

Russian studies at Princeton University and New York University. He further claims that "Washington continues to blame the Kremlin of the Ukrainian crisis and military aggression against Kiev. Still, the US and NATO leaderships failed to provide any evidence of Russia's alleged engagement in the Ukrainian turmoil. By aggravating further tensions with Moscow over Ukraine's crisis, Washington and its allies risk dealing a severe blow to the current geopolitical status quo in Europe. Russia is still an important element of global security and it cannot be isolated."⁹

On returning to Kiev after Minsk-II agreement, President Poroshenko made clear that moves towards decentralisation of power in Ukraine would be limited, and he completely ruled out Federalisation. On March 17, the Ukrainian parliament (Verkhovna Rada) openly and completely broke the Minsk agreements by declaring the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics "temporarily occupied territories". Rada postpones the introduction of the new status until the regions hold new elections under Ukrainian laws. Anti-Donbass and anti-Russian propaganda hysteria have taken their toll: it is not only the ordinary people at whom this hysteria was aimed that have been filled with hatred towards the residents of Novorossiya, but also the vast majority of Ukrainian politicians.¹⁰ The president has had to fight with members of his own party so that they would vote not even for adopting the bill, but for submitting it to the Constitutional Court for review. He threatened to introduce martial law over the whole country if the peace deal broke down. This would put the army in control, allowing them to control the streets, impose curfews, and introduce censorship, ban parties and mass gatherings. Poroshenko also faces growing difficulties to fulfill the condition of the Minsk agreements.¹⁰

A month after the Minsk agreement the masks are off. New weapons are coming, American instructors are in Ukraine, and the IMF credit is approved. The Verkhovna Rada (Ukraine Parliament) after a day of backroom negotiations voted in favor of a resolution on Donbass. In fact, the documents violate the Minsk agreement. Discussing more on the issue, the Mikhail Ryabov writes that "Firstly, the Ukrainian side has already failed the deadline for the adoption of laws. Secondly, MPs rejected the dialogue

between Kiev and DPR and LPR, declaring the Republics - "occupied territories". Thirdly, the Ukrainian Parliament appealed to the UN Security Council with a proposal for the deployment of a peacekeeping mission, which is opposed by the militia. Moreover, the representatives of Peter Poroshenko had promised that the army will eventually bring Ukrainian order to Donetsk and Lugansk."¹¹

Attitude of People in Donbass towards Peace Process

Many people in eastern and southern Ukraine favour the creation of what they term 'Novorossiya', a political entity conforming to the historical arc of territory sweeping from eastern Ukraine across southern Ukraine to Odessa in the southwest. The term "separatist" or "pro-Russia separatist" is a false as well as derogatory description of the pro-autonomy movement in eastern Ukraine. For many, a decentralized and federated Ukraine would be just fine, provided it is democratic and not run by oligarchs, and provided it can live in peace with its neighbours, particularly with Russia.¹² After the May 11, 2014 referendum, the DPR declared itself independent from Ukraine, yet the international community has denounced your right to do so. Donbass was always a place of enormous accumulated human resources—the place where people of all nationalities united in order to labor together and use Russian as their common language. The turnout at the referendum was about 75%, an average 90% of whom voted for their land to become an independent republic. A couple of days later the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and the Lugansk People's Republic (LPR) were proclaimed. The Kiev authorities saw perfectly well the threat of Donbass liberation movement spreading to the rest of the South-East and, perhaps, even further. This reaction, however, showed Kiev junta that the Ukrainian society had already been properly brainwashed for virtually all kinds of atrocities when the "rebels" were concerned and gave it a free hand in escalating the military operation in Donbass.¹³

The real conflict is between the people of the southeast and Ukrainian government, whom should actually negotiate. Apart from that, the DPR's entrance into the negotiation process means that it will achieve its new status, which Ukraine is trying to prevent. The Donetsk People's Republic is one of



several parties in the conflict, so without its participation, a negotiated resolution is impossible. However, Kiev's harsh stance and attempts to ignore the DPR and LPR in the Normandy Four negotiations is already known.

There are divergent opinions prevailed among scholars regarding the Minsk-II agreement. Brad Cabana argues that Agreement makes central the interests of Russia and Ukraine – at the expense of those who really matter, the people of war-hit Donbass. According to him, "the agreement ignores the referendums held by the people of Donetsk and Luhansk. It effectively ignores their democratic wish to be separate from Ukraine. That type of expression of will cannot be washed away with the stroke of a pen. It remains in the hearts and minds of the people. It was an expression of their will. A betrayal of their collective hopes and aspirations. The provisions for decentralization of powers and "special status" for Donetsk and Luhansk are left meaningless as Ukraine President Poroshenko so blatantly showed by declaring Ukraine will not federalize at a press conference held before he even left the venue of the talks. The list goes on and on."¹⁵ Blaming even on Moscow for the betrayal, Kennedy Applebaum argues that "the sorrow many feel at the loss and abandonment of the Novorossiya vision—abandonment not by the world at large, but by the leaders of Donbass itself. Further exacerbating this loss, which some call a betrayal, is the indifference of the Russian government to the fate of Donbass, as evidenced by Vladimir Putin's avid promotion of the Minsk Agreements and support of the vile and corrupt regime in Kiev."¹⁶

On the other hand, arguing from a different perspective, Jacques Sapir, Professor of Economics at l'EHRSS-Paris and MSE-MGU (Moscow), states that "Moscow's relations with the DPR and the LPR are complex. If the DPR and LPR forces' offensive halted where it did, this was due to Russian intervention. The Russian government made it clear to the insurgents that they had to stop. Here is found one of the paradoxes of the Ukrainian crisis: the countries of the European Union, and the United States, should have taken into account this attitude of Russia's. This was not done at all, which contributed in no small part to convincing leaders in Moscow of the bad faith of their interlocutors. If relations today

are truly difficult between these countries and Russia, this is equally the result of their attitude towards Russia at a time when the latter did everything to calm the military situation. Those who want to ignore autonomy of decision-making in Donetsk (more so than in Lugansk) are making a serious mistake. Naturally, the leaders of the DPR and the LPR seek to be on good terms with Moscow, but their objectives do not necessarily coincide."¹⁷

The Role of US-EU-NATO Alliance

The Americans were not present at the Minsk-II talks. Therefore, it is the first agreement in the framework of greater Europe that must respect the interests of all the partners. Instead of enforcing the accord on Ukraine regime, the United States was the first country to react by sending John Kerry to Kiev and threatening Russia with new sanctions. The British as well as the Baltic States and Poland are ready to follow the line enunciated by US with regard to Ukraine. The differences of opinion on the arms supplies issue do not mean there is a split between Washington and Europe when it comes to support of Ukraine's regime.¹⁸ In general, the format of the "Normandy Quartet" bears the lowest potential for escalation. If the negotiation process were put on hold, the current Obama administration would have to bear higher pressure from the Congress and warmongers demanding more decisive military aid for Ukraine. Such a move might have cause an escalating response not only new escalation of military operations in Donbass, but also pave the way for a real threat of direct Russia-NATO military confrontation.¹⁹

Furthermore, U.S. President Barack Obama's administration has said it is considering harsher sanctions against Moscow and is weighing the possibility of arming Ukraine's military to defend itself. As regards the U.S. position, it is more decisive than the EU position. And making further predictions, it is highly likely that the United States will start shipping more serious weapons to Ukraine.²⁰ On April 17, 2015 290 US airborne troops of the 173rd brigade based in Vincenza, Italy landed in Lviv region at the Yavorov training range to train Ukrainian servicemen to conduct combat actions (Operation Fearless Guardian). The announcement came on US Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt's twitter



account. The 173rd brigade and armed units of Ukraine's national guard will hold joint training exercises under the agreement with the US State Department, according to a *Facebook* post by Ukrainian Interior Minister Arsen Avakov. The Ukraine's parliament (Verkhovna Rada) has already approved the presence of 1000 foreign servicemen till November. British instructors had come before Americans (mid-March) to train the Ukrainian military in Nikolayev. The presence of US paratroops in Ukraine to train government forces is in violation of the Minsk agreement on the Kiev side.²¹

In Minsk, EU leaders were scared that Russia might use military force to get what it wants in diplomacy. Russia's Federation Council has unanimously approved President Vladimir Putin's request to use Russian military forces in Ukraine. Using Russian armed forces abroad only requires approval from the Federation Council. No preliminary OK is necessary from the lower house of parliament, the Duma. The EU has then started taking an active part in the peace process, in order to neutralize the American influence on Kiev and prevent Poroshenko's appeals to the U.S. for military assistance. Having extremely high hopes for the talks in Minsk, Germany and France officials realized that if the peace talks fail, Europeans would lose their ability to significantly influence the situation. Meanwhile, Europeans begin to feel exhaustion on the Ukrainian crisis issue. Few people today doubt the fact that Ukraine is now a "failed country" or "collapsed country". The Ukraine institutions still are under the influence of the oligarchs and corruption is getting worse. The International Monetary Fund discussed the possibility of a \$ 17 billion loan. But the conditions cannot be implemented by the current government without real cease-fire. At best, if paid, it will ensure the financial stability of Ukraine until the end of the year, not more. This money will not replace a healthy economy, and significant trade relations with Russia as well as with the European Union.²²

The Role of Russia

It has been propagated in Western media that the uprising is controlled by Russia or serves for Russia some concealed political purpose. The diplomacy adopted by Russian government since the start of the uprising in the Donbass in April 2014 proves that

it has again and again sought after a peaceful settlement of the conflict through dialogue. It is because the connections of ethnicity, culture, religion and language make such an outcome unacceptable to the Russian people. But it is the Maidan government in Kiev which has constantly chosen war to suppress the uprising in the Donbass.²³ After a 16-hour-long negotiation in Minsk, the capital of Belarus, the leaders of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine reached an agreement to bring peace to the Donbass region of eastern Ukraine. After the meetings ended, Russian President Vladimir Putin states that "There is a set of measures related to the further political settlement, and it includes several positions. First, this is a constitutional reform, which must take into consideration legitimate rights of the people living on the Donbass territory. The second position, which I view as very important, is the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the contact line existing today by the Ukrainian forces and from the line set in the Minsk agreements of Sept. 19, 2014 by the Donbass militias. We are expecting all sides [to the conflict] to exercise restraint in the forthcoming period until the complete ceasefire is attained."²⁴

Moscow's response to the Ukrainian coup d'état has turned out to be one of the heaviest blows to the US-EU-backed project of the "liberal world order" based on Western rules, institutions and under US leadership. Therefore, Washington takes Moscow's actions as a direct challenge to its global leadership. In this circumstance, Russian scholar, Dmitry Suslov, Deputy Director for Studies at the Center for Comprehensive European and International Studies of the School of World Economy and International Affairs, argues that "the very existence and continuation of the negotiation process enables the "Normandy Quartet" to keep Obama's administration in a sort of a rearguard of the political settlement and prevents him from taking the process into his own hands. In other words, it stops him from sending "lethal" armaments and vehicles to Kiev that would have doubtlessly incited a new round of military escalation."²⁵ However, the Russian side suffered a defeat as well. The so-called Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics were not mentioned by any of the protocol's provisions. Due to that fact, the primary responsibility for the conflict falls on Moscow being



a guarantor of the fulfillment of the Minsk II agreement.²⁶

Conclusion

Sovereignty and territorial integrity, and self-determination of peoples, are two intertwined, and at-times contradictory, principles, of international law.²⁷ The above statement undoubtedly applies to the concrete situation that prevails in Ukraine.

The main provisions in Minsk-II agreement concern the ceasefire, humanitarian aid and the principles of constitutional reform in Ukraine. It was signed by representatives of the OSCE, Russia and Ukraine, and the leaders of Lugansk and Donetsk republics in the Donbass region. If the Minsk agreement fails, Ukraine might continue along the path of dissolution as a state, similar to the Yugoslavian situation. Pro-independence sentiment is growing not only in the regions of Donetsk and Lugansk, but it might also spread in the Kharkov, Dnepropetrovsk, and Odessa oblasts.

On the other hand, it can be said that Russia is not interested in any territorial expansion in the east. But at the same time, it is a well-known fact that Moscow views Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration process as a threat to Russia's strategic interests in its backyard.

End Notes

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Iran-Israel Sociopolitical Conflict: Turmoil beyond Uncertainty

Ms. Rasmita Sahoo

Introduction

Iran-Israel relations can be observed by four key periods: first, the period from 1947-53, second, the friendly period during the era of the Pahlavi dynasty, third, the worsening period from the 1979 Iranian Revolution to 1990, and finally fourth, the hostility since the termination of the First Gulf War (February 1991) to till the date. The turning point from cordiality toward hostility occurred in the early 1990s, shortly after the disintegration of the Soviet Union and defeat of the Iraqi Army during Desert Storm, after which distribution of relative power shifted towards Iran and Israel and formed a nascent bipolar structure in the Middle East. The conflict escalated in the early 1990s, as Yitzhak Rabin's government adopted a more aggressive posture on Iran. Israel, the modern Jewish state, and Iran, the ancient Persian one, are two old civilizations with deep roots in the Middle East. The Persian Empire was obviously much vaster than the Jewish entity, and in its heyday extended throughout what would later be known as the Middle East, encompassing even the land of Israel.

