhua	za	ऺr	ऺrha	fa	ya	lra	t	aṉ

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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.

Prout in a Nutshell Part 3 [a compilation]

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1. Social Justice

2. Justice

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Glossary

Social Justice

Different groups of people contribute to the building of society in different ways. This diversity carries a special significance for the social structure as a whole. If diversity had not existed, human society would not have advanced even as far as the Stone Age, let alone the present stage of civilization. So we have to impartially consider and support all the diverse ideas, forms and colours which are conducive to fostering personal growth and social development among human beings. If we fail to do so, that section of society which has been built around a particular idea, form or colour will wither and die. I direct this not only to those who think deeply about social welfare, but to all members of society, to impress upon them that no one, through their thoughts, words or actions, should ever condone injustice.

If any physical, psychic, social, moral or spiritual weakness becomes apparent in a

particular activity or in any sphere of individual or social life, it is the duty of the other members of society to eradicate that weakness with all the sweetness of their hearts. However, due to a lack of genuine humanism or spiritual outlook, people do just the opposite. The moment opportunists discover a weakness in somebody, they exploit that weakness and devour all the vitality of the person. They even consider it a weakness on their part if they reflect on the sufferings and heartaches of those who are weak.

The Status of Women

As in the societies of most other species, in human society also females are physically weaker than males. Because their nervous systems are weaker, their minds are also slightly weak. Nevertheless women have no less value in human society than men. Selfish men, however,

have disregarded the value of women; they have taken full advantage, and are continuing to take full advantage, of their weakness. Although men have publicly declared that women should be respected as the mothers of society, they have actually relegated them to the status of domestic cattle and sheep.

In every sphere of life men have either substantially limited the rights of women, or made the ability of women to exercise their rights subject to the whims and caprices of men. Such an attitude never existed among the primitive human beings who lived at the dawn of human history. Nor had primitive men conceived of the deceitful practice of establishing their supremacy by keeping women in bondage in the name of social purity. Even today among primitive races we do not find significant lack of magnanimity concerning the freedom of women.

By nature human beings are not wicked; rather most people are peace-loving and thus inclined towards personal purity. This inclination of the individual keeps the collective mind pure. Although women enjoy freedom in so-called underdeveloped races, we can observe that there is not even one per cent of the social purity in so-called developed races that there is among those races. When freedom is forcibly curbed a hostile reaction is produced in the mind, and purity rapidly disappears as a result. This is one of the causes of the lack of social purity in the so-called developed societies of today. To try to camouflage this impurity with high-sounding rhetoric or ostentatious religious rituals cannot do any real good for society. Those who want to keep women subservient to men by holding out false hopes or the illusory prospect of heavenly enjoyment in the afterlife, fail to understand that although such false hopes

or the lure of heaven may be sufficient to keep women passive or in servitude, no real good can ever come to human society from this. The reason is that if, due to dogma and superstition, half of society is bogged down in a state of inertia, the other half will undoubtedly find progress difficult carrying a heavy, inert burden. In individual life purity is equally necessary for both men and women, and to make this possible real spiritual vision is essential. As long as injustices against either sex exist, purity is impossible.

Everyone should realize that to construct or preserve anything, there must be close cooperative action among the constituent parts. Human beings are not lifeless matter, so not only should all of their collective structures be based on cooperation, but that cooperation must be of a special type. It should not be based on the relation of master and servant, but on mutual

cordiality. It should be a coordinated cooperation and not a subordinated one.

What sort of treatment have women received so far? It is very true that women have gradually lost their rights or freedom in certain cases due to lack of competence. There are those who think that, because of this, special abilities are the only criteria for having rights. Such people, however, actually want women to be wageless slaves under the strict supervision of men. But is it merely due to their lack of competence that women have lost their rights? Have not the overflowing sentiments of their hearts also been partly responsible? Have not women, swayed by their emotions, ignored their own petty interests and gradually given everything – even the high social status that fascinates them – to their husbands, sons and brothers? Is it not reasonable to expect human beings (certainly human beings are not animals)

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to pay proper respect to such humility and large-heartedness? If a guest arrives unexpectedly, who volunteers to forgo a meal to feed the guest? Who deprives herself first when a delicious dish is prepared? Who leaves home to keep house for others, giving up her paternal property rights (regardless of what the law says)? Are not these observations applicable throughout most of the world? I do not say that men are ordinary human beings and that women are angels; I have only focused on women as human beings and mentioned their special qualities. Does a husband, when his wife is ill, nurse her with as much care as she nurses him when he is ill?

If men wish to prevent helpless widows from remarrying by taking advantage of their sentimental female hearts, they convince those widows that they will be reunited with their late husbands after their deaths – so how can they

consider remarrying? Shame on such men! Perhaps such tales may make women, already sentimental, even more so. The prospect of being reunited with the spirit of their deceased husband after their death may induce helpless widows to undertake rigorous lifelong penance, and to fast on every ekádashii [the eleventh day after each new moon and full moon]. Are not those who want to keep women slaves to dogmatic ideas guilty of acting against the dictates of their consciences?

The very idea of heaven and hell is sheer nonsense anyway. Such stupid ideas thrived in the minds of those who popularized ancient myths, but they have no capacity to find a foundation in the solid ground of rationality. If, however, in order to humour such fools, I accept the existence of heaven and hell, I might ask, “If the spirit of a wicked husband goes to hell and grazes in the fields as a bull, should his virtuous

wife also go to hell after her death, become a cow and start grazing beside him?”

Let us end this digression. The main point of the discussion is this: those who take advantage of people’s simplicity or ignorance are veritable demons in human form, and those who deceive people by exploiting their sentiments of sacrifice are even worse than demons.

Freedom is attained through struggle. No one offers it on a platter, because freedom is not a gift; it is one’s birthright. But as far as the rights which women have lost today, at least so it seems in most countries of the world, a proper socio-psycho-analysis shows, I should say, that women have not really lost their freedom; rather, they have trustingly placed their destiny in the hands of men. This is the plain truth. That is why I cannot but laugh when I see a certain

type of snobbish lady, who pretends to be learned, entrust her children to the care of a maidservant or nurse, travel about in a car purchased by her husband, attend meetings, and make lengthy speeches on the freedom of women.

Actually, when there is no question of women's rights having been snatched away, there is no need for a movement styled on the trade-union movement. Whatever responsibility there may be in this regard, it is entirely that of men. If at all a movement is required, it must be implemented by men themselves. Today men should consider the needs of women and gradually restore to women the rights which women once entrusted to men out of feelings of helplessness or in response to their heartfelt sentiments.

It must always be remembered that freedom, or liberty, and license are not the same thing. The concept of women's freedom is good, but license should not be encouraged in the name of liberty. Giving license to either men or women could destroy the social structure in a short time. Hence those who are the most vocal in proposing the freedom of women must carefully consider the form this proposed freedom shall take.

When we pay recognition to any simple truth, we should not be carried away by sentimentality. Only rationality based on humanism is acceptable. As children of nature, women should have the same access as men to light, air, earth and water. In fact, it is not a matter of granting rights to women, but rather a case of recognizing their rights. If, however, the recognition of women's rights is treated

sentimentally,[1] it may result in great social disaster.

The law of inheritance: For example, take the right of inheritance. There are diverse views on the subject among different sections of society around the world. Some people favour women having the sole right of inheritance to the complete exclusion of men; others favour equal distribution between men and women; still others give women only some tiny leftovers and in reality keep everything in men's hands. Behind all these systems there is clearly an attempt to maintain the influence and supremacy of one gender or the other, rather than to demonstrate rational judgement and humanitarian concern.

In fact, a final decision on this issue should be based on the fundamental principle that we will not deprive anyone; we will give equal

opportunities to both men and women concerning the right of inheritance. At the same time we will enact laws to ensure the orderly administration and preservation of property in order to reduce the possibility of a breach of domestic peace.

In most countries society is patrilineal. The patrilineal system has some advantage over the matrilineal one. There are two main advantages.

The first advantage stems from the fact that it is not as easy to determine the identity of the father as that of the mother, and in the absence of any direct blood relationship[2] the mother's affection for her children is generally greater than the father's. Under these circumstances the patrilineal system is much better, for it awakens in the father a proper sense of responsibility for his children and

precludes the possibility of the children's identity remaining unknown or concealed. And the father is compelled by circumstantial pressure to take responsibility for bringing up his children; and therefore makes an effort to properly preserve the structure of the family. (Among less-developed creatures, fathers rarely take care of their offspring due to the absence of this sort of circumstantial pressure.)

The second advantage of the patrilineal system complements the first. Since the relationship between the father and the child is known, the mother naturally does not feel so very alone in rearing the child. The physical and mental structure of a woman is such that even though she may have all the requisite ability to take care of her children, it is extremely difficult for her to bring them up properly and to adequately provide for food, clothing, education and medical care all alone; at the same time she

has to keep her children with her or near her, or else it becomes difficult for the children to survive. Therefore if men, instead of women, take the main responsibility for providing food and clothing, while women, after duly attending to the needs of the children, where possible or in cases of necessity earn money by working either at home or outside, neither the children nor society will be adversely affected in any way.

I do not support the supposed wisdom of those who advise women to spend their lives with ladles, [[tongs]] and spatulas, because this is unrealistic. Necessity often compels women to discard this convention. Such a system may suit a handful of rich or upper middle-class people, but it has no value for day-labourers or the poor. Many of those who loudly advocate equal rights and the freedom of women, in reality keep their women behind a purdah or covered with a burka. Even among such families I have noticed

poor housewives going to the market with their husbands to buy and sell, or to the fields, farms or coal mines, voluntarily taking on light work. Evidently, they cannot afford to behave ostentatiously and live indolently behind a lace curtain.

However, there are people who, in the name of giving equal rights to women in all spheres of life, want them to engage in heavy physical and mental labour which is unsuitable for them. Such an outlook is deplorable. It must be accepted that the physical bodies and nervous systems of women are not as strong as those of men, so men and women cannot work in identical areas. Apart from this, for physical reasons women cannot work in the same way every day of the month, and during pregnancy and the post-delivery period the ability to work strenuously is severely restricted. These points must not be overlooked.

There are many people who sentimentally think that if a few women are made ministers or members of parliament they will serve as shining examples of equal rights and the progress of women. But is this the correct attitude? Will it not be detrimental to society as a whole if rights are granted, or a principle of accelerating progress is adopted, at the expense of competence? The recognition of rights is a legal matter as well as a collective psychological phenomenon, and the only way to expedite progress is to establish a progressive education system. A woman who becomes a minister or an ambassador in any country is not an index of the real status of the women in that country. To raise the standard of women in society is neither so easy nor so cheap.

Since rational analysis leads us to the conclusion that the patrilineal system is better

than the matrilineal, the system of inheritance should be structured accordingly. Of course, at the time of drafting the law of inheritance, special precautions must be taken so that nothing is framed in the name of the patrilineal system that will make women slaves fighting for their very survival in the houses of their brothers or brothers-in-law. In other words, after recognizing the equal rights of women to use family property as long as they live and to enjoy a lifelong income from such property, the law of inheritance should be based on the patrilineal system.

The dowry system: Many people regard the dowry system, which is followed in various countries today, as being unfair and unjust towards women. But actually this is not so. The question of justice or injustice to women [[does not arise in relation to the dowry system]].

The problem is primarily economic, although there are secondary causes as well. In some societies, where women do not earn money, they are considered an economic liability once they are married. At the time of marriage the parents of the groom therefore extract a substantial amount of money or goods from the parents of the bride in order to maintain the wife for the rest of her life. These are the actual facts behind the dowry system. Similarly, in societies where men do not earn money, the parents of the bride receive a substantial dowry from the parents of the bridegroom. Of course a secondary cause of the dowry system arises when there is a disparity between the number of men and women in a particular country or section of society. So in fact, the parents of the bride give a dowry in a particular society only when the subsistence of the woman is dependent on the income of her husband, or where the number of men is less

than the number of women. If it is mainly the women who earn the money or if the number of women is less than the number of men, the situation is reversed.

There are those who mistakenly think that the dowry system will cease once the equal rights of daughters to paternal property are recognized. However, it has been noticed that even in societies where daughters are heirs to paternal property, the dowry system has gradually gained prominence for economic and other reasons. Generally very few daughters these days inherit alluring amounts of property from their parents, so it is completely unrealistic to expect that the parents of the groom will relinquish their claim to a dowry in the hope of receiving inherited property. A few daughters from rich or upper middle-class families inherit very substantial properties and therefore do not have any cause for worry, whether the dowry

system exists or not. Even the most unattractive daughter of rich parents gets married very easily due to the power of money.

Social interaction: There are diverse views among those who formulate social codes concerning the free mixing of men and women. It does not require much logic to convince people that the final outcome of free mixing in an undisciplined society is unhealthy. It is also true, however, that the absence of social interaction creates a suppressed longing, a special attraction or an unhealthy curiosity, as does the denial of other desires. This may lead to illicit mixing, which eventually undermines social purity. A system that thwarts social interaction is nothing but an attempt to suppress the mind. Where there is illicit mixing, the only harm done to men is that they degenerate morally, but the damage to women is far greater, because they may be cast out of

society in disgrace. Thus on the one hand, men and women will have to be free to mix together socially, while on the other hand, a well-thought-out code of self-control will have to guide their social interaction.

Those who want to keep their daughters away from the influence of modernism, and are therefore reluctant to send them to school and college, perhaps do not realize that long ago the waves of modernism intruded into the privacy of their homes without their knowledge. So their efforts to protect their daughters and themselves by following the custom of purdah and making women wear burkas, are entirely farcical.

The trend of the age is irresistible, for in this too there is dynamism. It is the duty of intelligent people to channelize the trend of the age towards the path of benevolence by applying

their intellect. Neither the individual nor the society as a whole is capable of resisting the powerful spirit of the age. It knocks down anyone who tries to thwart it, and proceeds ahead with irresistible speed. Those knocked down and sprawled on the ground stare at it in utter helplessness, with dazed minds and vacant eyes, as it marches by.

Educated and Uneducated

Great injustices are also being perpetrated against so-called uneducated people, although there is no legal basis for this. There is, in fact, a class of self-styled scholars who disdainfully dismiss others as fools, although I do not understand what these people actually mean when they describe themselves as scholars. If, by education, they mean the study of numerous books, then I must say there are countless instances where persons who have only

completed their primary education have read more books than many university graduates. Whom shall I then call educated? If the extent of one's knowledge is assessed by the number of degrees one possesses, a question still remains. How can one say that one has learned something when one has hurriedly crammed a few subjects just to pass one's examinations and has forgotten everything after a few months or a few years? If education denotes refined taste or restrained behaviour, illiterate people may also possess these qualities. Then again, if education means that people have learned much, remembered much and put their knowledge to practical use in their lives, it can be argued that people may not need to attend school to achieve this. So I have to say that the vanity of self-styled scholars is totally meaningless.

In fact, human beings should not feel vanity about anything in this universe. This is

even more true in the field of education than in other spheres of life. Some say, “Whom shall I mix with? Everyone here is a fool,” or “Well sir! There is not a single person here I can associate with,” or “I do not bother going to villages. What is the use? I cannot find anyone to talk to.” There are no grounds at all for such statements, only pure, unadulterated conceit.

Those who have learned a lot by reading books or by hearing lectures should remember when they talk to others, that those with whom they are talking may have far greater knowledge than they in some spheres. An ordinary farmer is not often treated with respect, but the details of rice cultivation are at his fingertips. A statistician who calculates the size of the rice crop may, on the other hand, readily believe that a chair can be made from “rice wood”! So I say that it is the height of foolishness to brag about the extent of one’s knowledge. Rather, such

vanity is the living symbol of educational bankruptcy.

Once an erudite Sanskrit scholar said to a boatman as they crossed a river, “You have not been able to answer even one of my philosophical questions. Half your life has gone in vain.” In mid-stream, when the boat was about to sink, the boatman asked the scholar, “Reverend sir, can you please lend me a hand?” The scholar replied, “But I don’t know how to row.” The boatman retorted, “Now your whole life is about to go in vain!”

Generally, so-called scholars cannot express an opinion about the soil composition of a field without first having made a detailed scientific analysis of it. But I have seen an ordinary farmer, Kshetranath Pal (who could not even see properly due to extreme old age), simply pick up a handful of earth and, without

hesitation, describe the merits and demerits of the soil, and the various crops that could best be grown in it. Should I call this so-called uneducated man, Khetu Pal, a fool or a scholar? Is his practical knowledge, acquired by many years of hard-earned experience and through the practical application of those years of experience, totally worthless? Should not this knowledge also come under the heading of education? It is most undesirable for the inherent intuition in human beings to be neglected in preference to theoretical knowledge or information memorized by rote.

Educated are those who have learned much, remembered much and made use of their knowledge in practical life. These virtues I call "education". For such an education, mere knowledge of the alphabet is not very essential. It should, however, be accepted that literacy is

extremely useful in recollecting what one has already learned.

In my opinion, it is a great mistake to think that refined behaviour represents education, for the true nature of a person is not limited to his or her external behaviour but is reflected in the extent to which he or she has developed his or her magnanimity of mind. If you consciously or unconsciously bump into someone and say, “Oh sorry,” without enquiring whether the person is hurt, that is enough to show one’s refinement. Although this is a sign of what we call courtesy, it does not reflect genuine magnanimity of mind. The person’s education will only be seen if he or she liberally applies a healing balm to the wound of the injured person – if the offender tries his or her utmost to mitigate the troubles of the injured person, even at his or her own expense. Then even the omission of the words “Oh sorry” will not matter.

Many things that are done in the name of education and refinement are simply hypocrisy. For example, instead of trying to remove the distress of their neighbours, some people merely ask, “What did you have with your rice today?” When the child replies, “Mummy only cooked spinach,” the enquirer merely replies, “Oh what a pity! Your family must be in great difficulty.” As they say “great difficulty” they emphasize the words to give their fake concern a veneer of sympathy. This is hardly an indication of genuine social concern or magnanimity of mind.

The main feature of what, in the modern sense, we call education or civility is that one does not have to take on the burden of others’ troubles; one only has to pay lip-service to them. If people actually do something constructive to alleviate the distress of others, this may hurt their own interests to some small extent; but if

people merely take up the cause of others in parliament, they can accomplish two things at one time. First, they will not be put to any trouble themselves, and secondly, they can gain adulation very cheaply. Those who protest against such hypocrisy are extremely vulnerable to accusations of incompetence or of being the agents of vested interests. If hypocrites declare that others are fools, should we accept their pronouncements with bowed heads?

To be civilized means to give a refined form to everything, and it is inseparably connected with education. But if refinement takes second place and hypocritical behaviour becomes the primary means of expression, that cannot be called civilization or education. If a man who is invited to a dinner party only nibbles at the savouries, saying, “I am sorry, I cannot eat any more,” then goes home to devour a hearty meal and later brags that he eats very

little, an impression of abstemiousness may be created in the minds of others, but there is a complete lack of straightforwardness in his behaviour. In modern society many aspects of civilization and education are of this sort.

A little while ago we were discussing how difficult it is to distinguish between the educated and the uneducated. Ordinary people wrongly consider that those who baffle the minds of others with their affected erudition are educated. Such fakes are not necessarily university graduates. In fact, many of them try to project themselves as educated by using their wealth or official status. They open clubs or libraries to impress upon others that they should not be equated with the common people. They pretend to understand and know a lot, smile scholastically with closed eyes, and speak sparingly with reserve and gravity to ensure that they do not unwittingly expose themselves!

While on the subject I would like to add that such clubs may be acceptable under some circumstances. Members of a club want to enjoy open-hearted laughter and topics of mutual interest rather than be subjected to uncomfortable formalities. However, on principle I cannot fully support the idea of establishing clubs for particular linguistic groups. If, for example, a club is set up with this intention on the basis of a common language for the sake of avoiding linguistic difficulties, it should not be opposed, but neither should this sort of trend be encouraged. Separate clubs may be formed by special groups of researchers such as doctors and lawyers for the cultivation of particular branches of knowledge. Through interaction and friendly discussion there can be an exchange of important ideas which may result in the rapid growth of a particular science or research project. However, there is at this

time a class of self-styled scholars who want to establish separate clubs for themselves for no particular reason. Is there any altruistic motive behind their demand? None at all. The actual reason is that they feel that if they mix with the illiterate masses their social prestige will be undermined. If you investigate more deeply, you will generally find that in such “gentlemen’s clubs” immorality is rampant and wine flows in abundance. Should we, then, consider the members of these clubs to be civilized, cultured and educated scholars while other people are uncivilized, uncultured and uneducated fools? Such silly nonsense propagated in the name of civilization cannot be allowed to continue.

We cannot build a strong society if we discriminate against a section of humanity by drawing imaginary lines of distinction between the educated and the uneducated. People must develop closer and closer links with each other.

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One heart must gain a warm and deep understanding of another heart.

To make people conscious of their rights in every sphere of life – social, economic, psychic and spiritual – is called [[jiṇána vistára; and to exercise these rights fully is called vijiṇána sádhaná.[3]]] Neglected people, who have remained ignorant of different branches of knowledge for whatever reason, should be given maximum opportunities to develop. There should not be any discrimination as far as these rights are concerned.

Vested Interests

Vested interests have taken advantage of human ignorance and have penetrated deeply into every arena of society: social, economic, psychic and spiritual. They want to suck dry the entire vitality of humanity. Vested interests do

not want the ignorant to see the light of wisdom or the downtrodden to climb up the social ladder; they do not want the hungry to eat proper meals or the superstitious to be freed from their dogmatic beliefs; and they do not want the human race to gain spiritual knowledge and a thorough understanding of science, and thus get the opportunity to progress towards the realm of effulgence.

In order to remove the imaginary line of demarcation between the educated and the uneducated – to eradicate this irrational distinction – the value of human beings must be recognized. Mundane knowledge and spiritual knowledge must be as free as light and air; and like the unhindered flow of a fountain, they must keep society in a dynamic state and be a continuous source of inspiration to one and all.

As regards learning versus ignorance, vested interests intentionally try to perpetuate ignorance among the exploited masses because this provides them with a good excuse to deny the value of human beings. In the economic field, such a hypocritical stand is even more conspicuous and much more despicable. When university graduates make use of their degrees to earn their livelihood, they tend to forget that physically-strong but illiterate people are making a similar use of such assets as they have, that is, their capacity for manual labour. These educated people deprive so-called illiterates of their rights, human dignity and self-respect, and thereby develop a sense of superiority. Similarly, the rich, who inherit huge ancestral properties, accumulate vast amounts of wealth by deceiving others or amass great fortunes whether they invest capital or not, forget that, just like light, air and water, all the mundane resources of the universe are the common property of everyone,

and that no property is the personal or paternal property of anyone.

All natural resources are meant to be used for collective welfare. No one has a monopoly over these resources. Some people argue, “When others by their manual labour earn money to provide themselves with food and clothing, why should I not be considered a member of the toiling masses when I earn by my intellectual labour?” In reply I will only say that by dint of intellect you may acquire as much of the boundless wealth in the intellectual or psychic realms as you like. Nobody can object to this. But if the intellect is used to appropriate limited mundane resources such as houses, land, food, clothing, money, etc., will this not deprive hundreds of thousands of people of their basic necessities? You may certainly earn your living by using your intellect, but your salary should be commensurate with the needs of your family,

plus sufficient extra to take care of future contingencies, and not a penny more.

It must always be remembered that the value of money lies in its proper use. If more money is accumulated than necessary, it loses its value due to lack of use. To the extent that you keep money idle and valueless, you become responsible for the injustices done to ragged, hungry people. You will have to give value to your accumulated money by utilizing it to provide opportunities for others. So in my opinion, those who do not know how to make good use of money, which is a medium of exchange for mundane resources, are enemies of society. In them the feeling of collective movement, the real spirit of society, is conspicuously absent. They cannot establish human rights by shouting high-sounding slogans.

The sense of human value must be reflected in every action, great or small. And one of the motives, if not the only motive, behind such actions must be the acceptance of humanism in the socio-economic sphere.

Any society which accepts inequality, which wants to perpetuate that inequality by spreading false logic, is not a society worthy of the name. The standard-bearers of such false logic masquerade in the garb of righteousness and try to convince the downtrodden members of society that their economic deprivations – their humiliations, their scarcity of food, clothing and medicine, their exposure to the extremes of heat and cold – are decreed by fate, as inevitable reactions to their past actions.

Some time ago I heard a millionaire speak at a meeting. He was arguing that in modern society the karmaváda [doctrine of action and

reaction of the Giitá] should be more widely propagated, because he thought that if people could understand this doctrine of action properly, the countless shrivelled-up human beings languishing in the dustbins of society would no longer blame the capitalists for their miserable condition. They would accept their misfortune with equanimity. Just imagine what a dangerous idea this is! What a wonderful capitalistic argument! Perhaps some academic stooge on the payroll of these self-seeking capitalists may even try to concoct a philosophy to support this proposition. God save humanity from such perverted philosophies!

People's physical longings are not satisfied until they come in contact with a truly great ideology. Till then, people's wolf-like hunger is insatiable, as if they are incessantly repeating, "I am hungry, I am hungry." Their jaws are always open, and the foolish people of this world resign

themselves to their own fatalistic beliefs and fall into them. The ferocious wolf-pack devours their flesh and blood and casts away the unpalatable bones. Should we support this wolfish philosophy? The day-labourers, porters and gate-keepers around us who wear dirty rags and have fatigue etched on their faces are not considered human by those who are rolling in luxury.

It is a characteristic of vested interests that they never bother to think of anyone except themselves. They must eat and the rest of humanity only exists to be eaten. They want increasingly more objects for their gratification. Those who earn three thousand rupees a month think that this is an extremely meagre amount, but they never stop to consider the needs of those who earn a negligible thirty rupees a month.[4] A poor man has to pay his rent, maintain his family, educate his children, buy

milk for his babies, and save something to put towards the cost of his daughter's marriage, all out of thirty rupees. Are these needs only applicable to the upper stratum of society? Are they not the minimum necessities of life? Rich people do not want to consider the needs of the poor, because if they do they will have to make some sacrifices. Where will their luxuries and comforts come from if hunger does not burn the bellies of the poor? Is it not a fine idea if the daughters of the poor go on collecting cow dung forever, and their sons work like slaves in the houses of the rich for generations together? Is this not a fine arrangement? As for the high hopes of the poor, aren't they ridiculous? Aren't they out of touch with reality?

No two things in this world are identical, so I am not suggesting that everything should be recast in the same mould. However, for the sake of humanism, for the sake of social justice,

equitable distribution of all the wealth of the universe is indispensable, and co-ownership of the world's resources is the birthright of every individual. Even the slightest attempt to deprive anyone of this right amounts to gross selfishness. As long as certain difficulties, both great and small, exist in the practical world, however, it will not be possible to grant perfectly equal opportunities to everybody in all instances. Apart from this, all people should be granted equal rights and opportunities, except where it is necessary to inspire some people to undertake activities which will directly benefit society, or as a temporary reward for their distinguished contribution to society. In addition, every individual must have equal rights concerning things such as food, clothing, housing, education and medical care, which are absolutely essential for existence.

Some people argue, “The sufferings that people experience today due to lack of food and clothing are the results of misdeeds in their previous lives. Therefore we have no social responsibility for their suffering.” But I argue that on the contrary, if people do have to undergo torments in proportion to their original bad actions, then they may undergo their suffering in a different way in the psychic realm. Without being deprived of food and clothing or being impoverished due to social disparity, people can just as easily atone for their past misdeeds through psychic suffering. Their psychic suffering, however, cannot necessarily be removed by bringing about social justice.

In countries where people have no difficulty arranging food, clothing or medical care, they have and will continue to have psychic clash. In such countries people have to endure the pain of humiliation. They cry at the deaths of

their relatives and groan in agony due to excruciating ailments. While these sufferings are beyond the scope of social justice, the problem of individual or collective suffering due to lack of physical requirements can be easily solved by implementing a system of social justice and social equality. So it is useless to blame the past misdeeds or fate of others. Actually, blaming people's suffering on their past misdeeds is merely an argument used by vested interests to justify their position, because to admit that these sufferings are the result of social injustices implies that everyone is responsible.

A little while ago I said that, because of certain difficulties, both great and small, it may not be possible to ensure the perfectly equal distribution of mundane resources, but what prevents us from at least working in this direction? What is the harm in reducing the gap between wages of thirty rupees and three

thousand rupees per month? Of course this will certainly curtail the luxuries and comforts of those who earn three thousand rupees a month, but with that money quite a number of people will have the opportunity to live as human beings. This is where vested interests will perhaps object; this is where they may feel inconvenienced. But why? Is it not proper to provide every individual with the minimum wage necessary to maintain his or her family, plus twenty or twenty-five rupees extra to reward his or her efficiency and sense of duty? This is the way justice can be applied in relation to people's competence and sense of responsibility.

Human beings are not yet looking towards the actual maladies that afflict society. Various occupational groups have formed societies and associations based solely on a sense of individual or group interest. Consequently they

try to solve every social problem only from the perspective of their own interests. They do not want to help solve the problems of the lower echelons of society. Not even one per cent of the energy that is spent to pull people down from the top of society is utilized to elevate those at the bottom. This is the greatest tragedy.

Defective Approaches

It is incorrect to think that no one has ever individually considered this problem in the past. I am not referring here to the social philosophies of the last few hundred years; nor to the social revolutions of that period; nor to the social conscious of different thinkers of that period. In the Middle Ages some people thought deeply about solutions to the problem of social injustice, and a few of them even tried to do something. But neither am I referring to the philanthropic overtures made to the poor by

some capitalists. I am referring to those who thought that it was virtuous to plunder the wealth of the capitalists and distribute it among those in need.

The Robin Hoods of the medieval period perhaps thought that this was the best way to eradicate social disparity. But this does not work, so it did not work.

In nearly every country of the world such Robin Hoods have emerged, but they have not been able to solve the problem of social injustice. The main reason is no one can survive on charity. Such an approach only creates a society of beggars. This type of greedy, indolent and inactive society promises even greater poverty in the future. Moreover, plundering the wealth of the rich does not destroy capitalism, because although robbery may reduce the assets of the capitalists, it does not destroy the seed of

capitalism. The adventures of medieval heroes may excite some people today, but they cannot be a source of genuine inspiration. It may be possible to snatch away the wealth of the rich by violent means, making them paupers, but this will not permanently prevent them from again becoming rich. Violence begets violence. Hordes of demons who lose their wealth become greedy for human blood, and plot greater conspiracies in the future. The less intelligent thieves are ultimately destroyed by them. The thieves suffer greater punishment at the hands of the exploiters than the exploiters suffer at the hands of the thieves.

Violence does not solve any problem, because whatever poisonous tendencies of the individual and collective minds may be destroyed by violence, the seeds of those tendencies remain embedded in the mind itself. When the pressure of circumstances is relaxed

they may again sprout forth, creating even greater evil.

Then where does the solution to this problem lie? A change of heart is absolutely necessary, but such a change will never be possible through violent means. If someone who is tormented by incessant hunger does not express his or her hunger due to fear of the collective force of society or pretends to be free from hunger, it does not mean that he or she has acquired the peace of mind that comes with not being hungry or will not engage in ruthless acts of violence to appease his or her hunger if he or she gets the opportunity.

Some people are of the opinion that only humanistic appeals and no other approach can effect a change of heart. Although the principles of such people may be high, in reality the soil of

the earth is extremely hard. Their appeals to do good cannot easily gain support.

What are humanistic appeals, or satyágraha? They are simply a special means of using violence to create circumstantial pressure. We can, in fact, call them the intellectual's method of using violence. They are a way to make people eager to move along the path of human welfare without resorting to actual violence, relying on legal enforcement, or becoming angry and adopting the path of bloodshed. Or, in simpler language, they are a way to compel people to move.

What is circumstantial pressure? Does it not aim to vibrate the individual or collective mind with the wave of collective welfare through the application of force? In fact, this approach is an attempt to touch the aspect of the human mind which is very tender and capable of

responding to humanistic appeals. Thus, those who have finer sensibilities and rational judgement readily respond to humanistic appeals, or satyágraha.

This sort of appeal does not hold much value for those with crude minds. To vibrate the minds of such people it is, and will forever remain, necessary to influence their minds by giving them a rude shock. Otherwise one will have to wait indefinitely for the sensitive violin[5] strings of some secret recess in their hard minds to be similarly vibrated by high-minded appeals to do good. And meanwhile the existence of the helpless, exploited people, on whose behalf these appeals are being made, will have been reduced to dust.

That is why no matter how much importance was given to the benevolence of the human mind by the Gandhian and Bhudan

movements,[6] or how saintly their propounders may have been, selfish and mean-minded people will never accept their principles. The bleeding sores on the feet of marching protesters will never be able to soften the minds of ruthless exploiters. Gandhism may be an excellent utopian model, but in the harsh reality of the world it is absurd and self-righteous.

Yes, the human mind must be vibrated, and for this one cannot wait for the application of the sentient force or humanistic appeals. Rather, all necessary steps must be taken to create circumstantial pressure. I do not consider it at all improper if exploiters are forced to follow the right path by circumstantial pressure in a totalitarian state or by legal compulsion in a democratic one. However, the primary objective is not simply to use any means available to create a vibration in the minds of exploiters. Proper moral training must also be imparted to

keep the waves of that vibration alive, and there must be a ceaseless endeavour in individual and collective life to perpetuate the waves of that vibration. One must maintain one's zeal so that, with the passage of time, the momentum of the vibration does not slow down. Its vigour and vitality should not turn into stagnation. Staticity should not creep into the hidden corners of the human mind.

Those who depend solely on magnanimity of mind or on humanistic appeals are bound to fail. And those who aspire to establish communistic systems either through legal methods or at bayonet point without changing the hearts of the people, without implementing development programmes and without introducing moral and ideological education to reform people's bad habits, are also bound to fail. If we do not equate this communism, established at the cost of so much suffering, with

robbery, then we must consider it rather worse than robbery, because it suppresses through brute force the natural life-urge for self-expression. It runs contrary to human nature to be suppressed like this. The suppressed human mind will revolt and find avenues to express itself. (If some people want to call this type of expression prativiplava [counter-revolution] they may, but I would not.) People do not like to lose their innate human qualities or spiritual potential, to be reduced to an animal-like existence, only eating and procreating; they cannot live like that.

Yet in order to make people "magnanimous" and "virtuous" through the application of brute force, individual liberty has to be ruthlessly crushed. Total power has to be concentrated in the hands of a particular group or party, and under these circumstances there is no alternative but to deny one's special value as

a human being. To recognize people's value would only invite trouble, because then people would have to be granted freedom to express their opinions, or at least the right to demonstrate that their opinions are beneficial for society. And if this is accepted, it will have to be indirectly accepted that it is unjust to suppress human beings through brute force. If this is conceded, then the so-called communism which took so much effort to establish would be jeopardized as a result. Within a short time the group or party in whose hands the power was concentrated would be ousted by the collective psychic and spiritual efforts of the masses who had newly attained freedom.

That is why neither Gandhism, nor the so-called communism which is based on brute force, can bring about human welfare.

People will have to adopt a path where there is sufficient scope for humanism or for humanistic appeals to be made, and which at the same time allows for brute force as well as the application of other types of force if necessary.

Genuine Love for Humanity

To build something on the basis of humanism means to build something on the basis of real love for humanity. It is not possible to build a genuine society, one which is truly dedicated to collective welfare, if its most intelligent and active members, or those who are more developed than ordinary people, constantly evaluate their contribution to society in terms of profit and loss. When love for humanity is the primary concern, the question of individual profit and loss becomes secondary. However, I cannot entirely dismiss the question of personal rewards, because if people incur

losses their love for humanity may be affected. If one's personal interest suffers seriously, or if for one reason or other one's survival is threatened, one should, in a society based on mutual love, have the right to demand redressal. In a healthy society where the only binding ingredient is genuine love, how will it be possible for coercion or legal compulsion to manifest this love, the true expression of society?

I have already expressed my lack of confidence in the success of economic idealists and those who believe that the continual propagation of idealistic philosophies will create an ideal society. Nor can I support those who resort to violence to build society, because there is no doubt that those who are coerced into submission because of their helplessness (sometimes they are not even aware of their fault), will try to resort to violence and bloodshed in retaliation at any moment. In fact,

it is the inherent nature of human beings to express suppressed propensities. If some people want to suppress the inherent nature of others, they will have to radically transform that inherent nature itself. The issue in question is based on this fundamental principle. Thus it is a complete waste of time to act on the basis of a short-term plan only.

It is natural for all living beings to search for a way to express themselves fully. Sometimes this expression takes the form of crude physical pleasure, and sometimes that of subtle psychic pleasure.

A little while ago I said that all crude objects of enjoyment are limited in nature, and thus their accumulation by any one individual is not desirable. Let everybody enjoy as much of the subtle psychic world as they can – let them accumulate as many psychic and spiritual

resources as they want – but there must be provision for the application of force if needed to prevent any one individual from accumulating excessive physical resources. The application of physical force will, no doubt, deprive people of some of the wealth they have accumulated or decrease their opportunities to accumulate physical wealth in the future. But it is certainly not impossible, through proper education, to transform people's desire for material pleasure into a desire for psychic pabula. (In fact, the desire for physical or psychic pabula "springs from innate psychic longings. The desires of the crude mind are easily satisfied." However, I object to calling the desires of the crude mind pure psychic longings.) This type of education is essential in society today.

Such an approach does not deny the world, as do impractical idealists, nor does it

attempt to suppress the higher propensities of the human mind, as do materialists.

Unless people's propensities are directed towards subtle forms of expression, their minds tend to get enmeshed in thoughts of petty enjoyment. People who portray themselves as saviours of humanity and espouse high-sounding philosophies from public platforms at the tops of their voices, while at the same time nourishing within themselves the worms of self-interest, can, in any weak moment, deceive the naive public. This is a perfectly natural thing for them to do. Those who want to build a society based on human welfare without first developing themselves fully through spiritual practices, will not only degrade themselves, they will also cause the degeneration of the whole of society. They will not even be able to trust the people with whom they are working. They may initially try to develop their own capacity in

order to attain positions of leadership, but eventually their sole aim will be to dominate others instead of developing themselves. When they realize from bitter experience that it is not possible to utilize the society as a vehicle for establishing their group or party supremacy, or when the suppressed masses rise up and revolt, the evil tendency to suppress the people will certainly awaken in them.