Since the early 1980s, Iran has tried to export its model for Islamic revolution, striving to become a hegemonic force in the Middle East. Iran also hoped to restore the glory of the ancient Persian Empire, which is such an important part of Iran's history and a source of national pride. A great Persian civilization had existed long before the original Muslims stormed out of Arabia and conquered Persia, converting the Persians to Islam in the process. The Persians, with all their influence on Islam, were never the political center of the Islamic world, as Iran strives to be now. The new Persian Empire aspires to be a kind of modern-day version of the ancient Persian and Muslim Empires combined. In 538 BCE, Cyrus, who became king of ancient Persia and turned it into an empire, permitted Jews to leave their Babylonian exile and return to their ancient homeland. Since 2005, the former president of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has

repeatedly proclaimed his intention of destroying the Jewish state and expelling the Jews from their country. Although Iranian leaders before Ahmadinejad expressed their hostility toward Israel, his declarations, at least judging by the effect they had, emphasize the Iranian desire to negate Israel's right to exist in the Middle East. According to this Iranian vision, some Israeli Jews, as well as Iranian ones, might be allowed to stay in the region and have certain religious, cultural and political rights, but, as in the situation 2,500 years ago, they would be bound to submit to the new Persian Empire. This policy arose from the traditional Persian perspective that held that nations like the Jews differ from the Persians not only in terms of their religion, but also their minuscule size. As such, they could be no match for the Persians. Obviously, as with the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Iranians have an overwhelming advantage due to the size of their population and territory, but that did not guarantee superiority to the Arabs and would not do so for Iran either. Iranians ought to think of that the ancient Persian Empire fell to a smaller nation that had better armed forces. Israel and the (Israel Defense Force) IDF might also prove to be such a foe. Naturally, in contrast to Alexander the Great, king of Macedonia, the IDF could not conquer a state as vast as Iran, which is also very remote from Israel; however, like the Macedonian Phalanx, the IDF also includes extremely effective units. First and foremost of these is the Israeli Air Force, which could reach Iran and inflict heavy punishment upon it.

Cooperation and Confrontation between Iran and Israel

Given the current state of hostility between Iran and Israel, we may easily overlook the years of cooperative relations between these two states, both before and even after the Islamic revolution. Although such cooperation faced limits and did not remove Iranian animosity toward Israel, it was still extensive at times. Iran's tacit military, economic, and



intelligence cooperation with Israel during the Shah's time was based on common geopolitical interests, including fears of Nasserite Pan-Arabism and Soviet communism. Although the Shah was sensitive to Arab anti-Israeli sentiment and became more openly critical of Israel after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, he continued Iran's quiet cooperation with Israel based on shared interests. Israel likewise found that it served its interests to form strategic alliances with non-Arab Middle Eastern countries such as Iran to counter hostile Arab states. Such cooperation did not end even after the Iranian revolution, despite the Islamic Republic's avowed ideological hostility toward Israel, as pragmatic interests and common enemies often trumped ideology. Iran continued to see Israel as a valuable counterweight to Baathist Iraq whereas Israeli leaders hoped that Iran would serve as a counterweight not only to Iraq but to the wider Arab world. Hence, pragmatic relations between Iran and Israel continued well into the 1980s, though on a much more limited scale. Nonetheless, cooperation stalled by the 1990s, and, by the following decade, the Israeli-Iranian rivalry emerged as a defining feature of the regional landscape. Israel adjusted to the loss of Iran as a partner. The Camp David peace agreement ended the threat of renewed Arab-Israeli war, which diminished the need for a periphery strategy and close relations with Iran. The Iran-Iraq War weakened both countries, in turn improving Israel's strategic environment. And Tehran's efforts to incite revolution and undermine secular Arab governments, except for Syria, distracted Israel's adversaries.

The 1988 ceasefire between Iran and Iraq removed any basis for secret engagement with Israel. The Soviet Union's demise in 1991 also ended Tehran's fear of a smash and grab attack aimed at the Khuzestan oilfields and a warm water port. The Islamic Republic's interests shifted to seducing Arab and Muslim public opinion, which meant an even harder line toward the Jewish state. Iran's sociopolitical hostility toward Israel was reinforced by ideological and obsessive enmity. Former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is the most visible purveyor of anti-Semitic notions, but such beliefs have circulated among Iran's leadership since the revolution. Israel's support for the ancient regime inflamed these views. A confluence of strategic

interest and religious rivalry has shaped Iran's severely negative attitude toward Israel.

Iran-Israel Proxy Conflict

The Iran-Israel proxy conflict is the ongoing indirect ideological conflict between Iran and Israel. The conflict is bound in the political struggle of Iranian leadership against Israel's conflict with the Palestinians and the counter aim of Israel to prevent alleged nuclear weapons from the Iranian government and downgrading its allies and proxies such as Hezbollah party in Lebanon. Iranian forces are operating in Syria in support of Bashar al-Assad's government. Israel has provided medical treatment for Syrian civilians and rebels, including some members of al-Nusra Front, which has caused strife amongst the Israeli Druze community.

Israel and Syria have observed a truce since Israel reaffirmed its control over most of the Golan Heights in the 1973 war, but the Syrian Civil War, which began in 2011, has led to several incidents of fire exchange across the once-peaceful borders. The Israeli military is reportedly preparing itself for potential threats should there be a power vacuum in Syria. After Assad and after establishing or strengthening their foothold in Syria they are going to move and deflect their effort and attack Israel, an Israeli official told The Associated Press in January 2014. Some experts say that while the encroaching militant forces on Israel's border will heighten security measures, the advancements are not likely to create significant changes to Israel's policy disengagement in the Syria crisis. It will also certainly contribute to the normalization of US-Iranian relations, which began after the visit of present President Hasan Rouhani on 24th September, 2013, to New York to attend the 68th session of the UN general assembly and his first meetings with President Obama, as well as Teheran's constructive position on its peaceful nuclear program, and willingness to cooperate more transparently in this area with the six negotiators and the IAEA.

But Israel will also have to rethink its stereotypes about Iran and honestly admit that the main enemy today for the entire Middle East, whether for Israel itself, or Iran and most Arab countries such as Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Algeria, Morocco, Sudan, Yemen, Lebanon, etc., is the Salafi radicalism and



Wahhabi expansionism promoted by the reactionary, conservative regimes of Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Iran, in contact with the U.S. over the fight against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria has said that Israel would be at risk if the U.S. and its coalition sought to topple Assad. Hezbollah's October 7, 2014 attack on Israeli forces, it's first declared such operation since 2006, proved the seriousness of the threat. Though the Islamic Republic of Iran has been known for its anti-Israeli stance from the very beginning, its continuous support for Hezbollah evolved into almost a direct confrontation with Israel, as Revolutionary Guards have allegedly infiltrated Lebanon and directly supported Hezbollah during the past decade. The Hamas-dominated Gaza had also been considered a proxy of Iran

Tehran's role in Hezbollah's emergence as a serious regional foe put Iran on Israel's borders by proxy. In the decade following its 2000 withdrawal, Israel concluded that Iran was, in effect, at war. In 2002, the Israeli Navy seized the Karine A, a ship owned by the Palestinian Authority which had been loaded with a vast array of weapons, explosives and ammunition at Iran's Kish Island. Since the mid-1990s, Iran had been funding Palestinian Islamic Jihad and training Palestinians at the Dara Kazwin barracks outside Tehran. But a large arms shipment to the Palestinian Authority was a quantum leap.

During this period, Israel and the United States also tracked large Iranian arms shipments to Lebanon's Hezbollah via Syria. Hezbollah acknowledged these shipments as part of resistance against Israel. In 2006, Hezbollah guerrillas attacked an Israeli patrol along the border and seized two soldiers. A new Israeli government, eager to demonstrate resolve and convinced Hezbollah was acting as a tool of Iran, responded harshly. In the 34-day war, Israel's longest conflict, an Israeli ship was nearly sunk by an Iranian cruise missile and northern Israel was inundated by rockets supplied by Iran to Hezbollah. The war reinforced Israeli views that Lebanon had become Iran's frontline against it.

Scenarios in lieu of Socio-political Conflict

Israel's position as of September 2010 was that Iran's nuclear program is a problem for the international community. Netanyahu has told numerous audiences

that he expected the United States to block Iranian progress toward a threshold or weapons capability. Israelis have little confidence, however, that sanctions will suffice. Nevertheless, Israel's incentives to strike will vary with several concerns:

- =>The effectiveness of sanctions and covert operations to scuffle Iranian efforts
- =>A consensus that diplomatic efforts have been conclusively and irrecoverably exhausted
- =>Confidence that a strike would set back Iran's program by three to five years
- =>Assessment of the effect of a strike on U.S.-Israel relations
- =>Availability of an uncontested flight path to the target
- =>The quality of targeting data.

In the fall of 2010, there was no agreement on some of these factors, especially on the feasibility of an attack. The IDF Chief of Staff, Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi, openly shared his skepticism about Israel's ability to carry out a successful strike. Military action is not likely in the near term, given the pace of diplomacy, the lead-time for sanctions to bite and ongoing talks between the United States and Israel on the way forward. The wild card is an outbreak of fighting with Hezbollah that leads to an Israeli attack against Iran. This scenario might happen, for example, if rockets supplied by Iran to Hezbollah killed a large number of Israeli civilians. Republic of Iran strengthened as a result of Hamas moving away from Iran due to differing positions on the Syrian Civil War. Iran rewarded the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine's pro-Assad stance with an increase in financial and military assistance. Abu Ahmad Fouad, a PFLP political-bureau member said that the group might retaliate toward Israel if the United States bombs Syria. On 10 December, Hamas announced that they have resumed ties with Iran after a brief cut off over the Syrian conflict.

On 15 December 2013 a Lebanese sniper opened fire at an Israeli vehicle traveling near the border area of Rosh Hanikra, killing a soldier inside. Several hours later, the Israeli military said it shot two Lebanese soldiers after spotting "suspicious movement" in the same area. Syrian opposition sources, as well as Lebanese sources, reported that



another strike happened in Latakia on January 26, 2014. Explosions were reported in the city and Israeli planes were reported over Lebanon. The target was allegedly S-300 missiles. On 18 January 2015, Israeli helicopters attacked a Hezbollah's convoy in the Syrian-controlled part of Golan Heights, killing six prominent members of Hezbollah and six IRGC commanders, including a General. On January 28, Hezbollah fired an anti-tank missile at an Israeli military convoy in the occupied Shebaa farms, killing two soldiers and wounding seven. Israel responded with at least 50 artillery shells across the border into southern Lebanon, in which a Spanish UN peacekeeper was killed.

On 25 April 2015, a series of attacks attributed to the Israeli Air Force were made in the al-Qalamoun region of Syria against Hezbollah camps and weapons convoys in two brigade bases. Al-Nusra Front, however, has also claimed the attacks. On 29 July 2015, Israeli airplanes reportedly struck a vehicle located in a Druse village in southwestern Syria, killing Hezbollah men and a pro-Assad militiaman. A second airstrike targeted a military base along the Syrian-Lebanese border belonging to a pro-Syrian Palestinian faction. On 20 and 21 August 2015, after four rockets hit the Golan Heights and Upper Galilee, Israel launched airstrikes in Syria, killing several militants. According to Syrian media, on October 31, 2015, Israeli aircraft attacked numerous Hezbollah targets in southern Syria, close to the border with Lebanon in the Qalamoun Mountains region. Estimated targets included a weapons convoy destined for Hezbollah. It was reported another Israeli airstrike near Damascus airport on November 11 that targeted Hezbollah weapons warehouses. On December 19, 2015, eight people, including Samir Kuntar and other Hezbollah commanders were killed by an explosion in the outskirts of Damascus. According to official Syrian sources, Kuntar was killed by a "terrorist rocket attack". On 20 December 2015, Syrian Information Minister Omran al-Zoubi described the incident as a terrorist operation "plotted beforehand", noting that Syrian authorities were carrying out an investigation to find out how the operation happened. Hezbollah claimed that the building was destroyed by an air-to-surface missile launched by Israeli Air Force jets. On 21 December, 2015, the (FSA) Free Syrian Army

released a video clip claiming responsibility for killing Kuntar.

Iran's quest for power and Iran-Israel rivalry

It is unlikely that a nuclear-armed Iran would deliberately use or transfer a nuclear device, but Tehran's emergence as a nuclear power would nevertheless result in a more dangerous Iran and an even more tense and violence-prone rivalry with Israel. Israeli-Iranian nuclear competition is likely to follow the historical pattern known as the stability-instability paradox, in which the very stability created by mutually assured destruction generates greater instability by making provocations, disputes and conflict below the nuclear threshold seem safe. During the Cold War, for example, nuclear deterrence prevented large-scale conventional or nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union, but the superpowers engaged in several direct crises, as well as proxy wars in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Angola, Nicaragua, El Salvador and elsewhere. More recently, nuclear weapons have made the Indian Pakistani rivalry more crisis-prone even as they have discouraged large-scale war or a nuclear exchange. Similarly, even if deterrence between Iran and Israel holds, Tehran's development of nuclear weapons is likely to encourage Iranian adventurism, reduce Israeli freedom of action and increase aggressive actions by Iranian proxies, resulting in more frequent and intense crises involving Iran and Israel.

Conclusion

Iran-Israel relations have shifted from close ties between Iran and Israel during the phase of the Pahlavi dynasty to hostility since the Revolution and ending of Gulf war. The most contentious issue of the Iranian-Israeli conflict is Iran's nuclear project. The Israeli fear of an Iranian version of a "nuclear solution" might push Israel to launch a preemptive strike against Iran. However, just one blow might not be enough, considering the various measures Iran implemented in order to protect her nuclear setup. Israel should therefore be ready for a long struggle, in which the rear of both sides would be hit. Israel could be part of a vast anti-Iranian coalition, including Arab states that are also on alert, fearing Iran's ambitions, particularly after losing Iraq as their shield. This option remains open should the Western powers not do what the Arabs expect them to do about Iran. From the



Arab perspective, Israel could deter Iran from expanding, carrying the burden in an attack on the Iranian nuclear infrastructure and dealing with Iran's allies Syria, Hezbollah and Hamas. Still, the Arabs, if only for internal reasons, would try to limit and hide any cooperation with Israel. This mutual understanding between some Arab states and Israel would, in any case, be temporary wedlock of convenience. An Arab-Israeli axis would probably not be a great Semitic alliance against the Persians, but it could be a possible solution to what seems as one of their greatest challenges in the near future the Iranian threat. On the other hand, Policymakers should work aggressively to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. The threat posed by a nuclear-armed Iran is neither imminent nor as dire as some observers suggest, but a nuclear-armed Iran would nevertheless threaten Israel's security and increase the prospects for regional confrontation. Even if the deliberate use or transfer of a nuclear device by Iran is unlikely, Iran's emergence as a nuclear power could create a much more dangerous rivalry with Israel than exists today. In addition, a more crisis-prone Israeli-Iranian

relationship would carry an inherent risk of inadvertent nuclear escalation. Only the United States, acting under the right circumstances and with a large coalition, would be able to employ the use of force and manage the associated risks effectively. A nuclear-armed Iran is an outcome that the United States and Israel should work together to avoid. Nevertheless, they ought to do so in ways that will make them more secure and protected.

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Ready to accelerate border talks: China

Pranab had called for a fair and reasonable settlement.

On the eve of President Pranab Mukherjee's visit, China on Monday struck a positive note, saying both the countries have been taking positive steps to manage the border dispute and that it is ready to "accelerate" talks to resolve the vexed issue "at an early date."

"China is ready to work with India to accelerate negotiations and resolve this historic issue at an early date to move forward bilateral relations," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said, responding to Mr. Mukherjee's remark that India wants a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement to solve the border issue.

"We will extend warm welcome to President Mukherjee," on his first visit to China, Ms. Hua told presspersons.

Committed to resolve territorial disputes

"China and India are committed to resolving territorial disputes through negotiations seeking a fair and reasonable settlement, which is acceptable to all," she said.

"In the past three decades and more, the two sides have been taking positive steps to properly manage disputes and safeguard peace and tranquillity of the border area, creating favourable conditions for sound and sustainable development of bilateral ties," Ms. Hua said, responding to a question on Mr. Mukherjee's comments to Chinese media on the issue.

Four-day visit begins today

Mr. Mukherjee, who arrives in the Chinese industrial city of Guangzhou on a four-day visit to China on Tuesday, has told the Chinese media that India seeks a "fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement of the (border) question."

He will reach Beijing on Wednesday and is scheduled to hold talks with President Xi Jinping and other Chinese leaders.

Outlining the steps taken by India and China to resolve the dispute, Ms. Hua said so far the two countries had established a series of working mechanisms including talks at the level of Special Representatives to resolve the issue, besides reaching political guidelines and a three-step road map. The two sides held 19th Special Representative talks here last month.

Increasing influence

"China and India are emerging markets with increasing influence on the international stage. Both the countries are major forces behind world peace and development. We are glad to see that in the past few years China and India have been moving forward on bilateral relations in a sound and stable way," she said.

Recalling Mr. Xi's 2014 visit to India, which was followed with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to China last year, Ms. Hua said bilateral ties had entered a period of fast development.

"We can take that President Mukherjee's visit this time will lead to the implementation of important outcomes during the previous visits of practical cooperation and also forging of close partnership for development," Ms. Hua said. PTI

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courtesy: The Hindu

US Policy Towards Syria: Constraints & Enablers

Ms. Kimberley Anne Nazareth

Who is to blame for the Syrian crisis that has turned out an international nightmare? What started as a regime crackdown has exacerbated into a breeding ground for the IS and all round terrorist activity. The US lacklustre policy towards Syria and fighting the IS has created a crisis in confidence in the Middle East. In 2011 as part of the Arab Spring that initiated in Tunisia and spread throughout the region demanding some form of democracy dispensation. This was true of Syria as well wherein the anti-Assad forces demanded the release of political prisoners. In what is till date considered the most brutal government crackdown that has claimed over 300,000 lives and ravaged the cities of Syria till nothing but rubble is left. So therefore who is to blame , is it the UN for not acting fast enough, is it the US and its President for sitting on the fence , is the Russians and the Iranians who have supported the Assad regime and is primarily responsible for keeping him in power. Or is the regional state who have aided and abetted IS simultaneously expecting the US and its allies to solve the crisis in the Middle East. This paper will deal with the external and internal forces that have driven the US policy in Syria. Decisions are not made unanimously in most cases , decision makers take into consideration the internal and external structure and climate. Though sometimes this may seem appealing for a particular decision, the decision makers have the onus of trying to foresee the repercussions of their decisions. This is what differentiates decision makers. The President of America is considered a global leader a status that is given as a result of America being a global power. Therefore like any leader the president has to weigh political risks. Which is exactly what Obama has done though questionable at times . Though the term 'strategic' gets tossed around a lot, presidents do act strategically at home and abroad (see George C. Edwards III , The Strategic Presidency).

There are various theories that discuss the role of the president in foreign policy. Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, (1999) discuss three theories: the

rational actor model, wherein the president is the centre of the decision making process, the bureaucratic politics model, where the bureaucracy plays a major role and the organizational model. The states that primary responsibility of a president is in no way means exclusive or unlimited authority, Congress has its part to play. But the presidency is an institution on which the Constitution places the duty to protect the Republic. Congress and president also compete (Powell 1999).

The executive primacy theory focuses on the primary role that a president plays in foreign policy. Paul Peterson (1994) states that though the Constitution does not provide president with extensive powers and partisanship affects the powers of the president, they have still managed to wield power, for instance, Jimmy Carter in the SALT II negotiations, the Camp David agreements between Israel and Egypt. In order to further their agenda presidents have two options, they can submit proposals to congress in the hope they respond positively or they exercise unilateral powers. Inorder to pursue this unilateral attitude but have to justify their actions. Bill Clinton also "perfected the art of go-alone governing. However there are institutional constraints to a presidential power. Information sharing is an important aspect. Congressional control over the agenda has decreased but on smaller aspects congress can rein presidential power (Howell 1999). However a major power of congress is over the budget this is especially true during the Clinton and Obama administration when Congress held the president to ransom. President Obama taught Constitutional law and supported the supremacy of the constitution, criticized the Bush administration for unilateral activity. However once in the White House his legal team expanded the powers of the president just like previous administrations had done. There has been a change in legal scholars who worked as legal councilors to Obama before coming to the White and



House and then the change once in the White House. Edelson (2013).

In matters pertaining to foreign policy, unilateralism can be achieved through the executive agreements as well as signing statements. But working with congress has its benefits, respect for the Constitution and joint action with Congress provide the strongest possible signal to both enemies and allies (Fisher 2009). The Constitution is protected in times of emergency, it allows the executive to take action without going through the legislative procedure this is known as the 'Lockean prerogative' and the inherent powers of the president to conduct foreign policy. The idea of inherent powers comes from the understanding or rather the misunderstanding of *Curtiss-Wright*, the idea from John Marshall (1800s) that the president is the sole organ of the nation in its external relations, usurping the war powers. Personality of the president matters, personality of the presidents do play a major role in either being victories or failures (Hargrove 2008). A president's temperament also matters, as Alter (2010), states that Obama had very zen temperament, he was cool, wry and mood never went too high or too low, a mix of calm and confidence may have looked too professional or too serious which many a time stood him in good stead. His strength and resilience were part of his instinct for self-creation, he also had a cool demeanor and a yearning to do something important. He is of the opinion that politics means something, "[that it] could be different and that the voters wanted something different".

Timing is another aspect that matters. In the second term, presidents are far more aggressive than in the first. Foreign policy is an opportunity for presidents to assert their leadership and display far-reaching vision, largely free from domestic political constraints. Without the prospect of another election campaign in sight, presidents feel encouraged to act more boldly on the international front. This is especially true when they face serious internal impediments, such as a divided government, which would prevent them from furthering their domestic agenda, or because they simply lack new ideas and get bogged down in the fight to consolidate what they achieved during the first term (Wieniewski 2012).

Obama & Syrian Conundrum

Presidents most often than not set the foreign policy agenda depending on the factors that influence the time. When Obama became President (2009), he had a full plate on the agenda in matters pertaining to foreign policy this included the rise of Asian states like China and India, America's problems in the Middle East Iraq and Afghanistan as well as a nuclear Iran. On the domestic front, the economic depression as well as the dismal health care system plagued the administration. "Political leaders have long understood the power that comes from setting the agenda and determining the framework of a debate. Politicians in democracies must rely more on a combination of inducement and attraction. Soft power is a staple of daily democratic politics" (Nye 2008).

A number of questions have been raised about Obama following a particular grand strategy. By not following particular grand strategy, Obama has allowed himself to be less constrained and act as per the situation requires one aspect is multilateral retrenchment to curtail US overseas engagement and the second is focused on the performance of this policy. It also includes, domestic rejuvenation, focus on other parts of the globe and winding down the wars. The Obama administration has been willing to assert its influence and ideals across the globe when challenged by other countries, reassuring allies and signalling resolve to rivals. However on the domestic front policies were not well received. (Drezner 2011). The Obama Doctrine, focuses on limited use of military but willingness use force unilaterally, relying on coalitions and rebalancing away from the Middle East. This was clear in the killing of Osama Bin Laden (unilaterally) and the Libyan crisis (multilaterally with the Arab League, UN resolution and NATO) (Sanger 2013). Smart power is also a strategy followed by the Obama Administration. In her confirmation hearings Hillary Clinton (2009, 2014) mentioned the idea of 'smart power'. A CSIS report introduced it in 2006 had coined the term. The idea of smart power was introduced by CSIS after the 2006 midterm loss of the Bush administration. However it has become very much part of the Obama administration. It is the ability to combine soft and hard power. The challenge is to find the right mix. Smart power has worked in some instances and there have been set backs in others (Hallams 2011; Carpenter 2008).

The main aspects of Obama's foreign policy resonate through his speeches and writings. In



Renewing America's Leadership (2007), *Audacity of Hope* (2008b), *Change We Can Believe* (2008a) deal with a number of Obama's core beliefs. Firstly isolationism was not an option. Secondly, unilateral action to eliminate imminent threat should be the last resort therefore forming coalitions and working with the allies and promoting peace not through force should be the goal. Third, moving beyond Iraq, and working to renew American diplomacy in the Middle East, military strength must be revitalised, nuclear proliferation and terrorism are the areas in which a change in foreign policy direction were needed. As well as focusing on Pakistan and demanding more accountability. Fourth, strengthening American alliances is an important aspect of the Obama administration especially since and denouncing unilateralism. Fifth, securing democracy, restoring America's trust in order to lead are other aspects. In his plan to renew America's Promise, the first major concern was to end the war in Iraq the idea was to have a phased withdrawal, launch a diplomatic surge and prevent a humanitarian crisis. The other aspects like restoring trust through American values. President Obama echoed the ideas contained in JFK's speeches. In his speech on accepting the Nobel Peace Prize (2009b), the president said, "*We must direct our effort to the task that President Kennedy called for long ago. "Let us focus," he said, "on a more practical, more attainable peace, based not on a sudden revolution in human nature but on a gradual evolution in human institutions.*". President Obama has tried balancing his idealistic instincts against his reluctance to use military action where the United States does not have a vital strategic interest. The administration is focused on the broader region, where other allies are more important. Obama set the tone for his policy of engagement especially with the Middle East in his address at Cairo. Strategic engagement is an important aspect is based on the assumption that that most states share similar interests and seek to increase global cooperation (Wright 2010). Strategic engagement also means extending combat troops, drone war and expanding sanctions. In attempting to strategically engage the first step was towards the Muslim world, in his Cairo address at Cairo (2009a), "*I've come here to Cairo to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one based on mutual interest and mutual respect, and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive*

and need not be in competition. Instead, they overlap, and share common principles" .He addressed a number of issues including violent extremism, Israel and Palestine, nuclear weapons, democracy, religious freedom, women's rights and finally economic development. His message to Iran on Nowruz (2015) was an attempt at convincing the Iranians on the nuclear deal. He stated, "*I believe that our countries should be able to resolve this issue peacefully, with diplomacy*"

In the NSS (2015) he outlined 'strategic patience and persistence' in matters pertaining to national security. This includes frightening terrorism and more specifically to degrade ISIS/ISIL and make Iraq free from sectarian violence. It also included continued vigilance on Iran. NSS 2010 and 2015 have focused on strengthening alliances. Renewing coalitions with Asia and Russia and strengthening NATO and UN. International cooperation on key issues like climate change, peacekeeping, health care, transnational threats. In NSS 2015, the strengthening of the Asia Pacific alliance took precedence over the Atlantic alliances. A responsible leader must formulate its policy on the basis of some estimation of the nation's existing power resources and their expected future level. If there is a significant mismatch between the capacities assumed it could end badly. Obama's aides often insist that he is an anti-ideological politician interested only in what actually works. He is a "consequentialist." (Ryan Lizza 2011). Gelb (2012), discusses the President's centrist foreign policy towards the Middle East, the Asia pacific, humanitarian intervention and promotion of democracy which has not been consistent. At the same time the author praises Obama foreign policy on an overall level except for his policy towards Afghanistan.