The human mind does not want to be suppressed. It wants to find ways to express itself. The more ordinary people try to resist individual or group dictatorship, the more tyrants oppress ordinary people through violence. Finally, as a result, they do not make the slightest effort to become worthy leaders. Instead they concentrate all their efforts on misappropriating more and more power. The same people who earlier worked for social welfare ultimately come to depend totally on

brute force. If any society overemphasizes brute force, the members of that society will start fighting each other and eventually become independent, self-styled autocrats. In such a society the last vestiges of morality will disappear and chaos will prevail.

Those who choose the middle course between morality and violence will not succeed either, unless they make intense efforts to eliminate the scourge of meanness from their minds. They will eventually become like those who advocate the path of violence.

The endeavour to remove inferiority complexes from the mind leads human beings slowly but surely to the Supreme Entity and establishes them in universal humanism. Hence it will not do for those who are determined to solve the problems of humanity to accept inferior ideals; along with this they must also

acquire the strength they need to implement their ideals. The active endeavour to acquire this strength is called sádhaná – the sádhaná of the Supreme. It should be borne in mind that no theory will ever bring people salvation. In fact, it is the inner strength gained from spiritual practices which helps to expand the individual mind. The tremendous force acquired from spiritual practices helps to bridge the gap between the harsh realities of human existence and the supreme desideratum of human life. This is an eternal truth, applicable to all spheres of life – social, economic, psychic and spiritual.

A person who runs after petty objects of enjoyment to fulfil his or her personal desires lacks the spirit needed to unite humanity. To unite humanity one must love the divine element latent in every human being which is the reflection of the Supreme Entity. Love does not arise in the hearts of those who are not

inspired by or not sympathetic to the lofty ideal of unqualified universalism. It is completely meaningless for people to try to do something constructive if they lack Cosmic ideation – if they have not learned how to accept the most magnanimous, universal, omniscient Supreme Entity as the object of their devotion – because it is an eternal truth that those who have not adopted such an outlook are bound to disappear into oblivion after inflicting a great deal of harm upon themselves and society.

Like any other problem, great or small, there is only one way to solve economic problems, and that is through genuine love for humanity. This love will give people guidance; it will show them what to do and what not to do. It is not necessary to study great numbers of books or to rely upon those who speculate with the future of the silent masses. The only essential

requirement is to look upon humanity with genuine sympathy.

Let me give a simple example. Those who are conservative, that is, who do not believe in violence, may argue that in the process of abolishing the zamindary [landlord] system or nationalizing large-scale industries society should pay adequate compensation for everything it acquires. Those who, on the other hand, believe in violence, but do not believe in changing human hearts through spiritual practices and spiritual education, argue that the capitalists have plundered the wealth of society for so long that the question of compensation does not even arise. Those who have genuine love for humanity, however, cannot accept either of those viewpoints.

If large enterprises are acquired by paying compensation, the owners will have to be paid in

instalments, which will take a long time. During this period the public will not get much benefit. Seen from this perspective, compensation is not a suitable solution. If, on the other hand, there is widespread confiscation of property, a large section of society may face economic deprivation, and as a result social balance may be lost. Not all those who own land or industry are healthy, able-bodied or young. Many of them are sick, invalids or elderly, and some are widows and minors. If all their property is forcibly confiscated without compensation, what situation will they be in? Furthermore, not all property owners are rich. Many are poor or belong to the lower middle class. Even if the policy of compensation or exchanging one property for another of similar value is not accepted, those who cherish genuine love for humanity will take a sympathetic view of the plight of those who find themselves in difficulty due to nationalization, and will act accordingly.

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A monthly pension or a lump sum should be allocated to old people, invalids, children and destitute women. Opportunities to earn a decent livelihood must be provided to all those, young or middle-aged, who are able-bodied and healthy, if they have no alternative means of support. Such employment opportunities should take into consideration their abilities as well as their needs.

If a proprietor or an industrialist has invested all his capital in a large industrial enterprise, then after his assets are confiscated he or she should be employed in a similar profession according to his or her ability. If, out of vengeance, some powerful group or individual forces such a person to work breaking rocks or as a porter in a railway station, circumstantial pressure may compel him to resign himself to his fate. Those who have assumed power may derive some sort of sadistic satisfaction from

this, but the people who are subjected to humiliation and torture and are forced into an occupation which they find demeaning will die a premature death.

We must not forget for a moment that even those who have continuously exploited others and suppressed their legitimate rights are human beings. The human family includes everyone. We have to move unitedly along the path of welfare by helping everyone to rectify themselves and adapt. If we try to progress while holding on to a feeling of revenge towards those who committed mistakes in the past, we will be following a suicidal path.

Social Progress

Social progress is not and can never be achieved by individual effort. Some people lend their brains, others their hands, and others their

legs. If we consider things carefully, to say that the legs are inferior and that the brain is superior, or that the brain has no value – that intellectuals are always exploiters and manual labourers are all that count – are both equally dangerous ways of thinking. The most important point to consider is who has utilized his or her ability and to what extent. Hanuman [the mighty monkey, a devotee of Rama in the mythological epic the Rámáyańa] fetched huge boulders to build a bridge across the sea, while the squirrels collected small pebbles. Yet intrinsically both these actions have the same value. We have no right to question anybody's sincerity, nor can we scoff at it. We cannot give more appreciation to those who have not utilized their potentialities properly but have done more work than to those who have fully utilized their talents.

Days roll on. Empires, wealth and valorous human deeds ride on the wings of time, creating

only brief flashes of brilliance. Against this panorama the efforts of common people, like those of the squirrels, do not receive recognition – they are like stones lost in the shadows of towering mountains. The leaders of society perform outstanding feats which are recorded in glowing letters in the annals of history. The students of later ages do research on them. But the common people, who carried the golden banners of these heroes, disappear into oblivion. If we try to think of all of them, we will never finish. Is it possible to print everyone's obituaries in the newspaper? Is it possible to arrange commemoration services or to build shrines in memory of everybody? But in my opinion there is no use thinking about whether it is possible or not. Those who are magnanimous will openly recognize the greatness in the outstanding achievements of those who lived in the past, regardless of their intellect, education or rank. Those who through

their sweat and blood provide vitality to human society do not need our approbation; but even so, why should we commit a social injustice by ignoring the work they have done, their karma sádhaná?

If the idea “The world belongs to the toiling masses” is accepted as the highest truth, the value of intellectual work will be denied, or, even if accepted, will be relegated to a secondary position. We find poverty among intellectuals as well as among the toiling masses, hence we cannot give exclusive importance to the problems of either class. Rather, before trying to solve the problems of any class, we should first find out what the common economic and psychic needs of everybody are. Then, in a humanitarian manner, in a spirit of universal love, we should set about helping them to progress. We cannot declare that this world is the property of one

social class just to satisfy the interests of a particular group.

People must make steady progress in the realms of intellect, art and entrepeneurial action, and this progress should be achieved through the heartfelt cooperation of all social classes. There must not be any discrimination on the basis of education or sex. It will not do to accept any type of social difference as an absolute system or a divine decree. If we accept discrimination, one section of society will develop a superiority complex and another section an inferiority complex. Eventually, due to conflict between the superiority and inferiority complexes, the structure of society will disintegrate. An inferiority complex creates obstacles in the path of human progress, while a superiority complex makes people think that the other members of society are not part of their society. “They are inferior, low, stupid,

superstitious fools. In fact, they should be beaten before they are spoken to!" As a result of this psychology a healthy social life is irretrievably lost, and along with this, the natural ties of affection between human beings break as people become estranged from each other.

Some of those who suffer from a superiority complex are intelligent, so they try to conceal their inner sentiments behind congenial external behaviour. But if the so-called inferior people happen to speak a few strong words, the inflated egos of those people get punctured and their real nature stands exposed. It is impossible for them to accept the truth from those whom they have considered inferior. When their logic fails them they begin to use abusive language. They try to recover their lost dignity by cursing the poor for being poor, humiliating the unattractive for being ugly, castigating low-caste people for their low-caste

status, and reproaching the young for their lack of experience. There is no need to waste space to show that this type of behaviour clearly betrays their intellectual bankruptcy.

There are some deep-rooted superstitions and prejudices among the older generation that must be eradicated in the greater interest of society, but the older generation does not want to accept this fact. In order to avoid accepting their just defeat they point to their long years of experience. While nobody can deny the value of practical experience, we should remember that the past does not always repeat itself, that is, past experience is not always of much value in the present. Experience helps us to determine the relationship between cause and effect, but in the absence of far-sightedness that experience cannot be effectively utilized. With a change of scene, people must maintain a consistency

between past experiences and probable future events when they determine future policies.

The younger generation usually has greater knowledge than the older generation of how circumstances will change in the future, because it is their nature to look ahead, and consequently they focus more attention on the future than their elders. I am not referring here to adolescent sentimentality, but to how far an understanding of the present momentum can help to prepare for the future. The sentimentality of adolescents and very young adults is nothing but impetuosity. This impetuosity itself does not help in determining future policies. Nevertheless I cannot deny that those who are impetuous understand the nature of this impetuosity better than anybody else. This also gives them a greater right than anybody else to determine policies. How much can those who lie inert like a lump of clay

understand of the significance of this impetuosity?

When the main aim is to keep formulating policies for social progress, experience cannot be the sole prerequisite for this work. Rather a combination of the past experiences of the older generation and the creative zeal of the young should determine the speed of social progress. We cannot afford to neglect either group. The human race must attain glory by giving due recognition and justice to all.

A society whose leaders have a strong tendency to denigrate others will suffer a great catastrophe. The tendency to look down upon others does not always result from a superiority complex. Many people treat others with contempt to hide their own ignorance. The superiority complex is harmful to society, and this treating others with contempt to hide one's

ignorance is even more harmful. Everyone, irrespective of their education, intellectual attainment, external appearance, internal qualities, social status or age, must remember that those whom they consider inferior know more about many things than they do.(7)
Although I have said this before, I will say it again: seventy-five per cent of the evils in society are the result of the injustices that people commit against each other.
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Footnotes
(1) The author defines “sentiment” as follows: “This running blindly without discrimination between the proper and the improper is called

‘sentiment’. One races after the idea that has come into one’s mind, like an unbridled horse, without considering its good or bad consequences. The horse may move along the right path, or it may fall into a chasm. One cannot be certain.” (“Geo-Sentiment” in The Liberation of Intellect: Neohumanism, 3rd ed., 1987) –Trans.

(2) Between father and child there is a blood relationship, but it is not a direct blood relationship; [[between mother and child there is a direct blood relationship because the mother’s]] body has actually nourished the child’s body in the pre-natal state. –Trans.

(3) Jiṇána vistára: the expansion of knowledge. Vijiṇána sádhaná: Vijiṇána is normally translated "science", so a literal translation of vijiṇána sádhaná might be "the cultivation of science". The intended meaning of vijiṇána sádhaná seems to be "the fullest development of knowledge". –Trans.

(4) The monthly salary of a primary-school teacher or lower-division clerk in the late fifties and early sixties. –Trans.
(5) Literally viińá, similar to a sitar. –Trans.
(6) The Gandhian movement, founded by Mahatma Gandhi, was based on the principles of truth and non-violence (satyágraha). The Bhudan movement, launched by Vinoba Bhave, was an attempt to convince landlords through humanistic appeals that they should donate land to poor, landless people. –Trans.
(7) For further discussion on superiority and inferiority complexes, see "The Social Order and Superiority and Inferiority Complexes" in Volume 3. –Eds. [Footnote used in the *Prout in a Nutshell Volume 1 Part 2,* 1st edition, publication of this article.]

Justice

The underlying spirit of the word vicára ["justice" in English] is "a particular type of mental process to ascertain the truth". Although human actions depend on relative principles, whatever appears to be the truth in this relative world, within society, is justice. The greatest benefit of the proper application of justice is that in the struggle between progressive and regressive forces, between good and evil, which is a permanent feature of society, the human intellect has an increasing number of

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opportunities to choose the path of righteousness.

Administering Justice

Many people say, “When human beings possess so little intelligence, how can they be qualified to sit in judgement over others? No one has the right to judge others.” I do not completely reject this argument, though I will raise the following question: “Is it not injustice if people do not use the intellect they have been endowed with in this relative world?” Judgements may not always be correct, the determination of judicial criteria may be flawed, or the mental faculties or the way of thinking of the judge may create doubts in the eyes of people about whether he or she can be considered an ideal person. Should we therefore abandon the judicial system altogether? No, certainly not. No particular standard for

measuring intellectual progress has ever been or will ever be accepted as absolute. Nevertheless, in every sphere of life there must be an ongoing effort to progress from imperfection to perfection. This effort will, if only indirectly, make social progress and all-round welfare more accessible to the human race.

A judicial process ends once a verdict is reached about anything, so a judicial process is not something complete in itself. Only once the verdict is implemented is the full process complete. In other words, the utility of justice in social life is felt only when a penal measure, or better still, a corrective measure, for the concerned individual or group is implemented as per the verdict. But if at any stage the judicial yardstick is not identical with truth beyond a shadow of doubt, no one can deny that special care will have to be taken at the time of passing

sentence on the accused in accordance with the verdict given.

I am personally of the opinion that since flaws will always unavoidably remain, no matter how good the judicial system, it is not the intent of nature for one human being to penalize another. Moreover, a detailed analysis reveals that whenever a punitive action is taken to penalize somebody, a feeling of vindictiveness arises in the minds of those administering the punishment, which in turn creates a malevolent mentality. I therefore think that the term “penal system” should be deleted from social terminology. If and when somebody, whether a judge or an ordinary person, takes any type of action against another, it should be corrective, not punitive.

If a system of corrective measures is introduced, criminals, whether they were deeply

involved in the crime or not, will have no reason to complain against anyone. Although there may be flaws in the judgement, it will not harm them in any way. A person who is definitely guilty will benefit from a system of corrective measures, and even a person who is not guilty will benefit from such a system.

Thus my opinion is that no innocent person should have the opportunity to think or say, “Although I am innocent, I am being punished because I couldn’t afford a good lawyer” due to flaws in the judicial system. No doubt society will be adversely affected if an offender evades the law and is not arrested by the police due to their incompetence, but far greater damage will be done if an innocent person is penalized because of a defective judicial system.

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From the social or human viewpoint, everybody has the right to correct the behaviour of everyone else. This is the birthright of every human being. No scholar can dispute the right of people to correct the shortcomings of those with whom they come in contact. The recognition of this right is indispensable for the health of society.

Thus it is clear that corrective measures are necessary to complement justice. Such an arrangement prevents a government from getting any scope to impose a violent, cruel penal system and an oppressive dictatorship on the masses.

Here lies the basic difference between the administrative system and the corrective system. The severe discipline that is needed in the administrative system to strengthen the framework of society or that of the state is not

necessary in the judicial system; rather the judicial system is based on rational, tolerant, humanistic ideas and benevolent sentiments. Thus we see that in many cases there is a fundamental difference between the administrative and the judicial systems. Judges can and will frequently temper the merciless attitudes of the administration with humane reasoning; the verdicts of humane judges will therefore be more acceptable to the populace of a state than the pronouncements of an insensitive administration. If this does not happen it will immediately become clear that either an individual or party is abusing the power vested in them by the state.

The Role of Judges

People judge the mistakes of others to the best of their own intellectual capacities. I do not feel that there is anything wrong in this as long

as people keep the ideal of welfare in front of them.

People may judge others, but there has always been and still is a difference of opinion among moralists concerning the final stage of the judicial process: in other words, concerning the extent to which people have the right to penalize others. If a person is tried and no action is taken as a result of the trial, the person in question will not have to face the possibility of a miscarriage of justice. But if in the event of a miscarriage of justice the person is penalized on the basis of the verdict, an innocent person will be made to suffer. In other words, penalizing a person on the basis of a verdict involves considerable risk.

Judges can rarely say with total conviction that one person is guilty and another innocent. Their verdicts are based on the testimonies of

witnesses, the evidence and the arguments of lawyers. They have very little scope to verify whether or not the witnesses are telling the truth or whether or not the evidence is genuine. Experienced lawyers often win cases because even an eminent judge becomes confused by their arguments. Moreover, if the experienced lawyers also happen to be retired judges, it will be very easy for them to win over the judge. A judge who previously worked under an experienced lawyer will usually find it difficult to reject his or her evidence and arguments. In other words, such lawyers exert a personal influence over the judge. Of course in most developed countries nowadays retired judges are prevented from practising law. This regulation is highly commendable, and results in the general public getting a better chance of receiving justice. However, there is still no guarantee that people will receive impartial justice, because in practice very few judges are

able to verify whether the witnesses are telling the truth or whether the evidence is genuine, or to closely scrutinize the verbose arguments of experienced lawyers.

In order to determine whether the witnesses are telling the truth and whether the evidence is genuine, judges will have to take considerable help from detectives. The workload of detectives will increase as a result, and thus it may be necessary to increase the number of detectives. By merely increasing the number of detectives, however, we cannot expect that this problem will be solved, because if the seeds of corruption are hidden in the detective department itself, it will be virtually impossible to eliminate them. In other words, if detectives take bribes out of greed, the accused or the plaintiff will suffer as a result. While it is necessary for a country to have an adequate number of detectives, it is impossible for a

government to recruit a large number of highly proficient detectives. It will therefore be necessary for the investigations carried out by the detectives into whether the witnesses are telling the truth and whether the evidence is genuine to be verified again by the judges.

Judges, however, do not need to take sole responsibility for this work in all cases; part of it may be performed by a jury. This will result in an increase in the importance of the jury system. The only criterion for selecting members of the jury should be honesty. Educational qualifications and social status should not be taken into consideration.

It is preferable that the final responsibility for a judgement rest with the judge, not the jury. So judges should be carefully selected from among those whose strength of character is irrefutable. Generally the number of judges is

smaller than the number of police or detectives, and their salaries are higher, so with proper efforts it will not be impossible for a country to procure the competent judges that it needs. Local autonomous bodies should be given the responsibility for selecting the members of the jury; business people, brokers and political leaders or party workers should not be eligible to be jury members.

We cannot expect judges to agree with the jury in all cases because that would limit their authority. Nor should we expect that the members of the jury will make good judges, no matter how honest and upright they may be. Furthermore, after conducting investigations into the event in question, the judge and jury may arrive at different conclusions; it will not be wrong to conclude that the judge's conclusion should carry more weight. However, it is possible for a judge to be partial, out to satisfy a

personal grudge or in collusion with the accused; if so, what should be done? If the members of a jury become suspicious of the judge's conduct or dissatisfied with his or her behaviour during the course of a trial, the entire proceedings of the case should be brought to the notice of a higher judicial authority before the judge delivers his or her final judgement in court. If the higher judicial authority shares the opinion of the members of the jury, it would be unwise to retain the judge.

Although I do not fully support the way in which justice was administered by the káziis [Muslim judges] in the Middle Ages, it would be useful if judges today emulated their dedication. The káziis took great risk and personal responsibility when they disguised themselves and went to seek the truth at the scene of the crime, or tried to extract a confession from the accused or the plaintiff by using a clever ruse.

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Such efforts would place greater responsibility on the judges, and thus it might be necessary to increase both their number and their salary. Besides this, it might also be necessary to increase their authority so that they could deliver judgements on the basis of their findings and experience.

However, no matter what efforts we make to ensure fair judgements, we cannot expect them to always be correct. The jury may make a mistake, or both the judge and the jury may make a mistake. Both may acquiesce in injustice due to transitory emotions or excitement. Hence, under no circumstances can a judgement be taken as the final word. So I am constrained to say that if there is any doubt at all about the accuracy of a judgement, no punishment should be given.

From the moral viewpoint also it is obvious that, if they wish to preserve social purity, people only have the right to take corrective measures and not punitive measures. The law that controls every pulsation of human existence has the sole authority to penalize people, and no other. Still, if people could have demonstrated that their judgements were absolutely free from defects or established that their system of punishment was legitimate, there would have been something to discuss. But human beings are incapable of doing this. So for the preservation of society, if people want to take measures against others, those measures will have to be corrective, not punitive. Even if the judicial system is defective, if only corrective measures are taken then there is no possibility of anyone coming to any harm.

Before looking more deeply at corrective measures, it is necessary to closely examine the

standard of judges. Those who are permitted to sit in judgement over others and have the power to punish must be closely monitored to see whether any degeneration has occurred in their intelligence, capacity for deliberation, or moral character. From time to time, as and when necessary, reports about the character and conduct of judges may be required by bodies representing the people. A judge who is a drunkard, of dubious character or engaged in any form of antisocial activity has no right to pass judgement on others. I am emphasizing the personal standards of judges because the nature of justice is such that higher priority has to be given to temporal, spatial and personal factors than to legal processes.

In the event of conflict between the criminal code and the moral code, the moral code must take precedence.

While presiding over a trial a judge should not be prejudiced against the accused, but should consider whether he or she has committed a crime or not; and if so, under what circumstances, and whether the crime was committed voluntarily or at the instigation of others. This is the main point for consideration during a trial. The person on whom society has bestowed the solemn office of judge has therefore to be of a higher standard than an ordinary person.

I am not ready to accept that a law student who has graduated with distinction from the law faculty of a university will necessarily make a competent judge. While it is undeniable that good lawyers and barristers have knowledge of the law and skill in presenting arguments, this is no guarantee that they will make equitable judges. Instances of equitable justice can be seen

in countless large and small events which occur in individual and social life.

When sitting to pass judgement on an offender the first thing for the judge to consider is whether the accused has committed a crime or not. For the purpose of analysing the types of crime committed by a criminal, and whether his or her offences were committed voluntarily or at the instigation of others, criminals may be classified into the following five categories.

(1) Criminals by Nature

Some few men and women are born with a deranged mind. The cause of their mental derangement is concealed within the defects of their body and glands. Such people can be divided into two main groups.

The first group is composed of people who are normally very quiet, but in whom truthfulness and doing good to others are against their nature. They derive malevolent pleasure from lying and harming others. They are generally poor at managing their worldly affairs and incapable of comprehending the difference between good and bad. They act according to their limited mental capacity. Although they are mentally underdeveloped, they are deprived of the same kindness and compassion that other simpletons, due to their innate purity, receive. They take a long time to learn how to walk and talk and to understand simple matters, and they continue to dribble for a large part of their lives. Despite the sincere efforts of their parents and teachers, they fail to acquire any education. Even before they reach adulthood, they manifest their base propensities. They generally become petty thieves, not armed robbers. Although they have

a bad character, they do not have the courage to perform antisocial activities openly. They commit offences on their own initiative and at the instigation of others.

The second group of born criminals is more dangerous. Throughout their lives they revel in displays of provoked or unprovoked cruelty. They have a natural inclination to kill or maim others. They become members of criminal gangs and commit murder and other horrendous acts. Generally they do not become pickpockets, petty thieves or burglars. They consider such things to be the activities of petty criminals and as such beneath their dignity. In criminal circles they are usually greatly feared. From their mode of thinking or lifestyle, it appears as though they were born only to commit crimes. They consider compassion and conscience to be mere frailties; the importance of such attributes is beyond their understanding. Although they may be slow when

it comes to worldly affairs, they are not fools. At the time of committing their instinct-inspired crimes, they give ample proof of their intelligence. They demonstrate their intelligence through their knowledge of osteology and psychology, and by their behaviour when dealing with the police and the public. Even if they are born into a salutary environment, this type of inborn criminal ultimately takes to a life of crime. Women with this kind of nature are quite incapable of leading chaste lives; even if they have good husbands, they often decide to become prostitutes.

The natures and lifestyles of born criminals are as diverse as their crimes. Some pose as honest people and secretly steal and commit robberies. Some gain a lot of money through forgery or armed robbery and donate it to the poor. Some like to prey on helpless victims. Among those who commit crimes

because they derive pleasure from it, some do not have the opportunity to earn a living, or if they do, do not utilize that chance to lead an honest life. The natures of born criminals, the lifestyles they lead, and their preferences for particular types of crimes are usually consistent with each other.

Psychologists have learned a great deal about criminals and are trying to research them more. If they receive cooperation from the government, and especially from the police department, they will make rapid progress in the study of criminal psychology. An analysis of criminal psychology is not the subject under discussion, but still it is a fact that born criminals are society's greatest burden and greatest responsibility. Although such criminals are born with human bodies, mentally they are sub-human. And that is not all: even the physical

structure of such people is different from that of ordinary people.

The sweet family environment that is within easy reach of human beings due to their developed intellect and which becomes even sweeter in time due to their natural qualities, is not accessible to born criminals. Even if they are born into a good environment, they cannot fully accept it. Just to satisfy their perverse mentality, they may poison their benevolent fathers out of any misunderstanding, or may brutally stab their loving mothers in the heart. From a viewpoint of normal human behaviour, it would be extremely difficult to treat born criminals as human beings.

Nature normally bestows different strengths and weaknesses on different persons, but this principle takes a deviant twist in the case of these people. Born criminals can

understand or grasp many natural phenomena more easily than highly-intelligent or wise people. Many underdeveloped creatures have a greater capacity than human beings to foresee the future, and it can be seen that born criminals also have this ability.

Through the observations and investigations psychologists have made while studying criminal psychology, they have gained a great deal of useful information about born criminals. But until now no physiological or psychological treatment has been developed to reform their nature. Psychologists or physiologists know the cause of their deformities or abnormalities, and they even know [theoretically] how their abnormalities can be cured, but in practice it is extremely difficult to cure them. No country in the world has ever wished to demonstrate any enthusiasm for curing the diseases of these unfortunate

people. They live like animals, senselessly performing wicked acts. And like animals, they allow their pointless lives to end with a rope around their necks.

If “a life for a life” is considered an unassailable principle of justice, then there is nothing more to say. But remember that born criminals commit their crimes due to their physical or psychic abnormalities; are not the so-called civilized people who make no effort to cure such born criminals, guilty of the same crime? Does not capital punishment amount to cutting off the head to get rid of a headache? In my opinion to take the life of a born criminal of this type is as much a crime as it would be to pass a death sentence on a patient just because we could not cure the person’s illness. It is the duty of a civilized society to arrange for born criminals to be cured of their ailments. Killing them to lighten the burden caused by their lives

is certainly not indicative of a developed civilization.

So, in my opinion the trials of born criminals should not concentrate solely on the magnitude of their crimes. Such criminals will have to be regarded with benevolent, humanistic sentiments, and means of curing them must be suggested.

Doctors quarantine those with an infectious disease to prevent the disease spreading to healthy people. Similarly it is necessary to isolate born criminals, indeed all types of criminals, from other people. The treatment of criminals should be undertaken in a prison, or better said, in a corrective centre. Prisons are not for punishment, rather prisons are hospitals for treatment of disease.

Psychologists cannot treat the mental diseases which inflict born criminals all alone; the cooperation of physicians and sociologists is essential. Psychologists will diagnose the mental disease and explain its origins, and they will also play a role in helping cure it as far as possible. Doctors will be responsible for curing the disease through medicine or surgery, insofar as it is caused by physiological abnormalities. Then sociologists will have to arrange for the social rehabilitation of the criminal after he or she has recovered. If psychologists only describe the nature of the disease, or if doctors only diagnose the physiological disorders and nothing more, it will not be possible to accomplish anything productive. Of course at the present time the patient may not make a complete recovery despite the concerted efforts of psychologists and sociologists, because psychology is still in an underdeveloped state. Moreover, doctors have not yet acquired the skills needed to remove the

physiological abnormalities responsible for mental disease. And furthermore, the science of sociology has only just emerged; it is developing extremely slowly. However, we must take the above measures for born criminals.

As long as society fails to take such humanistic measures in dealing with born criminals, it is farcical to compel them to stand trial.

One must always remember that born criminals are patients, and that their disease is stubborn. It can of course be cured quite quickly through spiritual practices, and in a slightly longer period through yogic methods, but for this a congenial environment is essential. Prison environments should therefore be made more pure, more humane.

(2) Criminals out of Habit

Where (a) moral integrity is low, where (b) no effort is made to develop mental force, or where (c) social control is slack, people will be influenced by their ripus,[1] and will not hesitate to choose a path which enables them to express their propensities unchecked. Ordinary people manage to keep their base propensities under control through internal moral reasoning, and thus avoid indulging in antisocial activities. But those who lack mental strength often knowingly commit crimes in an almost mechanical way, even though they possess a sense of morality. Such people who possess a sense of morality but lack mental strength normally keep their momentary mental weaknesses under control out of fear of what society might do, and as a result the health of society and the purity of individual life is upheld. But if any one of these three obstacles which keep people from moving along the path of evil becomes weak, people will

tend to engage in antisocial activities; in the absence of fear of these obstacles, they will gradually become increasingly addicted to such activities. In this way people get accustomed to performing antisocial activities and finally turn into hardened criminals.

The diseases of habitual criminals are not congenital, so in treating these people there is little place for a physiologist or doctor. However, habitual criminals can easily be treated if they are provided with a proper moral education, a method of acquiring moral strength and a strictly regulated social environment. So during the trials of habitual criminals, the judge should focus more on the provisions of the penal code than on humanitarian sensibility; this approach will benefit society.

No matter how villainous habitual criminals become, and no matter how notorious,

they will never be as dangerous as born criminals. Because they possess some sense of discrimination, they should not be automatically pardoned on the grounds of mental illness. They also possess the ability to feign innocence. They behave like saints by day and steal by night; they live like landlords one moment and like armed robbers the next; they are chaste in public and promiscuous in private. Generally the scale of their criminal activities is greater than that of other criminals.

Psychological treatment and strict prison discipline help to a great extent in reforming the nature of habitual criminals. (Of course such criminals must live in a pure social environment as well.)

This type of criminal nature is often formed as an indirect result of people being forced to submit to strict control without being

given any moral education or guidance as to how to develop strength of mind. For example, some parents do not impart moral education to their children, and do not help them to acquire strength of mind or teach them how to lead a virtuous life; instead, they beat their children with or without justification. It is the children of such parents who later take part in antisocial activities.

If parents fail to educate their daughters out of fear that they will go astray, fail to provide them with a moral education, fail to help them acquire strength of mind by holding up high ideals before them, and try to forcibly keep their unmarried or widowed daughters confined behind the purdah, naturally the secret desire will awaken in them to leave home and experience the world. As a result they will put on a show of purity in public while indulging in sinful conduct in private. Often they will even

break away from the constraints imposed on them and openly engage in antisocial activities.

Although it is extremely difficult to convince habitual criminals to follow the path of spirituality, it may be possible through psychological means.

In most cases they are intelligent, but out of petty selfishness they rebel against society, country and state. Many habitual criminals become politicians in order to further their own selfish ends and cheat the public day after day. Most of the great wars fought in the world have been started by such criminals. The leaders of the criminal community come from this group. Sometimes the unfortunate public grabs hold of these leaders, just as fishermen catch fish in a net and drag them onto the shore, and sometimes these leaders break the net and slip away. Not only is intelligence required to bring

these criminals to justice, a great deal of caution and courage is required as well. Black marketeers and adulterators who operate on a large scale should also be included in this group of criminals.

Habitual criminals sometimes also try to influence judges. They intimidate them in the hope of ensuring the successful continuation of their criminal activities. In order to punish habitual criminals, it is necessary to give judges far greater power than they now possess.

(3) Criminals Due to Environment

Many people in society do not become criminals because of physiological or hereditary factors. Nor do they become involved in criminal activities due to the influence of base propensities, or due to lack of education or social control. Yet today civilized society looks

down on them because they are criminals when they could have been revered as ideal human beings with impeccable characters if they had been given a proper environment.

They are glaring examples that honest people can become dishonest as a result of environmental pressures. The sensitive, honest son of a villainous father is compelled to participate in antisocial activities out of fear of paternal abuse. This creates a habit which eventually becomes part of his nature. The daughter of a prostitute, despite her best efforts to live a virtuous life, is forced to lead the life of a social outcast due to unbearable maternal abuse or circumstantial pressure. At first we usually censure the parents or guardians for the helpless condition of such women, but the parents are not always completely to blame. Sometimes personal difficulties, such as financial hardship or poverty, compel them to take such

steps, even when they know that what they are doing is wrong. Due to circumstantial pressure they encourage their children to do wrong and force them to commit crimes.

Those who denigrate refugees, seeing an antisocial mentality in some of them, will notice on closer examination that it is only because of lack of money that refugees encourage their children to act in an antisocial manner.

But antisocial behaviour is not always caused by lack of money. Where the parents or guardians are evil by nature, they try to infect the other members of their family with their disease. A few days ago I read in the newspaper that an upper-middle-class lady used to encourage her son to steal clothes, etc., from her neighbours by offering him money for cinema tickets if he did – in other words, by applying indirect pressure. When the incident became

public, it was discovered that her family was not in financial difficulty. By putting pressure on her son, the lady was infecting him with her own mental disease.

There are many parents who, due to miserliness or whatever reason, deprive their children of delicious food and drink. (If there is some reason for this deprivation, they do not explain it to their children.) They serve such food and drink to others in the presence of their children without explaining to them why they are being deprived. As a result, the children, under the pressure of circumstance, steal to try to satisfy their natural desires.

There are many people who themselves, that is, together with the members of their family, consume delicious food and drink but provide poor-quality food to their servants. The

servants subsequently develop the habit of stealing out of greed.

There are many parents who directly encourage their children to fight and abuse others. I have also observed quiet-natured children who often disagreed with the opinions of their parents, being forced to follow their parents' orders out of fear of physical abuse. In a remote village I once observed a young man, who was a member of a social group which followed the Dáyabhága system,[2] abuse his innocent wife and torture her at the instigation of his cruel father, out of fear of losing his right of inheritance.

These are just a few examples of crimes due to environment.

During the trials of criminals due to environment who have not yet turned into

habitual criminals, the judge should not attach too much importance to the provisions of the penal code. If, after thorough investigation, it is discovered that particular people or circumstantial pressure have caused these criminals (whatever their age) to take part in antisocial activities, it will be the duty of the judge to remove them from that environment with the help of sociologists and psychologists. Such cases rarely require further corrective measures. But if those who are criminals due to circumstantial pressure become habitual criminals as a result of a long-standing habit, a change of environment alone will not suffice. Corrective measures in accordance with the provisions of the penal code will also be necessary.

Those who are born with fairly healthy bodies and minds, who do not lack knowledge of morality or live an undisciplined social life, or

who have not become dishonest as a result of circumstantial pressure, often unwittingly take to the path of dishonesty because they keep bad company. Perhaps as many as ninety-nine per cent of people talk about themselves in the following way: “I do not need to bother about the company I keep, as long as I am good myself. I can remain good in all types of company. I am old enough to understand the difference between good and bad.” In other words, such people do not like to think, or rather feel piqued at the thought, that somebody should try to dissuade them from keeping bad company. Especially if a less-educated person advises a more highly-educated person to avoid bad company, that person will do it all the more. In society people who regard themselves as superior in status, wealth or education generally believe that it is entirely unwarranted for others to give them advice. That is why an educated but

wayward son often disregards the good advice of his parents.

The natural characteristics of the human mind, however, tell a different story than what that ninety-nine percent think. A person of any age between seven and seventy is invariably influenced by the company he or she keeps. In other words, where goodness is predominant, bad people will slowly but surely become good, and where the opposite is the case, good people will become bad. Even a saintly person will go astray after a few days of close association with bad people.

Suppose a teetotaller mixes regularly with a group of alcoholics. The frequent anti-teetotaller gibes and the positive portrayals of the wondrous virtues of wine by the alcoholics will one day tempt the teetotaller to taste a little wine. His or her drinking friends will say, “We

don't want you to become drunk. But what's the harm if you just taste a little! This surely won't make you a bad person! What a moralist you are! Oh friend, to be such a moralist in the world today is ridiculous!" So one day the teetotaller tastes wine and this becomes the cause of his or her downfall. But on the day the unsuspecting teetotaller took wine, he or she did not realize that from that very day wine would become the cause of his or her degeneration.

Similarly, by keeping bad company people become debauched, slanderers and thieves. Men or women who have to do little or no household work, who fail to cultivate high ideals in life, who are unable to evolve a spiritual outlook, or who do not have to work hard for a living, generally develop an extremely critical nature. By constantly associating with such people, those who possess high ideals or a diligent nature will gradually begin to spend their leisure time in

slanderous gossip. If the parents or older members of a family are quarrelsome, the children will also become quarrelsome due to constant association. Similarly, if the women of a family have a highly critical nature, the children will invariably become critical because they will learn how to criticize from their elders. Children will also tend to become depraved if they associate too closely with older children in schools or colleges. When they stay among children their own age, however, they generally play in an innocent, joyous way. Childhood companions should be selected with great care, but young children are incapable of doing this.

The base propensities which lie dormant in everyone are easily stimulated by constant association with bad people. Through the united efforts of parents, people living in the locality and educators, it may be possible to save children from bad company. But it is very

difficult to save them from the evil influences which reside in their own homes or preponderate in their neighbourhood. The only way to overcome such influences is to popularize the ideals of dharma, spread moral education and train an honest police force.

In the modern world there is a wide variety of films which excite the passions and have a degrading influence on boys and girls, adolescents and young men and women. Such films create in cinema-goers the desire to emulate in their individual lives the criminal activities, the vulgar expressions of love, or the adventurous behaviour that they see enacted on the screen. This is another example of how keeping bad company causes depravity. Many cinema-goers imagine that the characters that they see on the screen are their actual acquaintances, but when they try to emulate these characters, they discover that the real

world is much tougher than the world portrayed by the cinema. If their family ties are weak, if they are their own guardians or if they have no high ideals to inspire them, it will be extremely difficult, although not impossible, to save them from bad influences.

As long as those who become criminals due to keeping bad company are not transformed into habitual criminals, they will return to their normal good behaviour as soon as they give up the bad company. Therefore, during the trials of such criminals, corrective measures should be taken only after giving due consideration to the company they keep and the influence of this company on their behaviour. But in the case of those who have become habitual criminals, simply removing them from bad company will not suffice, because they themselves are their own bad company. For them, stricter measures will be needed.

Nearly all deceitful acts, such as swindling, fraud, gambling, looting, seducing women, and travelling without a ticket, are commonly a result of the influence of bad company.

In prisons also those criminals of this type who have already turned into habitual criminals should be housed with great care, otherwise their disease will spread to others.

(4) Criminals Due to Poverty

Most crimes throughout the world are committed due to poverty, except in countries where the minimum necessities of life have been met. Of course the tendency to engage in antisocial activities because of poverty does not manifest equally in all places or among all people. The degree of such crimes varies according to the moral strength of an individual.