The Tangled Web : Obama, Congress and Syria
In dealing with Syria, one of the biggest constraints was Obama himself and Congress. The president plays an important role in the formation of US foreign policy. However, in the making of US foreign policy a number of actors play an important role. The president's role tends to attract national attention to specific issues and problems that he sees as important. The Constitution is only the starting point, there has always been a tug of war between these two branches of government especially in matters pertaining to foreign affairs. The relationship between



Congress and the Executive branch has always been precarious. Striking a balancing has become more difficult. Negotiating with Iran and reassuring allies as well as Congress has put Obama's leadership as president to the test. Obama's foreign policy is supposed to rely on strategic engagement, persistence and patience. The primacy of the president in foreign policy is like a pendulum moving between the president and congress. In the case of Syria, since the beginning of the crackdown President Obama had been apprehensive about getting involved in the security dilemma. This is in tune with the Obama Doctrine. Obama came into office with a focus on getting America's domestic house in order. In matters pertaining to foreign policy withdrawal from Iraq and greater focus on Afghanistan as well as engaging with the Muslim world were part of his agenda. This was reiterated in his address at Cairo (Obama 2009). At first the administration followed a policy of 'wait and watch' this was especially true as the Arab Spring unfolded. However the US did support the movement that was hoped to spearhead democratic dispensation in the region. However as time eclipsed, they got embroiled in the situation especially in Libya and then Egypt. Under Operation Odyssey Dawn, President Obama not considering the War Powers of 1973 took unilateral action to overthrow Gaddafi. But a few days later under NATO took the lead Operation Unified Protector in Libya and therefore the war powers was not applicable. The attention then shifted to Egypt and Mubarak, after the stepping down of Mubarak the contemplation shifted to Syria. If Obama along with the UN could unilaterally ouster Gaddafi what was the case the problem in Syria which was in a far worse situation (Reuters 2011).

The post Gaddafi Libya had also taught its fair share of lessons and the situation with Congress only added pressure. In comparing the two, So then why Libya and not Syria, first for most Syrian army is stronger, better equipped than the Libyans were, the regional states surrounding Libya has Tunisia and Egypt the birth place of Arab spring while Syria has one of the most volatile combinations, Lebanon, Israel, Iraq, Jordan and Turkey. Looking at it from the relationship among leaders, Gaddafi had no allies while Assad has a powerful ally in Iran and Russia who are willing to use political muscle to keep him in power (Naim 2011). As mentioned earlier, President's weigh the political risks in making their

decisions. In July 2012 the Assad regime publicly acknowledged that they would not use chemical weapons. President Obama warned the regime in drawing the 'redline', stating that if Syria did use chemical weapons the US would use force against the regime (Obama 2012). By 2013, allegations began to swerve around over the use of chemical weapons, however until the US received absolute confirmation it was not going to act, for fear of the Iraq syndrome. A UN Report finally conferred it. (Charbonneau 2013).

Thereafter throughout 2013, the debate continued to rage on over the use of force especially since Congress made it clear that use of force would require their authorisation. Though President Obama believed he was well within his authority as President to use of force he chose an alternative route one that most Presidents have shunned from and tried to avoid. President appealed to Congress to authorise the use of force. What was the reason behind such a move? The reason was primarily because Congress began to exert its authority and demanded a say if the president used force (Shoichet and Watkins 2013; Lewis 2013).

This shocked most of the establishment, however congress postponed the debate, by the time congress came back from their break the Russians had already stepped in and got Assad to agree on some preconditions between the West the US and Syria which included destroying chemical stockpile in return for avoiding an attack. Those in favour of presidential power, felt that Obama was setting a precedent with Congress taking over. The President himself, a law professor, fiercely against presidential unilateralism felt that using presidential power to authorise the use of force was well within the purview of his power, but felt that upholding democratic tradition was more important (Baker 2013).

However there are other reasons for going to congress, legitimising is one explanation, the other is with congress needing to deliberate on which would take due process meant that authorisation would be delayed as compared to Presidential unilateral action. Thus the President could have wanted a delayed reaction. This also meant that Congress and President would share in the blame. The President could also have been scapegoating. From the external



perspective, Obama was still apprehensive considering Assad allies and the way in which Gaddafi's overthrow was received and the repercussions in a post Gaddafi Libya. One aspect of the argument could be that the Russians saved the US President and Congress from voting on a controversial issue. The decision to go to congress, is not always easy but sometimes mandatory depending on the situation. In this case Congress was hostile, with the House being controlled by Republican. However Democrats were also demanding a say.

However before congress could vote on authorisation, the Russian and the US reached a deal and set a time table to turn the chemical weapons over to the inspectors. This of course bought congress time to avoid voting on bill. Thus in this instance it was the presidents reluctance to act and the Russians posturing gave him and congress a way out.

Everett (2013)

When it came to authorisation of use of force against IS the congress once again raised its voice. However many in congress are still apprehensive about the AUMF both sides in congress are unsure about what to do over the authorisation issue. The divide is not completely partisan there are some Republicans, for instance John McCain who support American involvement in Syria but not troop involvement (Phillips 2015; Fuller 2015; Bendery 2015).

This debate in congress did not revolve around use of force but arming rebels as well. This especially true when it came to arming the rebels against the regime. Congress debated and deliberated over the issue of getting on board with the idea of arming the rebels. During the hearings a number of issues pertaining to the political orientation of the rebels was debated. For instant most were considered moderate. This debate also expanded to Assad being overthrown. At every stage during the unfolding of the Syrian crisis the President was cautious though some would argue that Obama was too cautious. It was with the reluctant approval from Congress that Obama sent military aid which included small arms, ammunition and perhaps anti-tank weapons to keep the Syrian opposition going against forces aligned with Assad's regime. Though the Republicans were apprehensive, supported it partially. (Kielar, Yellin and Cohen 2013)

When it came to debating the overthrowing Assad which still continues, President Obama dragged his feet. The Washington establishment was in favour of Assad stepping down but international pressure from Russia and Iran prevented Obama from acting. For the longest time the US administration wanted Assad to step down as an attempt to end the civil war, this was also supported by congress. The Obama administration has toyed with the idea of an overthrow but throughout the crisis has never managed to match words with action. This was thwarted by the rise of the IS not to mention Assad's regional allies in 2013 rise, growth and spread of IS like wild fire through the battlefields and war torn country of Syria which made it an easy target. Liberals argue that had the US intervened the IS would not have had the US to intervene the IS would not have been able to fill the vacuum (Coughlin 2015)

However though there are many in congress who still believe and are still discussing the end of the Assad regime. There are others question this strategy especially the Democrats. But its time to get strategic and not altruistic. The time has passed for government overthrow for the time being at least. This includes Secretary of State John Kerry who admitted that 'negotiate in the end' this is a change in US policy (Pecquet 2015)

Obama strategy against the IS continues to be no boots on the ground, however he has come under fire for his strategy not only internationally but congressional Republicans like McCain and Graham. Lawmakers have been increasingly critical of the administration's strategy against IS. When hearing testimony from top military officials, lawmakers have repeatedly suggested the administration hasn't done enough to counter IS. But simultaneously though Congress criticises, they still have not voted on authorisation of use of force against the IS. The Pentagon also wants to restart its program to train and equip Syrian rebels, despite scepticism from lawmakers after the initiative was shut down last year. Any shift in strategy, however, is unlikely to go far enough to satisfy Republicans such as Graham, who argue U.S. ground troops are necessary (Bendery 2015; Carney 2013).



For Congress there have been a number of issues especially when it came to selling arms to rebels finally after much debate and pondering congress voted to arm rebels Obama thanked Congress for the speed in which it acted to back the plan, which he announced on Sept. 10, and said the strong bipartisan support showed Americans were united in the fight against the IS. There are many that still debate that these wars are illegal as they lack congressional authorisation. Congress has not formally authorised the 'use of force against Syria. In terms of against the Assad regime nor against ISIS. But they still criticise the administration's strategy. The Senate voted 78-22, in a rare bipartisan show of support for one of Obama's high-profile initiatives. With the House of Representatives approving the legislation however this was against the IS (Zengerle and Lawder 2014)

The Bermuda Triangle In Syria: US, Russia & Iran

In dealing with the first the Syrian crackdown, meant not only dealing with congress but the external environment and later the IS and now the refugee crisis, surely seems like failure on the part of the US , but the problem like we have seen above is not only to get the US on board but the regionally countries who are more immediately affected by the ongoing crisis, the threat to security it creates. On the international front, Obama has mustered support against the IS , the international coalition has had some amount of success (Freeman 2014)

The Syrian crisis is a triangulated dilemma, Russia , Iran and the US. The Russian involvement in Syria in negotiating with Assad has been more about getting the Americans to acknowledge that Russia has an important role to play in Syria than about negotiating a truce. It's all about Russians flexing their muscles. There is a great deal of speculation whether the Russians want Assad to step down or not. The Russian military involvement in Syria since September 2015 and the Iranians for longer (Ghitis 2016)

In this case Russia and Iran have constantly blocked any measure that would effectively get Assad out. They have at times toyed with the idea but when made public have denied it , so it could either be false or true Both these are the greatest Assad supporters

which is mainly the reason he is still in power. Not to mention with the IS and the on again off again peace process the Americans themselves have left Assad for the time being. Russia is one of Syria's biggest arms suppliers. Syrian contracts with the Russian defense industry has increased, on the other hand Russia leases the port of Tartus, thus granting it access to the Mediterranean. However one of the main reasons to support Assad is to block American efforts to shape the region and the lack of trust it has in the US, wherein not only is there a threat of nuclear weapons but jihad and terrorism. Iran and Syria are bound by two factors : religion and strategic environment. In the case of the former, Iran is the world's most populous Shiite Muslim nation. The Syrian government is dominated by Alawites, a Shiite offshoot, and the rebels are dominated by Sunnis. Iran counted on Syria as its only Arab ally during its eight-year war with Iraq. Iraq was Sunni ruled but Shia's were the dominant sect. On a strategic front , Iran, Syria is also a strategically is a key ally. It's Iran's main conduit to the Shiite militia Hezbollah in Lebanon, the proxy through which Iran can threaten Israel with an arsenal of short-range missiles. So, it's in Iran's interest to see al-Assad's regime remain intact. Western intelligence officials believe the Islamic Republic has provided technical help such as intelligence, communications and advice on crowd control and weapons as protests in Syria morphed into resistance (Yan 2013). Russia is also playing a key role in the peace negotiations with Assad against IS. Moscow has also intensified contacts with its allies in the Middle East. Now bring the US into this dynamic , the 40 years of broken diplomatic ties between the US and Iran will take a long time to repair, and entrenched mutual distrust will make it unlikely that the two could have a meaningful dialogue over Syria. However though relations between the US and Iran may not be like what they were prior to the revolution the nuclear deal could act as a catalyst. If Syria remains united, it's possible that Iran would not object to U.S. efforts to replace Assad. Thus a de facto Russia-Iran alliance has emerged. It does come with some risks but the advantages outweigh them. However there is more that unites them than divides them. This is especially true with keeping Assad in power as well as dealing with ISIS. Together their military financial resources are sufficient to strengthen significantly Assad's control over the country. Although Russia has strategic interests in



Syria, it has no intention to keep a military presence in the Middle East forever. President Vladimir Putin definitely envisions Russia as a global superpower playing a key role in peace negotiations in the region. But it would not change the strategic interests of either Russia or Iran in Syria. Similarly, the U.S. "wait and see" policy won't help it formulate clear strategic interests and objectives in Syria. It's not possible, after all, to formulate a strategy to achieve a goal you don't even have (Aleksashenko 2015).

Therefore there seems two competing coalitions on the one hand there are US traditional allies and on the other hand there are allies that are not technically allies but still part of the international coalitions this includes Russia and Iran. The US are providing airstrike cover for the IRGC ground forces. During the air-raids, US informed Iran and made it known that Assad was not the focus of the attack. Therefore the US and Iran are working on the same side but are not on the same side. The Iranians have been deeply involved in Syria since 2012 (Orton and Snell 2015). The US also needs Assad in power during the peace process which ever so often is falling apart. Even in the peace process which keeps starting up and stopping , Russia continues to play a major role. Considering they are considerably the only allies. Putin continues to push for Assad to stay in power but on the other hand Washington is getting sick of this game and is now only looking for a post Assad Syria (Meyer 2015).

Conclusion

Now that the peace process has begun, how long it will last and whether a tangible solution will be the end result to this war torn region is a question that will only be answered with time. The idea behind this paper was to portray the different aspects within the state and the manner in which they act to either enable or constrain a particular policy decision. In the case of Syria there were times when President Obama was ready to act but the domestic and external environment were a mismatch. Relations between the two branches has been designed to create a deadlock however when external actors contribute to this, any kind of policy formation becomes difficult. There is no secret that President Obama has had a tough time dealing with congress and this is not only in Syria but in all avenues of policy making and not secluded to partisanship. However in the case of Syria

reluctance along with a great deal of external pressure as well as lack of being able to work together has contributed. The question in this paper is not about whether Obama's policy towards Syria has been a success or failure, the aspect here is that President Obama policy has been influenced by internal and external forces that have their own interests therefore placing the blame solely on Obama is misguided.

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WORLD FOCUS

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EDITORIAL

Ethics means different things to different people. When people apply rules it is applied differently to different people. Religious leaders of the olden times used rules to maintain their hold on people that over time came to be known as Ethics. Human Rights have also evolved from what is in fact ethical behavior. According to Dickson – Ethics is a set of moral principles that govern a persons' or a groups' behavior, considered to be behaving ethically if they conform to generally accepted practices of the society or group making that consideration.

According to BBC Ethics guide an explanation of the ethical argument is known as the "Slippery Slope". The Slippery slope argument views decisions not on one's own, but as the potential beginning of a trend. In general form, this argument says that if we allow something relatively harmless today, we may start a trend that results in something currently unthinkable becoming accepted tomorrow. Professionals of the I.T. sector in particular who administer systems with access to or are privy to a lot of personal data with multiple uses, if not careful could cross the line of "Slippery Slope" in their ethical behaviour.

According to David Resnik, "when most people think of Ethics (or morals) they think of rules for distinguishing between right and wrong, such as the golden rule ("Do unto others as you would have them do unto you"), a code of professional conduct like the Hippocratic oath ("First of all, do not harm"), a religious creed like the Ten Commandments ("Thou shalt not kill.....") or a wise aphorisms like the sayings of Confucius. This is the most common way of defining "Ethics" norms for conduct that distinguish between acceptance and unacceptable behaviour."

In the preface of "Ethics in Ancient India" by K.R. Paramahansa gives a gist of the issues. "The ultimate goal of a human being, in general parlance, relates to human conduct in society is called ethics. The word "Ethics" or Ethic means a pattern or norm or code of conduct adopted by a group of people. Ethics in ancient India is a compendium of the ethics elaborated in great detail in *Mahabharata*, *Arthashastra*, *Bhagavata Purana* and *Brahma Purana*. The authors of these works have narrated ethics in their entire gamut through the personages, known in those works as epitomes of flawless ethical conduct." The elaborate narrations of the great ancient Sage Vasistha on Ethical Values and Practices as taught to prince Rama in Vasistha Ramayana or Yoga-Vasistha in all its volumes are still relevant to contemporary societies. It is a must for everybody who wants to have a knowledge-journey on Vedantic philosophy and India's rich wisdom heritage.

A lot of issues for modern technology professionals that involves the Ethical use of data available to an employee at his/her workplace. The ethical issues are: should you see the data stored with you or use it to promote, one's own business or any other un-related business? The privacy and protection of the data with you is important. As not much formulated codes exist for I.T. professionals, organisations like Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) are developing standards with ethical issues in mind.

Nowadays, unethical practices are rampant jeopardizing business prospects of many organizations in the absence of proper regulatory mechanisms.

It is hoped, Goodness of mankind will take care of most our ethical questions that come in our lives as challenges.

This special issue on Ethics comes at a time when our minds are becoming too hazy and turbulent, because of turmoil all around. If the issue brings in some solace to our mind in spreading or dispersing some ethical lights, we will think, we did our bit! It is high time, we must be ethical in our thought and action, or else, we are heading towards disaster!!! Better late than never...

New Delhi
July 2016

G. Kishore Babu
Editor



Ethics in the Contemporary World

Contents

Ethics in the Contemporary World	
Maulana Wahiduddin Khan.....	5
India and the Threshold Ethics of R2P	
Prof. Samir Kumar Das.....	10
Ethics of a Shared Faith	
Dr. M. D. Thomas.....	16
Nuclear Bombs and the Morality Dilemma: Towards 'Global Zero' or Apocalyptic Abyss?	
Prof. Tridib Chakraborti and Dr. Mohor Chakraborty.....	25
Ethics for Governance: Exploring Emperor Ashokan Edicts	
Prof. Sushma Yadav & Harish Kumar.....	31
Ethics in the Contemporary World: A Baha'i Viewpoint	
Dr. A. K. Merchant.....	39
Ethics in Contemporary World	
Vinod Jain.....	44
Ethico - Eschatological Perspective of Death in Early Buddhism	
Prof. Bhikshu Satyapala.....	52
Interfaith Dialogue in Contemporary World	
Prof. Reeta Bagchi.....	61
Ethics in the Age of Commerce- Looking for Benchmarks	
Prof. Pramod Pathak and Ms. Ankita Anshul.....	65
Value Education for Universal Well Being and Happiness:	
Towards Peace and Sustainable Development	
Dr. Anita Devraj & Dr. Kuldeep Agarwal.....	71
Over-growing Chaos in the Contemporary World: Need for an Ethical Revolution	
Dr. Alok Kumar Gupta.....	79
Contemporary Islamic Ethics and Ideology of Terrorism	
Dr. Arunoday Bajpai.....	87
The Role of Environmental Ethics in Contemporary Society	
Dr. Bibudharanjan.....	93
Ethics - A Pathway to Human Development: Thought of Gandhiji and Sri Aurobindo	
Dr. Sanghamitra Patnaik.....	95
Constructivist Ethics in International Relations	
Souradeep Sen.....	104
Ethics and Politics in the Contemporary World: A Case of US Intervention in Iraq	
Dr. Saleem Ahmad and Dr. Subhash Singh.....	111
Ethics and Morality in Contemporary Islam: The Mutilation and Imperatives	
Dr. Alok Kumar Gupta & Ms. Salma Zafar.....	118
Acharya Narendra Deva's Views on Ethics and	
Buddhist Philosophy in the Realm of Contemporary World: An Appraisal	
Pratyay Dutta.....	124
From Flexibility to Primacy:	
Ethics in Use of Market Based Mechanisms for Carbon Mitigation	
Ms. Reva Prakash.....	132
Regionalism: Ethical Dilemma of Cosmopolitan Idealism and National Interest	
Ms. Aditi Paul.....	139



Ethics in the Contemporary World

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

According to my study, all the religions have two different aspects to them – theology and the moral scheme. Theology means the set of beliefs or doctrinal base of a religion, in other words, the inner contents of a religion. In terms of theology, there are differences between religions. For example, some religions have the monistic concept of God, while other religions believe in the monotheistic concept of God.

Differences of this kind have always been the subject of discussion among theologians and no doubt, they will continue to be so in the future. But like other intellectual discussions about differences, they are basically confined to scholars, having nothing to do with the common people. Common people can live their daily lives without concerning themselves with or even without knowing about these issues. These issues are concern of a few individuals and not of the masses of any society.

However, these differences are not simply matters about which people are at odds with each other they also have a positive role to play. Difference invites discussion, leads to intellectual exchange, necessitates knowing more and more about one's own religion as well as the religion of others. Thus difference, in terms of result, leads to intellectual development, enhancing the level of thinking. It leads to overall development in religious discipline. In fact, difference is not unwanted evil. On the contrary, it is good for the society. Difference has a positive role in religious studies.

The other aspect of any religion is its ethical system. That is, the standard of moral conduct. In this area, there is little difference between religions. Almost all the religions preach the same moral values to be followed in daily life. There are two main branches of religion: the Aryan religions and Semitic religions. I have studied both and have found that, in terms of moral teaching, there are great similarities between both and, of course, Islam is no exception.

Moral Teachings of Islam

All mankind is a single family

Islam teaches that all mankind is a single family. The Quran declares: "O mankind! Fear your Lord, who created you from a single soul. He created its mate from it and from the two of them spread countless men and women [throughout the earth]". (The Quran, 4:1) It means that all men and women share a common ancestor. That is, all men and women are a blood brothers and blood sisters to one another. There is complete commonality between different races and groups of people.

The Prophet of Islam declared: "Mankind is a divine family". (Al-Baihaqi, 6:2528) the Prophet of Islam used to rise early in the morning and say after his morning prayer: "O God, I bear witness that all men and women are sisters and brothers to each other." (Abu Daud, Hadith no. 1508).

These references, quoted from Islamic scriptures, are the same teachings which you can find in other religions like Hinduism, Judaism and Christianity, etc. Common teachings of this kind in all the religions provide the initial base of a good relationship between all men and women. In a family, all its members live with a sense of oneness, a sense which inculcates in the family members the spirit of unity and harmony. This family culture is desirable on a global level among all the nations and all the races. This kind of universal relationship is endorsed by almost all the religions. There may be some differences in belief but, in terms of social life, every religious individual, irrespective of his personal traditions, should live in his society just as he is living in his family.

Love your enemy

There is famous saying of Jesus Christ: "Love your enemy". (Luke 6:35) It means: love all including your enemy. The same teaching is likewise to be found in the Quran. The Quran in one of its chapters offers



this guidance: "Good deeds and bad deeds are not equal. Do a good deed in return for a bad deed and you will see that your enemy has become your dearest friend". (Quran, 41:34). Love or compassion is the greatest social value; it is the basis of all moral teachings or moral requirements. And it is also a fact that this teaching is found in every religion. If study the various religions, you will find that all of them try to promote the 'love culture' in society. To build a love-based society is the sole target of every religion.

Do unto others, as you would be done by

The Prophet of Islam once said: "Do with others what you want others to do with you". (Sahih Muslim, Hadith no. 12) The same maxim is to be found in Judaism. Rabbi Hillel the Elder is known to have said: "What is hateful (or hurtful) to you, do not do to any other man." (Babylonian Talmud, traced Shabbat 31a) This is a universal teaching, which you can find in almost every religion, in one verse or the other. This religious teaching gives us a very simple criterion for living as a good member of society.

Everybody knows what is good for him and what is bad for him. Apply this personal experience to all other members of society. If everyone observes this formula of moral conduct, the whole of society will emerge as a good society. This formula, a common religious formula, is the simplest for social construction.

The Importance of Peace

The Quran lays great emphasis on peace. For example, there is a verse in the Quran which says: "Peace is the best." (The Quran, 4:128) That is, in the case of controversy, adopt the peaceful rather than the confrontational course of action. Giving prime importance to this verse, the Sufis have adopted the following formula: *Sulh-e-kul* (Peace with all).

This concept has also been adopted by other religions as their basic teaching. For example, let us take Christianity. In one of the chapters of the New Testament, there is the following verse: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God." (Matthew, 5:9).

It is a fact that peace is a common teaching of all the religions. It is also a fact that peace is the

summum bonum; peace is the greatest good which leads to the building of a better society; without peace there is no development. Peace provides the environment in which every group can flourish without being harmful to others: peaceful living is the most important part of moral living.

Moral development is not simply a matter of individual conduct towards others. It is profoundly related to the development of the individual's personality. When one engages in good social behaviour, one is in the process of self-development, good social behaviour is thus a great aid to the building of one's character. Good social behaviour means positive behaviour and positive behaviour inculcates positive thinking in every man and women. Good social behaviour makes one a good human being.

Human society is based on a well-known formula – give and take. When you give something to others you create a situation in which you certainly garner positive fruit in return. The relationship between an individual and society is one of interchange; both the parties give something to the other and receive something from others, so it is a reciprocal relationship.

The establishment of a harmonious relationship between all the members of society is a common requirement of all religions. No religious activity can be carried out without normal social conditions. It is, therefore, in the best interest of all the religions that moral behaviour be recognized as the greatest means of normalizing the relationship between the different sections of a society and ensuring peaceable living conditions. In view of these, we can understand that every religion teaches its members to adopt a good moral standard.

There are ample references in all the religions that provide us with a good base for building a better society through partnership. This is the basic role of every religion. Without playing this role, religion becomes irrelevant to humanity.

Gratefulness

The Prophet of Islam said that one who is not grateful to man cannot be grateful to God either. The ac-



knowledge of a good turn done by a human being must be through thanksgiving.

If one is sensitive in this regard, this will find expression not only in the case of God but also in the case of human beings. It is impossible that man should be grateful in one respect and not in another.