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But no matter how strongly developed the moral consciousness of a person, if poverty threatens his or her very existence, usually the person will try to attack the prevailing social structure. This being the case, I cannot in the name of human dharma reject the reasons such people give, if they give any reasons at all, in defence of their actions. They demand simply the right to live, and on this human right stands the well-being of society, the justification for its existence.

Throughout history millions of people have died due to artificial famines created by other human beings. While walking along a road, weary, plodding legs have given way and a person has collapsed in a pitiful heap on the ground, yet he or she has refrained from stealing. Although a high standard of morality is one reason why the person did not make a last desperate bid for self-preservation, it is not the only reason. Starving people, particularly if they

lose their vitality by slow degrees, do not have the moral courage to fight. Knowing the end is sure, they seek refuge in the arms of death. Basing their way of life on incorrect philosophical and religious teachings, they accept their miserable situation as destiny. Perhaps, at that time, if they were led by a spirited leader and inspired by his or her fiery lectures, or if they received guidance about the course of action to take, they would collectively attack the prevailing social structure. In such circumstances, their actions might perhaps be described as immoral, but they certainly would not contravene the dharma of human existence.

Sometimes honest people, who hate corruption from the depths of their being but fail to keep their mental balance due to the pressure of poverty, resort to crime just to maintain their existence. What will happen in such circumstances if the judge looks only at the

crime, or is even slightly indifferent to the questions of cause and effect related to the crime? Such offenders – who may be more honest than most well-fed, well-dressed, so-called honest people – will be thrown into jail and branded as criminals merely because of deficiencies in the system of production and distribution of basic requirements. Due to the bad company there, and overcome with shame, hatred and humiliation due to their punishment, they will gradually turn into habitual criminals after being released from jail.

In areas hit by famine many crimes are committed due to poverty, but as soon as the economy improves the number of crimes decreases. This proves that most of the people in whatever country are not by nature criminals, nor for that matter is the human race in general. People want to be properly clothed and fed and to pass their days happily. They do not want to

have the path of their natural development stop at an impenetrable iron door constructed by narrow-minded social-law-givers.

Those who ignore their conscience and repeatedly commit crimes due to poverty, eventually turn into habitual criminals. If somebody steals or robs out of hunger, or is goaded by their propensities into some mean act, it will be the duty of society to find out what the person's needs are and then remove them in some lawful way. But if society fails to do its duty (I have already said that human beings have not yet been able to create a society in the true sense of the term) and punishes such criminals instead, focusing only on the magnitude of their crimes, all feelings of remorse will vanish from their minds and in their place a sense of desperation will arise. They will feel that since they have already been stigmatized and have nothing further to lose,

there is no point in suffering by earning a living in an honest way. They will think, “As I am sinking, let me sink to the depths of hell.” Those who have committed crimes due to poverty (whether due to lack of food or clothing, or physical or mental factors), will blame society for their offences. They will claim that their poverty is the result of a defective social structure, and in most cases this allegation will be true.

If the breadwinner of a family dies a premature death, a dark shadow of poverty will often fall over the family, and it may disintegrate. Its sweetness and purity will be destroyed due to poverty. The young boys and girls will become beggars, increasing the number of parasites in society, or they will become the playthings of antisocial forces, eventually turning into thieves, armed robbers, thugs, pickpockets or agents of some

professional beggars' association. They will become slaves in order to survive. Young widows from communities which follow a double standard of morality will also be compelled or tempted by various forces to lead antisocial lives.

Hence the solution to all these different antisocial activities is hidden in the creation of a sound economic and social structure. The man who is despised as a thief or treated with contempt by society might have been a genius if he had been brought up in a healthy social environment. The woman who is shunned as a prostitute might have been respected as the leader of a women's organization or honoured as the mother of a famous person, had she received a little sympathy from society in the early part of her life. That is why I contend that those unfortunate men and women carry a burden of sin created through the collective

efforts of society as a whole. They are not responsible for their sins, or if they are, their sins are considerably less, or at least no greater, than the sins of selfish, mean-minded people who call themselves honest.

It is doubtful whether the Supreme Creator, let alone humanity, has the right to punish those who commit crimes due to poverty. Still, from the moral standpoint, I cannot support criminal acts. I would suggest that before committing such crimes they should become revolutionaries. It is the duty of those with a good knowledge of morality to guide them in their revolutionary activities. Let them separate the gold from the dross in the fire of revolution.

On the subject of corrective measures for those who become criminals due to poverty, honest people have no alternative but to exhort

them to launch a revolution. In this situation the position of a judge is like that of a figurehead; he or she has nothing to say or do. Psychologists and sociologists also have very limited scope for action; the pathways that lie open to them are very circumscribed. The solution completely depends on the firm economic foundation of the different individual countries as well as of the entire world. If anyone is at fault it is every one of the world leaders. Their responsibilities do not end when they gain power by creating false hopes and deceiving the common people with remote and unattainable dreams.

People can score points in intellectual battles by hiding their inefficiency behind grandiloquent speeches, but if they do, the demands of the proletariat, who struggle for existence like animals, will not be heard. They will never be able to forget their hunger and ignore their psychic longings and

simultaneously dedicate themselves wholeheartedly to the enormous task of developing their country and building a universal human society in a better way.

Those whose stomachs are full can always forget about the hunger of others. The world has become accustomed to, but has experienced quite enough of, the procrastination and heartless histrionics of such blood-sucking brutes. By inventing crises, they force the needy to commit crimes; by hoarding grains, they cause artificial famines and indirectly incite starving people to steal; and by making people's circumstances difficult and subsequently enticing them with money, they encourage men to abandon their families and compel women to earn their living in an immoral way. Because they remain above suspicion and appear to be honest according to the laws of the land, which in many countries are enacted for the benefit of

the upper stratum of society, ordinary people are unable to raise their voices in protest. It can be said that the only path open to them is the path of revolution.

People look among the leaders of their country for someone to take up the noble task of protecting ordinary, simple people like themselves from the exploitation of blood-sucking brutes. Those who transform ordinary people into beasts by forcing them to live in extremely difficult circumstances are, in my opinion, the ones who should be put on trial. To burden judges with the trials of those who become criminals due to poverty, is to do an injustice to them.

However, it is fallacious to think that the economic structure is the sole cause of crimes committed due to poverty. There are many instances of affluent people also indulging in

drink, drugs, gambling, licentiousness, luxurious living, gluttony, etc., in order to forget their psychic problems or to gratify their instincts. Due to their addiction, they lose their wealth and finally get into debt to finance their bad habits. Eventually, when it becomes impossible for them to pay off their debts, they get involved in a wide variety of criminal activities which have a highly deleterious effect on society. Privation is clearly the superficial cause of such crimes, but society is not responsible for this type of privation as it is entirely self-created. It is imperative to take corrective measures to reform such types of criminal. In order to be able to reform them, it is essential to cure them of their addiction.

(5) Criminals out of Momentary Weakness

Another type of crime occurs occasionally. This is a temporary criminal urge, a special type

of mental disease which suddenly appears in a certain type of environment and again subsides after a short time. Kleptomania is an example of this kind of mental disease. After committing a crime kleptomaniacs feel ashamed and are anxious to return the property that they have stolen to the owner. They have sudden fantasies about stealing, abducting people, becoming drunk or indulging in decadent activities. But analysis shows that they do not in fact have the slightest personal interest in such things.

Usually weak-minded people who have witnessed larceny, murder or any other crime, are deeply affected by their experience, and due to the ensuing extreme agitation that occurs in their minds, they deviate from the path of common sense. If the feeling of mental agitation recurs due to the influence of temporal, spatial or personal factors, they will immediately commit a crime.

If a person who is not actually a thief constantly thinks about stealing and about the various techniques that can be used to steal, it may happen that he or she will begin to talk in a way that will give people the impression that he or she is really a thief. After witnessing a brutal murder, sometimes such weak-minded people begin to think of themselves as criminals, and under the influence of such thoughts, they conceal some clothing, a dead body or parts of a body, or some other items in their houses, and then start describing the modus operandi of the crime to others. They will say, “I dragged the person away like this; I stabbed him like that;” etc. In such circumstances it will not be surprising if the police regard the person as a criminal and if, after listening to the testimony of witnesses and seeing the evidence, the judge takes action against him or her. In such cases if there is even the slightest defect in the

confidential enquiries, the proficiency of the police or the insight of the judge – any of the three – in all probability an innocent person will be punished.

Poverty is the root cause of most crimes, but it is not the only cause. Even if the economic structure is sound, other factors which cause crimes may be present, jeopardizing social peace and discipline. With the eradication of poverty, crimes caused by keeping bad company and by personal difficulties may to some extent decrease, but there will be little decline in the number of crimes committed by born criminals or habitual criminals.

If we undertake a rational analysis of the causes of crimes and a scientific categorization of these causes, what stands out most is the variety of the propensities of the human mind and the weakness or strength of the mind

according to changes in time, place or person. As a result those investigating the causes of serious crimes may become confused. The accused could be a criminal who does not fit the previously-established categories. If the crime is grave, it will not be possible to pardon the person or disregard the crime on the grounds that it was committed accidentally or in a moment of weakness.

Crimes Involving Cruelty

Crimes involving cruelty are generally caused by the following factors:

1. loss of judgement due to intoxication or extreme excitement;
2. jealousy over property or wealth;
3. a severe blow to one's prestige or the influence of any of the ripus;

4. fights over women;
5. serious differences of opinion.

It is possible for a person who lacks mental straightforwardness, though [[that person]] may be a good person, to commit a crime due to any of these factors. But not all crimes are committed in a moment of anger. Even a cool-headed person may be influenced and overwhelmed by any of the factors listed above except the first, and these factors may have disturbed his or her mind for so long that the crime cannot be classified as a crime committed in anger. A cool-headed person with no criminal background may even plan a serious crime as much as six months in advance. The causes of these types of crime, as I mentioned above, lie in the weaknesses of the human mind. The manifestation of malevolent propensities depends on the environment and is subject to differences in time, place or person; sometimes

it occurs after a few years and sometimes after a few minutes.

When a crime is committed within five or ten minutes of provocation, the offence is generally viewed with leniency because it was committed in a moment of anger. However, where the thought of committing a crime gradually develops over a long period of time, where the offender deliberately becomes intoxicated in the hope of committing the crime with calm nerves, or where the offender gets others intoxicated in order for them to commit a crime with calm nerves, it is rare for the offender to receive clemency. In reality, of course, the crimes of both groups are equal in magnitude, and from the psychological point of view there is only a slight difference between them.

Benevolent people may wonder how much value corrective measures have for criminals who, for whatever reason, have not turned into habitual criminals but still do not show any sense of remorse after committing a crime; for first-time offenders who have not produced any type of evidence to demonstrate that circumstantial pressure was the reason for their crime; or for those who have not shown any physical or psychological symptoms which would warrant their being declared mentally ill. In such circumstances experienced judges and social well-wishers would take penal instead of corrective measures. From the moral standpoint, we cannot but support this. Yet when we know that weak-minded people, who are slaves to their lower propensities, have committed and are continuing to commit crimes due to circumstantial pressure created by temporal, spatial and personal factors, is it not society's duty to make them aware of their wrongdoing

and help them to learn how to develop their higher propensities and strengthen their minds? And is it not also the duty of society to ensure that this awakening is a corrective rather than a penal process? Of course it is necessary to retain tough penal measures as a part of the corrective system. Moreover, if punishment has an important place in correcting behaviour, people will, out of fear of being punished, avoid drifting along according to the inclinations of their lower propensities. As a result of this environmental pressure, dishonest people will be compelled to live an honest life and society will be greatly benefited. People who have succumbed to the influence of their base propensities will with society's sanction get the opportunity to become good. And those who are aware of the influence of their own base propensities will also feel encouraged to keep striving to become internally civilized – to become civilized people in a civilized society.

Crime and Politics

Calumny, jealousy, factionalism, indolence, grandiloquence, etc., are all social defects which, given a congenial environment, turn people into great criminals. These human defects are glaringly apparent in the modern world; the reason for this is the proclivity to indulge in politics. Politics today is concerned solely with satisfying the desire for power; all connection with selfless service has been lost. Unless the desire for power loosens its grip on the human mind, the unhealthy proclivity for politics will not be eliminated from modern society.

Seeing the way in which political involvement gradually transforms people into habitual criminals, benevolent people can no longer afford to stand by and watch. All good people should now work together to formulate a

comprehensive, well-thought-out plan for the all-round development of society. If the entire human race turns into habitual criminals, if people are no longer ready to listen with tolerance to the opinions of others, or if they sell their treasures of higher intellect to gain power and prestige, the age-old struggle to build human civilization, and all efforts to discover the value of human existence, will go in vain.

Virtue and Vice

In most countries crime is defined with reference to a sense of pápa [vice] and puńya [virtue]. These have their roots in the religions of individual countries. For example, English people customarily believe that suicide is one of the gravest sins. According to the customary belief of Indians, suicide is considered to be a sin, but it is not a grave sin. And the Japanese do not consider suicide to be a sin at all. That is why

the penal codes of these three countries are different. In Japan neither suicide nor attempted suicide constitutes a crime, and thus neither is a punishable offence. In India today the attempt to commit suicide is a crime, but suicide itself is not, hence only the attempt to commit suicide is a punishable offence. And in England the attempt to commit suicide and actual suicide are both crimes, hence both are considered to be punishable offences.[3] So those who rend the air arguing about virtue and vice are not usually listened to outside their own countries.

Ideas about virtue and vice are based on one or both of the following factors: different religious beliefs, and traditional or contemporary social beliefs created by factors other than religion.

These ideas change not only according to place, but also according to time and person. In

ancient India, for example, people used to burn defenceless widows to death without a twinge of conscience. The thought that this might be a sinful or unlawful act never entered their minds. Indians of that time believed that those who opposed sati were being antisocial, unpatriotic and sinful. It would not be correct for us to feel hatred or disdain towards those ancient people, living as we do in a different era. Perhaps those who burnt Joan of Arc to death did not commit a crime according to the concept of virtue and vice prevalent at the time.

Different concepts of virtue and vice may also coexist in one country. For example, for a Shákta [devotee of Shakti] eating meat is not a sin, but for a Vaeśńava [Vaishnavite, devotee of Viśńu] even to see an animal being slaughtered is a sin; he or she cannot even think of eating meat.

Since the concept of virtue and vice is completely relative, it is meaningless to loudly support or oppose the views of a particular community or the laws of a particular country as if they were the absolute truth. Today, therefore, everyone should develop a magnanimous outlook in such matters; otherwise their extreme intolerance will, in the name of spreading religion or of protecting virtue, result, as it did in the Middle Ages, in the entire world being bathed in human blood.

No matter what type of government a country has, it is not desirable for the state to blindly follow particular scriptural injunctions relating to virtue and vice. In this era of popular awakening, it will be impossible for the state to maintain its existence if it commits such an error.

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Virtue and vice are psychic expressions which are defined by changes in time, place and person; a type of mental aberration that one person in one place and at one time calls a sin is considered a virtue by another person in another place at another time. Under these circumstances, what should the basis of legal codes be? If legal codes are based on the different concepts of virtue and vice professed by different groups of people, a question will arise: “If two litigants, a plaintiff and a defendant, belonging to two different communities, appear in court, on which community’s legal code will the judicial process be based?” We can therefore see that crime cannot be defined by legal codes developed according to the concepts of virtue and vice followed by different groups of people.

Society will have to define what constitutes a crime and what does not in

accordance with a moral standard. I define immorality as that which, in order to further the personal interest of an individual or group, aims to exploit another individual or group or the rest of society, or aims to deprive them of the right to self-preservation. Behaviour based on such immoral intentions is a crime.

If the concept of virtue and vice of a particular person or a particular time is taken as absolute, the opportunity to introduce corrective measures into the law will be severely limited and restricted, and this will severely retard the dynamism of that society, leading to chaos and collapse. This is what happened to the ancient Egyptian, Roman, Greek and pre-Buddhist Vedic societies. If there had been no scope for reforming the Indian legal system in this way, sati would still be practised today. This is because, according to ancient beliefs, cremation by sati was considered to be a

virtuous act. Every rational person will therefore support giving scope to alterations and additions to legal codes.

In India, too, as soon as the social codes of the Vedic Age lost their flexibility due to the intransigence of Aryan vested interests, the Buddhist revolution took place. This significantly raised the consciousness of the people. In a later period, people of all religious affiliations – Buddhist, Jain, etc. – automatically accepted the idea that changes in the social code were desirable, that the concept of virtue and vice would inevitably change according to the needs of the age. Thus we see one kind of social system in the age of the Paráshara Saḿhitá, another in the age of the Rámáyaṅa, yet another in the age of the Mahábhárata, and still another in the age of the Manu Saḿhitá.[4]

Those who think that they can arbitrarily impose their judicial system or legal codes on people with the help of the power of the state, regardless of differences in time, place or person, are mistaken. The principles underlying the legal codes will have to be based on people's social needs and not on the whims of an individual or group or the biases inherent in a particular concept of virtue and vice.

Society is a dynamic entity. It has to progress by endlessly struggling to break through ever-changing barriers. It has to equip itself in different ways to respond to changing conditions and new challenges. Society cannot afford to forget that the type of struggles it had to go through in the past will not be the same as the struggles it has to go through in the present, and that the struggles of today will not be the same as those of the future. Thus, as the environment changes, newer and newer codes

of justice will have to be formulated on the basis of the moral code. The duty of those who frame legal codes is to fully recognize the essential characteristics of life and not violate the interests of individuals, groups or society as a whole. Otherwise the codes will be seen as unnatural and will not be accepted, which means that the state will have difficulty in implementing them effectively. (For example, during the British rule of India, the Sarda Act[5] was not properly enforced due to a lack of education.) If a large section of the society is confronted with the possibility of being considered criminals in the eyes of the law, they will engage in deceitful conduct and other antisocial acts to avoid punishment. Thus the standard of morality will decline considerably. Therefore, if such codes are ever formulated, the state will lose its credibility and become the laughing-stock of society.

If somebody commits a violent crime, generally he or she will not receive any sympathy from the public. But if somebody chooses the path of violence to protest against practices which are abhorred by his or her fellow citizens, he or she will, in all likelihood, enjoy popular support.

The Judicial System

Although the system of capital punishment is unacceptable from the moral viewpoint, people do sometimes resort to this custom under specific circumstances. It does not contain any corrective measures and has no purpose other than to instil fear into people's minds. Therefore the practice of taking a life for a life out of anger cannot be accepted in a civilized social system. Even if somebody is a genuine criminal who has no public support (no matter how notorious a criminal he or she may be, he or

she is still a human being), should not he or she have an opportunity to become an asset to society? It is possible that although the person fails to evoke our sympathy because of the seriousness of his or her crimes, he or she may sincerely repent and be prepared to dedicate the rest of his or her life to the genuine service of society. Furthermore, if those who commit crimes are afflicted with a mental disease, is it not our duty to cure them of their disease instead of sentencing them to death?

Most civilized countries follow the line of reasoning that criminals who commit a crime on the spur of the moment are to be treated with comparative leniency. Other types of criminals as well can hope, on the same line of reasoning, to receive comparatively good treatment. Should decapitation be prescribed as the cure for a headache?

Some people argue that if criminals who commit serious offences are not given capital punishment, they will have to be sentenced to life imprisonment, because few countries have the facilities to cure them of their mental disease. But such a decision may cause overcrowding in the prisons. Is it possible for the state to provide so many people with food and clothing? Rather I would ask, “Why should such criminals live off the state at all?” The state will have to see to it that it receives suitable work from them. And after the completion of their sentence, the state should sincerely make arrangements to find them employment so that they will be able to earn an honest living.

A prison should therefore be just like a reform school, and the superintendent should be a teacher who is trained in psychology and who has genuine love for society. Hence a jailer should possess no less ability than a judge. To

appoint a person to this post on the basis of a degree he or she has earned from some university or according to his or her capacity to please a superior, would be most detrimental. If those charged with antisocial activities and sentenced to prison experience daily injustices, feel a lack of open-heartedness from others, or receive less food and poorer-quality food than that sanctioned by the government, their criminal tendencies and maliciousness will develop and manifest all the more.

In this context yet another thought comes to mind. If a criminal is imprisoned for a serious crime, what will happen to his or her dependents? They will still have to somehow go on living. The boys of the family may join a gang of pickpockets and the girls may take to prostitution. In other words, by trying to punish a single criminal, ten more criminals may be created. Thus when sentencing a criminal, one

will have to take into consideration the financial condition of the members of his or her family, and the state will have to provide them with the means to earn an honest living.

If the judicial system is to be totally accessible to the public, ordinary people will have to be able to afford it. Therefore one of the most important things to do is to increase the number of judges.

It is true more or less everywhere in the world that judges, due to pressure of work, are often compelled to adjourn cases. I do not completely oppose the practice of adjournment, because at times an adjournment can be advantageous to innocent people. But it can be of equal value to criminals who get the opportunity to tamper with evidence, to influence witnesses and to find false witnesses. This cannot be denied. Experienced judges know

if and when it is necessary to adjourn a case in the interests of the public, but if the public interest is not served by this measure, no judge in all conscience should adjourn a case simply due to pressure of work. It is therefore essential to increase the number of judges.

Increasing the number of judges is not, however, an easy matter. It requires a thorough examination and careful selection of candidates. Relatively simple and ordinary cases can even be entrusted to responsible citizens. To deal with such cases it is not a bad idea to employ honorary magistrates. However, these honorary magistrates will also have to exhibit a highly-developed sense of responsibility at the time of discharging their duties. In countries where they are selected from among business people who have made a quick fortune or from among known sycophants, they will be mere liabilities to the people. I once heard a story about an ever-

so-learned judge who delivered judgements for and against defendants according to the nostril his clerk used to inhale snuff. Needless to say, whoever passed sufficient money to the clerk would win the case. As members of a civilized society in the twentieth century, we would like to see such an occurrence as a story from the past, not as a feature of modern life.

The Need for a Spiritual Ideal

The proverb "Prevention is better than cure" may be applied to all aspects of life. It is undeniable that, when we see the variety and seriousness of crimes increasing with the so-called advancement of civilization, it becomes necessary for crime-prevention policies to be given greater importance than remedial action. Civilized people today should be more interested in preventing base criminal propensities from arising in human beings in the

first place, than in taking corrective measures to cure criminals' mental diseases.

"Good" or "bad", "virtue" or "vice" from the worldly standpoint not withstanding, people act in order to attain happiness. We judge people's actions as "good" and "bad", "virtue" and "vice", only after evaluating those actions in terms of a goal and steps to reach that goal.

It is true that the majority of people are not born dishonest. Although there are differences among people insofar as their goals and their efforts to reach their goals – differences caused by defects in their bodies' various glands – I do not believe that this situation cannot be corrected through collective effort. If one's goal is a pure and pervasive one, then the defects in the process of attaining the goal can never transform a person into a sub-human creature. And if these efforts are in

harmony with people's psychology, this will be extremely beneficial. As a result many people will harmonize the rhythm of their diverse ideas and ideologies and progress together, thereby gradually transforming the inherent individualism and disparity of social life into one symphonic chord, one unified rhythm, which will become the genuine prototype of a healthy human society.

This idea of oneness is fundamentally a spiritual idea. Individually and collectively human beings will have to accept the Supreme and the path to realize the Supreme as the highest truth, and this will have to be recognized as the highest goal of human life. As long as human beings do not do so, the human race will find it impossible to implement a sound, well-thought-out plan of action for social progress. No penal or social code, no matter how well-planned, can liberate society. Without a spiritual

ideal, no social, economic, moral, cultural or political policy or programme can bring humanity to the path of peace. The sooner humanity understands this fundamental truth, the better.

Virtue and vice are both distortions of the mind. That which may be considered good in one particular temporal, spatial or personal environment may be considered bad in another. A country generally bases its penal code on the concept of virtue and vice which prevails in that country, and the concept of virtue and vice in turn is based on accepted religious doctrines. In my opinion virtue is that which helps to expand the mind, by whose assistance the universe increasingly becomes an integral part of oneself, and vice is that which makes the mind narrow and selfish. And the realm to which the mind of a person engaged in virtuous activities travels, is

heaven, and the realm where the mind of a sinner races about in a wild frenzy, is hell.
I do not see any reason to discuss the ideas contained in the various religious scriptures.

A Universal Penal Code

Finally, it is my sincere belief that, except for those social problems which are caused by geographical factors, the solution to all complex social problems may be found by implementing a universal penal code, one which is applicable to all humanity. It is not desirable for different laws to bind different peoples, countries or communities. All human beings laugh when they are happy, cry when they are sad and mourn when they feel despair, and all need food, clothing and housing; so why should people be separated from each other by artificial distinctions?

The constitution of the world should be drafted by a global organization recognized by the people, otherwise the possibility exists that at any moment a minority in a country might be persecuted. Everyone knows that when a revolutionary is victorious in the political struggle of a country, he or she will be considered a patriot, and when a revolutionary is defeated, he or she will face death and be branded as a traitor despite his or her innocence. In nearly every country the law is based on the opinions of powerful people, and their autocratic style cannot be questioned. But is such a situation desirable? Does this not undermine civilization? That is why I contend that laws must be drafted by a global organization, and, further, that the supreme authority to judge or to try a person should be vested in that organization. If that global organization then refrains from interfering in the internal affairs of countries, powerless

groups or individuals will be forced to lead the lives of virtual slaves, in spite of written assurances that they are free.[6]

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Footnotes

(1) The ripus, or śaḋaripus (six enemies), are underlying mental weaknesses which cause immense harm to people. They are: káma (physical desire); krodha (anger); lobha (avarice); mada (vanity); moha (blind attachment or infatuation); and mátsarya (jealousy). –Trans.

(2) In the Dáyabhága system the heirs' right of inheritance is subject to the discretion of the father, who has the right to disinherit any of the heirs. –Trans.

(3) After the Suicide Act 1961 was passed by the British Parliament, it was no longer an offence to commit suicide under English law. –Trans.
(4) These books contain mainly stories and codes of conduct. (While they have all provided social and ethical guidance to Indian society in their respective periods, only the Rámáyańa and the Mahábhárata continue to be extremely popular today.) –Trans.
(5) The Sarda Act was intended to prevent the marriage of girls below the age of fourteen. –Trans.
(6) For further discussion on a global constitution, see "Requirements of an Ideal Constitution" in Volume 3. –Eds. [Footnote used in the *Prout in a Nutshell Volume 1 Part 2,* 1st edition, publication of this article.]

Various Occupations

That which keeps something alive is said to be its vrtti [occupation]. The [[pabula]] on which the mind depends for its existence and development, or the objects on which the mind ideates, are one's mental occupation. The subtlest feeling a person can experience, which fills the mind with bliss, can be said to be one's spiritual occupation. In the same way there are various physical occupations which preserve one's physical existence and maintain the body. A means which one adopts to stay alive in the physical sphere is called an occupation; for example, one may be a doctor, a teacher, a businessman, etc.

It requires very little thought to realize that the different occupations create divisions between human beings. As a result people who lack high ideals usually form groups. The psychological reason is that the people's feelings are shaped by the nature of their occupation. And these feelings together with the identical nature of the people's mental occupations encourage the formation of groups. No matter how intense their professional jealousy or rivalry, a lawyer will seek out the company of another lawyer, a soldier that of another soldier, a doctor that of another doctor, and a renunciant that of another renunciant.

A detailed analysis of human psychology will clearly reveal that because psychic pabula are connected to matter due to the need to preserve physical existence, they are strongly influenced by matter. However, if a person has

high ideals, his or her materialistic ideation will be transformed into psychic ideation which in turn will develop a spiritual quality. One will thus acquire the capacity to rise above group [groupist] psychology.[1] But due to an absence of spiritual idealism and universal outlook, some of those engaged in different occupations become exploiters instead of assets to society. They completely ignore the fact that their individual or group interests are not separate from, but are a part of, the collective interest.

Lawyers

Let us start by discussing lawyers. I do not belong to a particularly fastidious or orthodox section of society. The popular allegation that lawyers earn their living by deceiving others and by encouraging litigation is, according to my understanding, not totally correct. But is this frequently-made allegation totally false?

Although it cannot be proved conclusively, we can say that in general most lawyers would like disputes in society to continue.

After the abolition of the zamindary system in a certain state of India, a lawyer complained to me, “Before the abolition of the zamindary system, there were constant lawsuits between one zamindar and another as well as between a zamindar and the people under his jurisdiction, and we used to earn money from this. But now the people who used to be under the jurisdiction of a zamindar do not have to come to court, and the number of civil and criminal cases has declined.” Just imagine! The good lawyer said this because he was concerned about his livelihood. In his personal life he was extremely honest and peace-loving, but the nature of his profession encouraged him to support disturbances, feuds and murder.

Though they understand the magnitude of their clients' crimes, competent lawyers, due solely to financial greed, use their intelligence and clever arguments to get criminals honourably acquitted. Such actions certainly do not help to preserve the purity of society. Are not those who lead society into the quagmire of sin in order to further their individual interest and for financial gain as guilty as criminals? If, in the eyes of the law, associating with evil people is regarded as an evil, the attempt to help criminals avoid corrective measures (I do not like to use the term "penal system" because I am not ready to accept at all that one human being has the right to penalize another) is most certainly an antisocial action.

There is yet another and more serious consideration in regard to this sort of conduct. The process of passing a judgement does not end when a criminal is released from the corrective

system. Sometimes criminal leaders derive sadistic satisfaction from seeing innocent people victimized. Cunning lawyers, when they become directly responsible for the victimization of innocent people, definitely commit a greater crime than criminals.

In spite of all this, I do believe that lawyers are necessary and have an extremely important role to play in society. Common people often cannot express themselves coherently. During a trial a frightened, nervous person sometimes behaves in such a way that his or her facial expressions arouse suspicion in the mind of the judge, which in turn influences the judgement. It is indisputable that lawyers are needed to protect common people from such dangerous situations. Apart from saving the innocent, lawyers can and do help to save criminals from unjustifiably harsh sentences which stem from prejudice or strong bias.

If supporting the guilty is an antisocial activity, is it not antisocial to appeal for leniency on behalf of the guilty? In my opinion, no. It is a lawyer's duty to see that a person is not severely punished for a small crime. It is the lawyer, and not the public, who should clearly explain to the judge the sort of circumstantial pressure that forced a criminal to commit a crime and the extent to which the criminal was responsible (or not responsible) for the creation of these circumstances. Considering that criminals are human beings and helpless during their trials, it is certainly not a crime to provide them with proper representation. That is why I do consider it an injustice to call lawyers social parasites. They are an indispensable group of intellectuals in society.

Although I do not doubt their intentions, I do feel that those who advocate the arbitration

and panchayat [village council] systems in order to reduce the cost of lawyers, should not entrust the functioning of the judicial system to the whims of an individual or a particular group. The subtle intelligence that is required in judicial procedures cannot generally be found among the majority of members of arbitral bodies or the leaders of village councils. If the selection of those on arbitral bodies and village councils is entrusted to experienced judges, it may be possible to hope for good judgements from them, but it may also turn out that those selected, despite their integrity and sincerity, pass a wrong judgement at any moment due to insufficient or incorrect knowledge of the law. Such mistakes are not normally expected from lawyers. If somebody wants to extensively implement the arbitration and village council systems in order to teach the members of the legal profession a lesson, he or she will have to agree that, for the sake of public welfare, the

members of such bodies should be selected, not elected. Of course only lawyers should be eligible for selection. Such an approach is not bad.

There was a time when lawyers had both prestige and money, but today they are on the verge of losing both. Many lawyers who have little work start giving fiery lectures from political platforms. I am not suggesting that none of them are dedicated to social service. Still, most of them do not aim to serve their country but simply to solve their personal problems. They think, "It would be good if I could further my political ambition. One day I may be elected a member of parliament or even become a minister. If this does not happen it does not matter, because my work situation will still improve due to the political support of my party." Today educated people can easily understand the motives behind their fiery

lectures. Very little investigation is required to reveal that in democratic countries politics is full of lawyers who were unable to secure briefs. No other profession than this has so much scope to exploit people in the name of public service.

But why is this so? Are they alone responsible for their deceitfulness and mental degradation? Certainly not. I do not blame them in the slightest. In order to obtain their basic necessities, poor intellectuals use these kinds of psychic means instead of stealing or committing armed robbery.

The implementation of various economic-development projects should be increased, and the number of lawyers should be reduced. In the field of education, students should give most importance to the study of science and technology, followed by commerce and then the arts. Only talented arts students should be given

the opportunity to pursue higher studies in the arts. A small percentage of these students should be encouraged to study law, provided they can demonstrate proficiency in sociology, civics, political science and logic. It is not at all desirable to encourage immorality by providing unlimited opportunities for students to study law, thus overcrowding the profession.

Doctors

Shatamárii bhavet vaedyah sahasramárii cikitsakah ["If one kills a hundred people, one may qualify as a quack, but if one kills a thousand people, one can qualify to be a doctor"]. It is both amusing and infuriating, yet it is true. Like an old barber, a young doctor cannot be trusted. But this is not the end of the matter. It is possible to earn the name shatamárii [one who has killed a hundred people] or sahasramárii [one who has killed a

thousand people] by killing mice or guinea pigs in laboratory experiments, but is it not tragic if the killing continues after one has qualified as a doctor?

No matter what country you belong to, tell me honestly, how many doctors can you really trust and respect? Among the doctors you know, you may believe in one or two at the most, but those who have won your faith may or may not command your respect. In other words, the doctors whom you believe in, who can cure a patient, are not accessible because they cost too much. In such circumstances your confidence in the ability of doctors remains intact, but you cannot consider them as friends; nor do you have any real proof of their humanity, hence you cannot give them your respect either.

Moreover, the medical profession as such has more to do with social service than with

professionalism. Social service is the main aim of the medical profession. But then social workers cannot live on air, so they have to accept some money for their livelihood from the government, autonomous bodies, public institutions or ordinary people: in short, from those they serve. To be a doctor may appear to be a way of earning a living to an unemployed person, but it cannot be categorized as a business under any circumstances. A helpless person, no matter how great his or her financial, social or intellectual capacity, considers a doctor to be a ray of light in the darkness or a lifeboat which can save him or her from drowning.

Of all the doctors you have come across, how many are idealistic and dutiful? If you visit a doctor, he or she will prescribe strong medicines for a light illness. This will inevitably be the case if he or she owns his or her own dispensary. But the same will be the case if the

doctor operates a “chamber practice” out of his or her home; he or she will force some patent medicine down the patient’s throat. The doctor’s special “mixture” will also be prescribed as a matter of course. Here, of course, I am referring particularly to allopaths. The most disconcerting thing is that they frequently diagnose a case by guesswork. An examination of the blood, stool or urine often reveals that their diagnosis was totally wrong; yet the patient depends on the doctor’s guesswork and as a result is required to swallow medicine after medicine. Is this not deplorable? What a cruel joke that doctors do such things to helpless patients!

Methods of medical treatment:

Current methods of medical treatment can be roughly divided into three groups.

The most common method is to fight disease with strong pills and injections. Allopathy, ayurveda and hekemii [hakims][2] can be included in this group because they use strong medicines and also poison as a medicine, although their methods of diagnosis and remedies differ. In this method of treatment the selection of medicines involves great risk, because more emphasis is placed on the indications of the disease than on those of the patient, and because of the possibility of causing death.

The great danger in diagnosing illnesses and prescribing medicines according to the germs and diseases present in the body is that it is nearly impossible to arrive at a firm conclusion about the precise nature of germs. Whether diseases are caused by germs or germs are created from diseases which are caused by other factors is a matter of controversy.

The symptoms of one disease may be identical to those of another, and the remedy for one may prove to be completely ineffective or even harmful in the case of the other. Moreover, as poisons are used, they may seriously affect the vitality of the patient. Just imagine, if the doctor is incompetent or is completely motivated by a business mentality, what will the plight of the public be?

There was a time when diagnosing illnesses and prescribing medicines were not very difficult because diagnoses were based on three constituents of the body – air, bile and phlegm – with blood as a fourth constituent. But increased physical and glandular complexity has led to a corresponding increase in the number and complexity of diseases. So to what extent can this method of diagnosis be useful to a doctor? Is it not simply guesswork to prescribe

medicines for a particular disease when the medicine is prescribed for the disease but the disease is diagnosed according to the bodily constituents? If you mentioned this to an allopath, ayurvedic doctor or hakim he or she would probably hand over his or her stethoscope or mortar and pestle and reply, “Here you are, sir. You had better treat the disease yourself.” This, of course, is an angry remark. While I recognize that a lay person should not have the audacity to counsel a doctor, I must also point out that everyone has the right to consider the merits and demerits of a particular type of medical treatment.

The principles, application and philosophy of homoeopathy are completely different from the above medical treatments. Homoeopathy treats the symptoms of the patient, not the disease or its symptoms. So there is very little possibility of causing harm, even if the diagnosis

is not quite correct. A doctor with good powers of observation and a subtle sense of discrimination can easily prescribe remedies according to the patient's symptoms. Another speciality of homoeopathy is that medicines are administered in subtle doses, not in the form of strong tablets, and such doses quickly become active in the molecules of the patient's body as well as in his or her mental sphere.

The greatest difficulty with homoeopathy is that it is based upon the subtle intellect of the doctor, and to achieve such a degree of subtlety regular, sustained effort is absolutely essential. Yet homoeopathic treatment is generally quite slack, and slackness is particularly evident in the proficiency of homoeopaths. Anybody can become a homoeopath by studying a few books. No one will object. In most countries there are no proper regulations either.

Surgery and injections are not acceptable to homoeopathic philosophy, but in certain instances the need for surgery as well as injections cannot be denied. Nowadays of course surgery is gradually being incorporated into homoeopathy. This is definitely a positive development.

Naturopaths do not believe in using medicine. They think that it is possible to cure patients through the gifts of nature only – through earth, water, light, heat and air, together with a proper diet. I do not deny that this is possible, but it is also often difficult to gradually and completely attune the body to nature. People should recognize that medicine does not cure disease, rather nature cures disease with the help of the body's own healing power. Medicine only helps to accelerate the activity and speed of the healing process.

In cases where disease is caused by unnatural activity, I do not see the harm in using medicines to help nature. Just as earth, water and air are medicines, are not various types of medicines also prepared by selecting ingredients from nature? Of course precautions must be taken when using medicines to help the healing power of the body, to ensure that they do not cause physical side-effects or psychic disturbances. Where a person has not engaged in unnatural activity, he or she may still contract a disease due to pollution in the air, earth or water. In such cases is it possible to attune the body to nature? Furthermore, the diets and lotions prescribed by naturopaths are often very expensive and beyond the means of the poor.