Acknowledgement is a praiseworthy human action when it takes the form of thanksgiving (*shukr*). For every human being owes everything to God. That is why he should be grateful to God more than to anyone else.

Mutual Respect

The Quran says addressing the Prophet: "For you your religion, for me mine."

This verse shows that when people belonging to different religious denominations live in a society, then the only possible via media is to "follow one and respect all." This is the sole principle by which to establish peace in a composite society. This world is full of differences. It is important to come to terms with those differences.

In such a situation the only practicable way of life is that of tolerance. That is, to grant everyone the right of opting for the religion and culture of his own liking. Peaceful dialogue should be held on the subject of differences for an attempt to obliterate differences will result only in more serious differences.

During the life of the Prophet there were some Jewish tribes settled in Madinah. One day, the Prophet of Islam saw a funeral procession passing along a street in Madinah. The Prophet of Islam was seated at that time. On seeing the funeral procession, the Prophet stood up in deference. One of his companions said, "O Prophet of God, this is the funeral of a Jew." The Prophet replied, "Was he not a human being?"

This shows that every man is worthy of respect, whether he belongs to one religion or another, to one nation or another. On no pretext can this respect be withheld from any human being. The truth is that every individual has been created by one and the same God, therefore, everyone is equally worthy of respect.

The Quran tells us that if someone appears to be your enemy, do not return enmity for enmity. Rather treat him well: the result of this unilateral good behaviour will be that your enemy will become your dearest friend. This teaching of Islam shows that enmity is not eternal.

The truth is that in every enemy there lies hidden a friendly human being. By unilateral good behaviour you can come to know this friend and you can actualise this potential by converting your enemy into your friend. Unilateral good behaviour awakens one's conscience, and when one's conscience is awakened one cannot afford any other stand but to abandon enmity in favour of friendliness.

The Quran tells us that good deeds mitigate evil deeds. This means that if one happens to commit some evil deed, one should follow it up with good deeds. This will nullify the effect of evil. For instance, if someone has abused another, he should utter words of comfort to him, if one has harmed someone then one should do him some good, if one has hurt someone, one should seek his pardon, if one has behaved arrogantly with someone, one should deal with him humbly, and so on. In this way the evil will vanish on its own.

The Prophet of Islam, addressing his companions, said: "Should I not tell you what is good character?" They said, "Yes, certainly."

Then the Prophet replied that you should join him who cuts asunder from you. You should give to those who deprive you. You should forgive those who oppress you. This can be termed unilateral ethics. But, high moral character does not mean that you should give good treatment only to those who give good treatment to you. That would show a tit for tat mentality. "Do as you would be done by" expresses the principle which should be adhered to.

Principled behaviour is not governed by our reaction to another's action, but is rather governed by a code of ethics. A man should rise above any base attitude displayed by others; he should instead be unilaterally governed by ethics. He should refrain from the psychology of reaction. And in no circumstance should he abandon his positive moral attitude.



The greatest sign of a noble character in any individual is that, in spite of a negative reaction from others, he maintains his positive attitude.

Associated with this is the virtue of gratefulness, which appears in the form of a person being grateful to people like himself in his daily life. The absence of this gratefulness towards man is a sure sign of his ungratefulness to God. For gratefulness in one respect and ungratefulness in another cannot go together. Either a man will be grateful to both man and God or he will be grateful to none.

Elevating Oneself through Modesty

The Prophet of Islam once observed: "One who adopts the way of modesty is granted high status by God." This is a law determined by God. Accordingly, the way of modesty opens the door to his intellectual development. Conversely, the way of arrogance leads man to degradation. Modesty has twofold benefits. The modest man receives the benefit of spirituality being awakened in him. High human qualities are produced within him. He becomes a recipient of God's inspiration. He becomes a realistic person, which enables him to look at things objectively. One who is dealt with in all humility is compelled to acknowledge the greatness of the modest person, and, abandoning his attitude of insolence, he is compelled to acknowledge his moral superiority. Modesty is a way of behaving. Man does not have to spend anything, nor does he have to lose anything by modest behaviour. Without losing anything he gains everything. If haughty behaviour is false greatness, modest behaviour is true humanity.

The Prophet of Islam once said that one man's food is sufficient for two and two men's food is sufficient for three. This tradition tells us the benefits of living together and the blessings that come from acting unitedly. The example of food is by way of analogy. This applies to all such situations. If people work together, joining hands with others, they will be able to perform great feats in life. Even small resources will yield great profits. If everybody works separately, he will desire only a limited benefit from his work. If individuals join one another and work unitedly, everyone will receive the benefits. Once the Prophet observed that a believer is one who likes for others what he likes for himself. This is a very con-

cise principle of social ethics. Everyone knows what attitude he wants or does not want from others.

He should behave with others as he wants them to behave with him; he should refrain from such behaviour as he does not want to receive from others.

Regulation of Society

Religion and political administration are the two basic instruments by which every society is regulated. Both have a very important role. Religion being intended to build a moral base for society, it is the duty of religious people to train the minds of the people on a moral basis. It is their duty to create an ethical atmosphere in society and to promote human, friendly behaviour among all the members of society.

Political rule has basically an administrative and regulatory function in the practical matters of the nation. It is put in place to maintain peace and harmony among the people and to ensure justice and check crimes. No religious institution can play the role of political masters. And no political master – given the limitations of political administration – can play the role of a religious institution. Both the institutions have their specific roles and both the institutions are complementary to each other. It is the complementary role of the two institutions that ensures the building of a better society.

Maintaining the Ethics – Positive Status Quoism

One very important principle taught in Islam is that of positive status quoism, that is, accepting the prevailing situation. Using this principle one can maintain unilateral ethics at all times. Here are a few examples of the Prophet of Islam in this regard.

When the Prophet Muhammad began his mission of *tawhid* (unity of God) in ancient Makkah, there existed, as usual, a status quo. The Quraysh had assumed the leadership of the town, and according to their beliefs, they had established a system. Now the question arose as to how the Prophet Muhammad should begin his work. It appeared that the status quo under the hegemony of the Quraysh would have to be abolished and only then would the path be cleared for Prophet's mission. At that juncture, certain basic guidance was revealed to the Prophet. God



declared in the Quran: "Surely with every hardship there is ease; with every hardship there is surely ease." (Quran, 94:5-6)

This verse showed the Prophet of Islam that in spite of the obstacles, by the very law of nature, opportunities for the furtherance of his aims, that is, opportunities also existed side by side. Therefore, any attempt to change the status quo was not to be made in the first stage itself. Without disturbing the prevailing situation, such opportunities as were available in other fields were to be utilized to promote the Islamic mission.

The method Islam prescribes for the achievement of our goals, and the model we find in the life of the Prophet, can be described in brief as a method based on positive status quoism. That is, remaining in harmony with the status quo and launching one's struggle in the sphere of the possible. In this respect, it may be called positive status quoism.

However, the status quoism of the Prophet did not simply mean to accept the extant sets of circumstances for all time. It meant rather carving out a path for oneself by adopting a non-confrontational policy within the existing set-up. Far from leading to a state of inertia, this was a planned course of action.

The Prophet of Islam followed this principle in his life at Makkah as well as at Madinah. This is one of the reasons for his achieving such great success – within the short period of 23 years – as had never been achieved by anyone throughout the entire course of human history. The great benefit of such status quoism is that, by adopting this policy, one is instantly able to avail of opportunities for carrying out one's projects. One is in a position to utilize one's energies fully in one's mission without wasting one iota of effort. By avoiding unnecessary clash and confrontation, one is able to devote oneself to constructive activity to the fullest extent.

The Amsterdam Declaration

In 1952, at the first World Humanist Congress, the founders of International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) agreed a statement of the fundamental principles of modern Humanism. They called it "The Amsterdam Declaration". The Amsterdam Declaration of 1952 was a child of its time. For example, it was set in the world of great power politics and the Cold War, and it asserted that "humanists have confidence that the present crisis can be surmounted".

As befits the nature of Humanism – friendly to evolution, anathema to dogma – the statement was updated in 2002. The 50th anniversary World Humanist Congress in 2002, again meeting in the Netherlands, unanimously passed a resolution known as "The Amsterdam Declaration 2002". Following the Congress, this updated declaration was adopted unanimously by the IHEU General Assembly, and thus became the official defining statement of World Humanism.

Amsterdam Declaration 2002: IHEU Congress

Humanism is the outcome of a long tradition of free thought that has inspired many of the world's great thinkers and creative artists and gave rise to science itself.

The fundamentals of modern Humanism are as follows:

1. Humanism is ethical. It affirms the worth, dignity and autonomy of the individual and the right of every human being to the greatest possible freedom compatible with the rights of others. Humanists have a duty of care to all of humanity including future generations. Humanists believe that morality is an intrinsic part of human nature based on understanding and a concern for others, needing no external sanction.
 2. Humanism is rational. It seeks to use science creatively, not destructively. Humanists believe that the solutions to the world's problems lie in human thought and action rather than divine intervention. Humanism advocates the application of the methods of science and free inquiry to the problems of human welfare. But Humanists also believe that the application of science and technology must be tempered by human values. Science gives us the means but human values must propose the ends.
 3. Humanism supports democracy and human rights. Humanism aims at the fullest possible development of every human being. It holds that democracy and human development are matters of right. The principles of democracy and human rights can be applied to many human relationships and are not restricted to methods of government.
 4. Humanism insists that personal liberty must be combined with social responsibility. Humanism ventures to build a world on the idea of the free person responsible to society, and recognises our dependence on and responsibility for the natural world. Humanism is undogmatic, imposing no creed upon its adherents. It is thus committed to education free from indoctrination.
 5. Humanism is a response to the widespread demand for an alternative to dogmatic religion. The world's major religions claim to be based on revelations fixed for all time, and many seek to impose their world-views on all of humanity. Humanism recognises that reliable knowledge of the world and ourselves arises through a continuing process of observation, evaluation and revision.
 6. Humanism values artistic creativity and imagination and recognises the transforming power of art. Humanism affirms the importance of literature, music, and the visual and performing arts for personal development and fulfilment.
 7. Humanism is a lifestance aiming at the maximum possible fulfilment through the cultivation of ethical and creative living and offers an ethical and rational means of addressing the challenges of our times. Humanism can be a way of life for everyone everywhere.
- Our primary task is to make human beings aware in the simplest terms of what Humanism can mean to them and what it commits them to. By utilising free inquiry, the power of science and creative imagination for the furtherance of peace and in the service of compassion, we have confidence that we have the means to solve the problems that confront us all. We call upon all who share this conviction to associate themselves with us in this endeavour.

(Courtesy: IHEU)

India and the Threshold Ethics of R2P

Prof. Samir Kumar Das

India's foreign policy in the post-Cold War period has become a subject of one of the most acrimonious debates in her recent past history. While it is often denigrated as 'firefighting', 'ad hocism' and 'drift', many other commentators propose to interpret it as one driven by *realpolitik* interests paying scant regard to her ideological and ethical commitments. Never before in her history has Indian foreign policy faced such an ethical crisis as it is facing now. It is also argued that with her coming of age as a 'Power' in international politics, the otherwise deep well of exemplary ethical commitments characteristic of her role in the Cold War era seems to have dried up. For, *strong ethics*, according to this line of understanding, is only a substitute for a *poor Power* and the reverse is also true. This paper reflects on the issue of ethicality in relation to India's position on R2P or Right to Protection of population and shows how it is issued from some of the abiding ethical concerns that India has shared in her history and particularly her recent past history. I call it *threshold ethics* that has its origins in Indian theories of moderation and avoidance of extremes.

The Indian Debate

With the commencement of Russian air strikes in Syria, the debate on India's position on the right to protection seems to have resurfaced with a new lease of life. While the American interest lies in dismantling the ISIL (Islamic State of Syria and Levant)-held bases without at the same time strengthening the Al-Assad regime, Russian interest reportedly lies in destroying them in a way that the regime can regain its strength. Al-Assad – no protector of his people and no friend of liberal-democracy – is expected to play a key role in delivering the country from the present crisis – literally a 'war of all against all' and giving it a regime that holds out the promise of providing strong and stable rule 'at least for the time being'. While the anxiety expressed by a section of the international community is whether strengthening of Al-Assad regime would eventually relegate the

liberal-democratic agenda further into the backburner by triggering rampant violation of the civilians' right to protection, it is obvious that a regime divested of its sovereign capacity is incapable of fulfilling the responsibility that the international community expects of it. The question that continues to bother us is: While capacity is a necessary condition of fulfilling the responsibility, is it a sufficient condition? Is there any way of enforcing the responsibility other than 'taking collective action in a timely and decisive manner'?

Three Principles

India's position on this issue is predicated on three albeit overlapping principles:

- (a) India makes it clear that the responsibility of protection finally remains with the respective States.
- (b) India maintains that the international community should 'encourage and help states exercise their responsibility' through peaceful and non-violent means.
- (c) India critiques 'collective action' or intervention as a *standard mode of enforcement* insofar as it violates what she calls 'the fundamental aspects' of the UN Charter including sovereignty and integrity of Member-States. Besides, it opens peace keeping missions to the risk of being abused for political purposes and expediency (like regime change). In more positive terms, she observes that our approach to peace keeping must be anchored in the principle of respect for national sovereignty.