Ápascavishvabheśajii ["Water is the universal remedy"]. I do not disagree with this assertion of the Rgveda. However, although I have a deep regard for various aspects of

hydropathy and naturopathy, I do not see any reason to support the view that all types of medicine and surgery are harmful. Biná cikitsáy yata lok mare tár cáite beshii lok cikitsáy mare ["More people die with medical treatment than without it"] – nor am I prepared to accept this view, because in the acute stage of an illness even very poor people get or try to get medical treatment. I do not think such views are worth commenting on.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the majority of those who die while under the care of doctors die due to incorrect diagnoses and wrong prescriptions. All medical systems can be equally faulted for wrong diagnoses; but as far as wrong prescriptions that lead to death, in my opinion more blame should fall on those who use heavy doses of medicine.

The welfare of the patient should be the main aim of the medical profession, regardless of the philosophical or logical ramifications of a particular system of medicine. Doctors may find it somewhat difficult to work with such a principle, because it is unreasonable to expect them to be experts in all the medical systems. In reality, it is highly unlikely. Nevertheless, what is not possible in a doctor's chambers may be possible in a hospital.

In the hospitals of some countries the welfare of the patient is given top priority and the patient is treated accordingly. Immediately after being admitted, he or she is thoroughly examined by an appropriate board of doctors who determine the most suitable system of medical treatment. In other words, if the patient's disease can be easily cured by allopathy, he or she will be treated by an allopath; if by homoeopathy, by a homoeopath; if

by naturopathy, by a naturopath; and so on. If various types of treatment are available, changing from one type to another will not be difficult in the event of the patient not responding to a particular type of treatment.

The healing power of nature: The healing power of nature cures disease; medicine only helps nature. The mind of the patient helps to activate the healing power of nature. If a doctor in whom the patient has complete faith prescribes water instead of medicine the patient will be quickly cured, but if the patient regards the doctor as a quack the disease will not be cured, even if the purest medicines known to medical science are prescribed and properly administered. It is obvious then that the disease is actually cured by the power of the mind, the medicine being secondary.

However, I do not support orthodox psychologists who believe that all diseases can be cured by psychological treatment, because psychological treatment does not work in all cases; it just cannot. Those who believe, as idealists do, that only the mind exists and not the five fundamental factors[3] (of such idealists Lenin said, “They believe that there is a mind but not a head”), argue that the mind is responsible for all diseases. But does mind alone determine human existence? Does not the mind, which becomes agitated when the physical body is pinched, depend on the physical body? Taking hashish, marijuana, opium or wine causes a peculiar change in the mind. This is but one proof of the mind’s dependence on the body and its nerves.

A disease can be mental or can be physical. Similarly, medicine may be mental or may be physical; hence it is most desirable and

productive if both kinds of medicine are administered simultaneously in all diseases, whether they are physical or mental. Those who only believe in psychological treatment for mental disease know from experience that such treatment will not permanently cure the disease and the patient will soon relapse. Only where, along with psychological treatment, guidance concerning diet, bathing and behaviour is given, and to normalize the diseased glands of the body medicines prepared from the five fundamental factors are prescribed, can the disease be permanently cured.

In the same way, if patients suffering from a physical disease are given proper medicine, food, light and air but at the same time are subjected to constant criticism and humiliation, it will be difficult for them to fully recover. Even though some people have everything they physically need, they become mentally

debilitated, like a worm-eaten, withered flower. So it is evident that patients suffering from a physical disease need proper psychological treatment and a congenial environment in order to maintain their mental health.

The conduct of doctors and nurses: The patients' faith is more important than medicine in curing a disease, but where does their faith come from? From the conduct of the doctors and nurses, who have to win their confidence and inspire them with faith. Labourers perform manual work in order to earn their livelihood; they therefore dig the ground without regard for the earth. The relationship between doctors and patients should not be like this. Doctors must use all the qualities of their minds to win over their patients. It will certainly not add to the glory of any country or government if doctors and nurses complain, "Because of the

tremendous pressure of our work, we have lost all our sympathy, tenderness and sweetness."

But to become mechanical due to the pressure of work, on the one hand; or on the other hand to show a lack of humanity by selling hospital medicines on the black market in collusion with dishonest traders, or by illegally using food, such as fruit and milk, allocated for patients; are certainly not the same thing. Can doctors and nurses involved in such activities defend themselves against the accusations of the public? Exasperated by such dishonest, exploitative bloodsuckers, the public often severely criticizes the government. However, in my opinion the government is in most cases not to blame. Of course it is quite a different matter if the government sanctions insufficient money to properly maintain hospitals, but in most cases this is not the problem.

In medical institutions where the public is made to suffer, you can be sure that improper dealings exist from top to bottom (that is, from the chief medical officer down to the orderlies and sweepers); there is an immoral association among these thieves, regardless of their rank. They are all experts in the art of exploitation – they all share the spoils. Needless to say, in such places neither the doctors nor the hospital can ever inspire faith or confidence in the minds of the patients. This is the reason that today, even after the lapse of half the twentieth century, I notice that in many countries people are still as afraid of hospitals as they are of prisons.

People try to keep out of the hands of doctors just as earnestly as they try to avoid the claws of a tiger. Doctors who operate "chamber practices" out of their homes we may be able to tolerate, but those who themselves dispense patent medicines never let a patient leave

without selling him or her ten or twenty rupees worth of medicine, whether he or she needs it or not. These words may seem harsh, but anybody who has had such an experience will agree with what I have said.

Our complaints are endless. In every sphere of society there is a terrifying conspiracy. Patients are completely helpless. When we discover deficiencies in those who have made it their life's work to cure patients of their diseases, we naturally become all the more offended and begin to complain bitterly. But while complaining we fail to notice all the difficulties that doctors and nurses have to face in their daily lives. If we discuss such matters not as patients but as human beings, then perhaps we might see that those against whom we have a long list of complaints have been forced by society, consciously or unconsciously, to get involved in antisocial activities.

Those doctors who continue to treat patients as their friends and serve society as genuine social workers while living in an antisocial environment deserve our deepest respect. But what should be done with those who are incapable of doing this, who are full of sin and can be described as antisocial bloodsuckers? According to criminology we may find among such doctors criminals due both to instinct and to poverty. To rectify them corrective measures will have to be taken, such as providing them with a proper education, imparting a proper ideology and creating a proper environment. A dishonest doctor or nurse is more harmful to society than an ordinary criminal, because such doctors and nurses not only harm society directly, they also add to social problems by not performing social service according to their capacity. Their problems should be seriously and

sympathetically considered and their difficulties should be immediately solved.

I once knew an extremely honest and capable doctor who suffered greatly due to lack of money during the last years of his life. While active he was a dedicated, exemplary social worker, but when he became physically incapacitated society failed to recognize this. Is it any wonder that such circumstances force doctors to become mercenary?

I have encountered some doctors such as this who did not exploit their patients. Not only did they not take fees from poor patients, sometimes they provided medicine free of charge as well. But some patients think, “If a doctor distributes free medicine, he or she must have an ulterior motive,” so they would rather not visit such doctors. Some of these doctors are forced to maintain their families by private

tuition. Perhaps that is why we hear many people say, “The medical profession is a business like any other. Can such a business prosper without doing anything wrong? It is impossible to run a business if one is totally honest.”

Let me recount an incident that occurred several years ago. In 1940 I went to a homoeopathic pharmacy. With me was a boy of twelve or thirteen, the younger brother of an acquaintance. I had gone there for some medicine for the boy. The doctor took pains to examine the boy properly, then prescribed some medicine. He said, “Please return with his medical report on Saturday afternoon.” I replied, “Will Saturday morning not do? On Saturday afternoon I will be going out of town; I will be going home.” Further discussion revealed that we came from the same district and our homes came under the jurisdiction of adjacent police

stations on opposite sides of a river. The doctor then asked me to return the medicine and said, "I am giving you another medicine." When I asked why he said, "Both medicines are good, but I give the first medicine to people I do not know because it takes a little longer to cure the patient, hence I sell more medicine. Sometimes I am requested to make house calls too. What can I do, sir? Character is the first casualty of want."

This incident is neither to the doctor's credit nor to that of society. The doctor is losing his character due to poverty, caused in turn by a defective social system – isn't this true?

Sociologists will agree that it is not desirable for those who are involved in saving lives to face financial difficulties. If in any country the people believe that they have more doctors than necessary, the study of medicine should be strictly supervised so that only

competent and talented students have the opportunity to become doctors. That way, by reducing the number of unwanted doctors, those who enter the medical profession will be able to earn sufficient money with the cooperation of society and the state. In the absence of want, there is no risk of their losing their character.

But what is the situation in the world today? How many countries can claim to have more doctors than they need? In most countries there is a shortage of capable doctors. And in those countries where there is little or no shortage of doctors, ordinary people are often unable to get medical help because of financial difficulties. As a result capable doctors also experience financial difficulties which compel them to become involved in antisocial activities.

To eliminate the financial difficulties faced by doctors, temporary arrangements can be

made. For example, young doctors who have financial difficulties can be sent from countries with surplus doctors to countries with insufficient doctors so that they can get the opportunity to earn a living and serve society. Education will be necessary to overcome attachment to a particular country.

Criminals are of many types and so are criminally-inclined doctors. As with criminals due to poverty, there is also no dearth of criminals due to instinct in the medical profession.[4] These monsters in the form of doctors (colloquially speaking, cámár ḍáktár [vile, low-class doctors]) are the scourge of society. Sometimes they behave so atrociously with helpless people – manipulating dying patients for the sake of money – that I really do not like to consider them as human beings. Such hellish creatures can be found in nearly every large or small city. Very strong measures should

be taken against them with the active cooperation of society, the state and socially-concerned doctors.

Once I heard about a doctor, standing by the bed of a poor, distressed patient, who said in an authoritarian way, “You must pay my fees at once. I won’t listen to any excuses.” A poor relative of the patient left the house in despair, borrowed money by giving an IOU (I owe you; Acknowledgement of debt), and paid the doctor’s bill. I doubt whether a country can be considered civilized if the strictest reform measures are not taken against such human demons.

I once saw with my own eyes a well-educated doctor snatch a bottle of medicine from the hand of a female patient who had offered twelve instead of fourteen annas for the medicine, saying, “Must I wait till you bring me

the two annas from your house? When I was studying in medical college, would the college authorities have allowed me to continue studying had I paid my monthly fees in arrears?" As she was an uneducated rural woman, she could not fully understand what he was saying. But with that humiliating rejection, she had to return home weeping without the bottle of medicine. Although this incident took place a long time ago, it remains indelibly etched on my mind.

Good and bad exist everywhere. But regrettably, among the multitudes of the "bad," the "good" are in danger of being lost. The harshness of reality becomes glaringly apparent if we consider the medical profession as a reflection of society. On the one hand there are good doctors sincerely serving poor patients on their own initiative, and on the other hand we may observe immature young doctors proudly

boasting to each other about their career prospects. Regrettable though these things may be, I do not feel that there is any reason to lose hope.

Countless complaints can be made against doctors and the medical profession. Although it would take a lot of space to list them all, let me briefly mention a few: patients have to settle for adulterated medicines unless they bribe the pharmacist; sweepers, orderlies and nurses do not take proper care of a patient's needs unless they are tipped; a patient writhing in pain may be rebuked instead of being given medicine; if one does not call the doctor at least once for a personal consultation so that that doctor can earn some extra money, one may be unable to secure a bed on one's next visit to the hospital; a medicine that is supposedly out of stock in the hospital can be illegally purchased in a nearby shop at an exorbitant price; without bribing the

doctor a sick patient will not be admitted to the hospital; during the compulsory medical examination for a new job, all the medical staff put out their hand for a bribe; the doctor in collusion with the optician fails many people in their eye tests so that they will have to buy glasses; hospital patients are served food which is cheaper and of poorer quality than what they are entitled to; milk and fruits reserved for patients are consumed by the hospital staff; spurious drugs and injections are administered to patients. Such grievances are endless. Some are extremely serious, involving accusations of such irresponsibility that it is difficult to believe that people actually have these experiences.

Usually the public blames the government for such lapses, but in my opinion, if anyone is to blame, it is the public itself. The government is not an individual who accepts bribes or encourages immorality. The government does

not support the distribution of spurious drugs. If the distribution of spurious drugs ever does get sanctioned by the government, it is due to the mistakes of immoral officials. They surrender their humanity to the rich out of greed for money. Dishonest business people are aware of their own guilt and are constantly troubled by it, but they receive encouragement from greedy and mentally-weak police and anti-corruption officials. Why not earn a hundred thousand rupees by paying a bribe of a thousand rupees! Most business people wait for the right opportunity with this type of outlook. For these reasons I do not blame the government for such immorality. Now, let us return to our topic.

The key to solving the medical problem is in the hands of the public. This is the actual truth of the matter. One may ask, “Why does the public not do something to rectify the situation?” Some maintain that these problems only occur

in underdeveloped countries and that the people there tolerate evil because they are unaware of their rights. But is this correct? In underdeveloped countries there are educated people who staunchly support the different political parties and who can provide the people with leadership. Although they cannot inspire the whole society, they are certainly able to solve some of the problems. So why do they not do so? The reason is perfectly simple. A large section of the upper stratum of society is involved in corrupt practices. That is why uneducated people do not have the courage to raise their voices in protest, prevent immorality and take corrective measures against the corrupt elements active in every sphere of society.

A large number of clerks, teachers, engineers, government officials and business people who comprise the so-called educated

section of society indulge in immorality and corruption in their respective professions. Their weak minds indirectly criticize injustice but cannot directly confront it. Thieves can criticize other thieves in a society of thieves, but they cannot offer suggestions in a society of honest people because their lips will quiver and their hearts will palpitate; the condition of corrupt educated people in the upper stratum of society in underdeveloped countries is similar. The Second World War has further complicated the situation.

The characters of such people have to be transformed and they will have to become honest, otherwise none of the evils in society will be eliminated, none of the problems will be solved.

So it is madness to hope that the efforts of the government alone will eliminate the

problems in the medical profession, as if by magic.

To turn people into real human beings is the burning issue today, the greatest challenge. There are very few people who can take the lead in this undertaking, this sacred endeavour. Today tormented souls look to the purodhás [spiritual vanguard] of society with great expectations.

Politicians cannot provide what is needed. During the last six thousand years of human history, they have failed at every step. Hence, it would be wise for them to resist the temptation to try and take the lead in any sphere of society.

Business People

Is the medical profession alone floundering in the quagmire of sin? No. Delve

into the recesses of any business person's mind and you will find, in most cases if not all, that the garbage of sin collected there has become utterly putrefied and decomposed and polluted his or her entire psychic environment. The situation has become so bad that in most parts of the world embarking on this profession is tantamount to becoming a refined criminal. I use the term "refined" because no matter what type of business a person may start, their success depends upon their skilful use of persuasive language.

Can a business be run honestly? Why not! Of course it can. But an honestly-run business cannot make one rich overnight. In ancient times, when the *varńáshrama* [caste] system was in vogue, managing a business honestly was considered to be the social dharma of Vaeshyas.[5] But today it is extremely difficult, if

not impossible, for people to run their businesses honestly.

Vaeshyas' means of earning a living are such that at any moment they may fall victim to greed and indulge in contemptible activities. So the vaeshyas of ancient times had the term sádhu [Sanskrit for "honest"] attached to their names to help them to keep the ideal of honesty constantly alive in their minds. They were known in society as Sádhu (which became Sáhu in Prákrta and finally Sáu or Sáo[6] today). History tells us that from ancient times vaeshyas have, by monopolizing trade, frequently degraded themselves and betrayed their humanity, and that since the Buddhist Age, they have accumulated most of the wealth in society.

It is worth noting that according to ancient social literature, sociologists and diplomats took a series of measures to save society from the

greed and excessive hoarding of the vaeshyas. In the first part of the Middle Ages the power of the government, which was controlled by kśatriyas, was used to launch various campaigns whenever and wherever necessary to limit the hoarding tendency of the vaeshyas.

Chanakya said that a business person who becomes extremely rich is harmful to the state. If a king finds that somebody has become extremely wealthy, he should reduce the person's wealth and property by imposing direct and indirect taxes on them. If he does not do this, the vaeshyas may destroy the structure of the government unless they can make it the tool of their exploitation. Chanakya also said that if the imposition of taxes fails to stop or control extremely wealthy vaeshyas, the king should poison them to death through a secret agent. These are indeed strong recommendations, but in that age of social darkness there was no

alternative. Vaeshyas received the good advice that their responsibility was to earn money and undertake charity, not to hoard wealth.

But the vaeshyas of other times and other countries were unable to fulfil the duties connected with their nature. Because the ignorant people of ancient times were more religious, the vaeshyas used to undertake a little charity in the hope of deriving some benefit in their next life. But today in this age of materialism, vaeshyas are not the slightest bit interested in undertaking charitable work in this life in the hope of gaining some benefit in their next life.

According to Indian social treatises, “Those who donate to others in this life are misers, and those who are misers are actually donors.” This ironic statement was made about hypocritical vaeshyas. “Those who donate to others in this

life are misers" means that those who give donations to others in this life have deposited something in their next life's account; that is, they have successfully arranged so as to maximize their accumulation. And "those who are misers are actually donors" means that misers when they die give up all their hard-earned wealth, because they have not deposited anything in their next life's account. But the vaeshyas of today are not to be charmed by such humour.

Regarding earning money and hoarding wealth, most vaeshyas today are pishácavats [ghouls]. In Sanskrit pisháca means "one who breaks the neck of an animal and then sucks out all the blood, leaving only the flesh and bones". In India it is said that it is extremely difficult to understand the nature of these bloodsucking pisháca vaeshyas – because when they drink water, even if it is already pure, they filter it; but

on other occasions they drink people's blood, which, even if it is not pure, they do not bother to filter! Sometimes they kick the heads of their customers, and sometimes they lick the soles of their feet.

Incidentally, the word vaeshyas actually means "those who produce through various occupations". But today the meaning has completely changed. Today vaeshyas means "those who profit by trading and broking without being directly involved in production". Where profit is the only objective, there is every possibility that all types of selfish and antisocial activities will flourish. In one sense the vaeshyas of developed countries are better than those of other countries because although they engage in activities which are detrimental to the welfare of the public, they generally prefer not to undertake activities which are harmful to public

health, due to either their own consciences or people's awareness of their rights.

If, after analysing the economic structure of society, I described vaeshyas from developed countries as polished devils, I would find it extremely difficult to find a suitable term for their counterparts in underdeveloped countries. Such vaeshyas are not satisfied with just sucking people's blood, they often devour their flesh and bones as well; then they beat drums made from the skins of their victims as they deliver religious and philosophical discourses, build temples and construct lodgings for pilgrims, and undertake various other activities. They criticize materialism and try to retard its progress not because they object to it philosophically or psychologically, but because in a materialistic system there is every possibility that their vested interests would be adversely affected. Although they support spirituality, they are not

motivated by spiritual sentiments. The fake spirituality they preach actually injects impotency into society. In their endeavours they are assisted by like-minded exploiters who trade in religion.

There is an unhealthy collusion between vaeshyas and those who trade in religion to try to prevent human beings from forcefully asserting their rights. They try to persuade people that exploitation, the sucking of blood, by vaeshyas, is not an outrage but a law of nature; that it is useless to try to bring about social welfare by establishing human rights. The exploited people should forget about the world and support those who trade in religion in order to enjoy unlimited happiness in an imaginary heaven.

Now, let us return to our previous subject. The vaeshyas of today have let loose the reins of

their greed. Perhaps they can hear the sound of their death-knell. Because they lack a spirit of sacrifice and are not prepared to undergo hardships in order to progress, the great majority of them are unable to find their path in life. They believe that their business will be short-lived, and like Abu Hussain [a fictitious character who became king for a day] they lack discrimination, plundering as much wealth as they can to satisfy their greed without caring about right or wrong.

Among these vicious vaeshyas there are some who project themselves as philanthropic politicians. They also devour the people, but they shed a few false tears. They too have not discovered any real meaning in life. Their only aim is to fool the public in order to prosper in business. They try to prevent class struggle by advocating non-violence and preaching utopian philosophies, although they realize full well that

if spirituality, whether or not it is practised in individual life, is not practised in at least an important section of collective life then it will be impossible to remove the economic disparity and exploitation of the vaeshyas without conflict.

Only the small number of good vaeshyas in whom humanism has begun to develop and who have discovered the meaning of life, should be eligible to guide and manage the material affairs of society. Some among them may say, “What I save, I lose. It is a sin to die rich.”

Business enterprises: Is there any way to escape from the uncontrolled propensities and ghoulish hunger of the vaeshyas? Some argue that all business enterprises should be directly controlled by the state so that people will be free from exploitation. Others argue that all businesses should be run by cooperatives so that

people will be able to control their own economic destiny. Still others argue that businesses should be owned by private enterprise, that the state should only indirectly control businesses, and that greedy exploiters should be controlled through legal means; or, if indirect state control is not possible, the state should curb the wealth of the vaeshyas by imposing high taxes. I prefer not to mention the views of those who directly support capitalism, because their opinions are not worth noting. They want the shortcomings in society to remain so that they can continue to exploit the situation.

The widespread nationalization of industry cannot be supported for a number of reasons. The two main reasons are as follows. First, if a state is completely dependent on its bureaucrats (it should be kept in mind that no matter what people say, bureaucrats will always play an important role in the structure of a

government, because without them the administration cannot function), it will not be possible to properly run all the large- and small-scale businesses and industries spread over the entire country. Officials are required not only to keep accounts, but also to supervise workers. Secondly, it is not possible for state-controlled industries to be as proficient either industrially or commercially as private enterprises which can make any product more cheaply and with greater efficiency than a state-controlled industry. Without the backing and preferential treatment of the state, state-controlled industries cannot compete with non-government enterprises.

The proposal to run all industrial and commercial enterprises as cooperatives is also unrealistic. This is because a cooperative enterprise is built with the collective labour and intelligence of a group of people who share a

common economic structure, have the same requirements, and have markets available nearby for the goods they produce (or purchase). Although an enterprise may be called a business venture and be run using the limited resources of its members, it cannot be called a cooperative unless these three factors are all present. It will not have the fundamental characteristics of a cooperative.

To run a business as a private enterprise under state control is worse than running a business that is completely nationalized, because it will not only suffer from the defects inherent in nationalization, it will also lead to the creation of a group of rich but vikśubdha [disgruntled] vaeshyas in society who in all likelihood will express anti-national sentiments and stoop to any means to re-establish their power. Indirect state control over industrial enterprises and attempts to prevent them from

increasing their profits are doomed to failure, because it will not be difficult for business people to deceive the government by falsifying their accounts with the collaboration of dishonest officials. In such a system businesses will not retain the same prices as when they were non-government private enterprises; they will increase their prices due to increased expenditure.

Most countries realize that only imposing high taxes will not be successful once uncontrolled commercial freedom has been granted to business people. In most countries today the revenue collected through sales tax, service tax, income tax, wealth tax, etc., is only a very small fraction of the total revenue that could be collected. Tax evaders are much more intelligent and skilful than those who collect taxes. They are also united by their mutual interests while tax collectors are not. This is

because tax collectors fight among themselves for a share of the spoils, remain divided over policies, and show a lack of mutual trust. Hence it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to curb the domination of vaeshyas by trying to force them to pay high taxes. Even if this became possible as a result of tremendous efforts, the common people would not really benefit.

In my opinion we should take a middle path in order to save society from the enormous greed of the vaeshyas. By middle path I do not mean compromising with them and partially tolerating their greed. What I mean is that whatever we do we should do so as to maintain the balance of society. It is inadvisable to act rashly or out of jealousy, because this may adversely affect some spheres of social life, thus undermining the good and honest aspects.

The production and distribution of food and clothing: The most essential things for self-preservation are first food and then clothing. So let us discuss the problems of food and clothing.

In most countries the distribution of food is controlled by business people, and in many countries they control not only the distribution but also the production of food. That is, business people who are farmers in name only own large areas of land legally in their own names or illegally in the names of others, while the farm labourers, peasants or sharecroppers who are the actual farmers, grow golden crops through their own labour and give most of each crop to their non-labouring masters. Almost everyone in the world today has in principle acknowledged that only genuine farmers should own arable land, and that no third party should come between them and the revenue department of the government. So it must be accepted that in

the production of food, the question of ownership by non-producing business people does not arise at all.

But those who are themselves farmers, that is, those who, in principle, can be called vaeshyas, is it proper for them to have individual ownership of land? No, certainly not. The amount of arable land one farmer is capable of farming is not very large, so if he or she owns a large amount of land, it will not be possible for him or her to efficiently arrange seeds, improved manure, irrigation, etc. Personal problems also sometimes arise resulting in seeds not being sown or harvests not being reaped on time. Hence, the land may remain uncultivated. Uncultivated land is a liability for the human race.

Land is also unnecessarily wasted by demarcating the boundaries of privately-owned

land. (Actually it is a complete waste of land to demarcate the boundaries of land where land is of the same level.)[7] It is also difficult to introduce improved methods of cultivation on small plots of privately-owned land. Because of this problem many countries, despite being educationally and intellectually developed, have not been able to introduce tractors, the latest technology and scientific systems in the field of agriculture. If anyone thinks that land should be owned by individual cultivators because they are deeply attached to their land, we may also argue that those who own land but do not work in the fields have and will continue to have a deep attachment to their land. Actually in this matter we should give more importance to collective welfare than to the sentiments of the individual.

In my opinion all the land in the entire universe is the common property of every

human being. A particular individual, group of individuals or state should only have the right to preserve and properly utilize a particular piece of land. No one should need to worry about the ownership of land.

The preservation and utilization of land should be the responsibility of the local government, which in turn should carry out its duty through producers' cooperatives composed of actual farmers. The disadvantages of private ownership will not manifest if the land is collectively owned in a cooperative system. The use of proper scientific methods will make it possible to increase crop production without much effort.

It is undesirable for business people to have the right to distribute food grains. Only consumers' cooperatives should have this right. As long as the production and distribution of

crops is controlled by vaeshyas rather than by cooperatives, it is absolutely impossible to stop hoarding, speculation, black marketing and adulteration in food markets. The slightest weakness in such matters will have extremely dangerous consequences. Such weakness is not at all desirable in those who love humanity and practise politics. It is completely immoral for food grains to lie in the warehouses of black marketeers and speculators to be eaten by rats while people die little by little of starvation.

Besides food and clothing, fuel may also be considered an essential commodity. Distributing fuel through business people has the same drawbacks as distributing food. Local consumers' cooperatives should have the sole right to distribute essential, though not all, varieties of clothing, and the essential fuels produced in their countries (wood is used in some places, and coal or oil in others) in any

given age. Producers' cooperatives should have the sole right to produce essential clothing and, as far as practicable, essential fuels. Where this is not possible (such as where the conditions and climate are unsuitable for spinning thread) the right to produce the associated raw or half-finished materials for a particular industry and to supply them to producers' cooperatives, should belong to the state government or local autonomous bodies and not to business people. At most, business people should have the right to produce and distribute non-essential foods and fuels, because then there is virtually no chance of their exploiting the common people by exerting undue pressure on them.

The production and distribution of other commodities: Business people should not be given the right to produce reading and writing materials or any commodities not classified as luxury items (such as razor blades,

washing soap, etc.) Only producers' cooperatives or the state government should have this right. These goods should, of course, be distributed through consumers' cooperatives. Business people may be permitted to produce and distribute commodities considered to be luxury items.

Business people should not have the right to produce materials for constructing houses (such as cement and metal products) that cannot be easily manufactured everywhere. Such materials should be manufactured directly by the state government or by large cooperatives which are supported by the state government. Distribution should be directly arranged by the state government or by state-controlled autonomous bodies. Business people should not be allowed to meddle in such matters at all because they will try to create artificial scarcity,

to increase the demand for commodities which are in limited supply.

On the subject of housing materials, I have observed that dishonest business people, in collusion with dishonest government officials, compel the owners of incomplete houses to buy cement, corrugated tiles, etc., from black marketeers by creating circumstantial pressure. Those who are socially aware and have had bitter experiences in such matters should carefully eliminate the cause of this problem.

As with construction materials, the manufacture of drugs is not safe in the hands of business people.

Out of their greed some people add flour, guŕer bátásá[8] or other things to milk and then demonstrate its thickness with a lactometer, ignoring the detrimental repercussions their

actions have on unsuspecting consumers, especially children and sick people. It is not desirable to entrust the production or distribution of any necessary item to criminals who betray society by adulterating medicines, pushing sick people little by little into the jaws of death.

The right to manufacture medicines should be entrusted to autonomous bodies which can distribute the medicines themselves or through consumers' cooperatives. If necessary, certain types of medicines may be manufactured by the state or central government, but it is preferable for them to be distributed by autonomous bodies or cooperatives.

The production and distribution of [non-essential] housing materials and non-essential

food items (such as sweets, betel, etc.) may remain in the hands of business people.

Business people should not have the right to manage banks, because past experience has shown that managers who are dishonest business people have seldom protected the hard-earned savings of ordinary depositors. Many have profited by illegally or recklessly investing the bank's money; their activities have also ruined many middle-class families. The number of middle-class people who have lost the money they were saving for their old age is not small.

The less private enterprise is provided with business opportunities and the more production and distribution is carried out through cooperatives[9] and autonomous bodies, the better. The less the government is involved with the public in the areas of production and

distribution the better its relationship with them will be, and the less power the central government has in these areas the better.

Trading: In the area of trade, state governments must have the right to take action against those involved in black marketeering, speculation, adulteration, illegal misappropriation and the creation of artificial scarcity, but broad-based autonomous bodies (such as district boards or municipal corporations) should also have sufficient power to act. This is because if ordinary people want to take action against a local offender they may have to register their complaint with an individual police officer, then with the police station, then with the sub-divisional administration and finally with the district administration, the entire process taking about six or nine months, and when they reach the state capital, they learn that such matters come

under the jurisdiction of the central government and not the state government. This type of situation is certainly not desirable. The state government must have the right to pass and enforce anti-corruption laws.

To eliminate dishonesty in business, free trade should be established throughout the world as far as possible and the speculative markets of all countries should be immediately closed down.

Actors

I do not believe that all singers, artists or actors who awaken the subtler faculties of mind in others by inspiring them through their art, are business people. (Here I am using the term "business" to describe the people's mental make-up. It is not correct to call artists who accept money for their own or their families'

basic requirements business people or business-minded.) However, the vast majority of artists (most of whom are actors) are one hundred ten per cent business-minded. My discussion here focuses on these artists.

The purpose of inspiring people through art is to illuminate the dark and lonely recesses of their minds, to remove their monotony and make their life joyful, at least for a little while. But this joyful experience is socially justified only when it spreads a sweet feeling of benevolence in all spheres of society. In other words, art should inspire the creation of sweet, benevolent sentiments and the continual reawakening of latent faculties.

Everyone will agree that this aim can only be achieved when there is a sweet relationship between the artist and the audience. It is not possible through business. Art cannot be

allowed to remain in the hands of those who exploit artistic endeavour for business purposes.

Today in most countries of the world those who are not business people or who do not exploit art for business purposes but are genuine artists or art lovers, face acute financial as well as other difficulties for the sake of art. Those who exploit art for business purposes gain name, fame and money and dominate social life. They are the heroes of the youth or the adored goddesses of the cinema-goers. Their pictures adorn living rooms and their autographs are preserved in collectors' albums. Sarasvatii [the goddess of art and knowledge] has to be liberated from her enslavement to Lakśmii [the goddess of wealth]. Ample opportunities have to be provided to talented artists, and the performances of those who exploit art for business purposes have to be

controlled. Speculating on theatrical or cinematic productions has to stop.

Some people maintain that the ownership and management of cinemas, theatres and all types of concert halls should be in the hands of artists' cooperatives. Although this sounds like a good idea, it does not merit our full support because born artists keep their minds engrossed in benevolent thoughts in order to inspire ordinary people, and thus tend to forget about the hard realities of life. They generally lack the practical intelligence needed to run a cooperative. In my opinion the right to own and manage cinemas, theatres and all types of concert halls should be in the hands of local autonomous bodies which are supported by the state government. However, artists should be completely free to select films and live performances and all other activities related to art.

The salaries of artists should depend upon their abilities and the needs of their families. A large percentage of the net profit from artistic events should be distributed among the artists as bonuses. Provision should also be made so that they receive pensions when they retire.

The youth of a country are attracted to artists; it is therefore the duty of society and the state to monitor these artists' ideals and character. Otherwise they may exert a harmful influence on young men and women who are the future hope of society. For this reason it is essential for artists to have impeccable conduct, a healthy lifestyle and strength of character. If those whom youths respect as ideal men and women possess an ideal character, the characters of those whom they influence will no doubt also be positively affected. In addition, ideal artists and actors who have a strong

character will be able to express their artistic brilliance more sweetly and completely. Characterless, drunken or greedy artists will be considered liabilities by their fans and society.

The nature of art is such that in order to develop it subtle intellect and appreciation as well as deep sensitivity is required. Thus, during that time that artists do not devote to their artistic efforts, they often feel compelled to express their subtle intellect, appreciation and deep sensitivity in a demeaning way. Due to this psychological tendency, we generally find that artists whose singing, dancing, acting or other artistic achievements earn the unstinting praise of hundreds of spectators express their subtle artistic power in quite opposite ways in private life through the pursuit of material gratification. Thus we hear obscene language from devotional singers and observe a strong worldly attachment in detached spiritual aspirants.

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Those who are fanatically sanctimonious in their youth become immoral lechers in middle age. Actors are no exception.

The only way to save oneself from this kind of psychological degradation is to keep one's mind constantly engaged in the thought of the Great and to always look upon the world with sweet, benevolent sentiments. Artists and actors must never forget this even for a moment because they have a great responsibility to society and an immeasurable influence over it.

Unlike in the past, people today do not want to establish separate theatrical societies for artists because of immoral conduct. Actors are now a part of society and this will continue. This is necessary in the greater interest of society.

Although actors are not fully accepted in Indian society today, in practice they are becoming or are in the process of becoming fully accepted. So under these circumstances strict vigilance should be kept over the purity of their individual conduct. They should not become the cause of a disease which invades the whole social body like a cancer. If actors and actresses fail to acquire a basic level of personal purity or are reluctant to acquire it, it will be the duty of society and the state to compel them to lead good lives by creating circumstantial pressure. No matter how talented they may be, immoral actors and actresses will have to be deprived of their right to exhibit their artistic talents, and sent to reform schools.

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Footnotes

(1) 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.]

(2) Ayurveda and hekemii are traditional Indian systems of medicine. –Trans.

(3) All matter is constituted of one or more of the five fundamental factors: the ethereal factor, the aerial factor, the luminous factor, the liquid factor and the solid factor. –Trans.

(4) For further discussion on criminals due both to poverty and to instinct, and on the other categories of criminals, see “Justice”. –Eds. [Footnote used in the *Prout in a Nutshell Volume 1 Part 2,* 1st edition, publication of this article.]

(5) “Vaeshyas” are members of the second-lowest caste in the Hindu caste system of India; vaeshyas are those with a capitalistic mentality. –Trans.

(6) Common surnames. –Trans.
(7) Demarcating land with a low mud wall, a foot or so wide, renders that much land unarable. –Trans.
(8) Bátásá are sweets in the form of small, lumpy balls – in this case made from guŕ (raw sugar, boiled sugar-cane juice). –Trans.
(9) For further discussion on cooperatives, see "Agrarian Revolution" in Volume 2, "Farmers' Cooperatives" in Volume 3, and "Cooperatives"

Prout in a nutshell
Part -3

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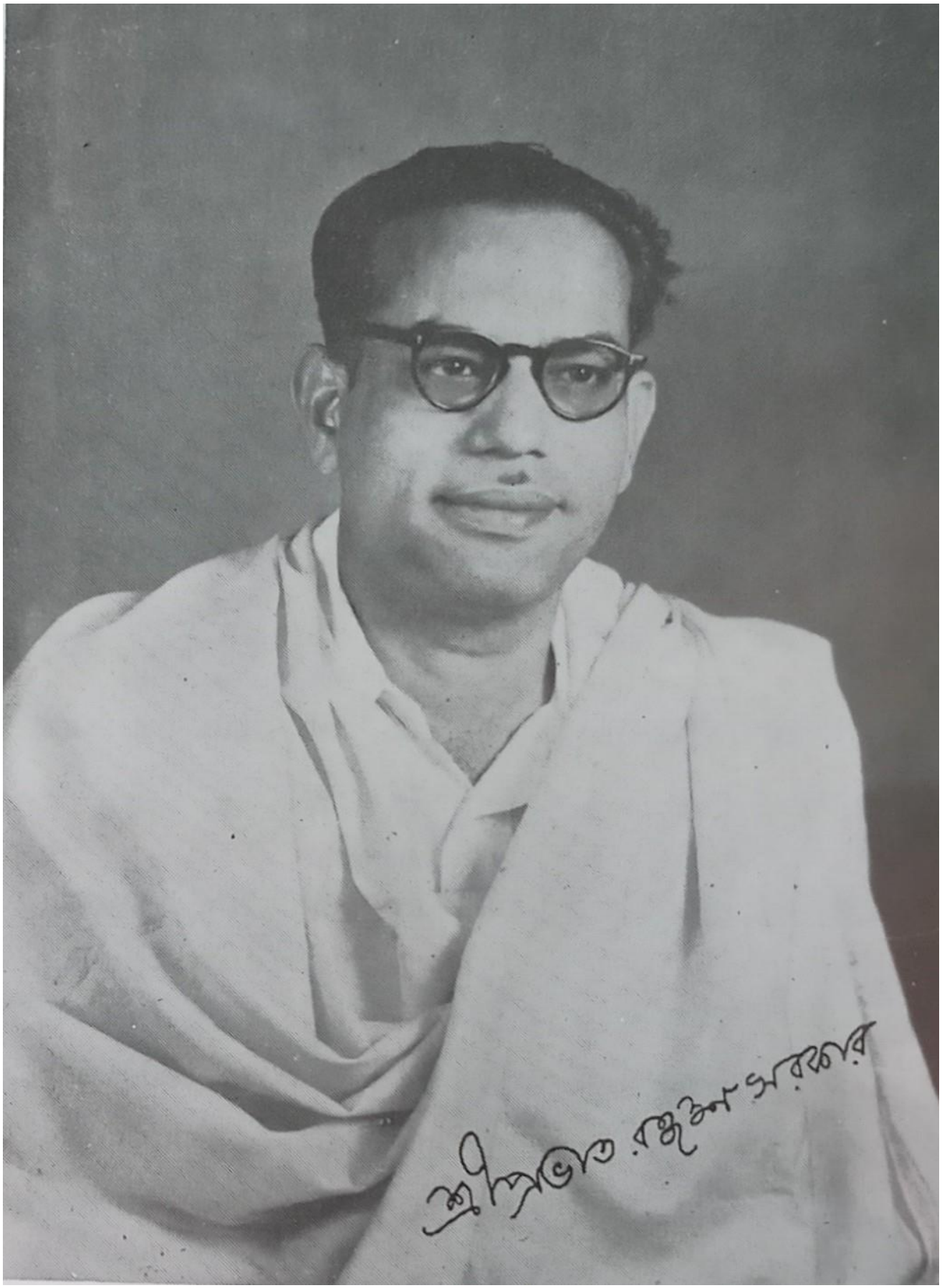

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

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ROMAN SAḾSKRTA 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 ঍ ৡ এ ঐ ও ঔ অং অঃ

अ आ इ ई उ ऊ ऋ ॠ ऌ ॡ ए ऐ ओ औ अं अः

a á i ii u ú r rr lr lrr e ae o ao aḿ ah

ক খ গ ঘ ঙ চ ছ জ ঝ ঞ

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क ख ग घ ङ च छ ज झ ञ

ka kha ga gha uṇa ca cha ja jha iṇa

ট ঠ ড ঢ ণ ত থ দ ধ ন

ट ठ ड ढ ण त थ द ध न

ta tha da dha na ta tha da dha na

প ফ ৰ ভ ম

प फ ब भ म

Pa pha ba bha ma

য র ল ব

य र ल व

ya ra la va

শ ষ স হ ক্ষ

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श ष स ह क्ष

sha śa sa ha kśa

অঁ ঞ ঋষি ছায়া জ্ঞান সংস্কৃত ততোऽহং

अँ ञ ऋषि छाया ज्ञान संस्कृत ततोऽहं

aṇ̃ jiṇ̃a rśi cháya jiṇ̃ána saṁskrta tato’haṁ

a á b c d ḍ e g h i j k l m ṁ n
ṅ ṇ̃ o p r s ś t ṭ 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 , Persian , and various other languages , but not in Samskrta .