India's position is much misunderstood insofar as the third principle is concerned. While she is often accused of having continued with her 'preference for sovereignty' that has already become a passé and anachronistic in the post-Cold War era and therefore calls for some redefinition, 'India's ambiguity towards international law' is believed to have – in the words of Navsharan Singh and Patrick Hoenig – 'exasperated human rights defenders at home and abroad'.



India's position for sure can hardly be called Hobbesian. In acknowledging that 'protection' is the responsibility of the sovereign as per the first principle, India affirms that 'protection' is an inalienable principle as much as sovereignty is and 'liberty of the subject' - unlike what Hobbes would have us believe - is not necessarily 'consistent with the unlimited power of the sovereign'. The question then is two-fold: First, what will be the appropriate agency that can carry out and fulfill the responsibility? Or to put the same question in a different way, how does the international community make the State fulfill the responsibility of protecting its own people? Second, how much of sovereignty is necessary for enforcing protection - short of and beyond which, its exercise involves violation of the right to protection? Accordingly, the paper is divided into two broad parts.

The Agency

By way of assigning the 'responsibility' to the community of 'sovereign' States, the international community not only introduces a hierarchy in the allocation of responsibilities by discriminating between the *more* responsible and the *less* responsible ones but effectively invests the 'liberal-democratic regimes' with the responsibility of enforcing protection in the less responsible or even irresponsible States. In the same vein, the international community also asserts the right of the more responsible, liberal-democratic States to become *more* sovereign than the less responsible ones. Doesn't this reintroduce the same hierarchy of sovereignties that seems to have haunted the Cold War world? Instead of taking us to a post-sovereign world, are we in fact plunging back into an increasingly anarchic world of sovereign States where only a few with greater sovereignty stand a chance to survive in the long run. India has been consistently opposed to any hierarchization of nations and their sovereignties. Remember her opposition to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in the early decades of her Independence.

Much of what India has to contribute to the normative theory of International Politics will have to be articulated - not so much from her statements and addresses in global, international and regional forums - but from her protection practices both at home and in the immediate South Asian region.

The 'Hegemony' of the Liberal Trajectory

The so-called 'hegemony' of the liberal trajectory defined predominantly as its promise of transcending national borders whether by sending 'waves' (like the 'Three Waves' that Samuel P. Huntington has so eloquently illustrated in his writings, the latest being the 'Arab Spring') or through direct intervention or a combination of both will have to be demystified in the first place. What Kant calls 'interference of foreign powers' is justified by him not on the ground of a State's 'unwillingness or inability' to protect, but on the ground of chaos and disorder that such unwillingness and inability might consequently trigger - 'internal discord [that] splits [the State] into two parts, each putting itself as a separate state, and laying claim to the whole'. The fine distinction that Kant makes between unwillingness and/or inability on the one hand and the consequent chaos and disorder that follows from it often escapes our notice. One does not necessarily lead to the other. Besides, many States have their resilience to survive the chaos and disorder on their own, with the effect that such chaos and disorder turn out to be a passing phase in their history. The general reluctance on the part of the liberal thinkers to justify intervention with the objective of protecting the citizens of another country is much too obvious to be recounted at this point. Locke - considered widely as the father of classical liberalism - argues that people 'retain' the right to rebellion in case the polity they themselves have contracted into does not protect their 'life, liberty and pursuit of happiness' albeit on an enduring basis. But it gives no power to the external forces to intervene on their behalf.

While liberalism's sense of triumphalism and self-pride (or should we call it arrogance?) is not alien to its very being, triumphalism in its present form is aided substantially by the specific conjuncture of history in which all other alternatives to 'Western liberal democracy' perhaps with equally hegemonic claims have been reportedly 'exhausted' especially in the post-Cold War era. This is often termed as 'the end of history'.

It may be interesting to see how liberalism in general and liberal-democracy in particular have historically sought to grapple with its *outside* composed of States and non-State actors that are



neither liberal nor democratic. For purposes of convenience, we may refer briefly to three moments of their response and we hasten to define 'moments' more in the Hegelian sense of specific configurations of forces than as linearly sequenced stages of history. First, there is the moment of dichotomy. The outside at this moment is taken to comprise the savages and barbarians who lack the potential of becoming liberal ever in the future. The fine line between liberalism and its outside, according to this view, coincides with that between the civilized and the barbarians. Insofar as the outside forces spell any danger to the survival of liberalism and liberal-democracy, the latter is advised to engage them in a perpetual warfare till they are fatally weakened and kept successfully at bay. Greek democracy, as we know, was essentially Hellenic for the Greek philosophers would believe that the savages and barbarians are never eligible for any meaningful democratic rule.

Secondly, we refer to the moment of moral guardianship. The outside at this moment is viewed as illiberal, yet with a potential of becoming liberal in future. History has conferred on the frontrunners of actually existing liberal-democracies (mostly the colonizing States of Europe and America) the onerous burden of being the moral guardian supervising the gradual transformation of the blatantly illiberal systems into the liberal ones on a global scale. India too was under the guardianship of British Parliament and is believed to have benefited immensely from the British rule. This is what John Stuart Mill for example has to say about how the British rule may benefit India: "It is not by attempting to rule directly a country like India, but by giving it good rulers, that the English people can do their duty to that country ..."

Third is the moment of obligation that we propose to locate somewhere between the other two moments of dichotomy and moral guardianship. John Rawls while reformulating his theory classifies the illiberal systems into well-ordered and non-well-ordered ones and argues that the former are so called because they are ordered by certain rules, which he describes in sum as 'law of the people'. Such rules range from observance of peace and governance by law to respect for human rights. The non-well-ordered illiberal systems have an obligation of complying with

these otherwise universal rules. Liberal-democracies should have no problem with the well-ordered illiberal systems, for they have the potential of becoming one of them in future. But, how should these democracies tackle the non-well-ordered illiberal systems? "This", according to him, "poses the problem of the limits of toleration". As he puts it:

Clearly, tyrannical and dictatorial regimes must be outlawed, and also for, basic liberal reasons, expansionist states like those of the Wars of Religion. The ... necessary conditions for a well-ordered regime ... are proposed as an answer as to where those limits are.

Rawls' theory as it were anticipates the successive military interventions whether in Afghanistan or in Iraq, in Libya or in Syria and perhaps many more in the offing.

Many Liberalisms

True to the liberal mission, military action in both Afghanistan and Iraq are believed to have had a 'liberating' impact. The one in Afghanistan, according to the official sources, will be celebrated as a symbol of women's liberation. The Afghan women, according to Hilary Clinton – then the special envoy of the US President sent to Afghanistan after the USA declared the end of its 'offensive war' - abandoned the *purdah* the day the Taliban regime was brought to an 'end' as the joint forces first marched through the streets of Kabul. Their eagerness to participate in schools, colleges and other educational institutions, government and non-governmental establishments, to visit beauty parlours – all hitherto denied to them, is reportedly unparalleled in Afghan history. The way common people in Iraq joined hands in dismantling the huge statues of Saddam Hussein, slapped with their shoes his murals and photographs etched and displayed prominently in public places, playing with already devalued Iraqi currency surprised many of us. The apologists however interpreted these as the 'preliminary' indications of the coming of democracy that had hitherto eluded the Iraqis.

In the same vein, it was also argued that if the Afghans and the Iraqis do not feel sufficiently elated by the arrival of 'freedom' and 'democracy', it only reflects their 'ignorance'. Does not this remind



us of Rousseau's dictum that 'men will be forced to be free' in case they refuse to join the common undertaking through an act of contract? The power that the international community claims to wield emanates from the universality of these principles and not the other way round. That is to say, the universality of these principles cannot be sourced back to the economic and military power of the international community.

In an essay written almost immediately after the US operations in Iraq, I described it as the 'imperialism of democracy' and its crisis has been compounded by the absence of any alternative to liberal-democratic vision on the part of those who have taken up arms against it. That there is no universal 'liberal trajectory' became clear as 'offensive' interventions in these countries came to an end and these countries plunged into durable disorder. It only illustrates that liberalism is historically contingent and assumes its various forms in keeping with the changing circumstances. Liberal-democracies always get configured within a specific context. Every 'wave' that it sends, as I argued in one of my essays in *World Focus*, breaks into many ripples - each induced and circumscribed by factors not easily reducible to others.

As the recalcitrant States are bombed back to the 'stone age' by the more sovereign States of the West apparently in exercise of their responsibility to protect and the States that are bombed are unable to absorb their aftershocks, the tsunami of human migration has already hit the shores of Europe in an unprecedented way. Where will the hapless people go if their States are destroyed and economies are decimated? They will go obviously to those who destroyed their States and decimated their economies in the name of R2P. The principle of R2P acquires a new spin as eight million immigrants holed up in Turkey are banging on the doors of Europe and asking for protection.

Capacity with Responsibility

The relation of capacity to responsibility is – to say the least – ambiguous, for, violation of protection is likely to take place in both the high-capacity and the low capacity regimes. While too much of liberalism and democracy is considered as corrosive of sovereign capacity, right to protection is also seen to be

jeopardized in regimes endowed with relatively higher capacity.

In India and perhaps more so in the larger context of South Asia, states have reportedly been 'weakened' like never before – whether in the sense of becoming increasingly incapable of retaining their monopoly over the legitimate instruments of violence in the face of growing challenges from other sub- or supra-state bodies or in the sense that their control over the instruments of violence as a means of internal pacification and stabilization has exceeded the limits of legitimacy. By contrast, Iraq under Saddam Hussain provides a case of high-capacity regime with incredibly poor record of protection.

In my Policy Brief written for the Norwegian Peacebuilding Centre, I restated Indian position as one of sovereign capacity with responsibility. Capacity with responsibility has to do with, first, finding out a threshold of how much of capacity is required in order that a State can fulfill its responsibility and, secondly, how the imperative of responsibility acts as a limiting condition of its sovereign capacity.

Exploring the Alternatives

In the Policy Brief mentioned above, I also argued that given India's sensitivity to sovereignty, strengthening of the country's civil society institutions and popular movements is perhaps the only way to audit her willingness to fulfill the responsibility.

Civil society institutions and popular movements are not however an unmixed blessing for any country. In a country like India, they often seem to bear the same ethnic fault lines that also afflict the society at large. Empirical evidences point out how otherwise strong and stout civil society organizations seem to cave in as ethnic riots take place and communal violence starts taking its toll. More often than not, these institutions emerge merely as tactical alliance of ethnic forces on extremely contingent basis much in the same way as they also collapse as soon as they outlive their utility. Eruption of violence is usually seen to coincide with the collapse of these institutions and movements. Besides, indiscriminate extension of international support to the NGOs in the name of civil society building has often contributed not only to the NGO-ization of the civic space, but to its



complete corporatization. As the recent debate in India underlines, these NGOs often develop a vested interest of their own and are allegedly involved in bribing the witnesses and officials, filing of false testimonies, money laundering and violation of foreign currency regulations etc. In some cases, civil society organizations even turn themselves into para-states forcibly imposing their diktats (like banning Hindi movies, imposing dress code and prohibition and boycotting India-made gods etc.) on the people particularly in parts of India's Northeast.

Notwithstanding all this, there is reason to believe that India considers civil society institutions as important instruments of protection. According to an estimate made in 2013, the country hosted more than three million NGOs that advocated for social justice, sustainable development, and human rights. These institutions do and can potentially play a role in protecting the civilians. By most of the accounts available to us, extreme violations of human rights are not always mediated by State institutions and therefore do not seem to mark any institutional decay per se. Such violations, in other words, reflect not so much the absence of rules and institutions as much their violations. These violations therefore do not take away from the victims and survivors their right to seek remedies even in the most abject of cases. It is certainly not the kind of violation and perpetration of 'total' terror that Hannah Arendt chronicles in her famous book on *Origins of Totalitarianism*. In her examples, the terror was total insofar as even the widows losing their husbands to state terror would refuse to admit that they had ever married in the first place whereas in the Indian case, both the aggressors and the victims, according to several reports, appear to be 'familiar' with each other and inhabit the same social space and do not rupture the social. In a landmark judgment delivered in 2007, the apex court in India, for instance, reiterated that "no wielder of power should be allowed to claim the right to perpetrate state's violence against any one, much less its own citizens, unchecked by law, and notions of innate human dignity of every individual".

Civil Society and International Community

But does this mean that international community has no role to play in strengthening civil society institutions and popular movements of another country? India's

position in this regard is governed by two paramount principles: One, while self-auditing by the civil society institutions based in the country are welcome, India's reservation towards international or internationally funded NGOs for reasons stated above is much too well known to be recounted here. A US State Department Report on the state of human rights in India published in 2013 appreciates the 'cooperation and responsiveness' of the Government officials to the human rights NGOs barring of course only a few exceptions. The report also notes that the same cannot be said without any qualification about international or internationally funded NGOs. NGOs like Medecins Sans Frontieres continue to work in parts of central India, but not of all of them are welcome.