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" ḍa " and " ḍha " , occurring in the middle of a word or at the end of a word , are pronounced " ŕ ” and “ ŕha " , respectively . Like " ya " , they are not independent letters . When the need arises in writing non - Saṁskrta words , " ŕ ” and “ ŕha " may be written .

Ten additional letters in Roman Saṁskrta, for writing non-Sanskrit words….

क़	ख़	ज़	ड़	ढ़	फ़	य़	ऱ	ॎ	ॐ
क़	ख़	ज़	ड़	ढ़	फ़	य़	ऱ	त्	ॐ
qua	qhua	za	ŕ	ŕha	fa	ya	lra	t	aṉ

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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 who support this principle as "Proutists".

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

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Social Justice

Different groups of people contribute to the building of society in different ways. This diversity carries a special significance for the social structure as a whole. If diversity had not existed, human society would not have advanced even as far as the Stone Age, let alone the present stage of civilization. So we have to impartially consider and support all the diverse ideas, forms and colours which are conducive to fostering personal growth and social

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development among human beings. If we fail to do so, that section of society which has been built around a particular idea, form or colour will wither and die. I direct this not only to those who think deeply about social welfare, but to all members of society, to impress upon them that no one, through their thoughts, words or actions, should ever condone injustice.

If any physical, psychic, social, moral or spiritual weakness becomes apparent in a particular activity or in any sphere of individual or social life, it is the duty of the other members of society to eradicate that weakness with all the sweetness of their hearts. However, due to a lack of genuine humanism or spiritual outlook, people do just the opposite. The moment opportunists discover a weakness in somebody, they exploit that weakness and devour all the vitality of the person. They even consider it a weakness on their part if they reflect on the

sufferings and heartaches of those who are weak.

The Status of Women

As in the societies of most other species, in human society also females are physically weaker than males. Because their nervous systems are weaker, their minds are also slightly weak. Nevertheless women have no less value in human society than men. Selfish men, however, have disregarded the value of women; they have taken full advantage, and are continuing to take full advantage, of their weakness. Although men have publicly declared that women should be respected as the mothers of society, they have actually relegated them to the status of domestic cattle and sheep.

In every sphere of life men have either substantially limited the rights of women, or

made the ability of women to exercise their rights subject to the whims and caprices of men. Such an attitude never existed among the primitive human beings who lived at the dawn of human history. Nor had primitive men conceived of the deceitful practice of establishing their supremacy by keeping women in bondage in the name of social purity. Even today among primitive races we do not find significant lack of magnanimity concerning the freedom of women.

By nature human beings are not wicked; rather most people are peace-loving and thus inclined towards personal purity. This inclination of the individual keeps the collective mind pure. Although women enjoy freedom in so-called underdeveloped races, we can observe that there is not even one per cent of the social purity in so-called developed races that there is among those races. When freedom is forcibly

curbed a hostile reaction is produced in the mind, and purity rapidly disappears as a result. This is one of the causes of the lack of social purity in the so-called developed societies of today. To try to camouflage this impurity with high-sounding rhetoric or ostentatious religious rituals cannot do any real good for society. Those who want to keep women subservient to men by holding out false hopes or the illusory prospect of heavenly enjoyment in the afterlife, fail to understand that although such false hopes or the lure of heaven may be sufficient to keep women passive or in servitude, no real good can ever come to human society from this. The reason is that if, due to dogma and superstition, half of society is bogged down in a state of inertia, the other half will undoubtedly find progress difficult carrying a heavy, inert burden. In individual life purity is equally necessary for both men and women, and to make this possible real spiritual vision is essential. As long as

injustices against either sex exist, purity is impossible.

Everyone should realize that to construct or preserve anything, there must be close cooperative action among the constituent parts. Human beings are not lifeless matter, so not only should all of their collective structures be based on cooperation, but that cooperation must be of a special type. It should not be based on the relation of master and servant, but on mutual cordiality. It should be a coordinated cooperation and not a subordinated one.

What sort of treatment have women received so far? It is very true that women have gradually lost their rights or freedom in certain cases due to lack of competence. There are those who think that, because of this, special abilities are the only criteria for having rights. Such people, however, actually want women to be

wageless slaves under the strict supervision of men. But is it merely due to their lack of competence that women have lost their rights? Have not the overflowing sentiments of their hearts also been partly responsible? Have not women, swayed by their emotions, ignored their own petty interests and gradually given everything – even the high social status that fascinates them – to their husbands, sons and brothers? Is it not reasonable to expect human beings (certainly human beings are not animals) to pay proper respect to such humility and large-heartedness? If a guest arrives unexpectedly, who volunteers to forgo a meal to feed the guest? Who deprives herself first when a delicious dish is prepared? Who leaves home to keep house for others, giving up her paternal property rights (regardless of what the law says)? Are not these observations applicable throughout most of the world? I do not say that men are ordinary human beings and that women

are angels; I have only focused on women as human beings and mentioned their special qualities. Does a husband, when his wife is ill, nurse her with as much care as she nurses him when he is ill?

If men wish to prevent helpless widows from remarrying by taking advantage of their sentimental female hearts, they convince those widows that they will be reunited with their late husbands after their deaths – so how can they consider remarrying? Shame on such men! Perhaps such tales may make women, already sentimental, even more so. The prospect of being reunited with the spirit of their deceased husband after their death may induce helpless widows to undertake rigorous lifelong penance, and to fast on every ekádashii [the eleventh day after each new moon and full moon]. Are not those who want to keep women slaves to

dogmatic ideas guilty of acting against the dictates of their consciences?

The very idea of heaven and hell is sheer nonsense anyway. Such stupid ideas thrived in the minds of those who popularized ancient myths, but they have no capacity to find a foundation in the solid ground of rationality. If, however, in order to humour such fools, I accept the existence of heaven and hell, I might ask, “If the spirit of a wicked husband goes to hell and grazes in the fields as a bull, should his virtuous wife also go to hell after her death, become a cow and start grazing beside him?”

Let us end this digression. The main point of the discussion is this: those who take advantage of people’s simplicity or ignorance are veritable demons in human form, and those who deceive people by exploiting their

sentiments of sacrifice are even worse than demons.

Freedom is attained through struggle. No one offers it on a platter, because freedom is not a gift; it is one's birthright. But as far as the rights which women have lost today, at least so it seems in most countries of the world, a proper socio-psycho-analysis shows, I should say, that women have not really lost their freedom; rather, they have trustingly placed their destiny in the hands of men. This is the plain truth. That is why I cannot but laugh when I see a certain type of snobbish lady, who pretends to be learned, entrust her children to the care of a maidservant or nurse, travel about in a car purchased by her husband, attend meetings, and make lengthy speeches on the freedom of women.

Actually, when there is no question of women's rights having been snatched away, there is no need for a movement styled on the trade-union movement. Whatever responsibility there may be in this regard, it is entirely that of men. If at all a movement is required, it must be implemented by men themselves. Today men should consider the needs of women and gradually restore to women the rights which women once entrusted to men out of feelings of helplessness or in response to their heartfelt sentiments.

It must always be remembered that freedom, or liberty, and license are not the same thing. The concept of women's freedom is good, but license should not be encouraged in the name of liberty. Giving license to either men or women could destroy the social structure in a short time. Hence those who are the most vocal in proposing the freedom of women must

carefully consider the form this proposed freedom shall take.

When we pay recognition to any simple truth, we should not be carried away by sentimentality. Only rationality based on humanism is acceptable. As children of nature, women should have the same access as men to light, air, earth and water. In fact, it is not a matter of granting rights to women, but rather a case of recognizing their rights. If, however, the recognition of women's rights is treated sentimentally,[1] it may result in great social disaster.

The law of inheritance: For example, take the right of inheritance. There are diverse views on the subject among different sections of society around the world. Some people favour women having the sole right of inheritance to the complete exclusion of men; others favour

equal distribution between men and women; still others give women only some tiny leftovers and in reality keep everything in men's hands. Behind all these systems there is clearly an attempt to maintain the influence and supremacy of one gender or the other, rather than to demonstrate rational judgement and humanitarian concern.

In fact, a final decision on this issue should be based on the fundamental principle that we will not deprive anyone; we will give equal opportunities to both men and women concerning the right of inheritance. At the same time we will enact laws to ensure the orderly administration and preservation of property in order to reduce the possibility of a breach of domestic peace.

In most countries society is patrilineal. The patrilineal system has some advantage over

the matrilineal one. There are two main advantages.

The first advantage stems from the fact that it is not as easy to determine the identity of the father as that of the mother, and in the absence of any direct blood relationship[2] the mother's affection for her children is generally greater than the father's. Under these circumstances the patrilineal system is much better, for it awakens in the father a proper sense of responsibility for his children and precludes the possibility of the children's identity remaining unknown or concealed. And the father is compelled by circumstantial pressure to take responsibility for bringing up his children; and therefore makes an effort to properly preserve the structure of the family. (Among less-developed creatures, fathers rarely take care of their offspring due to the absence of this sort of circumstantial pressure.)

The second advantage of the patrilineal system complements the first. Since the relationship between the father and the child is known, the mother naturally does not feel so very alone in rearing the child. The physical and mental structure of a woman is such that even though she may have all the requisite ability to take care of her children, it is extremely difficult for her to bring them up properly and to adequately provide for food, clothing, education and medical care all alone; at the same time she has to keep her children with her or near her, or else it becomes difficult for the children to survive. Therefore if men, instead of women, take the main responsibility for providing food and clothing, while women, after duly attending to the needs of the children, where possible or in cases of necessity earn money by working either at home or outside, neither the children nor society will be adversely affected in any way.

I do not support the supposed wisdom of those who advise women to spend their lives with ladles, [[tongs]] and spatulas, because this is unrealistic. Necessity often compels women to discard this convention. Such a system may suit a handful of rich or upper middle-class people, but it has no value for day-labourers or the poor. Many of those who loudly advocate equal rights and the freedom of women, in reality keep their women behind a purdah or covered with a burka. Even among such families I have noticed poor housewives going to the market with their husbands to buy and sell, or to the fields, farms or coal mines, voluntarily taking on light work. Evidently, they cannot afford to behave ostentatiously and live indolently behind a lace curtain.

However, there are people who, in the name of giving equal rights to women in all

spheres of life, want them to engage in heavy physical and mental labour which is unsuitable for them. Such an outlook is deplorable. It must be accepted that the physical bodies and nervous systems of women are not as strong as those of men, so men and women cannot work in identical areas. Apart from this, for physical reasons women cannot work in the same way every day of the month, and during pregnancy and the post-delivery period the ability to work strenuously is severely restricted. These points must not be overlooked.

There are many people who sentimentally think that if a few women are made ministers or members of parliament they will serve as shining examples of equal rights and the progress of women. But is this the correct attitude? Will it not be detrimental to society as a whole if rights are granted, or a principle of accelerating progress is adopted, at the expense

of competence? The recognition of rights is a legal matter as well as a collective psychological phenomenon, and the only way to expedite progress is to establish a progressive education system. A woman who becomes a minister or an ambassador in any country is not an index of the real status of the women in that country. To raise the standard of women in society is neither so easy nor so cheap.

Since rational analysis leads us to the conclusion that the patrilineal system is better than the matrilineal, the system of inheritance should be structured accordingly. Of course, at the time of drafting the law of inheritance, special precautions must be taken so that nothing is framed in the name of the patrilineal system that will make women slaves fighting for their very survival in the houses of their brothers or brothers-in-law. In other words, after recognizing the equal rights of women to

use family property as long as they live and to enjoy a lifelong income from such property, the law of inheritance should be based on the patrilineal system.

The dowry system: Many people regard the dowry system, which is followed in various countries today, as being unfair and unjust towards women. But actually this is not so. The question of justice or injustice to women [[does not arise in relation to the dowry system]].

The problem is primarily economic, although there are secondary causes as well. In some societies, where women do not earn money, they are considered an economic liability once they are married. At the time of marriage the parents of the groom therefore extract a substantial amount of money or goods from the parents of the bride in order to maintain the wife for the rest of her life. These

are the actual facts behind the dowry system. Similarly, in societies where men do not earn money, the parents of the bride receive a substantial dowry from the parents of the bridegroom. Of course a secondary cause of the dowry system arises when there is a disparity between the number of men and women in a particular country or section of society. So in fact, the parents of the bride give a dowry in a particular society only when the subsistence of the woman is dependent on the income of her husband, or where the number of men is less than the number of women. If it is mainly the women who earn the money or if the number of women is less than the number of men, the situation is reversed.

There are those who mistakenly think that the dowry system will cease once the equal rights of daughters to paternal property are recognized. However, it has been noticed that

even in societies where daughters are heirs to paternal property, the dowry system has gradually gained prominence for economic and other reasons. Generally very few daughters these days inherit alluring amounts of property from their parents, so it is completely unrealistic to expect that the parents of the groom will relinquish their claim to a dowry in the hope of receiving inherited property. A few daughters from rich or upper middle-class families inherit very substantial properties and therefore do not have any cause for worry, whether the dowry system exists or not. Even the most unattractive daughter of rich parents gets married very easily due to the power of money.

Social interaction: There are diverse views among those who formulate social codes concerning the free mixing of men and women. It does not require much logic to convince people that the final outcome of free mixing in

an undisciplined society is unhealthy. It is also true, however, that the absence of social interaction creates a suppressed longing, a special attraction or an unhealthy curiosity, as does the denial of other desires. This may lead to illicit mixing, which eventually undermines social purity. A system that thwarts social interaction is nothing but an attempt to suppress the mind. Where there is illicit mixing, the only harm done to men is that they degenerate morally, but the damage to women is far greater, because they may be cast out of society in disgrace. Thus on the one hand, men and women will have to be free to mix together socially, while on the other hand, a well-thought-out code of self-control will have to guide their social interaction.

Those who want to keep their daughters away from the influence of modernism, and are therefore reluctant to send them to school and

college, perhaps do not realize that long ago the waves of modernism intruded into the privacy of their homes without their knowledge. So their efforts to protect their daughters and themselves by following the custom of purdah and making women wear burkas, are entirely farcical.

The trend of the age is irresistible, for in this too there is dynamism. It is the duty of intelligent people to channelize the trend of the age towards the path of benevolence by applying their intellect. Neither the individual nor the society as a whole is capable of resisting the powerful spirit of the age. It knocks down anyone who tries to thwart it, and proceeds ahead with irresistible speed. Those knocked down and sprawled on the ground stare at it in utter helplessness, with dazed minds and vacant eyes, as it marches by.

Educated and Uneducated

Great injustices are also being perpetrated against so-called uneducated people, although there is no legal basis for this. There is, in fact, a class of self-styled scholars who disdainfully dismiss others as fools, although I do not understand what these people actually mean when they describe themselves as scholars. If, by education, they mean the study of numerous books, then I must say there are countless instances where persons who have only completed their primary education have read more books than many university graduates. Whom shall I then call educated? If the extent of one's knowledge is assessed by the number of degrees one possesses, a question still remains. How can one say that one has learned something when one has hurriedly crammed a few subjects just to pass one's examinations and has forgotten everything after a few months or a few

years? If education denotes refined taste or restrained behaviour, illiterate people may also possess these qualities. Then again, if education means that people have learned much, remembered much and put their knowledge to practical use in their lives, it can be argued that people may not need to attend school to achieve this. So I have to say that the vanity of self-styled scholars is totally meaningless.

In fact, human beings should not feel vanity about anything in this universe. This is even more true in the field of education than in other spheres of life. Some say, “Whom shall I mix with? Everyone here is a fool,” or “Well sir! There is not a single person here I can associate with,” or “I do not bother going to villages. What is the use? I cannot find anyone to talk to.” There are no grounds at all for such statements, only pure, unadulterated conceit.

Those who have learned a lot by reading books or by hearing lectures should remember when they talk to others, that those with whom they are talking may have far greater knowledge than they in some spheres. An ordinary farmer is not often treated with respect, but the details of rice cultivation are at his fingertips. A statistician who calculates the size of the rice crop may, on the other hand, readily believe that a chair can be made from "rice wood"! So I say that it is the height of foolishness to brag about the extent of one's knowledge. Rather, such vanity is the living symbol of educational bankruptcy.

Once an erudite Sanskrit scholar said to a boatman as they crossed a river, "You have not been able to answer even one of my philosophical questions. Half your life has gone in vain." In mid-stream, when the boat was about to sink, the boatman asked the scholar,

"Reverend sir, can you please lend me a hand?" The scholar replied, "But I don't know how to row." The boatman retorted, "Now your whole life is about to go in vain!"

Generally, so-called scholars cannot express an opinion about the soil composition of a field without first having made a detailed scientific analysis of it. But I have seen an ordinary farmer, Kshetranath Pal (who could not even see properly due to extreme old age), simply pick up a handful of earth and, without hesitation, describe the merits and demerits of the soil, and the various crops that could best be grown in it. Should I call this so-called uneducated man, Khetu Pal, a fool or a scholar? Is his practical knowledge, acquired by many years of hard-earned experience and through the practical application of those years of experience, totally worthless? Should not this knowledge also come under the heading of

education? It is most undesirable for the inherent intuition in human beings to be neglected in preference to theoretical knowledge or information memorized by rote.

Educated are those who have learned much, remembered much and made use of their knowledge in practical life. These virtues I call “education”. For such an education, mere knowledge of the alphabet is not very essential. It should, however, be accepted that literacy is extremely useful in recollecting what one has already learned.

In my opinion, it is a great mistake to think that refined behaviour represents education, for the true nature of a person is not limited to his or her external behaviour but is reflected in the extent to which he or she has developed his or her magnanimity of mind. If you consciously or unconsciously bump into someone and say, “Oh

sorry," without enquiring whether the person is hurt, that is enough to show one's refinement. Although this is a sign of what we call courtesy, it does not reflect genuine magnanimity of mind. The person's education will only be seen if he or she liberally applies a healing balm to the wound of the injured person – if the offender tries his or her utmost to mitigate the troubles of the injured person, even at his or her own expense. Then even the omission of the words "Oh sorry" will not matter.

Many things that are done in the name of education and refinement are simply hypocrisy. For example, instead of trying to remove the distress of their neighbours, some people merely ask, "What did you have with your rice today?" When the child replies, "Mummy only cooked spinach," the enquirer merely replies, "Oh what a pity! Your family must be in great difficulty." As they say "great difficulty" they emphasize the

words to give their fake concern a veneer of sympathy. This is hardly an indication of genuine social concern or magnanimity of mind.

The main feature of what, in the modern sense, we call education or civility is that one does not have to take on the burden of others' troubles; one only has to pay lip-service to them. If people actually do something constructive to alleviate the distress of others, this may hurt their own interests to some small extent; but if people merely take up the cause of others in parliament, they can accomplish two things at one time. First, they will not be put to any trouble themselves, and secondly, they can gain adulation very cheaply. Those who protest against such hypocrisy are extremely vulnerable to accusations of incompetence or of being the agents of vested interests. If hypocrites declare that others are fools, should we accept their pronouncements with bowed heads?

To be civilized means to give a refined form to everything, and it is inseparably connected with education. But if refinement takes second place and hypocritical behaviour becomes the primary means of expression, that cannot be called civilization or education. If a man who is invited to a dinner party only nibbles at the savouries, saying, “I am sorry, I cannot eat any more,” then goes home to devour a hearty meal and later brags that he eats very little, an impression of abstemiousness may be created in the minds of others, but there is a complete lack of straightforwardness in his behaviour. In modern society many aspects of civilization and education are of this sort.

A little while ago we were discussing how difficult it is to distinguish between the educated and the uneducated. Ordinary people wrongly consider that those who baffle the minds of

others with their affected erudition are educated. Such fakes are not necessarily university graduates. In fact, many of them try to project themselves as educated by using their wealth or official status. They open clubs or libraries to impress upon others that they should not be equated with the common people. They pretend to understand and know a lot, smile scholastically with closed eyes, and speak sparingly with reserve and gravity to ensure that they do not unwittingly expose themselves!

While on the subject I would like to add that such clubs may be acceptable under some circumstances. Members of a club want to enjoy open-hearted laughter and topics of mutual interest rather than be subjected to uncomfortable formalities. However, on principle I cannot fully support the idea of establishing clubs for particular linguistic groups. If, for example, a club is set up with this

intention on the basis of a common language for the sake of avoiding linguistic difficulties, it should not be opposed, but neither should this sort of trend be encouraged. Separate clubs may be formed by special groups of researchers such as doctors and lawyers for the cultivation of particular branches of knowledge. Through interaction and friendly discussion there can be an exchange of important ideas which may result in the rapid growth of a particular science or research project. However, there is at this time a class of self-styled scholars who want to establish separate clubs for themselves for no particular reason. Is there any altruistic motive behind their demand? None at all. The actual reason is that they feel that if they mix with the illiterate masses their social prestige will be undermined. If you investigate more deeply, you will generally find that in such “gentlemen’s clubs” immorality is rampant and wine flows in abundance. Should we, then, consider the

members of these clubs to be civilized, cultured and educated scholars while other people are uncivilized, uncultured and uneducated fools? Such silly nonsense propagated in the name of civilization cannot be allowed to continue.

We cannot build a strong society if we discriminate against a section of humanity by drawing imaginary lines of distinction between the educated and the uneducated. People must develop closer and closer links with each other. One heart must gain a warm and deep understanding of another heart.

To make people conscious of their rights in every sphere of life – social, economic, psychic and spiritual – is called [[jiṇána vistára; and to exercise these rights fully is called vijiṇána sádhaná.[3]]] Neglected people, who have remained ignorant of different branches of knowledge for whatever reason, should be given

maximum opportunities to develop. There should not be any discrimination as far as these rights are concerned.

Vested Interests

Vested interests have taken advantage of human ignorance and have penetrated deeply into every arena of society: social, economic, psychic and spiritual. They want to suck dry the entire vitality of humanity. Vested interests do not want the ignorant to see the light of wisdom or the downtrodden to climb up the social ladder; they do not want the hungry to eat proper meals or the superstitious to be freed from their dogmatic beliefs; and they do not want the human race to gain spiritual knowledge and a thorough understanding of science, and thus get the opportunity to progress towards the realm of effulgence.

In order to remove the imaginary line of demarcation between the educated and the uneducated – to eradicate this irrational distinction – the value of human beings must be recognized. Mundane knowledge and spiritual knowledge must be as free as light and air; and like the unhindered flow of a fountain, they must keep society in a dynamic state and be a continuous source of inspiration to one and all.

As regards learning versus ignorance, vested interests intentionally try to perpetuate ignorance among the exploited masses because this provides them with a good excuse to deny the value of human beings. In the economic field, such a hypocritical stand is even more conspicuous and much more despicable. When university graduates make use of their degrees to earn their livelihood, they tend to forget that physically-strong but illiterate people are making a similar use of such assets as they have,

that is, their capacity for manual labour. These educated people deprive so-called illiterates of their rights, human dignity and self-respect, and thereby develop a sense of superiority. Similarly, the rich, who inherit huge ancestral properties, accumulate vast amounts of wealth by deceiving others or amass great fortunes whether they invest capital or not, forget that, just like light, air and water, all the mundane resources of the universe are the common property of everyone, and that no property is the personal or paternal property of anyone.

All natural resources are meant to be used for collective welfare. No one has a monopoly over these resources. Some people argue, “When others by their manual labour earn money to provide themselves with food and clothing, why should I not be considered a member of the toiling masses when I earn by my intellectual labour?” In reply I will only say that by dint of

intellect you may acquire as much of the boundless wealth in the intellectual or psychic realms as you like. Nobody can object to this. But if the intellect is used to appropriate limited mundane resources such as houses, land, food, clothing, money, etc., will this not deprive hundreds of thousands of people of their basic necessities? You may certainly earn your living by using your intellect, but your salary should be commensurate with the needs of your family, plus sufficient extra to take care of future contingencies, and not a penny more.

It must always be remembered that the value of money lies in its proper use. If more money is accumulated than necessary, it loses its value due to lack of use. To the extent that you keep money idle and valueless, you become responsible for the injustices done to ragged, hungry people. You will have to give value to your accumulated money by utilizing it to

provide opportunities for others. So in my opinion, those who do not know how to make good use of money, which is a medium of exchange for mundane resources, are enemies of society. In them the feeling of collective movement, the real spirit of society, is conspicuously absent. They cannot establish human rights by shouting high-sounding slogans.

The sense of human value must be reflected in every action, great or small. And one of the motives, if not the only motive, behind such actions must be the acceptance of humanism in the socio-economic sphere.

Any society which accepts inequality, which wants to perpetuate that inequality by spreading false logic, is not a society worthy of the name. The standard-bearers of such false logic masquerade in the garb of righteousness

and try to convince the downtrodden members of society that their economic deprivations – their humiliations, their scarcity of food, clothing and medicine, their exposure to the extremes of heat and cold – are decreed by fate, as inevitable reactions to their past actions.

Some time ago I heard a millionaire speak at a meeting. He was arguing that in modern society the karmaváda [doctrine of action and reaction of the Giitá] should be more widely propagated, because he thought that if people could understand this doctrine of action properly, the countless shrivelled-up human beings languishing in the dustbins of society would no longer blame the capitalists for their miserable condition. They would accept their misfortune with equanimity. Just imagine what a dangerous idea this is! What a wonderful capitalistic argument! Perhaps some academic stooge on the payroll of these self-seeking

capitalists may even try to concoct a philosophy to support this proposition. God save humanity from such perverted philosophies!

People's physical longings are not satisfied until they come in contact with a truly great ideology. Till then, people's wolf-like hunger is insatiable, as if they are incessantly repeating, "I am hungry, I am hungry." Their jaws are always open, and the foolish people of this world resign themselves to their own fatalistic beliefs and fall into them. The ferocious wolf-pack devours their flesh and blood and casts away the unpalatable bones. Should we support this wolfish philosophy? The day-labourers, porters and gate-keepers around us who wear dirty rags and have fatigue etched on their faces are not considered human by those who are rolling in luxury.

It is a characteristic of vested interests that they never bother to think of anyone except themselves. They must eat and the rest of humanity only exists to be eaten. They want increasingly more objects for their gratification. Those who earn three thousand rupees a month think that this is an extremely meagre amount, but they never stop to consider the needs of those who earn a negligible thirty rupees a month.[4] A poor man has to pay his rent, maintain his family, educate his children, buy milk for his babies, and save something to put towards the cost of his daughter's marriage, all out of thirty rupees. Are these needs only applicable to the upper stratum of society? Are they not the minimum necessities of life? Rich people do not want to consider the needs of the poor, because if they do they will have to make some sacrifices. Where will their luxuries and comforts come from if hunger does not burn the bellies of the poor? Is it not a fine idea if the

daughters of the poor go on collecting cow dung forever, and their sons work like slaves in the houses of the rich for generations together? Is this not a fine arrangement? As for the high hopes of the poor, aren't they ridiculous? Aren't they out of touch with reality?

No two things in this world are identical, so I am not suggesting that everything should be recast in the same mould. However, for the sake of humanism, for the sake of social justice, equitable distribution of all the wealth of the universe is indispensable, and co-ownership of the world's resources is the birthright of every individual. Even the slightest attempt to deprive anyone of this right amounts to gross selfishness. As long as certain difficulties, both great and small, exist in the practical world, however, it will not be possible to grant perfectly equal opportunities to everybody in all instances. Apart from this, all people should be

granted equal rights and opportunities, except where it is necessary to inspire some people to undertake activities which will directly benefit society, or as a temporary reward for their distinguished contribution to society. In addition, every individual must have equal rights concerning things such as food, clothing, housing, education and medical care, which are absolutely essential for existence.

Some people argue, “The sufferings that people experience today due to lack of food and clothing are the results of misdeeds in their previous lives. Therefore we have no social responsibility for their suffering.” But I argue that on the contrary, if people do have to undergo torments in proportion to their original bad actions, then they may undergo their suffering in a different way in the psychic realm. Without being deprived of food and clothing or being impoverished due to social disparity,

people can just as easily atone for their past misdeeds through psychic suffering. Their psychic suffering, however, cannot necessarily be removed by bringing about social justice.

In countries where people have no difficulty arranging food, clothing or medical care, they have and will continue to have psychic clash. In such countries people have to endure the pain of humiliation. They cry at the deaths of their relatives and groan in agony due to excruciating ailments. While these sufferings are beyond the scope of social justice, the problem of individual or collective suffering due to lack of physical requirements can be easily solved by implementing a system of social justice and social equality. So it is useless to blame the past misdeeds or fate of others. Actually, blaming people's suffering on their past misdeeds is merely an argument used by vested interests to justify their position, because to admit that these

sufferings are the result of social injustices implies that everyone is responsible.

A little while ago I said that, because of certain difficulties, both great and small, it may not be possible to ensure the perfectly equal distribution of mundane resources, but what prevents us from at least working in this direction? What is the harm in reducing the gap between wages of thirty rupees and three thousand rupees per month? Of course this will certainly curtail the luxuries and comforts of those who earn three thousand rupees a month, but with that money quite a number of people will have the opportunity to live as human beings. This is where vested interests will perhaps object; this is where they may feel inconvenienced. But why? Is it not proper to provide every individual with the minimum wage necessary to maintain his or her family, plus twenty or twenty-five rupees extra to

reward his or her efficiency and sense of duty? This is the way justice can be applied in relation to people's competence and sense of responsibility.

Human beings are not yet looking towards the actual maladies that afflict society. Various occupational groups have formed societies and associations based solely on a sense of individual or group interest. Consequently they try to solve every social problem only from the perspective of their own interests. They do not want to help solve the problems of the lower echelons of society. Not even one per cent of the energy that is spent to pull people down from the top of society is utilized to elevate those at the bottom. This is the greatest tragedy.

Defective Approaches

It is incorrect to think that no one has ever individually considered this problem in the past. I am not referring here to the social philosophies of the last few hundred years; nor to the social revolutions of that period; nor to the social conscious of different thinkers of that period. In the Middle Ages some people thought deeply about solutions to the problem of social injustice, and a few of them even tried to do something. But neither am I referring to the philanthropic overtures made to the poor by some capitalists. I am referring to those who thought that it was virtuous to plunder the wealth of the capitalists and distribute it among those in need.

The Robin Hoods of the medieval period perhaps thought that this was the best way to eradicate social disparity. But this does not work, so it did not work.

In nearly every country of the world such Robin Hoods have emerged, but they have not been able to solve the problem of social injustice. The main reason is no one can survive on charity. Such an approach only creates a society of beggars. This type of greedy, indolent and inactive society promises even greater poverty in the future. Moreover, plundering the wealth of the rich does not destroy capitalism, because although robbery may reduce the assets of the capitalists, it does not destroy the seed of capitalism. The adventures of medieval heroes may excite some people today, but they cannot be a source of genuine inspiration. It may be possible to snatch away the wealth of the rich by violent means, making them paupers, but this will not permanently prevent them from again becoming rich. Violence begets violence. Hordes of demons who lose their wealth become greedy for human blood, and plot greater conspiracies in the future. The less intelligent thieves are

ultimately destroyed by them. The thieves suffer greater punishment at the hands of the exploiters than the exploiters suffer at the hands of the thieves.

Violence does not solve any problem, because whatever poisonous tendencies of the individual and collective minds may be destroyed by violence, the seeds of those tendencies remain embedded in the mind itself. When the pressure of circumstances is relaxed they may again sprout forth, creating even greater evil.

Then where does the solution to this problem lie? A change of heart is absolutely necessary, but such a change will never be possible through violent means. If someone who is tormented by incessant hunger does not express his or her hunger due to fear of the collective force of society or pretends to be free

from hunger, it does not mean that he or she has acquired the peace of mind that comes with not being hungry or will not engage in ruthless acts of violence to appease his or her hunger if he or she gets the opportunity.

Some people are of the opinion that only humanistic appeals and no other approach can effect a change of heart. Although the principles of such people may be high, in reality the soil of the earth is extremely hard. Their appeals to do good cannot easily gain support.

What are humanistic appeals, or satyágraha? They are simply a special means of using violence to create circumstantial pressure. We can, in fact, call them the intellectual's method of using violence. They are a way to make people eager to move along the path of human welfare without resorting to actual violence, relying on legal enforcement, or

becoming angry and adopting the path of bloodshed. Or, in simpler language, they are a way to compel people to move.

What is circumstantial pressure? Does it not aim to vibrate the individual or collective mind with the wave of collective welfare through the application of force? In fact, this approach is an attempt to touch the aspect of the human mind which is very tender and capable of responding to humanistic appeals. Thus, those who have finer sensibilities and rational judgement readily respond to humanistic appeals, or satyágraha.

This sort of appeal does not hold much value for those with crude minds. To vibrate the minds of such people it is, and will forever remain, necessary to influence their minds by giving them a rude shock. Otherwise one will have to wait indefinitely for the sensitive

violin[5] strings of some secret recess in their hard minds to be similarly vibrated by high-minded appeals to do good. And meanwhile the existence of the helpless, exploited people, on whose behalf these appeals are being made, will have been reduced to dust.

That is why no matter how much importance was given to the benevolence of the human mind by the Gandhian and Bhudan movements,[6] or how saintly their propounders may have been, selfish and mean-minded people will never accept their principles. The bleeding sores on the feet of marching protesters will never be able to soften the minds of ruthless exploiters. Gandhism may be an excellent utopian model, but in the harsh reality of the world it is absurd and self-righteous.

Yes, the human mind must be vibrated, and for this one cannot wait for the application

of the sentient force or humanistic appeals. Rather, all necessary steps must be taken to create circumstantial pressure. I do not consider it at all improper if exploiters are forced to follow the right path by circumstantial pressure in a totalitarian state or by legal compulsion in a democratic one. However, the primary objective is not simply to use any means available to create a vibration in the minds of exploiters. Proper moral training must also be imparted to keep the waves of that vibration alive, and there must be a ceaseless endeavour in individual and collective life to perpetuate the waves of that vibration. One must maintain one's zeal so that, with the passage of time, the momentum of the vibration does not slow down. Its vigour and vitality should not turn into stagnation. Staticity should not creep into the hidden corners of the human mind.

Those who depend solely on magnanimity of mind or on humanistic appeals are bound to fail. And those who aspire to establish communistic systems either through legal methods or at bayonet point without changing the hearts of the people, without implementing development programmes and without introducing moral and ideological education to reform people's bad habits, are also bound to fail. If we do not equate this communism, established at the cost of so much suffering, with robbery, then we must consider it rather worse than robbery, because it suppresses through brute force the natural life-urge for self-expression. It runs contrary to human nature to be suppressed like this. The suppressed human mind will revolt and find avenues to express itself. (If some people want to call this type of expression prativiplava [counter-revolution] they may, but I would not.) People do not like to lose their innate human qualities or spiritual

potential, to be reduced to an animal-like existence, only eating and procreating; they cannot live like that.

Yet in order to make people "magnanimous" and "virtuous" through the application of brute force, individual liberty has to be ruthlessly crushed. Total power has to be concentrated in the hands of a particular group or party, and under these circumstances there is no alternative but to deny one's special value as a human being. To recognize people's value would only invite trouble, because then people would have to be granted freedom to express their opinions, or at least the right to demonstrate that their opinions are beneficial for society. And if this is accepted, it will have to be indirectly accepted that it is unjust to suppress human beings through brute force. If this is conceded, then the so-called communism which took so much effort to establish would be

jeopardized as a result. Within a short time the group or party in whose hands the power was concentrated would be ousted by the collective psychic and spiritual efforts of the masses who had newly attained freedom.

That is why neither Gandhism, nor the so-called communism which is based on brute force, can bring about human welfare.

People will have to adopt a path where there is sufficient scope for humanism or for humanistic appeals to be made, and which at the same time allows for brute force as well as the application of other types of force if necessary.

Genuine Love for Humanity

To build something on the basis of humanism means to build something on the basis of real love for humanity. It is not possible

to build a genuine society, one which is truly dedicated to collective welfare, if its most intelligent and active members, or those who are more developed than ordinary people, constantly evaluate their contribution to society in terms of profit and loss. When love for humanity is the primary concern, the question of individual profit and loss becomes secondary. However, I cannot entirely dismiss the question of personal rewards, because if people incur losses their love for humanity may be affected. If one's personal interest suffers seriously, or if for one reason or other one's survival is threatened, one should, in a society based on mutual love, have the right to demand redressal. In a healthy society where the only binding ingredient is genuine love, how will it be possible for coercion or legal compulsion to manifest this love, the true expression of society?

I have already expressed my lack of confidence in the success of economic idealists and those who believe that the continual propagation of idealistic philosophies will create an ideal society. Nor can I support those who resort to violence to build society, because there is no doubt that those who are coerced into submission because of their helplessness (sometimes they are not even aware of their fault), will try to resort to violence and bloodshed in retaliation at any moment. In fact, it is the inherent nature of human beings to express suppressed propensities. If some people want to suppress the inherent nature of others, they will have to radically transform that inherent nature itself. The issue in question is based on this fundamental principle. Thus it is a complete waste of time to act on the basis of a short-term plan only.

It is natural for all living beings to search for a way to express themselves fully. Sometimes this expression takes the form of crude physical pleasure, and sometimes that of subtle psychic pleasure.

A little while ago I said that all crude objects of enjoyment are limited in nature, and thus their accumulation by any one individual is not desirable. Let everybody enjoy as much of the subtle psychic world as they can – let them accumulate as many psychic and spiritual resources as they want – but there must be provision for the application of force if needed to prevent any one individual from accumulating excessive physical resources. The application of physical force will, no doubt, deprive people of some of the wealth they have accumulated or decrease their opportunities to accumulate physical wealth in the future. But it is certainly not impossible, through proper education, to

transform people's desire for material pleasure into a desire for psychic pabula. (In fact, the desire for physical or psychic pabula "springs from innate psychic longings. The desires of the crude mind are easily satisfied." However, I object to calling the desires of the crude mind pure psychic longings.) This type of education is essential in society today.

Such an approach does not deny the world, as do impractical idealists, nor does it attempt to suppress the higher propensities of the human mind, as do materialists.

Unless people's propensities are directed towards subtle forms of expression, their minds tend to get enmeshed in thoughts of petty enjoyment. People who portray themselves as saviours of humanity and espouse high-sounding philosophies from public platforms at the tops of their voices, while at the same time

nourishing within themselves the worms of self-interest, can, in any weak moment, deceive the naive public. This is a perfectly natural thing for them to do. Those who want to build a society based on human welfare without first developing themselves fully through spiritual practices, will not only degrade themselves, they will also cause the degeneration of the whole of society. They will not even be able to trust the people with whom they are working. They may initially try to develop their own capacity in order to attain positions of leadership, but eventually their sole aim will be to dominate others instead of developing themselves. When they realize from bitter experience that it is not possible to utilize the society as a vehicle for establishing their group or party supremacy, or when the suppressed masses rise up and revolt, the evil tendency to suppress the people will certainly awaken in them.

The human mind does not want to be suppressed. It wants to find ways to express itself. The more ordinary people try to resist individual or group dictatorship, the more tyrants oppress ordinary people through violence. Finally, as a result, they do not make the slightest effort to become worthy leaders. Instead they concentrate all their efforts on misappropriating more and more power. The same people who earlier worked for social welfare ultimately come to depend totally on brute force. If any society overemphasizes brute force, the members of that society will start fighting each other and eventually become independent, self-styled autocrats. In such a society the last vestiges of morality will disappear and chaos will prevail.

Those who choose the middle course between morality and violence will not succeed either, unless they make intense efforts to

eliminate the scourge of meanness from their minds. They will eventually become like those who advocate the path of violence.

The endeavour to remove inferiority complexes from the mind leads human beings slowly but surely to the Supreme Entity and establishes them in universal humanism. Hence it will not do for those who are determined to solve the problems of humanity to accept inferior ideals; along with this they must also acquire the strength they need to implement their ideals. The active endeavour to acquire this strength is called sádhaná – the sádhaná of the Supreme. It should be borne in mind that no theory will ever bring people salvation. In fact, it is the inner strength gained from spiritual practices which helps to expand the individual mind. The tremendous force acquired from spiritual practices helps to bridge the gap between the harsh realities of human existence

and the supreme desideratum of human life. This is an eternal truth, applicable to all spheres of life – social, economic, psychic and spiritual.

A person who runs after petty objects of enjoyment to fulfil his or her personal desires lacks the spirit needed to unite humanity. To unite humanity one must love the divine element latent in every human being which is the reflection of the Supreme Entity. Love does not arise in the hearts of those who are not inspired by or not sympathetic to the lofty ideal of unqualified universalism. It is completely meaningless for people to try to do something constructive if they lack Cosmic ideation – if they have not learned how to accept the most magnanimous, universal, omniscient Supreme Entity as the object of their devotion – because it is an eternal truth that those who have not adopted such an outlook are bound to disappear

into oblivion after inflicting a great deal of harm upon themselves and society.

Like any other problem, great or small, there is only one way to solve economic problems, and that is through genuine love for humanity. This love will give people guidance; it will show them what to do and what not to do. It is not necessary to study great numbers of books or to rely upon those who speculate with the future of the silent masses. The only essential requirement is to look upon humanity with genuine sympathy.

Let me give a simple example. Those who are conservative, that is, who do not believe in violence, may argue that in the process of abolishing the zamindary [landlord] system or nationalizing large-scale industries society should pay adequate compensation for everything it acquires. Those who, on the other

hand, believe in violence, but do not believe in changing human hearts through spiritual practices and spiritual education, argue that the capitalists have plundered the wealth of society for so long that the question of compensation does not even arise. Those who have genuine love for humanity, however, cannot accept either of those viewpoints.

If large enterprises are acquired by paying compensation, the owners will have to be paid in instalments, which will take a long time. During this period the public will not get much benefit. Seen from this perspective, compensation is not a suitable solution. If, on the other hand, there is widespread confiscation of property, a large section of society may face economic deprivation, and as a result social balance may be lost. Not all those who own land or industry are healthy, able-bodied or young. Many of them are sick, invalids or elderly, and some are

widows and minors. If all their property is forcibly confiscated without compensation, what situation will they be in? Furthermore, not all property owners are rich. Many are poor or belong to the lower middle class. Even if the policy of compensation or exchanging one property for another of similar value is not accepted, those who cherish genuine love for humanity will take a sympathetic view of the plight of those who find themselves in difficulty due to nationalization, and will act accordingly. A monthly pension or a lump sum should be allocated to old people, invalids, children and destitute women. Opportunities to earn a decent livelihood must be provided to all those, young or middle-aged, who are able-bodied and healthy, if they have no alternative means of support. Such employment opportunities should take into consideration their abilities as well as their needs.

If a proprietor or an industrialist has invested all his capital in a large industrial enterprise, then after his assets are confiscated he or she should be employed in a similar profession according to his or her ability. If, out of vengeance, some powerful group or individual forces such a person to work breaking rocks or as a porter in a railway station, circumstantial pressure may compel him to resign himself to his fate. Those who have assumed power may derive some sort of sadistic satisfaction from this, but the people who are subjected to humiliation and torture and are forced into an occupation which they find demeaning will die a premature death.

We must not forget for a moment that even those who have continuously exploited others and suppressed their legitimate rights are human beings. The human family includes everyone. We have to move unitedly along the

path of welfare by helping everyone to rectify themselves and adapt. If we try to progress while holding on to a feeling of revenge towards those who committed mistakes in the past, we will be following a suicidal path.

Social Progress

Social progress is not and can never be achieved by individual effort. Some people lend their brains, others their hands, and others their legs. If we consider things carefully, to say that the legs are inferior and that the brain is superior, or that the brain has no value – that intellectuals are always exploiters and manual labourers are all that count – are both equally dangerous ways of thinking. The most important point to consider is who has utilized his or her ability and to what extent. Hanuman [the mighty monkey, a devotee of Rama in the mythological epic the Rámáyańa] fetched huge boulders to

build a bridge across the sea, while the squirrels collected small pebbles. Yet intrinsically both these actions have the same value. We have no right to question anybody's sincerity, nor can we scoff at it. We cannot give more appreciation to those who have not utilized their potentialities properly but have done more work than to those who have fully utilized their talents.

Days roll on. Empires, wealth and valorous human deeds ride on the wings of time, creating only brief flashes of brilliance. Against this panorama the efforts of common people, like those of the squirrels, do not receive recognition – they are like stones lost in the shadows of towering mountains. The leaders of society perform outstanding feats which are recorded in glowing letters in the annals of history. The students of later ages do research on them. But the common people, who carried the golden banners of these heroes, disappear into oblivion.

If we try to think of all of them, we will never finish. Is it possible to print everyone's obituaries in the newspaper? Is it possible to arrange commemoration services or to build shrines in memory of everybody? But in my opinion there is no use thinking about whether it is possible or not. Those who are magnanimous will openly recognize the greatness in the outstanding achievements of those who lived in the past, regardless of their intellect, education or rank. Those who through their sweat and blood provide vitality to human society do not need our approbation; but even so, why should we commit a social injustice by ignoring the work they have done, their karma sádhaná?

If the idea "The world belongs to the toiling masses" is accepted as the highest truth, the value of intellectual work will be denied, or, even if accepted, will be relegated to a secondary

position. We find poverty among intellectuals as well as among the toiling masses, hence we cannot give exclusive importance to the problems of either class. Rather, before trying to solve the problems of any class, we should first find out what the common economic and psychic needs of everybody are. Then, in a humanitarian manner, in a spirit of universal love, we should set about helping them to progress. We cannot declare that this world is the property of one social class just to satisfy the interests of a particular group.

People must make steady progress in the realms of intellect, art and entrepeneurial action, and this progress should be achieved through the heartfelt cooperation of all social classes. There must not be any discrimination on the basis of education or sex. It will not do to accept any type of social difference as an absolute system or a divine decree. If we accept

discrimination, one section of society will develop a superiority complex and another section an inferiority complex. Eventually, due to conflict between the superiority and inferiority complexes, the structure of society will disintegrate. An inferiority complex creates obstacles in the path of human progress, while a superiority complex makes people think that the other members of society are not part of their society. “They are inferior, low, stupid, superstitious fools. In fact, they should be beaten before they are spoken to!” As a result of this psychology a healthy social life is irretrievably lost, and along with this, the natural ties of affection between human beings break as people become estranged from each other.

Some of those who suffer from a superiority complex are intelligent, so they try to conceal their inner sentiments behind congenial external behaviour. But if the so-called

inferior people happen to speak a few strong words, the inflated egos of those people get punctured and their real nature stands exposed. It is impossible for them to accept the truth from those whom they have considered inferior. When their logic fails them they begin to use abusive language. They try to recover their lost dignity by cursing the poor for being poor, humiliating the unattractive for being ugly, castigating low-caste people for their low-caste status, and reproaching the young for their lack of experience. There is no need to waste space to show that this type of behaviour clearly betrays their intellectual bankruptcy.

There are some deep-rooted superstitions and prejudices among the older generation that must be eradicated in the greater interest of society, but the older generation does not want to accept this fact. In order to avoid accepting their just defeat they point to their long years of

experience. While nobody can deny the value of practical experience, we should remember that the past does not always repeat itself, that is, past experience is not always of much value in the present. Experience helps us to determine the relationship between cause and effect, but in the absence of far-sightedness that experience cannot be effectively utilized. With a change of scene, people must maintain a consistency between past experiences and probable future events when they determine future policies.

The younger generation usually has greater knowledge than the older generation of how circumstances will change in the future, because it is their nature to look ahead, and consequently they focus more attention on the future than their elders. I am not referring here to adolescent sentimentality, but to how far an understanding of the present momentum can help to prepare for the future. The

sentimentality of adolescents and very young adults is nothing but impetuosity. This impetuosity itself does not help in determining future policies. Nevertheless I cannot deny that those who are impetuous understand the nature of this impetuosity better than anybody else. This also gives them a greater right than anybody else to determine policies. How much can those who lie inert like a lump of clay understand of the significance of this impetuosity?

When the main aim is to keep formulating policies for social progress, experience cannot be the sole prerequisite for this work. Rather a combination of the past experiences of the older generation and the creative zeal of the young should determine the speed of social progress. We cannot afford to neglect either group. The human race must attain glory by giving due recognition and justice to all.

A society whose leaders have a strong tendency to denigrate others will suffer a great catastrophe. The tendency to look down upon others does not always result from a superiority complex. Many people treat others with contempt to hide their own ignorance. The superiority complex is harmful to society, and this treating others with contempt to hide one's ignorance is even more harmful. Everyone, irrespective of their education, intellectual attainment, external appearance, internal qualities, social status or age, must remember that those whom they consider inferior know more about many things than they do.[7] Although I have said this before, I will say it again: seventy-five per cent of the evils in society are the result of the injustices that people commit against each other.

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Footnotes

(1) The author defines “sentiment” as follows: “This running blindly without discrimination between the proper and the improper is called ‘sentiment’. One races after the idea that has come into one’s mind, like an unbridled horse, without considering its good or bad consequences. The horse may move along the right path, or it may fall into a chasm. One cannot be certain.” (“Geo-Sentiment” in The Liberation of Intellect: Neohumanism, 3rd ed., 1987) –Trans.

(2) Between father and child there is a blood relationship, but it is not a direct blood relationship; [[between mother and child there is a direct blood relationship because the

mother's]] body has actually nourished the child's body in the pre-natal state. –Trans.

(3) Jiṇána vistára: the expansion of knowledge. Vijiṇána sádhaná: Vijiṇána is normally translated "science", so a literal translation of vijiṇána sádhaná might be "the cultivation of science". The intended meaning of vijiṇána sádhaná seems to be "the fullest development of knowledge". –Trans.

(4) The monthly salary of a primary-school teacher or lower-division clerk in the late fifties and early sixties. –Trans.

(5) Literally viiṅá, similar to a sitar. –Trans.

(6) The Gandhian movement, founded by Mahatma Gandhi, was based on the principles of truth and non-violence (satyágraha). The Bhudan movement, launched by Vinoba Bhave, was an attempt to convince landlords through humanistic appeals that they should donate land to poor, landless people. –Trans.

(7) For further discussion on superiority and inferiority complexes, see "The Social Order and Superiority and Inferiority Complexes" in Volume 3. –Eds. [Footnote used in the *Prout in a Nutshell Volume 1 Part 2,* 1st edition, publication of this article.]

Justice

The underlying spirit of the word vicára ["justice" in English] is "a particular type of mental process to ascertain the truth". Although

human actions depend on relative principles, whatever appears to be the truth in this relative world, within society, is justice. The greatest benefit of the proper application of justice is that in the struggle between progressive and regressive forces, between good and evil, which is a permanent feature of society, the human intellect has an increasing number of opportunities to choose the path of righteousness.

Administering Justice

Many people say, “When human beings possess so little intelligence, how can they be qualified to sit in judgement over others? No one has the right to judge others.” I do not completely reject this argument, though I will raise the following question: “Is it not injustice if people do not use the intellect they have been endowed with in this relative world?”

Judgements may not always be correct, the determination of judicial criteria may be flawed, or the mental faculties or the way of thinking of the judge may create doubts in the eyes of people about whether he or she can be considered an ideal person. Should we therefore abandon the judicial system altogether? No, certainly not. No particular standard for measuring intellectual progress has ever been or will ever be accepted as absolute. Nevertheless, in every sphere of life there must be an ongoing effort to progress from imperfection to perfection. This effort will, if only indirectly, make social progress and all-round welfare more accessible to the human race.

A judicial process ends once a verdict is reached about anything, so a judicial process is not something complete in itself. Only once the verdict is implemented is the full process complete. In other words, the utility of justice in

social life is felt only when a penal measure, or better still, a corrective measure, for the concerned individual or group is implemented as per the verdict. But if at any stage the judicial yardstick is not identical with truth beyond a shadow of doubt, no one can deny that special care will have to be taken at the time of passing sentence on the accused in accordance with the verdict given.

I am personally of the opinion that since flaws will always unavoidably remain, no matter how good the judicial system, it is not the intent of nature for one human being to penalize another. Moreover, a detailed analysis reveals that whenever a punitive action is taken to penalize somebody, a feeling of vindictiveness arises in the minds of those administering the punishment, which in turn creates a malevolent mentality. I therefore think that the term “penal system” should be deleted from social

terminology. If and when somebody, whether a judge or an ordinary person, takes any type of action against another, it should be corrective, not punitive.

If a system of corrective measures is introduced, criminals, whether they were deeply involved in the crime or not, will have no reason to complain against anyone. Although there may be flaws in the judgement, it will not harm them in any way. A person who is definitely guilty will benefit from a system of corrective measures, and even a person who is not guilty will benefit from such a system.

Thus my opinion is that no innocent person should have the opportunity to think or say, “Although I am innocent, I am being punished because I couldn’t afford a good lawyer” due to flaws in the judicial system. No doubt society will be adversely affected if an

offender evades the law and is not arrested by the police due to their incompetence, but far greater damage will be done if an innocent person is penalized because of a defective judicial system.

From the social or human viewpoint, everybody has the right to correct the behaviour of everyone else. This is the birthright of every human being. No scholar can dispute the right of people to correct the shortcomings of those with whom they come in contact. The recognition of this right is indispensable for the health of society.

Thus it is clear that corrective measures are necessary to complement justice. Such an arrangement prevents a government from getting any scope to impose a violent, cruel penal system and an oppressive dictatorship on the masses.

Here lies the basic difference between the administrative system and the corrective system. The severe discipline that is needed in the administrative system to strengthen the framework of society or that of the state is not necessary in the judicial system; rather the judicial system is based on rational, tolerant, humanistic ideas and benevolent sentiments. Thus we see that in many cases there is a fundamental difference between the administrative and the judicial systems. Judges can and will frequently temper the merciless attitudes of the administration with humane reasoning; the verdicts of humane judges will therefore be more acceptable to the populace of a state than the pronouncements of an insensitive administration. If this does not happen it will immediately become clear that either an individual or party is abusing the power vested in them by the state.

The Role of Judges

People judge the mistakes of others to the best of their own intellectual capacities. I do not feel that there is anything wrong in this as long as people keep the ideal of welfare in front of them.

People may judge others, but there has always been and still is a difference of opinion among moralists concerning the final stage of the judicial process: in other words, concerning the extent to which people have the right to penalize others. If a person is tried and no action is taken as a result of the trial, the person in question will not have to face the possibility of a miscarriage of justice. But if in the event of a miscarriage of justice the person is penalized on the basis of the verdict, an innocent person will be made to suffer. In other words, penalizing a

person on the basis of a verdict involves considerable risk.

Judges can rarely say with total conviction that one person is guilty and another innocent. Their verdicts are based on the testimonies of witnesses, the evidence and the arguments of lawyers. They have very little scope to verify whether or not the witnesses are telling the truth or whether or not the evidence is genuine. Experienced lawyers often win cases because even an eminent judge becomes confused by their arguments. Moreover, if the experienced lawyers also happen to be retired judges, it will be very easy for them to win over the judge. A judge who previously worked under an experienced lawyer will usually find it difficult to reject his or her evidence and arguments. In other words, such lawyers exert a personal influence over the judge. Of course in most developed countries nowadays retired judges

are prevented from practising law. This regulation is highly commendable, and results in the general public getting a better chance of receiving justice. However, there is still no guarantee that people will receive impartial justice, because in practice very few judges are able to verify whether the witnesses are telling the truth or whether the evidence is genuine, or to closely scrutinize the verbose arguments of experienced lawyers.

In order to determine whether the witnesses are telling the truth and whether the evidence is genuine, judges will have to take considerable help from detectives. The workload of detectives will increase as a result, and thus it may be necessary to increase the number of detectives. By merely increasing the number of detectives, however, we cannot expect that this problem will be solved, because if the seeds of corruption are hidden in the detective

department itself, it will be virtually impossible to eliminate them. In other words, if detectives take bribes out of greed, the accused or the plaintiff will suffer as a result. While it is necessary for a country to have an adequate number of detectives, it is impossible for a government to recruit a large number of highly proficient detectives. It will therefore be necessary for the investigations carried out by the detectives into whether the witnesses are telling the truth and whether the evidence is genuine to be verified again by the judges.

Judges, however, do not need to take sole responsibility for this work in all cases; part of it may be performed by a jury. This will result in an increase in the importance of the jury system. The only criterion for selecting members of the jury should be honesty. Educational qualifications and social status should not be taken into consideration.

It is preferable that the final responsibility for a judgement rest with the judge, not the jury. So judges should be carefully selected from among those whose strength of character is irrefutable. Generally the number of judges is smaller than the number of police or detectives, and their salaries are higher, so with proper efforts it will not be impossible for a country to procure the competent judges that it needs. Local autonomous bodies should be given the responsibility for selecting the members of the jury; business people, brokers and political leaders or party workers should not be eligible to be jury members.

We cannot expect judges to agree with the jury in all cases because that would limit their authority. Nor should we expect that the members of the jury will make good judges, no matter how honest and upright they may be.

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Furthermore, after conducting investigations into the event in question, the judge and jury may arrive at different conclusions; it will not be wrong to conclude that the judge's conclusion should carry more weight. However, it is possible for a judge to be partial, out to satisfy a personal grudge or in collusion with the accused; if so, what should be done? If the members of a jury become suspicious of the judge's conduct or dissatisfied with his or her behaviour during the course of a trial, the entire proceedings of the case should be brought to the notice of a higher judicial authority before the judge delivers his or her final judgement in court. If the higher judicial authority shares the opinion of the members of the jury, it would be unwise to retain the judge.

Although I do not fully support the way in which justice was administered by the káziis [Muslim judges] in the Middle Ages, it would be

useful if judges today emulated their dedication. The káziis took great risk and personal responsibility when they disguised themselves and went to seek the truth at the scene of the crime, or tried to extract a confession from the accused or the plaintiff by using a clever ruse. Such efforts would place greater responsibility on the judges, and thus it might be necessary to increase both their number and their salary. Besides this, it might also be necessary to increase their authority so that they could deliver judgements on the basis of their findings and experience.

However, no matter what efforts we make to ensure fair judgements, we cannot expect them to always be correct. The jury may make a mistake, or both the judge and the jury may make a mistake. Both may acquiesce in injustice due to transitory emotions or excitement. Hence, under no circumstances can a judgement be

taken as the final word. So I am constrained to say that if there is any doubt at all about the accuracy of a judgement, no punishment should be given.

From the moral viewpoint also it is obvious that, if they wish to preserve social purity, people only have the right to take corrective measures and not punitive measures. The law that controls every pulsation of human existence has the sole authority to penalize people, and no other. Still, if people could have demonstrated that their judgements were absolutely free from defects or established that their system of punishment was legitimate, there would have been something to discuss. But human beings are incapable of doing this. So for the preservation of society, if people want to take measures against others, those measures will have to be corrective, not punitive. Even if the judicial system is defective, if only corrective

measures are taken then there is no possibility of anyone coming to any harm.

Before looking more deeply at corrective measures, it is necessary to closely examine the standard of judges. Those who are permitted to sit in judgement over others and have the power to punish must be closely monitored to see whether any degeneration has occurred in their intelligence, capacity for deliberation, or moral character. From time to time, as and when necessary, reports about the character and conduct of judges may be required by bodies representing the people. A judge who is a drunkard, of dubious character or engaged in any form of antisocial activity has no right to pass judgement on others. I am emphasizing the personal standards of judges because the nature of justice is such that higher priority has to be given to temporal, spatial and personal factors than to legal processes.

In the event of conflict between the criminal code and the moral code, the moral code must take precedence.

While presiding over a trial a judge should not be prejudiced against the accused, but should consider whether he or she has committed a crime or not; and if so, under what circumstances, and whether the crime was committed voluntarily or at the instigation of others. This is the main point for consideration during a trial. The person on whom society has bestowed the solemn office of judge has therefore to be of a higher standard than an ordinary person.

I am not ready to accept that a law student who has graduated with distinction from the law faculty of a university will necessarily make a competent judge. While it is undeniable that

good lawyers and barristers have knowledge of the law and skill in presenting arguments, this is no guarantee that they will make equitable judges. Instances of equitable justice can be seen in countless large and small events which occur in individual and social life.

When sitting to pass judgement on an offender the first thing for the judge to consider is whether the accused has committed a crime or not. For the purpose of analysing the types of crime committed by a criminal, and whether his or her offences were committed voluntarily or at the instigation of others, criminals may be classified into the following five categories.

(1) Criminals by Nature

Some few men and women are born with a deranged mind. The cause of their mental derangement is concealed within the defects of

their body and glands. Such people can be divided into two main groups.

The first group is composed of people who are normally very quiet, but in whom truthfulness and doing good to others are against their nature. They derive malevolent pleasure from lying and harming others. They are generally poor at managing their worldly affairs and incapable of comprehending the difference between good and bad. They act according to their limited mental capacity. Although they are mentally underdeveloped, they are deprived of the same kindness and compassion that other simpletons, due to their innate purity, receive. They take a long time to learn how to walk and talk and to understand simple matters, and they continue to dribble for a large part of their lives. Despite the sincere efforts of their parents and teachers, they fail to acquire any education. Even before they reach

adulthood, they manifest their base propensities. They generally become petty thieves, not armed robbers. Although they have a bad character, they do not have the courage to perform antisocial activities openly. They commit offences on their own initiative and at the instigation of others.

The second group of born criminals is more dangerous. Throughout their lives they revel in displays of provoked or unprovoked cruelty. They have a natural inclination to kill or maim others. They become members of criminal gangs and commit murder and other horrendous acts. Generally they do not become pickpockets, petty thieves or burglars. They consider such things to be the activities of petty criminals and as such beneath their dignity. In criminal circles they are usually greatly feared. From their mode of thinking or lifestyle, it appears as though they were born only to commit crimes. They consider

compassion and conscience to be mere frailties; the importance of such attributes is beyond their understanding. Although they may be slow when it comes to worldly affairs, they are not fools. At the time of committing their instinct-inspired crimes, they give ample proof of their intelligence. They demonstrate their intelligence through their knowledge of osteology and psychology, and by their behaviour when dealing with the police and the public. Even if they are born into a salutary environment, this type of inborn criminal ultimately takes to a life of crime. Women with this kind of nature are quite incapable of leading chaste lives; even if they have good husbands, they often decide to become prostitutes.

The natures and lifestyles of born criminals are as diverse as their crimes. Some pose as honest people and secretly steal and commit robberies. Some gain a lot of money

through forgery or armed robbery and donate it to the poor. Some like to prey on helpless victims. Among those who commit crimes because they derive pleasure from it, some do not have the opportunity to earn a living, or if they do, do not utilize that chance to lead an honest life. The natures of born criminals, the lifestyles they lead, and their preferences for particular types of crimes are usually consistent with each other.

Psychologists have learned a great deal about criminals and are trying to research them more. If they receive cooperation from the government, and especially from the police department, they will make rapid progress in the study of criminal psychology. An analysis of criminal psychology is not the subject under discussion, but still it is a fact that born criminals are society's greatest burden and greatest responsibility. Although such criminals are born

with human bodies, mentally they are sub-human. And that is not all: even the physical structure of such people is different from that of ordinary people.

The sweet family environment that is within easy reach of human beings due to their developed intellect and which becomes even sweeter in time due to their natural qualities, is not accessible to born criminals. Even if they are born into a good environment, they cannot fully accept it. Just to satisfy their perverse mentality, they may poison their benevolent fathers out of any misunderstanding, or may brutally stab their loving mothers in the heart. From a viewpoint of normal human behaviour, it would be extremely difficult to treat born criminals as human beings.

Nature normally bestows different strengths and weaknesses on different persons,

but this principle takes a deviant twist in the case of these people. Born criminals can understand or grasp many natural phenomena more easily than highly-intelligent or wise people. Many underdeveloped creatures have a greater capacity than human beings to foresee the future, and it can be seen that born criminals also have this ability.

Through the observations and investigations psychologists have made while studying criminal psychology, they have gained a great deal of useful information about born criminals. But until now no physiological or psychological treatment has been developed to reform their nature. Psychologists or physiologists know the cause of their deformities or abnormalities, and they even know [theoretically] how their abnormalities can be cured, but in practice it is extremely difficult to cure them. No country in the world

has ever wished to demonstrate any enthusiasm for curing the diseases of these unfortunate people. They live like animals, senselessly performing wicked acts. And like animals, they allow their pointless lives to end with a rope around their necks.

If “a life for a life” is considered an unassailable principle of justice, then there is nothing more to say. But remember that born criminals commit their crimes due to their physical or psychic abnormalities; are not the so-called civilized people who make no effort to cure such born criminals, guilty of the same crime? Does not capital punishment amount to cutting off the head to get rid of a headache? In my opinion to take the life of a born criminal of this type is as much a crime as it would be to pass a death sentence on a patient just because we could not cure the person’s illness. It is the duty of a civilized society to arrange for born

criminals to be cured of their ailments. Killing them to lighten the burden caused by their lives is certainly not indicative of a developed civilization.

So, in my opinion the trials of born criminals should not concentrate solely on the magnitude of their crimes. Such criminals will have to be regarded with benevolent, humanistic sentiments, and means of curing them must be suggested.

Doctors quarantine those with an infectious disease to prevent the disease spreading to healthy people. Similarly it is necessary to isolate born criminals, indeed all types of criminals, from other people. The treatment of criminals should be undertaken in a prison, or better said, in a corrective centre. Prisons are not for punishment, rather prisons are hospitals for treatment of disease.

Psychologists cannot treat the mental diseases which inflict born criminals all alone; the cooperation of physicians and sociologists is essential. Psychologists will diagnose the mental disease and explain its origins, and they will also play a role in helping cure it as far as possible. Doctors will be responsible for curing the disease through medicine or surgery, insofar as it is caused by physiological abnormalities. Then sociologists will have to arrange for the social rehabilitation of the criminal after he or she has recovered. If psychologists only describe the nature of the disease, or if doctors only diagnose the physiological disorders and nothing more, it will not be possible to accomplish anything productive. Of course at the present time the patient may not make a complete recovery despite the concerted efforts of psychologists and sociologists, because psychology is still in an underdeveloped state. Moreover, doctors have

not yet acquired the skills needed to remove the physiological abnormalities responsible for mental disease. And furthermore, the science of sociology has only just emerged; it is developing extremely slowly. However, we must take the above measures for born criminals.

As long as society fails to take such humanistic measures in dealing with born criminals, it is farcical to compel them to stand trial.

One must always remember that born criminals are patients, and that their disease is stubborn. It can of course be cured quite quickly through spiritual practices, and in a slightly longer period through yogic methods, but for this a congenial environment is essential. Prison environments should therefore be made more pure, more humane.

(2) Criminals out of Habit

Where (a) moral integrity is low, where (b) no effort is made to develop mental force, or where (c) social control is slack, people will be influenced by their ripus,[1] and will not hesitate to choose a path which enables them to express their propensities unchecked. Ordinary people manage to keep their base propensities under control through internal moral reasoning, and thus avoid indulging in antisocial activities. But those who lack mental strength often knowingly commit crimes in an almost mechanical way, even though they possess a sense of morality. Such people who possess a sense of morality but lack mental strength normally keep their momentary mental weaknesses under control out of fear of what society might do, and as a result the health of society and the purity of individual life is upheld. But if any one of these three obstacles which keep people from moving

along the path of evil becomes weak, people will tend to engage in antisocial activities; in the absence of fear of these obstacles, they will gradually become increasingly addicted to such activities. In this way people get accustomed to performing antisocial activities and finally turn into hardened criminals.

The diseases of habitual criminals are not congenital, so in treating these people there is little place for a physiologist or doctor. However, habitual criminals can easily be treated if they are provided with a proper moral education, a method of acquiring moral strength and a strictly regulated social environment. So during the trials of habitual criminals, the judge should focus more on the provisions of the penal code than on humanitarian sensibility; this approach will benefit society.

No matter how villainous habitual criminals become, and no matter how notorious, they will never be as dangerous as born criminals. Because they possess some sense of discrimination, they should not be automatically pardoned on the grounds of mental illness. They also possess the ability to feign innocence. They behave like saints by day and steal by night; they live like landlords one moment and like armed robbers the next; they are chaste in public and promiscuous in private. Generally the scale of their criminal activities is greater than that of other criminals.

Psychological treatment and strict prison discipline help to a great extent in reforming the nature of habitual criminals. (Of course such criminals must live in a pure social environment as well.)

This type of criminal nature is often formed as an indirect result of people being forced to submit to strict control without being given any moral education or guidance as to how to develop strength of mind. For example, some parents do not impart moral education to their children, and do not help them to acquire strength of mind or teach them how to lead a virtuous life; instead, they beat their children with or without justification. It is the children of such parents who later take part in antisocial activities.

If parents fail to educate their daughters out of fear that they will go astray, fail to provide them with a moral education, fail to help them acquire strength of mind by holding up high ideals before them, and try to forcibly keep their unmarried or widowed daughters confined behind the purdah, naturally the secret desire will awaken in them to leave home and

experience the world. As a result they will put on a show of purity in public while indulging in sinful conduct in private. Often they will even break away from the constraints imposed on them and openly engage in antisocial activities.

Although it is extremely difficult to convince habitual criminals to follow the path of spirituality, it may be possible through psychological means.

In most cases they are intelligent, but out of petty selfishness they rebel against society, country and state. Many habitual criminals become politicians in order to further their own selfish ends and cheat the public day after day. Most of the great wars fought in the world have been started by such criminals. The leaders of the criminal community come from this group. Sometimes the unfortunate public grabs hold of these leaders, just as fishermen catch fish in a

net and drag them onto the shore, and sometimes these leaders break the net and slip away. Not only is intelligence required to bring these criminals to justice, a great deal of caution and courage is required as well. Black marketeers and adulterators who operate on a large scale should also be included in this group of criminals.

Habitual criminals sometimes also try to influence judges. They intimidate them in the hope of ensuring the successful continuation of their criminal activities. In order to punish habitual criminals, it is necessary to give judges far greater power than they now possess.

(3) Criminals Due to Environment

Many people in society do not become criminals because of physiological or hereditary factors. Nor do they become involved in criminal

activities due to the influence of base propensities, or due to lack of education or social control. Yet today civilized society looks down on them because they are criminals when they could have been revered as ideal human beings with impeccable characters if they had been given a proper environment.

They are glaring examples that honest people can become dishonest as a result of environmental pressures. The sensitive, honest son of a villainous father is compelled to participate in antisocial activities out of fear of paternal abuse. This creates a habit which eventually becomes part of his nature. The daughter of a prostitute, despite her best efforts to live a virtuous life, is forced to lead the life of a social outcast due to unbearable maternal abuse or circumstantial pressure. At first we usually censure the parents or guardians for the helpless condition of such women, but the

parents are not always completely to blame. Sometimes personal difficulties, such as financial hardship or poverty, compel them to take such steps, even when they know that what they are doing is wrong. Due to circumstantial pressure they encourage their children to do wrong and force them to commit crimes.

Those who denigrate refugees, seeing an antisocial mentality in some of them, will notice on closer examination that it is only because of lack of money that refugees encourage their children to act in an antisocial manner.

But antisocial behaviour is not always caused by lack of money. Where the parents or guardians are evil by nature, they try to infect the other members of their family with their disease. A few days ago I read in the newspaper that an upper-middle-class lady used to encourage her son to steal clothes, etc., from her

neighbours by offering him money for cinema tickets if he did – in other words, by applying indirect pressure. When the incident became public, it was discovered that her family was not in financial difficulty. By putting pressure on her son, the lady was infecting him with her own mental disease.

There are many parents who, due to miserliness or whatever reason, deprive their children of delicious food and drink. (If there is some reason for this deprivation, they do not explain it to their children.) They serve such food and drink to others in the presence of their children without explaining to them why they are being deprived. As a result, the children, under the pressure of circumstance, steal to try to satisfy their natural desires.

There are many people who themselves, that is, together with the members of their

family, consume delicious food and drink but provide poor-quality food to their servants. The servants subsequently develop the habit of stealing out of greed.

There are many parents who directly encourage their children to fight and abuse others. I have also observed quiet-natured children who often disagreed with the opinions of their parents, being forced to follow their parents' orders out of fear of physical abuse. In a remote village I once observed a young man, who was a member of a social group which followed the Dáyabhága system,[2] abuse his innocent wife and torture her at the instigation of his cruel father, out of fear of losing his right of inheritance.

These are just a few examples of crimes due to environment.

During the trials of criminals due to environment who have not yet turned into habitual criminals, the judge should not attach too much importance to the provisions of the penal code. If, after thorough investigation, it is discovered that particular people or circumstantial pressure have caused these criminals (whatever their age) to take part in antisocial activities, it will be the duty of the judge to remove them from that environment with the help of sociologists and psychologists. Such cases rarely require further corrective measures. But if those who are criminals due to circumstantial pressure become habitual criminals as a result of a long-standing habit, a change of environment alone will not suffice. Corrective measures in accordance with the provisions of the penal code will also be necessary.

Those who are born with fairly healthy bodies and minds, who do not lack knowledge of morality or live an undisciplined social life, or who have not become dishonest as a result of circumstantial pressure, often unwittingly take to the path of dishonesty because they keep bad company. Perhaps as many as ninety-nine per cent of people talk about themselves in the following way: “I do not need to bother about the company I keep, as long as I am good myself. I can remain good in all types of company. I am old enough to understand the difference between good and bad.” In other words, such people do not like to think, or rather feel piqued at the thought, that somebody should try to dissuade them from keeping bad company. Especially if a less-educated person advises a more highly-educated person to avoid bad company, that person will do it all the more. In society people who regard themselves as superior in status, wealth or education generally

believe that it is entirely unwarranted for others to give them advice. That is why an educated but wayward son often disregards the good advice of his parents.

The natural characteristics of the human mind, however, tell a different story than what that ninety-nine percent think. A person of any age between seven and seventy is invariably influenced by the company he or she keeps. In other words, where goodness is predominant, bad people will slowly but surely become good, and where the opposite is the case, good people will become bad. Even a saintly person will go astray after a few days of close association with bad people.

Suppose a teetotaller mixes regularly with a group of alcoholics. The frequent anti-teetotaller gibes and the positive portrayals of the wondrous virtues of wine by the alcoholics

will one day tempt the teetotaller to taste a little wine. His or her drinking friends will say, “We don’t want you to become drunk. But what’s the harm if you just taste a little! This surely won’t make you a bad person! What a moralist you are! Oh friend, to be such a moralist in the world today is ridiculous!” So one day the teetotaller tastes wine and this becomes the cause of his or her downfall. But on the day the unsuspecting teetotaller took wine, he or she did not realize that from that very day wine would become the cause of his or her degeneration.

Similarly, by keeping bad company people become debauched, slanderers and thieves. Men or women who have to do little or no household work, who fail to cultivate high ideals in life, who are unable to evolve a spiritual outlook, or who do not have to work hard for a living, generally develop an extremely critical nature. By constantly associating with such people, those

who possess high ideals or a diligent nature will gradually begin to spend their leisure time in slanderous gossip. If the parents or older members of a family are quarrelsome, the children will also become quarrelsome due to constant association. Similarly, if the women of a family have a highly critical nature, the children will invariably become critical because they will learn how to criticize from their elders. Children will also tend to become depraved if they associate too closely with older children in schools or colleges. When they stay among children their own age, however, they generally play in an innocent, joyous way. Childhood companions should be selected with great care, but young children are incapable of doing this.

The base propensities which lie dormant in everyone are easily stimulated by constant association with bad people. Through the united efforts of parents, people living in the locality

and educators, it may be possible to save children from bad company. But it is very difficult to save them from the evil influences which reside in their own homes or preponderate in their neighbourhood. The only way to overcome such influences is to popularize the ideals of dharma, spread moral education and train an honest police force.

In the modern world there is a wide variety of films which excite the passions and have a degrading influence on boys and girls, adolescents and young men and women. Such films create in cinema-goers the desire to emulate in their individual lives the criminal activities, the vulgar expressions of love, or the adventurous behaviour that they see enacted on the screen. This is another example of how keeping bad company causes depravity. Many cinema-goers imagine that the characters that they see on the screen are their actual

acquaintances, but when they try to emulate these characters, they discover that the real world is much tougher than the world portrayed by the cinema. If their family ties are weak, if they are their own guardians or if they have no high ideals to inspire them, it will be extremely difficult, although not impossible, to save them from bad influences.

As long as those who become criminals due to keeping bad company are not transformed into habitual criminals, they will return to their normal good behaviour as soon as they give up the bad company. Therefore, during the trials of such criminals, corrective measures should be taken only after giving due consideration to the company they keep and the influence of this company on their behaviour. But in the case of those who have become habitual criminals, simply removing them from bad company will not suffice, because they

themselves are their own bad company. For them, stricter measures will be needed.

Nearly all deceitful acts, such as swindling, fraud, gambling, looting, seducing women, and travelling without a ticket, are commonly a result of the influence of bad company.

In prisons also those criminals of this type who have already turned into habitual criminals should be housed with great care, otherwise their disease will spread to others.

(4) Criminals Due to Poverty

Most crimes throughout the world are committed due to poverty, except in countries where the minimum necessities of life have been met. Of course the tendency to engage in antisocial activities because of poverty does not manifest equally in all places or among all

people. The degree of such crimes varies according to the moral strength of an individual. But no matter how strongly developed the moral consciousness of a person, if poverty threatens his or her very existence, usually the person will try to attack the prevailing social structure. This being the case, I cannot in the name of human dharma reject the reasons such people give, if they give any reasons at all, in defence of their actions. They demand simply the right to live, and on this human right stands the well-being of society, the justification for its existence.

Throughout history millions of people have died due to artificial famines created by other human beings. While walking along a road, weary, plodding legs have given way and a person has collapsed in a pitiful heap on the ground, yet he or she has refrained from stealing. Although a high standard of morality is one reason why the person did not make a last

desperate bid for self-preservation, it is not the only reason. Starving people, particularly if they lose their vitality by slow degrees, do not have the moral courage to fight. Knowing the end is sure, they seek refuge in the arms of death. Basing their way of life on incorrect philosophical and religious teachings, they accept their miserable situation as destiny. Perhaps, at that time, if they were led by a spirited leader and inspired by his or her fiery lectures, or if they received guidance about the course of action to take, they would collectively attack the prevailing social structure. In such circumstances, their actions might perhaps be described as immoral, but they certainly would not contravene the dharma of human existence.

Sometimes honest people, who hate corruption from the depths of their being but fail to keep their mental balance due to the pressure of poverty, resort to crime just to maintain their

existence. What will happen in such circumstances if the judge looks only at the crime, or is even slightly indifferent to the questions of cause and effect related to the crime? Such offenders – who may be more honest than most well-fed, well-dressed, so-called honest people – will be thrown into jail and branded as criminals merely because of deficiencies in the system of production and distribution of basic requirements. Due to the bad company there, and overcome with shame, hatred and humiliation due to their punishment, they will gradually turn into habitual criminals after being released from jail.

In areas hit by famine many crimes are committed due to poverty, but as soon as the economy improves the number of crimes decreases. This proves that most of the people in whatever country are not by nature criminals, nor for that matter is the human race in general.

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People want to be properly clothed and fed and to pass their days happily. They do not want to have the path of their natural development stop at an impenetrable iron door constructed by narrow-minded social-law-givers.

Those who ignore their conscience and repeatedly commit crimes due to poverty, eventually turn into habitual criminals. If somebody steals or robs out of hunger, or is goaded by their propensities into some mean act, it will be the duty of society to find out what the person's needs are and then remove them in some lawful way. But if society fails to do its duty (I have already said that human beings have not yet been able to create a society in the true sense of the term) and punishes such criminals instead, focusing only on the magnitude of their crimes, all feelings of remorse will vanish from their minds and in their place a sense of desperation will arise.

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They will feel that since they have already been stigmatized and have nothing further to lose, there is no point in suffering by earning a living in an honest way. They will think, “As I am sinking, let me sink to the depths of hell.” Those who have committed crimes due to poverty (whether due to lack of food or clothing, or physical or mental factors), will blame society for their offences. They will claim that their poverty is the result of a defective social structure, and in most cases this allegation will be true.

If the breadwinner of a family dies a premature death, a dark shadow of poverty will often fall over the family, and it may disintegrate. Its sweetness and purity will be destroyed due to poverty. The young boys and girls will become beggars, increasing the number of parasites in society, or they will become the playthings of antisocial forces,

eventually turning into thieves, armed robbers, thugs, pickpockets or agents of some professional beggars' association. They will become slaves in order to survive. Young widows from communities which follow a double standard of morality will also be compelled or tempted by various forces to lead antisocial lives.

Hence the solution to all these different antisocial activities is hidden in the creation of a sound economic and social structure. The man who is despised as a thief or treated with contempt by society might have been a genius if he had been brought up in a healthy social environment. The woman who is shunned as a prostitute might have been respected as the leader of a women's organization or honoured as the mother of a famous person, had she received a little sympathy from society in the early part of her life. That is why I contend that

those unfortunate men and women carry a burden of sin created through the collective efforts of society as a whole. They are not responsible for their sins, or if they are, their sins are considerably less, or at least no greater, than the sins of selfish, mean-minded people who call themselves honest.

It is doubtful whether the Supreme Creator, let alone humanity, has the right to punish those who commit crimes due to poverty. Still, from the moral standpoint, I cannot support criminal acts. I would suggest that before committing such crimes they should become revolutionaries. It is the duty of those with a good knowledge of morality to guide them in their revolutionary activities. Let them separate the gold from the dross in the fire of revolution.

On the subject of corrective measures for those who become criminals due to poverty, honest people have no alternative but to exhort them to launch a revolution. In this situation the position of a judge is like that of a figurehead; he or she has nothing to say or do. Psychologists and sociologists also have very limited scope for action; the pathways that lie open to them are very circumscribed. The solution completely depends on the firm economic foundation of the different individual countries as well as of the entire world. If anyone is at fault it is every one of the world leaders. Their responsibilities do not end when they gain power by creating false hopes and deceiving the common people with remote and unattainable dreams.

People can score points in intellectual battles by hiding their inefficiency behind grandiloquent speeches, but if they do, the demands of the proletariat, who struggle for

existence like animals, will not be heard. They will never be able to forget their hunger and ignore their psychic longings and simultaneously dedicate themselves wholeheartedly to the enormous task of developing their country and building a universal human society in a better way.

Those whose stomachs are full can always forget about the hunger of others. The world has become accustomed to, but has experienced quite enough of, the procrastination and heartless histrionics of such blood-sucking brutes. By inventing crises, they force the needy to commit crimes; by hoarding grains, they cause artificial famines and indirectly incite starving people to steal; and by making people's circumstances difficult and subsequently enticing them with money, they encourage men to abandon their families and compel women to earn their living in an immoral way. Because

they remain above suspicion and appear to be honest according to the laws of the land, which in many countries are enacted for the benefit of the upper stratum of society, ordinary people are unable to raise their voices in protest. It can be said that the only path open to them is the path of revolution.

People look among the leaders of their country for someone to take up the noble task of protecting ordinary, simple people like themselves from the exploitation of blood-sucking brutes. Those who transform ordinary people into beasts by forcing them to live in extremely difficult circumstances are, in my opinion, the ones who should be put on trial. To burden judges with the trials of those who become criminals due to poverty, is to do an injustice to them.

However, it is fallacious to think that the economic structure is the sole cause of crimes committed due to poverty. There are many instances of affluent people also indulging in drink, drugs, gambling, licentiousness, luxurious living, gluttony, etc., in order to forget their psychic problems or to gratify their instincts. Due to their addiction, they lose their wealth and finally get into debt to finance their bad habits. Eventually, when it becomes impossible for them to pay off their debts, they get involved in a wide variety of criminal activities which have a highly deleterious effect on society. Privation is clearly the superficial cause of such crimes, but society is not responsible for this type of privation as it is entirely self-created. It is imperative to take corrective measures to reform such types of criminal. In order to be able to reform them, it is essential to cure them of their addiction.

(5) Criminals out of Momentary Weakness

Another type of crime occurs occasionally. This is a temporary criminal urge, a special type of mental disease which suddenly appears in a certain type of environment and again subsides after a short time. Kleptomania is an example of this kind of mental disease. After committing a crime kleptomaniacs feel ashamed and are anxious to return the property that they have stolen to the owner. They have sudden fantasies about stealing, abducting people, becoming drunk or indulging in decadent activities. But analysis shows that they do not in fact have the slightest personal interest in such things.

Usually weak-minded people who have witnessed larceny, murder or any other crime, are deeply affected by their experience, and due to the ensuing extreme agitation that occurs in their minds, they deviate from the path of

common sense. If the feeling of mental agitation recurs due to the influence of temporal, spatial or personal factors, they will immediately commit a crime.

If a person who is not actually a thief constantly thinks about stealing and about the various techniques that can be used to steal, it may happen that he or she will begin to talk in a way that will give people the impression that he or she is really a thief. After witnessing a brutal murder, sometimes such weak-minded people begin to think of themselves as criminals, and under the influence of such thoughts, they conceal some clothing, a dead body or parts of a body, or some other items in their houses, and then start describing the modus operandi of the crime to others. They will say, “I dragged the person away like this; I stabbed him like that;” etc. In such circumstances it will not be surprising if the police regard the person as a

criminal and if, after listening to the testimony of witnesses and seeing the evidence, the judge takes action against him or her. In such cases if there is even the slightest defect in the confidential enquiries, the proficiency of the police or the insight of the judge – any of the three – in all probability an innocent person will be punished.

Poverty is the root cause of most crimes, but it is not the only cause. Even if the economic structure is sound, other factors which cause crimes may be present, jeopardizing social peace and discipline. With the eradication of poverty, crimes caused by keeping bad company and by personal difficulties may to some extent decrease, but there will be little decline in the number of crimes committed by born criminals or habitual criminals.

If we undertake a rational analysis of the causes of crimes and a scientific categorization of these causes, what stands out most is the variety of the propensities of the human mind and the weakness or strength of the mind according to changes in time, place or person. As a result those investigating the causes of serious crimes may become confused. The accused could be a criminal who does not fit the previously-established categories. If the crime is grave, it will not be possible to pardon the person or disregard the crime on the grounds that it was committed accidentally or in a moment of weakness.

Crimes Involving Cruelty

Crimes involving cruelty are generally caused by the following factors:

1. loss of judgement due to intoxication or extreme excitement;
2. jealousy over property or wealth;
3. a severe blow to one's prestige or the influence of any of the ripus;
4. fights over women;
5. serious differences of opinion.

It is possible for a person who lacks mental straightforwardness, though [[that person]] may be a good person, to commit a crime due to any of these factors. But not all crimes are committed in a moment of anger. Even a cool-headed person may be influenced and overwhelmed by any of the factors listed above except the first, and these factors may have disturbed his or her mind for so long that the crime cannot be classified as a crime committed in anger. A cool-headed person with no criminal background may even plan a serious crime as much as six months in advance. The

causes of these types of crime, as I mentioned above, lie in the weaknesses of the human mind. The manifestation of malevolent propensities depends on the environment and is subject to differences in time, place or person; sometimes it occurs after a few years and sometimes after a few minutes.

When a crime is committed within five or ten minutes of provocation, the offence is generally viewed with leniency because it was committed in a moment of anger. However, where the thought of committing a crime gradually develops over a long period of time, where the offender deliberately becomes intoxicated in the hope of committing the crime with calm nerves, or where the offender gets others intoxicated in order for them to commit a crime with calm nerves, it is rare for the offender to receive clemency. In reality, of course, the crimes of both groups are equal in

magnitude, and from the psychological point of view there is only a slight difference between them.

Benevolent people may wonder how much value corrective measures have for criminals who, for whatever reason, have not turned into habitual criminals but still do not show any sense of remorse after committing a crime; for first-time offenders who have not produced any type of evidence to demonstrate that circumstantial pressure was the reason for their crime; or for those who have not shown any physical or psychological symptoms which would warrant their being declared mentally ill. In such circumstances experienced judges and social well-wishers would take penal instead of corrective measures. From the moral standpoint, we cannot but support this. Yet when we know that weak-minded people, who are slaves to their lower propensities, have committed and

are continuing to commit crimes due to circumstantial pressure created by temporal, spatial and personal factors, is it not society's duty to make them aware of their wrongdoing and help them to learn how to develop their higher propensities and strengthen their minds? And is it not also the duty of society to ensure that this awakening is a corrective rather than a penal process? Of course it is necessary to retain tough penal measures as a part of the corrective system. Moreover, if punishment has an important place in correcting behaviour, people will, out of fear of being punished, avoid drifting along according to the inclinations of their lower propensities. As a result of this environmental pressure, dishonest people will be compelled to live an honest life and society will be greatly benefited. People who have succumbed to the influence of their base propensities will with society's sanction get the opportunity to become good. And those who are aware of the influence

of their own base propensities will also feel encouraged to keep striving to become internally civilized – to become civilized people in a civilized society.

Crime and Politics

Calumny, jealousy, factionalism, indolence, grandiloquence, etc., are all social defects which, given a congenial environment, turn people into great criminals. These human defects are glaringly apparent in the modern world; the reason for this is the proclivity to indulge in politics. Politics today is concerned solely with satisfying the desire for power; all connection with selfless service has been lost. Unless the desire for power loosens its grip on the human mind, the unhealthy proclivity for politics will not be eliminated from modern society.

Seeing the way in which political involvement gradually transforms people into habitual criminals, benevolent people can no longer afford to stand by and watch. All good people should now work together to formulate a comprehensive, well-thought-out plan for the all-round development of society. If the entire human race turns into habitual criminals, if people are no longer ready to listen with tolerance to the opinions of others, or if they sell their treasures of higher intellect to gain power and prestige, the age-old struggle to build human civilization, and all efforts to discover the value of human existence, will go in vain.

Virtue and Vice

In most countries crime is defined with reference to a sense of pápa [vice] and puńya [virtue]. These have their roots in the religions of individual countries. For example, English

people customarily believe that suicide is one of the gravest sins. According to the customary belief of Indians, suicide is considered to be a sin, but it is not a grave sin. And the Japanese do not consider suicide to be a sin at all. That is why the penal codes of these three countries are different. In Japan neither suicide nor attempted suicide constitutes a crime, and thus neither is a punishable offence. In India today the attempt to commit suicide is a crime, but suicide itself is not, hence only the attempt to commit suicide is a punishable offence. And in England the attempt to commit suicide and actual suicide are both crimes, hence both are considered to be punishable offences.[3] So those who rend the air arguing about virtue and vice are not usually listened to outside their own countries.

Ideas about virtue and vice are based on one or both of the following factors: different religious beliefs, and traditional or

contemporary social beliefs created by factors other than religion.

These ideas change not only according to place, but also according to time and person. In ancient India, for example, people used to burn defenceless widows to death without a twinge of conscience. The thought that this might be a sinful or unlawful act never entered their minds. Indians of that time believed that those who opposed sati were being antisocial, unpatriotic and sinful. It would not be correct for us to feel hatred or disdain towards those ancient people, living as we do in a different era. Perhaps those who burnt Joan of Arc to death did not commit a crime according to the concept of virtue and vice prevalent at the time.

Different concepts of virtue and vice may also coexist in one country. For example, for a Shákta [devotee of Shakti] eating meat is not a

sin, but for a Vaeśńava [Vaishnavite, devotee of Viśńu] even to see an animal being slaughtered is a sin; he or she cannot even think of eating meat.

Since the concept of virtue and vice is completely relative, it is meaningless to loudly support or oppose the views of a particular community or the laws of a particular country as if they were the absolute truth. Today, therefore, everyone should develop a magnanimous outlook in such matters; otherwise their extreme intolerance will, in the name of spreading religion or of protecting virtue, result, as it did in the Middle Ages, in the entire world being bathed in human blood.

No matter what type of government a country has, it is not desirable for the state to blindly follow particular scriptural injunctions relating to virtue and vice. In this era of popular

awakening, it will be impossible for the state to maintain its existence if it commits such an error.

Virtue and vice are psychic expressions which are defined by changes in time, place and person; a type of mental aberration that one person in one place and at one time calls a sin is considered a virtue by another person in another place at another time. Under these circumstances, what should the basis of legal codes be? If legal codes are based on the different concepts of virtue and vice professed by different groups of people, a question will arise: “If two litigants, a plaintiff and a defendant, belonging to two different communities, appear in court, on which community’s legal code will the judicial process be based?” We can therefore see that crime cannot be defined by legal codes developed

according to the concepts of virtue and vice followed by different groups of people.

Society will have to define what constitutes a crime and what does not in accordance with a moral standard. I define immorality as that which, in order to further the personal interest of an individual or group, aims to exploit another individual or group or the rest of society, or aims to deprive them of the right to self-preservation. Behaviour based on such immoral intentions is a crime.

If the concept of virtue and vice of a particular person or a particular time is taken as absolute, the opportunity to introduce corrective measures into the law will be severely limited and restricted, and this will severely retard the dynamism of that society, leading to chaos and collapse. This is what happened to the ancient Egyptian, Roman, Greek and pre-

Buddhist Vedic societies. If there had been no scope for reforming the Indian legal system in this way, sati would still be practised today. This is because, according to ancient beliefs, cremation by sati was considered to be a virtuous act. Every rational person will therefore support giving scope to alterations and additions to legal codes.

In India, too, as soon as the social codes of the Vedic Age lost their flexibility due to the intransigence of Aryan vested interests, the Buddhist revolution took place. This significantly raised the consciousness of the people. In a later period, people of all religious affiliations – Buddhist, Jain, etc. – automatically accepted the idea that changes in the social code were desirable, that the concept of virtue and vice would inevitably change according to the needs of the age. Thus we see one kind of social system in the age of the Paráshara Saḿhitá,

another in the age of the Rámáyańa, yet another in the age of the Mahábhárata, and still another in the age of the Manu Saḿhitá.[4]

Those who think that they can arbitrarily impose their judicial system or legal codes on people with the help of the power of the state, regardless of differences in time, place or person, are mistaken. The principles underlying the legal codes will have to be based on people's social needs and not on the whims of an individual or group or the biases inherent in a particular concept of virtue and vice.

Society is a dynamic entity. It has to progress by endlessly struggling to break through ever-changing barriers. It has to equip itself in different ways to respond to changing conditions and new challenges. Society cannot afford to forget that the type of struggles it had to go through in the past will not be the same as

the struggles it has to go through in the present, and that the struggles of today will not be the same as those of the future. Thus, as the environment changes, newer and newer codes of justice will have to be formulated on the basis of the moral code. The duty of those who frame legal codes is to fully recognize the essential characteristics of life and not violate the interests of individuals, groups or society as a whole. Otherwise the codes will be seen as unnatural and will not be accepted, which means that the state will have difficulty in implementing them effectively. (For example, during the British rule of India, the Sarda Act[5] was not properly enforced due to a lack of education.) If a large section of the society is confronted with the possibility of being considered criminals in the eyes of the law, they will engage in deceitful conduct and other antisocial acts to avoid punishment. Thus the standard of morality will decline considerably.

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Therefore, if such codes are ever formulated, the state will lose its credibility and become the laughing-stock of society.

If somebody commits a violent crime, generally he or she will not receive any sympathy from the public. But if somebody chooses the path of violence to protest against practices which are abhorred by his or her fellow citizens, he or she will, in all likelihood, enjoy popular support.

The Judicial System

Although the system of capital punishment is unacceptable from the moral viewpoint, people do sometimes resort to this custom under specific circumstances. It does not contain any corrective measures and has no purpose other than to instil fear into people's minds. Therefore the practice of taking a life for a life

out of anger cannot be accepted in a civilized social system. Even if somebody is a genuine criminal who has no public support (no matter how notorious a criminal he or she may be, he or she is still a human being), should not he or she have an opportunity to become an asset to society? It is possible that although the person fails to evoke our sympathy because of the seriousness of his or her crimes, he or she may sincerely repent and be prepared to dedicate the rest of his or her life to the genuine service of society. Furthermore, if those who commit crimes are afflicted with a mental disease, is it not our duty to cure them of their disease instead of sentencing them to death?

Most civilized countries follow the line of reasoning that criminals who commit a crime on the spur of the moment are to be treated with comparative leniency. Other types of criminals as well can hope, on the same line of reasoning,

to receive comparatively good treatment. Should decapitation be prescribed as the cure for a headache?

Some people argue that if criminals who commit serious offences are not given capital punishment, they will have to be sentenced to life imprisonment, because few countries have the facilities to cure them of their mental disease. But such a decision may cause overcrowding in the prisons. Is it possible for the state to provide so many people with food and clothing? Rather I would ask, “Why should such criminals live off the state at all?” The state will have to see to it that it receives suitable work from them. And after the completion of their sentence, the state should sincerely make arrangements to find them employment so that they will be able to earn an honest living.

A prison should therefore be just like a reform school, and the superintendent should be a teacher who is trained in psychology and who has genuine love for society. Hence a jailer should possess no less ability than a judge. To appoint a person to this post on the basis of a degree he or she has earned from some university or according to his or her capacity to please a superior, would be most detrimental. If those charged with antisocial activities and sentenced to prison experience daily injustices, feel a lack of open-heartedness from others, or receive less food and poorer-quality food than that sanctioned by the government, their criminal tendencies and maliciousness will develop and manifest all the more.

In this context yet another thought comes to mind. If a criminal is imprisoned for a serious crime, what will happen to his or her dependents? They will still have to somehow go

on living. The boys of the family may join a gang of pickpockets and the girls may take to prostitution. In other words, by trying to punish a single criminal, ten more criminals may be created. Thus when sentencing a criminal, one will have to take into consideration the financial condition of the members of his or her family, and the state will have to provide them with the means to earn an honest living.

If the judicial system is to be totally accessible to the public, ordinary people will have to be able to afford it. Therefore one of the most important things to do is to increase the number of judges.

It is true more or less everywhere in the world that judges, due to pressure of work, are often compelled to adjourn cases. I do not completely oppose the practice of adjournment, because at times an adjournment can be

advantageous to innocent people. But it can be of equal value to criminals who get the opportunity to tamper with evidence, to influence witnesses and to find false witnesses. This cannot be denied. Experienced judges know if and when it is necessary to adjourn a case in the interests of the public, but if the public interest is not served by this measure, no judge in all conscience should adjourn a case simply due to pressure of work. It is therefore essential to increase the number of judges.

Increasing the number of judges is not, however, an easy matter. It requires a thorough examination and careful selection of candidates. Relatively simple and ordinary cases can even be entrusted to responsible citizens. To deal with such cases it is not a bad idea to employ honorary magistrates. However, these honorary magistrates will also have to exhibit a highly-developed sense of responsibility at the time of

discharging their duties. In countries where they are selected from among business people who have made a quick fortune or from among known sycophants, they will be mere liabilities to the people. I once heard a story about an ever-so-learned judge who delivered judgements for and against defendants according to the nostril his clerk used to inhale snuff. Needless to say, whoever passed sufficient money to the clerk would win the case. As members of a civilized society in the twentieth century, we would like to see such an occurrence as a story from the past, not as a feature of modern life.

The Need for a Spiritual Ideal

The proverb “Prevention is better than cure” may be applied to all aspects of life. It is undeniable that, when we see the variety and seriousness of crimes increasing with the so-called advancement of civilization, it becomes

necessary for crime-prevention policies to be given greater importance than remedial action. Civilized people today should be more interested in preventing base criminal propensities from arising in human beings in the first place, than in taking corrective measures to cure criminals' mental diseases.

"Good" or "bad", "virtue" or "vice" from the worldly standpoint not withstanding, people act in order to attain happiness. We judge people's actions as "good" and "bad", "virtue" and "vice", only after evaluating those actions in terms of a goal and steps to reach that goal.

It is true that the majority of people are not born dishonest. Although there are differences among people insofar as their goals and their efforts to reach their goals – differences caused by defects in their bodies' various glands – I do not believe that this

situation cannot be corrected through collective effort. If one's goal is a pure and pervasive one, then the defects in the process of attaining the goal can never transform a person into a sub-human creature. And if these efforts are in harmony with people's psychology, this will be extremely beneficial. As a result many people will harmonize the rhythm of their diverse ideas and ideologies and progress together, thereby gradually transforming the inherent individualism and disparity of social life into one symphonic chord, one unified rhythm, which will become the genuine prototype of a healthy human society.

This idea of oneness is fundamentally a spiritual idea. Individually and collectively human beings will have to accept the Supreme and the path to realize the Supreme as the highest truth, and this will have to be recognized as the highest goal of human life. As long as

human beings do not do so, the human race will find it impossible to implement a sound, well-thought-out plan of action for social progress. No penal or social code, no matter how well-planned, can liberate society. Without a spiritual ideal, no social, economic, moral, cultural or political policy or programme can bring humanity to the path of peace. The sooner humanity understands this fundamental truth, the better.

Virtue and vice are both distortions of the mind. That which may be considered good in one particular temporal, spatial or personal environment may be considered bad in another. A country generally bases its penal code on the concept of virtue and vice which prevails in that country, and the concept of virtue and vice in turn is based on accepted religious doctrines. In my opinion virtue is that which helps to expand the mind, by whose assistance the universe

increasingly becomes an integral part of oneself, and vice is that which makes the mind narrow and selfish. And the realm to which the mind of a person engaged in virtuous activities travels, is heaven, and the realm where the mind of a sinner races about in a wild frenzy, is hell.
I do not see any reason to discuss the ideas contained in the various religious scriptures.

A Universal Penal Code

Finally, it is my sincere belief that, except for those social problems which are caused by geographical factors, the solution to all complex social problems may be found by implementing a universal penal code, one which is applicable to all humanity. It is not desirable for different laws to bind different peoples, countries or communities. All human beings laugh when they are happy, cry when they are sad and mourn when they feel despair, and all need food,

clothing and housing; so why should people be separated from each other by artificial distinctions?

The constitution of the world should be drafted by a global organization recognized by the people, otherwise the possibility exists that at any moment a minority in a country might be persecuted. Everyone knows that when a revolutionary is victorious in the political struggle of a country, he or she will be considered a patriot, and when a revolutionary is defeated, he or she will face death and be branded as a traitor despite his or her innocence. In nearly every country the law is based on the opinions of powerful people, and their autocratic style cannot be questioned. But is such a situation desirable? Does this not undermine civilization? That is why I contend that laws must be drafted by a global organization, and, further, that the supreme

authority to judge or to try a person should be vested in that organization. If that global organization then refrains from interfering in the internal affairs of countries, powerless groups or individuals will be forced to lead the lives of virtual slaves, in spite of written assurances that they are free.[6]

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Footnotes

(1) The ripus, or śaḍaripus (six enemies), are underlying mental weaknesses which cause immense harm to people. They are: káma (physical desire); krodha (anger); lobha (avarice); mada (vanity); moha (blind attachment or infatuation); and mátsarya (jealousy). –Trans.

(2) In the Dáyabhága system the heirs' right of inheritance is subject to the discretion of the

father, who has the right to disinherit any of the heirs. –Trans.

(3) After the Suicide Act 1961 was passed by the British Parliament, it was no longer an offence to commit suicide under English law. –Trans.

(4) These books contain mainly stories and codes of conduct. (While they have all provided social and ethical guidance to Indian society in their respective periods, only the Rámáyańa and the Mahábhárata continue to be extremely popular today.) –Trans.

(5) The Sarda Act was intended to prevent the marriage of girls below the age of fourteen. –Trans.

(6) For further discussion on a global constitution, see "Requirements of an Ideal Constitution" in Volume 3. –Eds. [Footnote used in the *Prout in a Nutshell Volume 1 Part 2,* 1st edition, publication of this article.]

Various Occupations

That which keeps something alive is said to be its vrtti [occupation]. The [[pabula]] on which the mind depends for its existence and development, or the objects on which the mind ideates, are one's mental occupation. The subtlest feeling a person can experience, which fills the mind with bliss, can be said to be one's spiritual occupation. In the same way there are various physical occupations which preserve one's physical existence and maintain the body. A means which one adopts to stay alive in the physical sphere is called an occupation; for

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example, one may be a doctor, a teacher, a businessman, etc.

It requires very little thought to realize that the different occupations create divisions between human beings. As a result people who lack high ideals usually form groups. The psychological reason is that the people's feelings are shaped by the nature of their occupation. And these feelings together with the identical nature of the people's mental occupations encourage the formation of groups. No matter how intense their professional jealousy or rivalry, a lawyer will seek out the company of another lawyer, a soldier that of another soldier, a doctor that of another doctor, and a renunciant that of another renunciant.

A detailed analysis of human psychology will clearly reveal that because psychic pabula are connected to matter due to the need to

preserve physical existence, they are strongly influenced by matter. However, if a person has high ideals, his or her materialistic ideation will be transformed into psychic ideation which in turn will develop a spiritual quality. One will thus acquire the capacity to rise above group [groupist] psychology.[1] But due to an absence of spiritual idealism and universal outlook, some of those engaged in different occupations become exploiters instead of assets to society. They completely ignore the fact that their individual or group interests are not separate from, but are a part of, the collective interest.

Lawyers

Let us start by discussing lawyers. I do not belong to a particularly fastidious or orthodox section of society. The popular allegation that lawyers earn their living by deceiving others and by encouraging litigation is, according to my

understanding, not totally correct. But is this frequently-made allegation totally false? Although it cannot be proved conclusively, we can say that in general most lawyers would like disputes in society to continue.

After the abolition of the zamindary system in a certain state of India, a lawyer complained to me, “Before the abolition of the zamindary system, there were constant lawsuits between one zamindar and another as well as between a zamindar and the people under his jurisdiction, and we used to earn money from this. But now the people who used to be under the jurisdiction of a zamindar do not have to come to court, and the number of civil and criminal cases has declined.” Just imagine! The good lawyer said this because he was concerned about his livelihood. In his personal life he was extremely honest and peace-loving, but the

nature of his profession encouraged him to support disturbances, feuds and murder.

Though they understand the magnitude of their clients' crimes, competent lawyers, due solely to financial greed, use their intelligence and clever arguments to get criminals honourably acquitted. Such actions certainly do not help to preserve the purity of society. Are not those who lead society into the quagmire of sin in order to further their individual interest and for financial gain as guilty as criminals? If, in the eyes of the law, associating with evil people is regarded as an evil, the attempt to help criminals avoid corrective measures (I do not like to use the term "penal system" because I am not ready to accept at all that one human being has the right to penalize another) is most certainly an antisocial action.

There is yet another and more serious consideration in regard to this sort of conduct. The process of passing a judgement does not end when a criminal is released from the corrective system. Sometimes criminal leaders derive sadistic satisfaction from seeing innocent people victimized. Cunning lawyers, when they become directly responsible for the victimization of innocent people, definitely commit a greater crime than criminals.

In spite of all this, I do believe that lawyers are necessary and have an extremely important role to play in society. Common people often cannot express themselves coherently. During a trial a frightened, nervous person sometimes behaves in such a way that his or her facial expressions arouse suspicion in the mind of the judge, which in turn influences the judgement. It is indisputable that lawyers are needed to protect common people from such dangerous

situations. Apart from saving the innocent, lawyers can and do help to save criminals from unjustifiably harsh sentences which stem from prejudice or strong bias.

If supporting the guilty is an antisocial activity, is it not antisocial to appeal for leniency on behalf of the guilty? In my opinion, no. It is a lawyer's duty to see that a person is not severely punished for a small crime. It is the lawyer, and not the public, who should clearly explain to the judge the sort of circumstantial pressure that forced a criminal to commit a crime and the extent to which the criminal was responsible (or not responsible) for the creation of these circumstances. Considering that criminals are human beings and helpless during their trials, it is certainly not a crime to provide them with proper representation. That is why I do consider it an injustice to call lawyers social parasites.

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They are an indispensable group of intellectuals in society.

Although I do not doubt their intentions, I do feel that those who advocate the arbitration and panchayat [village council] systems in order to reduce the cost of lawyers, should not entrust the functioning of the judicial system to the whims of an individual or a particular group. The subtle intelligence that is required in judicial procedures cannot generally be found among the majority of members of arbitral bodies or the leaders of village councils. If the selection of those on arbitral bodies and village councils is entrusted to experienced judges, it may be possible to hope for good judgements from them, but it may also turn out that those selected, despite their integrity and sincerity, pass a wrong judgement at any moment due to insufficient or incorrect knowledge of the law. Such mistakes are not normally expected from

lawyers. If somebody wants to extensively implement the arbitration and village council systems in order to teach the members of the legal profession a lesson, he or she will have to agree that, for the sake of public welfare, the members of such bodies should be selected, not elected. Of course only lawyers should be eligible for selection. Such an approach is not bad.

There was a time when lawyers had both prestige and money, but today they are on the verge of losing both. Many lawyers who have little work start giving fiery lectures from political platforms. I am not suggesting that none of them are dedicated to social service. Still, most of them do not aim to serve their country but simply to solve their personal problems. They think, “It would be good if I could further my political ambition. One day I may be elected a member of parliament or even become a

minister. If this does not happen it does not matter, because my work situation will still improve due to the political support of my party." Today educated people can easily understand the motives behind their fiery lectures. Very little investigation is required to reveal that in democratic countries politics is full of lawyers who were unable to secure briefs. No other profession than this has so much scope to exploit people in the name of public service.

But why is this so? Are they alone responsible for their deceitfulness and mental degradation? Certainly not. I do not blame them in the slightest. In order to obtain their basic necessities, poor intellectuals use these kinds of psychic means instead of stealing or committing armed robbery.

The implementation of various economic-development projects should be increased, and

the number of lawyers should be reduced. In the field of education, students should give most importance to the study of science and technology, followed by commerce and then the arts. Only talented arts students should be given the opportunity to pursue higher studies in the arts. A small percentage of these students should be encouraged to study law, provided they can demonstrate proficiency in sociology, civics, political science and logic. It is not at all desirable to encourage immorality by providing unlimited opportunities for students to study law, thus overcrowding the profession.

Doctors

Shatamárii bhavet vaedyah sahasramárii cikitsakah ["If one kills a hundred people, one may qualify as a quack, but if one kills a thousand people, one can qualify to be a doctor"]. It is both amusing and infuriating, yet it

is true. Like an old barber, a young doctor cannot be trusted. But this is not the end of the matter. It is possible to earn the name shatamárii [one who has killed a hundred people] or sahasramárii [one who has killed a thousand people] by killing mice or guinea pigs in laboratory experiments, but is it not tragic if the killing continues after one has qualified as a doctor?

No matter what country you belong to, tell me honestly, how many doctors can you really trust and respect? Among the doctors you know, you may believe in one or two at the most, but those who have won your faith may or may not command your respect. In other words, the doctors whom you believe in, who can cure a patient, are not accessible because they cost too much. In such circumstances your confidence in the ability of doctors remains intact, but you cannot consider them as friends; nor do you

have any real proof of their humanity, hence you cannot give them your respect either.

Moreover, the medical profession as such has more to do with social service than with professionalism. Social service is the main aim of the medical profession. But then social workers cannot live on air, so they have to accept some money for their livelihood from the government, autonomous bodies, public institutions or ordinary people: in short, from those they serve. To be a doctor may appear to be a way of earning a living to an unemployed person, but it cannot be categorized as a business under any circumstances. A helpless person, no matter how great his or her financial, social or intellectual capacity, considers a doctor to be a ray of light in the darkness or a lifeboat which can save him or her from drowning.

Of all the doctors you have come across, how many are idealistic and dutiful? If you visit a doctor, he or she will prescribe strong medicines for a light illness. This will inevitably be the case if he or she owns his or her own dispensary. But the same will be the case if the doctor operates a “chamber practice” out of his or her home; he or she will force some patent medicine down the patient’s throat. The doctor’s special “mixture” will also be prescribed as a matter of course. Here, of course, I am referring particularly to allopaths. The most disconcerting thing is that they frequently diagnose a case by guesswork. An examination of the blood, stool or urine often reveals that their diagnosis was totally wrong; yet the patient depends on the doctor’s guesswork and as a result is required to swallow medicine after medicine. Is this not deplorable? What a cruel joke that doctors do such things to helpless patients!

Methods of medical treatment:

Current methods of medical treatment can be roughly divided into three groups.

The most common method is to fight disease with strong pills and injections. Allopathy, ayurveda and hekemii [hakims](2) can be included in this group because they use strong medicines and also poison as a medicine, although their methods of diagnosis and remedies differ. In this method of treatment the selection of medicines involves great risk, because more emphasis is placed on the indications of the disease than on those of the patient, and because of the possibility of causing death.

The great danger in diagnosing illnesses and prescribing medicines according to the germs and diseases present in the body is that it

is nearly impossible to arrive at a firm conclusion about the precise nature of germs. Whether diseases are caused by germs or germs are created from diseases which are caused by other factors is a matter of controversy.

The symptoms of one disease may be identical to those of another, and the remedy for one may prove to be completely ineffective or even harmful in the case of the other. Moreover, as poisons are used, they may seriously affect the vitality of the patient. Just imagine, if the doctor is incompetent or is completely motivated by a business mentality, what will the plight of the public be?

There was a time when diagnosing illnesses and prescribing medicines were not very difficult because diagnoses were based on three constituents of the body – air, bile and phlegm – with blood as a fourth constituent. But

increased physical and glandular complexity has led to a corresponding increase in the number and complexity of diseases. So to what extent can this method of diagnosis be useful to a doctor? Is it not simply guesswork to prescribe medicines for a particular disease when the medicine is prescribed for the disease but the disease is diagnosed according to the bodily constituents? If you mentioned this to an allopath, ayurvedic doctor or hakim he or she would probably hand over his or her stethoscope or mortar and pestle and reply, “Here you are, sir. You had better treat the disease yourself.” This, of course, is an angry remark. While I recognize that a lay person should not have the audacity to counsel a doctor, I must also point out that everyone has the right to consider the merits and demerits of a particular type of medical treatment.

The principles, application and philosophy of homoeopathy are completely different from the above medical treatments. Homoeopathy treats the symptoms of the patient, not the disease or its symptoms. So there is very little possibility of causing harm, even if the diagnosis is not quite correct. A doctor with good powers of observation and a subtle sense of discrimination can easily prescribe remedies according to the patient's symptoms. Another speciality of homoeopathy is that medicines are administered in subtle doses, not in the form of strong tablets, and such doses quickly become active in the molecules of the patient's body as well as in his or her mental sphere.

The greatest difficulty with homoeopathy is that it is based upon the subtle intellect of the doctor, and to achieve such a degree of subtlety regular, sustained effort is absolutely essential. Yet homoeopathic treatment is generally quite

slack, and slackness is particularly evident in the proficiency of homoeopaths. Anybody can become a homoeopath by studying a few books. No one will object. In most countries there are no proper regulations either.

Surgery and injections are not acceptable to homoeopathic philosophy, but in certain instances the need for surgery as well as injections cannot be denied. Nowadays of course surgery is gradually being incorporated into homoeopathy. This is definitely a positive development.

Naturopaths do not believe in using medicine. They think that it is possible to cure patients through the gifts of nature only – through earth, water, light, heat and air, together with a proper diet. I do not deny that this is possible, but it is also often difficult to gradually and completely attune the body to nature.

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People should recognize that medicine does not cure disease, rather nature cures disease with the help of the body's own healing power. Medicine only helps to accelerate the activity and speed of the healing process.

In cases where disease is caused by unnatural activity, I do not see the harm in using medicines to help nature. Just as earth, water and air are medicines, are not various types of medicines also prepared by selecting ingredients from nature? Of course precautions must be taken when using medicines to help the healing power of the body, to ensure that they do not cause physical side-effects or psychic disturbances. Where a person has not engaged in unnatural activity, he or she may still contract a disease due to pollution in the air, earth or water. In such cases is it possible to attune the body to nature? Furthermore, the diets and

lotions prescribed by naturopaths are often very expensive and beyond the means of the poor.

Ápascavishvabheśajii ["Water is the universal remedy"]. I do not disagree with this assertion of the Rgveda. However, although I have a deep regard for various aspects of hydropathy and naturopathy, I do not see any reason to support the view that all types of medicine and surgery are harmful. Biná cikitsáy yata lok mare tár cáite beshii lok cikitsáy mare ["More people die with medical treatment than without it"] – nor am I prepared to accept this view, because in the acute stage of an illness even very poor people get or try to get medical treatment. I do not think such views are worth commenting on.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the majority of those who die while under the care of doctors die due to incorrect diagnoses and

wrong prescriptions. All medical systems can be equally faulted for wrong diagnoses; but as far as wrong prescriptions that lead to death, in my opinion more blame should fall on those who use heavy doses of medicine.

The welfare of the patient should be the main aim of the medical profession, regardless of the philosophical or logical ramifications of a particular system of medicine. Doctors may find it somewhat difficult to work with such a principle, because it is unreasonable to expect them to be experts in all the medical systems. In reality, it is highly unlikely. Nevertheless, what is not possible in a doctor's chambers may be possible in a hospital.

In the hospitals of some countries the welfare of the patient is given top priority and the patient is treated accordingly. Immediately after being admitted, he or she is thoroughly

examined by an appropriate board of doctors who determine the most suitable system of medical treatment. In other words, if the patient's disease can be easily cured by allopathy, he or she will be treated by an allopath; if by homoeopathy, by a homoeopath; if by naturopathy, by a naturopath; and so on. If various types of treatment are available, changing from one type to another will not be difficult in the event of the patient not responding to a particular type of treatment.

The healing power of nature: The healing power of nature cures disease; medicine only helps nature. The mind of the patient helps to activate the healing power of nature. If a doctor in whom the patient has complete faith prescribes water instead of medicine the patient will be quickly cured, but if the patient regards the doctor as a quack the disease will not be cured, even if the purest medicines known to

medical science are prescribed and properly administered. It is obvious then that the disease is actually cured by the power of the mind, the medicine being secondary.

However, I do not support orthodox psychologists who believe that all diseases can be cured by psychological treatment, because psychological treatment does not work in all cases; it just cannot. Those who believe, as idealists do, that only the mind exists and not the five fundamental factors[3] (of such idealists Lenin said, “They believe that there is a mind but not a head”), argue that the mind is responsible for all diseases. But does mind alone determine human existence? Does not the mind, which becomes agitated when the physical body is pinched, depend on the physical body? Taking hashish, marijuana, opium or wine causes a peculiar change in the mind. This is but one

proof of the mind's dependence on the body and its nerves.

A disease can be mental or can be physical. Similarly, medicine may be mental or may be physical; hence it is most desirable and productive if both kinds of medicine are administered simultaneously in all diseases, whether they are physical or mental. Those who only believe in psychological treatment for mental disease know from experience that such treatment will not permanently cure the disease and the patient will soon relapse. Only where, along with psychological treatment, guidance concerning diet, bathing and behaviour is given, and to normalize the diseased glands of the body medicines prepared from the five fundamental factors are prescribed, can the disease be permanently cured.

In the same way, if patients suffering from a physical disease are given proper medicine, food, light and air but at the same time are subjected to constant criticism and humiliation, it will be difficult for them to fully recover. Even though some people have everything they physically need, they become mentally debilitated, like a worm-eaten, withered flower. So it is evident that patients suffering from a physical disease need proper psychological treatment and a congenial environment in order to maintain their mental health.

The conduct of doctors and nurses: The patients' faith is more important than medicine in curing a disease, but where does their faith come from? From the conduct of the doctors and nurses, who have to win their confidence and inspire them with faith. Labourers perform manual work in order to earn their livelihood; they therefore dig the ground without regard for

the earth. The relationship between doctors and patients should not be like this. Doctors must use all the qualities of their minds to win over their patients. It will certainly not add to the glory of any country or government if doctors and nurses complain, “Because of the tremendous pressure of our work, we have lost all our sympathy, tenderness and sweetness.”

But to become mechanical due to the pressure of work, on the one hand; or on the other hand to show a lack of humanity by selling hospital medicines on the black market in collusion with dishonest traders, or by illegally using food, such as fruit and milk, allocated for patients; are certainly not the same thing. Can doctors and nurses involved in such activities defend themselves against the accusations of the public? Exasperated by such dishonest, exploitative bloodsuckers, the public often severely criticizes the government. However, in

my opinion the government is in most cases not to blame. Of course it is quite a different matter if the government sanctions insufficient money to properly maintain hospitals, but in most cases this is not the problem.

In medical institutions where the public is made to suffer, you can be sure that improper dealings exist from top to bottom (that is, from the chief medical officer down to the orderlies and sweepers); there is an immoral association among these thieves, regardless of their rank. They are all experts in the art of exploitation – they all share the spoils. Needless to say, in such places neither the doctors nor the hospital can ever inspire faith or confidence in the minds of the patients. This is the reason that today, even after the lapse of half the twentieth century, I notice that in many countries people are still as afraid of hospitals as they are of prisons.

People try to keep out of the hands of doctors just as earnestly as they try to avoid the claws of a tiger. Doctors who operate “chamber practices” out of their homes we may be able to tolerate, but those who themselves dispense patent medicines never let a patient leave without selling him or her ten or twenty rupees worth of medicine, whether he or she needs it or not. These words may seem harsh, but anybody who has had such an experience will agree with what I have said.

Our complaints are endless. In every sphere of society there is a terrifying conspiracy. Patients are completely helpless. When we discover deficiencies in those who have made it their life’s work to cure patients of their diseases, we naturally become all the more offended and begin to complain bitterly. But while complaining we fail to notice all the difficulties that doctors and nurses have to face

in their daily lives. If we discuss such matters not as patients but as human beings, then perhaps we might see that those against whom we have a long list of complaints have been forced by society, consciously or unconsciously, to get involved in antisocial activities.

Those doctors who continue to treat patients as their friends and serve society as genuine social workers while living in an antisocial environment deserve our deepest respect. But what should be done with those who are incapable of doing this, who are full of sin and can be described as antisocial bloodsuckers? According to criminology we may find among such doctors criminals due both to instinct and to poverty. To rectify them corrective measures will have to be taken, such as providing them with a proper education, imparting a proper ideology and creating a proper environment. A dishonest doctor or

nurse is more harmful to society than an ordinary criminal, because such doctors and nurses not only harm society directly, they also add to social problems by not performing social service according to their capacity. Their problems should be seriously and sympathetically considered and their difficulties should be immediately solved.

I once knew an extremely honest and capable doctor who suffered greatly due to lack of money during the last years of his life. While active he was a dedicated, exemplary social worker, but when he became physically incapacitated society failed to recognize this. Is it any wonder that such circumstances force doctors to become mercenary?

I have encountered some doctors such as this who did not exploit their patients. Not only did they not take fees from poor patients,

sometimes they provided medicine free of charge as well. But some patients think, “If a doctor distributes free medicine, he or she must have an ulterior motive,” so they would rather not visit such doctors. Some of these doctors are forced to maintain their families by private tuition. Perhaps that is why we hear many people say, “The medical profession is a business like any other. Can such a business prosper without doing anything wrong? It is impossible to run a business if one is totally honest.”

Let me recount an incident that occurred several years ago. In 1940 I went to a homoeopathic pharmacy. With me was a boy of twelve or thirteen, the younger brother of an acquaintance. I had gone there for some medicine for the boy. The doctor took pains to examine the boy properly, then prescribed some medicine. He said, “Please return with his

medical report on Saturday afternoon." I replied, "Will Saturday morning not do? On Saturday afternoon I will be going out of town; I will be going home." Further discussion revealed that we came from the same district and our homes came under the jurisdiction of adjacent police stations on opposite sides of a river. The doctor then asked me to return the medicine and said, "I am giving you another medicine." When I asked why he said, "Both medicines are good, but I give the first medicine to people I do not know because it takes a little longer to cure the patient, hence I sell more medicine. Sometimes I am requested to make house calls too. What can I do, sir? Character is the first casualty of want."

This incident is neither to the doctor's credit nor to that of society. The doctor is losing his character due to poverty, caused in turn by a defective social system – isn't this true?

Sociologists will agree that it is not desirable for those who are involved in saving lives to face financial difficulties. If in any country the people believe that they have more doctors than necessary, the study of medicine should be strictly supervised so that only competent and talented students have the opportunity to become doctors. That way, by reducing the number of unwanted doctors, those who enter the medical profession will be able to earn sufficient money with the cooperation of society and the state. In the absence of want, there is no risk of their losing their character.

But what is the situation in the world today? How many countries can claim to have more doctors than they need? In most countries there is a shortage of capable doctors. And in those countries where there is little or no shortage of doctors, ordinary people are often unable to get medical help because of financial

difficulties. As a result capable doctors also experience financial difficulties which compel them to become involved in antisocial activities.

To eliminate the financial difficulties faced by doctors, temporary arrangements can be made. For example, young doctors who have financial difficulties can be sent from countries with surplus doctors to countries with insufficient doctors so that they can get the opportunity to earn a living and serve society. Education will be necessary to overcome attachment to a particular country.

Criminals are of many types and so are criminally-inclined doctors. As with criminals due to poverty, there is also no dearth of criminals due to instinct in the medical profession.[4] These monsters in the form of doctors (colloquially speaking, cámár ḍáktár [vile, low-class doctors]) are the scourge of

society. Sometimes they behave so atrociously with helpless people – manipulating dying patients for the sake of money – that I really do not like to consider them as human beings. Such hellish creatures can be found in nearly every large or small city. Very strong measures should be taken against them with the active cooperation of society, the state and socially-concerned doctors.

Once I heard about a doctor, standing by the bed of a poor, distressed patient, who said in an authoritarian way, “You must pay my fees at once. I won’t listen to any excuses.” A poor relative of the patient left the house in despair, borrowed money by giving an IOU (I owe you; Acknowledgement of debt), and paid the doctor’s bill. I doubt whether a country can be considered civilized if the strictest reform measures are not taken against such human demons.

I once saw with my own eyes a well-educated doctor snatch a bottle of medicine from the hand of a female patient who had offered twelve instead of fourteen annas for the medicine, saying, “Must I wait till you bring me the two annas from your house? When I was studying in medical college, would the college authorities have allowed me to continue studying had I paid my monthly fees in arrears?” As she was an uneducated rural woman, she could not fully understand what he was saying. But with that humiliating rejection, she had to return home weeping without the bottle of medicine. Although this incident took place a long time ago, it remains indelibly etched on my mind.

Good and bad exist everywhere. But regrettably, among the multitudes of the “bad,” the “good” are in danger of being lost. The

harshness of reality becomes glaringly apparent if we consider the medical profession as a reflection of society. On the one hand there are good doctors sincerely serving poor patients on their own initiative, and on the other hand we may observe immature young doctors proudly boasting to each other about their career prospects. Regrettable though these things may be, I do not feel that there is any reason to lose hope.

Countless complaints can be made against doctors and the medical profession. Although it would take a lot of space to list them all, let me briefly mention a few: patients have to settle for adulterated medicines unless they bribe the pharmacist; sweepers, orderlies and nurses do not take proper care of a patient's needs unless they are tipped; a patient writhing in pain may be rebuked instead of being given medicine; if one does not call the doctor at least once for a

personal consultation so that that doctor can earn some extra money, one may be unable to secure a bed on one's next visit to the hospital; a medicine that is supposedly out of stock in the hospital can be illegally purchased in a nearby shop at an exorbitant price; without bribing the doctor a sick patient will not be admitted to the hospital; during the compulsory medical examination for a new job, all the medical staff put out their hand for a bribe; the doctor in collusion with the optician fails many people in their eye tests so that they will have to buy glasses; hospital patients are served food which is cheaper and of poorer quality than what they are entitled to; milk and fruits reserved for patients are consumed by the hospital staff; spurious drugs and injections are administered to patients. Such grievances are endless. Some are extremely serious, involving accusations of such irresponsibility that it is difficult to believe that people actually have these experiences.

Usually the public blames the government for such lapses, but in my opinion, if anyone is to blame, it is the public itself. The government is not an individual who accepts bribes or encourages immorality. The government does not support the distribution of spurious drugs. If the distribution of spurious drugs ever does get sanctioned by the government, it is due to the mistakes of immoral officials. They surrender their humanity to the rich out of greed for money. Dishonest business people are aware of their own guilt and are constantly troubled by it, but they receive encouragement from greedy and mentally-weak police and anti-corruption officials. Why not earn a hundred thousand rupees by paying a bribe of a thousand rupees! Most business people wait for the right opportunity with this type of outlook. For these reasons I do not blame the government for such immorality. Now, let us return to our topic.

The key to solving the medical problem is in the hands of the public. This is the actual truth of the matter. One may ask, “Why does the public not do something to rectify the situation?” Some maintain that these problems only occur in underdeveloped countries and that the people there tolerate evil because they are unaware of their rights. But is this correct? In underdeveloped countries there are educated people who staunchly support the different political parties and who can provide the people with leadership. Although they cannot inspire the whole society, they are certainly able to solve some of the problems. So why do they not do so? The reason is perfectly simple. A large section of the upper stratum of society is involved in corrupt practices. That is why uneducated people do not have the courage to raise their voices in protest, prevent immorality and take corrective measures against the

corrupt elements active in every sphere of society.

A large number of clerks, teachers, engineers, government officials and business people who comprise the so-called educated section of society indulge in immorality and corruption in their respective professions. Their weak minds indirectly criticize injustice but cannot directly confront it. Thieves can criticize other thieves in a society of thieves, but they cannot offer suggestions in a society of honest people because their lips will quiver and their hearts will palpitate; the condition of corrupt educated people in the upper stratum of society in underdeveloped countries is similar. The Second World War has further complicated the situation.

The characters of such people have to be transformed and they will have to become

honest, otherwise none of the evils in society will be eliminated, none of the problems will be solved.

So it is madness to hope that the efforts of the government alone will eliminate the problems in the medical profession, as if by magic.

To turn people into real human beings is the burning issue today, the greatest challenge. There are very few people who can take the lead in this undertaking, this sacred endeavour. Today tormented souls look to the purodhás [spiritual vanguard] of society with great expectations.

Politicians cannot provide what is needed. During the last six thousand years of human history, they have failed at every step. Hence, it

would be wise for them to resist the temptation to try and take the lead in any sphere of society.

Business People

Is the medical profession alone floundering in the quagmire of sin? No. Delve into the recesses of any business person's mind and you will find, in most cases if not all, that the garbage of sin collected there has become utterly putrefied and decomposed and polluted his or her entire psychic environment. The situation has become so bad that in most parts of the world embarking on this profession is tantamount to becoming a refined criminal. I use the term "refined" because no matter what type of business a person may start, their success depends upon their skilful use of persuasive language.

Can a business be run honestly? Why not! Of course it can. But an honestly-run business cannot make one rich overnight. In ancient times, when the *varńáshrama* [caste] system was in vogue, managing a business honestly was considered to be the social dharma of Vaeshyas.[5] But today it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for people to run their businesses honestly.

Vaeshyas' means of earning a living are such that at any moment they may fall victim to greed and indulge in contemptible activities. So the vaeshyas of ancient times had the term sádhu [Sanskrit for "honest"] attached to their names to help them to keep the ideal of honesty constantly alive in their minds. They were known in society as Sádhu (which became Sáhu in Prákrta and finally Sáu or Sáo[6] today). History tells us that from ancient times vaeshyas have, by monopolizing trade, frequently

degraded themselves and betrayed their humanity, and that since the Buddhist Age, they have accumulated most of the wealth in society.

It is worth noting that according to ancient social literature, sociologists and diplomats took a series of measures to save society from the greed and excessive hoarding of the vaeshyas. In the first part of the Middle Ages the power of the government, which was controlled by kśatriyas, was used to launch various campaigns whenever and wherever necessary to limit the hoarding tendency of the vaeshyas.

Chanakya said that a business person who becomes extremely rich is harmful to the state. If a king finds that somebody has become extremely wealthy, he should reduce the person's wealth and property by imposing direct and indirect taxes on them. If he does not do this, the vaeshyas may destroy the structure of

the government unless they can make it the tool of their exploitation. Chanakya also said that if the imposition of taxes fails to stop or control extremely wealthy vaeshyas, the king should poison them to death through a secret agent. These are indeed strong recommendations, but in that age of social darkness there was no alternative. Vaeshyas received the good advice that their responsibility was to earn money and undertake charity, not to hoard wealth.

But the vaeshyas of other times and other countries were unable to fulfil the duties connected with their nature. Because the ignorant people of ancient times were more religious, the vaeshyas used to undertake a little charity in the hope of deriving some benefit in their next life. But today in this age of materialism, vaeshyas are not the slightest bit interested in undertaking charitable work in this

life in the hope of gaining some benefit in their next life.

According to Indian social treatises, “Those who donate to others in this life are misers, and those who are misers are actually donors.” This ironic statement was made about hypocritical vaeshyas. “Those who donate to others in this life are misers” means that those who give donations to others in this life have deposited something in their next life’s account; that is, they have successfully arranged so as to maximize their accumulation. And “those who are misers are actually donors” means that misers when they die give up all their hard-earned wealth, because they have not deposited anything in their next life’s account. But the vaeshyas of today are not to be charmed by such humour.

Regarding earning money and hoarding wealth, most vaeshyas today are pishácavats [ghouls]. In Sanskrit pisháca means “one who breaks the neck of an animal and then sucks out all the blood, leaving only the flesh and bones”. In India it is said that it is extremely difficult to understand the nature of these bloodsucking pisháca vaeshyas – because when they drink water, even if it is already pure, they filter it; but on other occasions they drink people’s blood, which, even if it is not pure, they do not bother to filter! Sometimes they kick the heads of their customers, and sometimes they lick the soles of their feet.

Incidentally, the word vaeshyas actually means “those who produce through various occupations”. But today the meaning has completely changed. Today vaeshyas means “those who profit by trading and broking without being directly involved in production”.

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Where profit is the only objective, there is every possibility that all types of selfish and antisocial activities will flourish. In one sense the vaeshyas of developed countries are better than those of other countries because although they engage in activities which are detrimental to the welfare of the public, they generally prefer not to undertake activities which are harmful to public health, due to either their own consciences or people's awareness of their rights.

If, after analysing the economic structure of society, I described vaeshyas from developed countries as polished devils, I would find it extremely difficult to find a suitable term for their counterparts in underdeveloped countries. Such vaeshyas are not satisfied with just sucking people's blood, they often devour their flesh and bones as well; then they beat drums made from the skins of their victims as they deliver religious and philosophical discourses, build

temples and construct lodgings for pilgrims, and undertake various other activities. They criticize materialism and try to retard its progress not because they object to it philosophically or psychologically, but because in a materialistic system there is every possibility that their vested interests would be adversely affected. Although they support spirituality, they are not motivated by spiritual sentiments. The fake spirituality they preach actually injects impotency into society. In their endeavours they are assisted by like-minded exploiters who trade in religion.

There is an unhealthy collusion between vaeshyas and those who trade in religion to try to prevent human beings from forcefully asserting their rights. They try to persuade people that exploitation, the sucking of blood, by vaeshyas, is not an outrage but a law of nature; that it is useless to try to bring about social

welfare by establishing human rights. The exploited people should forget about the world and support those who trade in religion in order to enjoy unlimited happiness in an imaginary heaven.

Now, let us return to our previous subject. The vaeshyas of today have let loose the reins of their greed. Perhaps they can hear the sound of their death-knell. Because they lack a spirit of sacrifice and are not prepared to undergo hardships in order to progress, the great majority of them are unable to find their path in life. They believe that their business will be short-lived, and like Abu Hussain [a fictitious character who became king for a day] they lack discrimination, plundering as much wealth as they can to satisfy their greed without caring about right or wrong.

Among these vicious vaeshyas there are some who project themselves as philanthropic politicians. They also devour the people, but they shed a few false tears. They too have not discovered any real meaning in life. Their only aim is to fool the public in order to prosper in business. They try to prevent class struggle by advocating non-violence and preaching utopian philosophies, although they realize full well that if spirituality, whether or not it is practised in individual life, is not practised in at least an important section of collective life then it will be impossible to remove the economic disparity and exploitation of the vaeshyas without conflict.

Only the small number of good vaeshyas in whom humanism has begun to develop and who have discovered the meaning of life, should be eligible to guide and manage the material affairs

of society. Some among them may say, “What I save, I lose. It is a sin to die rich.”

Business enterprises: Is there any way to escape from the uncontrolled propensities and ghoulish hunger of the vaeshyas? Some argue that all business enterprises should be directly controlled by the state so that people will be free from exploitation. Others argue that all businesses should be run by cooperatives so that people will be able to control their own economic destiny. Still others argue that businesses should be owned by private enterprise, that the state should only indirectly control businesses, and that greedy exploiters should be controlled through legal means; or, if indirect state control is not possible, the state should curb the wealth of the vaeshyas by imposing high taxes. I prefer not to mention the views of those who directly support capitalism, because their opinions are not worth noting.

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They want the shortcomings in society to remain so that they can continue to exploit the situation.

The widespread nationalization of industry cannot be supported for a number of reasons. The two main reasons are as follows. First, if a state is completely dependent on its bureaucrats (it should be kept in mind that no matter what people say, bureaucrats will always play an important role in the structure of a government, because without them the administration cannot function), it will not be possible to properly run all the large- and small-scale businesses and industries spread over the entire country. Officials are required not only to keep accounts, but also to supervise workers. Secondly, it is not possible for state-controlled industries to be as proficient either industrially or commercially as private enterprises which can make any product more cheaply and with greater efficiency than a state-controlled

industry. Without the backing and preferential treatment of the state, state-controlled industries cannot compete with non-government enterprises.

The proposal to run all industrial and commercial enterprises as cooperatives is also unrealistic. This is because a cooperative enterprise is built with the collective labour and intelligence of a group of people who share a common economic structure, have the same requirements, and have markets available nearby for the goods they produce (or purchase). Although an enterprise may be called a business venture and be run using the limited resources of its members, it cannot be called a cooperative unless these three factors are all present. It will not have the fundamental characteristics of a cooperative.

To run a business as a private enterprise under state control is worse than running a business that is completely nationalized, because it will not only suffer from the defects inherent in nationalization, it will also lead to the creation of a group of rich but vikśubdha [disgruntled] vaeshyas in society who in all likelihood will express anti-national sentiments and stoop to any means to re-establish their power. Indirect state control over industrial enterprises and attempts to prevent them from increasing their profits are doomed to failure, because it will not be difficult for business people to deceive the government by falsifying their accounts with the collaboration of dishonest officials. In such a system businesses will not retain the same prices as when they were non-government private enterprises; they will increase their prices due to increased expenditure.

Most countries realize that only imposing high taxes will not be successful once uncontrolled commercial freedom has been granted to business people. In most countries today the revenue collected through sales tax, service tax, income tax, wealth tax, etc., is only a very small fraction of the total revenue that could be collected. Tax evaders are much more intelligent and skilful than those who collect taxes. They are also united by their mutual interests while tax collectors are not. This is because tax collectors fight among themselves for a share of the spoils, remain divided over policies, and show a lack of mutual trust. Hence it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to curb the domination of vaeshyas by trying to force them to pay high taxes. Even if this became possible as a result of tremendous efforts, the common people would not really benefit.

In my opinion we should take a middle path in order to save society from the enormous greed of the vaeshyas. By middle path I do not mean compromising with them and partially tolerating their greed. What I mean is that whatever we do we should do so as to maintain the balance of society. It is inadvisable to act rashly or out of jealousy, because this may adversely affect some spheres of social life, thus undermining the good and honest aspects.

The production and distribution of food and clothing: The most essential things for self-preservation are first food and then clothing. So let us discuss the problems of food and clothing.

In most countries the distribution of food is controlled by business people, and in many countries they control not only the distribution but also the production of food. That is, business people who are farmers in name only own large

areas of land legally in their own names or illegally in the names of others, while the farm labourers, peasants or sharecroppers who are the actual farmers, grow golden crops through their own labour and give most of each crop to their non-labouring masters. Almost everyone in the world today has in principle acknowledged that only genuine farmers should own arable land, and that no third party should come between them and the revenue department of the government. So it must be accepted that in the production of food, the question of ownership by non-producing business people does not arise at all.

But those who are themselves farmers, that is, those who, in principle, can be called vaeshyas, is it proper for them to have individual ownership of land? No, certainly not. The amount of arable land one farmer is capable of farming is not very large, so if he or she owns a

large amount of land, it will not be possible for him or her to efficiently arrange seeds, improved manure, irrigation, etc. Personal problems also sometimes arise resulting in seeds not being sown or harvests not being reaped on time. Hence, the land may remain uncultivated. Uncultivated land is a liability for the human race.

Land is also unnecessarily wasted by demarcating the boundaries of privately-owned land. (Actually it is a complete waste of land to demarcate the boundaries of land where land is of the same level.)[7] It is also difficult to introduce improved methods of cultivation on small plots of privately-owned land. Because of this problem many countries, despite being educationally and intellectually developed, have not been able to introduce tractors, the latest technology and scientific systems in the field of agriculture. If anyone thinks that land should be

owned by individual cultivators because they are deeply attached to their land, we may also argue that those who own land but do not work in the fields have and will continue to have a deep attachment to their land. Actually in this matter we should give more importance to collective welfare than to the sentiments of the individual.

In my opinion all the land in the entire universe is the common property of every human being. A particular individual, group of individuals or state should only have the right to preserve and properly utilize a particular piece of land. No one should need to worry about the ownership of land.

The preservation and utilization of land should be the responsibility of the local government, which in turn should carry out its duty through producers' cooperatives composed

of actual farmers. The disadvantages of private ownership will not manifest if the land is collectively owned in a cooperative system. The use of proper scientific methods will make it possible to increase crop production without much effort.

It is undesirable for business people to have the right to distribute food grains. Only consumers' cooperatives should have this right. As long as the production and distribution of crops is controlled by vaeshyas rather than by cooperatives, it is absolutely impossible to stop hoarding, speculation, black marketing and adulteration in food markets. The slightest weakness in such matters will have extremely dangerous consequences. Such weakness is not at all desirable in those who love humanity and practise politics. It is completely immoral for food grains to lie in the warehouses of black

marketeers and speculators to be eaten by rats while people die little by little of starvation.

Besides food and clothing, fuel may also be considered an essential commodity. Distributing fuel through business people has the same drawbacks as distributing food. Local consumers' cooperatives should have the sole right to distribute essential, though not all, varieties of clothing, and the essential fuels produced in their countries (wood is used in some places, and coal or oil in others) in any given age. Producers' cooperatives should have the sole right to produce essential clothing and, as far as practicable, essential fuels. Where this is not possible (such as where the conditions and climate are unsuitable for spinning thread) the right to produce the associated raw or half-finished materials for a particular industry and to supply them to producers' cooperatives, should belong to the state government or local

autonomous bodies and not to business people. At most, business people should have the right to produce and distribute non-essential foods and fuels, because then there is virtually no chance of their exploiting the common people by exerting undue pressure on them.

The production and distribution of other commodities: Business people should not be given the right to produce reading and writing materials or any commodities not classified as luxury items (such as razor blades, washing soap, etc.) Only producers' cooperatives or the state government should have this right. These goods should, of course, be distributed through consumers' cooperatives. Business people may be permitted to produce and distribute commodities considered to be luxury items.

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Business people should not have the right to produce materials for constructing houses (such as cement and metal products) that cannot be easily manufactured everywhere. Such materials should be manufactured directly by the state government or by large cooperatives which are supported by the state government. Distribution should be directly arranged by the state government or by state-controlled autonomous bodies. Business people should not be allowed to meddle in such matters at all because they will try to create artificial scarcity, to increase the demand for commodities which are in limited supply.

On the subject of housing materials, I have observed that dishonest business people, in collusion with dishonest government officials, compel the owners of incomplete houses to buy cement, corrugated tiles, etc., from black marketeers by creating circumstantial pressure.

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Those who are socially aware and have had bitter experiences in such matters should carefully eliminate the cause of this problem.

As with construction materials, the manufacture of drugs is not safe in the hands of business people.

Out of their greed some people add flour, guŕer bátásá[8] or other things to milk and then demonstrate its thickness with a lactometer, ignoring the detrimental repercussions their actions have on unsuspecting consumers, especially children and sick people. It is not desirable to entrust the production or distribution of any necessary item to criminals who betray society by adulterating medicines, pushing sick people little by little into the jaws of death.

The right to manufacture medicines should be entrusted to autonomous bodies which can distribute the medicines themselves or through consumers' cooperatives. If necessary, certain types of medicines may be manufactured by the state or central government, but it is preferable for them to be distributed by autonomous bodies or cooperatives.

The production and distribution of [non-essential] housing materials and non-essential food items (such as sweets, betel, etc.) may remain in the hands of business people.

Business people should not have the right to manage banks, because past experience has shown that managers who are dishonest business people have seldom protected the hard-earned savings of ordinary depositors. Many have profited by illegally or recklessly

investing the bank's money; their activities have also ruined many middle-class families. The number of middle-class people who have lost the money they were saving for their old age is not small.

The less private enterprise is provided with business opportunities and the more production and distribution is carried out through cooperatives[9] and autonomous bodies, the better. The less the government is involved with the public in the areas of production and distribution the better its relationship with them will be, and the less power the central government has in these areas the better.

Trading: In the area of trade, state governments must have the right to take action against those involved in black marketeering, speculation, adulteration, illegal misappropriation and the creation of artificial

scarcity, but broad-based autonomous bodies (such as district boards or municipal corporations) should also have sufficient power to act. This is because if ordinary people want to take action against a local offender they may have to register their complaint with an individual police officer, then with the police station, then with the sub-divisional administration and finally with the district administration, the entire process taking about six or nine months, and when they reach the state capital, they learn that such matters come under the jurisdiction of the central government and not the state government. This type of situation is certainly not desirable. The state government must have the right to pass and enforce anti-corruption laws.

To eliminate dishonesty in business, free trade should be established throughout the world as far as possible and the speculative

markets of all countries should be immediately closed down.

Actors

I do not believe that all singers, artists or actors who awaken the subtler faculties of mind in others by inspiring them through their art, are business people. (Here I am using the term "business" to describe the people's mental make-up. It is not correct to call artists who accept money for their own or their families' basic requirements business people or business-minded.) However, the vast majority of artists (most of whom are actors) are one hundred ten per cent business-minded. My discussion here focuses on these artists.

The purpose of inspiring people through art is to illuminate the dark and lonely recesses of their minds, to remove their monotony and

make their life joyful, at least for a little while. But this joyful experience is socially justified only when it spreads a sweet feeling of benevolence in all spheres of society. In other words, art should inspire the creation of sweet, benevolent sentiments and the continual reawakening of latent faculties.

Everyone will agree that this aim can only be achieved when there is a sweet relationship between the artist and the audience. It is not possible through business. Art cannot be allowed to remain in the hands of those who exploit artistic endeavour for business purposes.

Today in most countries of the world those who are not business people or who do not exploit art for business purposes but are genuine artists or art lovers, face acute financial as well as other difficulties for the sake of art. Those who exploit art for business purposes

gain name, fame and money and dominate social life. They are the heroes of the youth or the adored goddesses of the cinema-goers. Their pictures adorn living rooms and their autographs are preserved in collectors' albums. Sarasvatii [the goddess of art and knowledge] has to be liberated from her enslavement to Lakśmii [the goddess of wealth]. Ample opportunities have to be provided to talented artists, and the performances of those who exploit art for business purposes have to be controlled. Speculating on theatrical or cinematic productions has to stop.

Some people maintain that the ownership and management of cinemas, theatres and all types of concert halls should be in the hands of artists' cooperatives. Although this sounds like a good idea, it does not merit our full support because born artists keep their minds engrossed in benevolent thoughts in order to inspire

ordinary people, and thus tend to forget about the hard realities of life. They generally lack the practical intelligence needed to run a cooperative. In my opinion the right to own and manage cinemas, theatres and all types of concert halls should be in the hands of local autonomous bodies which are supported by the state government. However, artists should be completely free to select films and live performances and all other activities related to art.

The salaries of artists should depend upon their abilities and the needs of their families. A large percentage of the net profit from artistic events should be distributed among the artists as bonuses. Provision should also be made so that they receive pensions when they retire.

The youth of a country are attracted to artists; it is therefore the duty of society and the

state to monitor these artists' ideals and character. Otherwise they may exert a harmful influence on young men and women who are the future hope of society. For this reason it is essential for artists to have impeccable conduct, a healthy lifestyle and strength of character. If those whom youths respect as ideal men and women possess an ideal character, the characters of those whom they influence will no doubt also be positively affected. In addition, ideal artists and actors who have a strong character will be able to express their artistic brilliance more sweetly and completely. Characterless, drunken or greedy artists will be considered liabilities by their fans and society.

The nature of art is such that in order to develop it subtle intellect and appreciation as well as deep sensitivity is required. Thus, during that time that artists do not devote to their artistic efforts, they often feel compelled to

express their subtle intellect, appreciation and deep sensitivity in a demeaning way. Due to this psychological tendency, we generally find that artists whose singing, dancing, acting or other artistic achievements earn the unstinting praise of hundreds of spectators express their subtle artistic power in quite opposite ways in private life through the pursuit of material gratification. Thus we hear obscene language from devotional singers and observe a strong worldly attachment in detached spiritual aspirants. Those who are fanatically sanctimonious in their youth become immoral lechers in middle age. Actors are no exception.

The only way to save oneself from this kind of psychological degradation is to keep one's mind constantly engaged in the thought of the Great and to always look upon the world with sweet, benevolent sentiments. Artists and actors must never forget this even for a moment

because they have a great responsibility to society and an immeasurable influence over it.

Unlike in the past, people today do not want to establish separate theatrical societies for artists because of immoral conduct. Actors are now a part of society and this will continue. This is necessary in the greater interest of society.

Although actors are not fully accepted in Indian society today, in practice they are becoming or are in the process of becoming fully accepted. So under these circumstances strict vigilance should be kept over the purity of their individual conduct. They should not become the cause of a disease which invades the whole social body like a cancer. If actors and actresses fail to acquire a basic level of personal purity or are reluctant to acquire it, it will be the duty of society and the state to compel them to lead

good lives by creating circumstantial pressure. No matter how talented they may be, immoral actors and actresses will have to be deprived of their right to exhibit their artistic talents, and sent to reform schools.

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Footnotes

(1) 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.]

(2) Ayurveda and hekemii are traditional Indian systems of medicine. –Trans.

(3) All matter is constituted of one or more of the five fundamental factors: the ethereal factor, the aerial factor, the luminous factor, the liquid factor and the solid factor. –Trans.

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(4) For further discussion on criminals due both to poverty and to instinct, and on the other categories of criminals, see “Justice”. –Eds. [Footnote used in the Prout in a Nutshell Volume 1 Part 2, 1st edition, publication of this article.]
(5) “Vaeshyas” are members of the second-lowest caste in the Hindu caste system of India; vaeshyas are those with a capitalistic mentality. –Trans.
(6) Common surnames. –Trans.
(7) Demarcating land with a low mud wall, a foot or so wide, renders that much land unarable. –Trans.
(8) Bátásá are sweets in the form of small, lumpy balls – in this case made from guŕ (raw sugar, boiled sugar-cane juice). –Trans.
(9) For further discussion on cooperatives, see “Agrarian Revolution” in Volume 2, “Farmers’ Cooperatives” in Volume 3, and “Cooperatives” and “Cooperative Production” in Volume 4. –Eds.

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[Footnote used in the Prout in a Nutshell Volume 1 Part 2, 1st edition, publication of this article.]

The end

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