Secondly - and unlike the commonplace belief - India prefers to define international community not only as one of States, but also as one of peoples contained in them and urges that the people living in the States involved in 'collective action' too have many things to do, which may eventually make such collective action redundant: 'a positive duty to promote the justice of social institutions for the sake of safeguarding the rights and needs of human beings anywhere' and 'the negative duty of not collaborating in designing or imposing unjust social institutions upon other human beings'. For, their States have an active responsibility of facilitating protection elsewhere and preempting its abuse - other than taking 'collective action'. The situation might not have come to a head in the first place, had the international community been persuaded to undertake these measures at an early stage by the people. The people are believed to have failed the victims in many instances wherever the new right has been voted to power and allowed to take control of their countries.

The point is: these States may not have been the human agents for the non-fulfillment of the responsibility to protect, but were certainly responsible for non-fulfillment of human rights elsewhere. As Pogge argues:

Many women are exposed to assault and rape because they cannot afford to divorce their husband, cannot afford a secure dwelling, or must fetch water from distant locations. Others are sold



into prostitution by their own relatives or fall prey to traffickers who abduct them or promise them a living wage abroad. Most poor people are vulnerable to humiliation, dispossession, or personal domination because they lack the means to defend their legal rights... When a person is without food or shelter far from any other human agent, her human right to an adequate standard of living may be unfulfilled even while there are no obligations on the part of others because none of them can reach her to supply what she lacks.

Doctrine of Soft Involvement

India's position is soft when it comes to the question of involvement in protection crisis by regional powers. For one thing, regional powers share many an ethnic and geopolitical continuity with their neighbours so much so that protection crisis has an adverse impact on them too. Involvement by regional powers is seen as less 'foreign' and less of a domination. For another, prolonged violations of the right to protection adversely affect a country's capacity of fulfilling its responsibility. As a result, the country is as it were caught in an apparently irredeemable stalemate. External support – and not external intervention - from a neighbouring power is essential for the State to tide over the humanitarian crisis.

Again, this does not necessarily authorize a regional power to intervene. India maintains a distinction between intervention and involvement. Her regional policy in recent years seems to have undergone a paradigmatic shift from direct intervention as in the cases of East Pakistan/Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to soft involvement through such means as providing diplomatic and logistic support, lending moral legitimacy to the affected State, bringing the crisis to the attention of the international community and so forth that helps the State in gradually rebuilding its capacity. India called for ceasefire and "political solution" to the Sri Lankan crisis and offered to evacuate and rehabilitate the Tamil civilians trapped in disturbed areas of the North. This is said to have given the Island nation a 'lifeline' that it badly needed after being accused of genocide and war crimes.

While soft involvement through both State and civil society actors is capable of ensuring that the aggressor State is kept within the threshold and does not indulge in the wanton and persistent violation of people's R2P, this also lends to India's foreign policy a rare ethical concern for living peacefully in a world of nation-states by respecting the twin principles of sovereignty and integrity of nation-states and not by riding roughshod over them.

Albert Einstein: Nothing Divine About Morality; Morality is a Human Affair

The scientist is possessed by the sense of universal causation... There is nothing divine about morality; it is a purely human affair. His religious feeling takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection... It is beyond question closely akin to that which has possessed the religious genuses of all ages.

- Albert Einstein, *The World As I See It* (1949)

Albert Einstein: Ethical Behavior Should be Based on Sympathy, Education

A scientist has no use for the religion of fear and equally little for social or moral religion. A God who rewards and punishes is inconceivable to him for the simple reason that a man's actions are determined by necessity, external and internal, so that in God's eyes he cannot be responsible, any more than an inanimate object is responsible for the motions it undergoes. Science has therefore been charged with undermining morality, but the charge is unjust. A man's ethical behavior should be based effectually on sympathy, education, and social ties and needs; no religious basis is necessary. Man would indeed be in a poor way if he had to be restrained by fear of punishment and hopes of reward after death.

- New York Times, 11.9.1930

Albert Einstein: Ethics Is Exclusively Human with No Superhuman Authority

I do not believe in immortality of the individual, and I consider ethics to be an exclusively human concern with no superhuman authority behind it.

- Albert Einstein, *The Human Side*, edited by Helen Dukas & Banesh Hoffman

Ethics of a Shared Faith

Dr M. D. Thomas

Taking into consideration the lives of human beings, what is the *raison de'etre* of faith? Can faith or religion ever be a cloistered phenomenon? If not, what are its social characteristics and interfaith implications? Does it have any essential linkage with ethics and if yes, what are the ethical imperatives of a shared faith?

In fact, the root meanings of the words 'faith and religion' suggest a perception of life that is necessarily dynamic and relational. They are loaded with a wide range of in-depth implications. They aren't merely pious ideas that may or may not have any bearing on one's life. They are in effect ethical directives that are oriented to motivate and empower believers, in favour of scaling higher and larger degrees and dimensions of life.

The above ethical framework affirms that faith has to evolve towards interfaith or shared faith with obligatory ethical implications. The logic of faith can be justified only when it is oriented to ethical living, which advocates a value-based way of conducting oneself in life. An honest critique of faith and religion raises concerns about the gracelessness of the modern times that is massively afflicted with a flimsy fibre of ethics. The ethics of a shared faith without doubt is capable of refreshing and brightening the future of the humanity afresh.

Faith, in the real sense of the word, is interfaith in spirit. It is ever dynamic in its character and is programmed for blossoming towards an ever interrelated phenomenon in life. Interfaith, as a grown up perception of and an elevated approach to life, permeates into persons and groups of all affiliations. It is a vibrant process of 'sharing in the richness of others', while sharing with them the best one holds on to. Interfaith is the spirit of a divinely tuned human life as well as a humanly full-blown divine life.

In addition, charged with the all-inclusive universal fibre of life, the spirit of interfaith applies to

all arenas of social life and leads the society to the sublime altitudes of divine horizons as well as to the magnitudes of human life, two in one. This is in fact the outline of an 'ethics of a shared faith'. This paper explores the varied nuances and arenas of ethical living, in terms of faith, interfaith and shared faith, along with related perceptions, implications and perspectives.

Introduction

Taking into consideration the lives of human beings, what is the *raison de'etre* of faith? Can faith or religion ever be a cloistered phenomenon? If not, what are its social characteristics and interfaith implications? Does it have any essential linkage with ethics and if yes, what are the ethical imperatives of a shared faith?

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interfaith and shared faith, along with related perceptions, implications and perspectives.

1. Notional Implications

1.1. Faith

The term 'faith' evolves from the old French terms 'feid' and 'foi' and the Latin 'fides' and 'fidere', which mean 'faith, belief, trust, confidence, assurance, loyalty, reliance and pledge'. Its etymological connotations point towards the central and all-inclusive dynamics of human life. It entertains an open-ended concept, as well.

Faith refers to more of a perspective and conviction. It is an experience and an approach to life. It is very much a subtle and inclusive phenomenon in life. The open-ended and wide-ranging character of faith is geared towards a more qualitative, richer and meaningful life for the humans. In this sense, faith is greatly capable of paving the way for a more harmonious and peaceful society.

1.2. Religion

The word 'religion' derives from the Latin root, 'religare', meaning 'being fastened, bound/held together and re-connected'. It refers to a system of remaining networked with the natural, the human and the divine arenas. Religion is devised for providing the humans with a meaning in life. It also signifies a 'sense of sacred' and joins the humans not only with the world of the divine above but the divine in other human beings and in nature.

In the technical sense, religion refers to a large system of devotions and rituals, myths and stories, doctrines and dogmas, ideals, principles and values, stipulations, rules, spiritual processes and pursuits. There are bindings that apply to individuals and to the community. While imposing regulations on one side, religion gives a sense of belonging to those affiliated to it.

1.3. Religion and faith – comparative notions

Religion and faith, more often than not, are considered synonyms to each other. This popular notion can be justified to a certain extent, when both religion and faith are treated in the general sense. The basic meanings of either of them as 'getting united, trust, conviction, and the like, affirm their core connections. Faith and religion are very much close to each other when their core elements as well as their utility in relation to life, too.

In the specific sense, they are different from each other. Religion pertains to a system of doctrine, myth, beliefs, creed and cult. It is like the body of the spirit, whereas faith is like the spirit of the body. The former belongs more to the external forum, while the latter belongs to the inner. Belonging to a religion is clearly defined and external signs accompany it, whereas being affiliated to a faith or having one is mostly a matter of personal choice or internal affair. In special, faith, as a free style phenomenon, has a much larger scope with its subtle, open-ended and wide-ranging character. For that matter, faith has a tremendous potential, much more than religion, for making a shared world for the humans. The larger range of faith lays a substantial premise for an all-inclusive approach to human society. Faith-based approach to life has a greater potential in making a more qualitative, richer, harmonious and peaceful society, as well.

1.4. Ethics

The term 'ethics' derives from the ancient Greek words 'ethikos' and 'ethos', which mean 'habit, custom', etc. Ethics investigates 'the best way for people to live' and 'the actions that are right or wrong in particular circumstances'. Ethics resolves the questions of good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice, justice and crime, and the like. Obviously, it deals with principles of human behavior and its various dimensions.

1.5. Morals

The term 'morals' originates from the Latin word 'moralis', which comes from 'mos or mor', meaning 'custom and mores' (in plural). Merriam Webster Dictionary describes the word as 'beliefs about what is right behavior and what is wrong behavior', 'the degree to which something is right and good' and 'the moral goodness or badness of something'. The word signifies also 'the quality of being in accord with standards of right or good conduct'. While it refers to standards of behavior on the one side, it pertains to the lesson that derives from a story or experience on the other.

1.6. Ethics and morals – comparative notions

Both ethics and morals are often used interchangeably as both of them deal with standards of behaviour in life. Both of them relate to the conduct of 'right and wrong' or do's or don'ts. Both deal with



the system of regulating life. Since they take care of two aspects of the same system, like two sides of the same coin, they are complementary elements of keeping life within the parameters of discipline.

Ethics and morals stand different from several angles. Ethics are standards of behavior founded upon learned conduct, while morals are standards of behavior grounded in beliefs, including religion. Ethical perspective of right or wrong is legal or illegal, whereas morality examines whether something is good (righteous) and evil. Ethics are rules provided by an external source, like codes of conduct in workplaces or principles in religions and morals refer to an individual's own principles regarding right and wrong.

Above and beyond, ethics and morals possess certain paradoxical or out of the ordinary nuances. One could strictly follow ethical principles and not have any morals at all. Similarly, one could even violate ethical principles within a given system of rules in order to maintain one's moral integrity.

1.7. Inter

The Latin prefix 'inter' means 'between', 'among', 'in the midst of', 'mutually', 'reciprocally', 'together', 'during', and the like. Evidently, it refers to linking persons or things with each other. It explores clearly the space between or among human beings, as well. It implies all sorts of human clusters, like family, community, nation and society. It stands for all offshoots of human bonding like friendship, fellowship and harmony as well as collective processes, like, collaboration and integration.

1.8. Interfaith

The term 'interfaith' points to engaging with different faiths or persons of different affiliations of faith. It presupposes plurality of religious systems as equally valid paths to the divine. It avows the capacity of believers of diverse perspectives to scale a greater sense of spiritual perfection as well as human quality, while in the very process of mutual interaction. It envisages a pooling of combined values in view of bettering the social fibre of the human society. It foresees for the humankind a wide range of elevated benefits, which are left to the world that is even beyond simple imagination.

1.9. Interaction

The term 'interaction' comes from the Latin 'inter', meaning between, and 'ago', meaning to do or to act. It is 'action between' or reciprocal action. It is a way of affecting or influencing one another. It is an occasion when two or more people or things communicate with or react to each other. Engaging with each other may involve looking, talking, sharing, and the like. Interaction includes dealings of various sorts between two persons. Interface, communication, relations, etc are synonyms of interaction.

1.10. Dialogue

The word 'dialogue' derives from ancient roots 'dialoge' (Old French), 'dialogus' (Latin), 'dialogos' and 'dialegesthai' (Greek), meaning 'converse with' and 'speak through/between'. It is a conversation, discussion or exchange of ideas between or among two or more people. As a philosophical or didactic device or narrative, it is linked with Socratic dialogue as developed by Plato, who used the term first. Since the word dialogue has a general meaning and is used in diverse sectors of the society with different connotations, it needs to be specified according to contexts. When applied to faith or religion, it highlights the deeper implications of the engagement between people of diverse faiths. In this context, dialogue is an alternative word for interfaith interaction.

1.11. Sharing

The word 'share' means 'having a portion of something with another or others' or 'giving a portion of something to another or others'. Split, divide, go halves in/with are synonyms for the former and portion out, divide up, allocate, ration out, give out, distribute, dispense, hand out, dish out, deal out, dole out, parcel out, measure out, etc are synonyms for the latter. Use, occupy or enjoy (something) jointly with another or others is the basic sense of the word. The Cambridge English Dictionary elaborates the implications of the word further. Accordingly, 'to have or use something at the same time as someone else, to divide and give part of it to someone else, two or more people share an activity, they each do some of it, two or more people or things share a feeling, quality or experience, they both or all have the same feeling, quality or experience and to tell someone else about your thoughts, feelings, ideas, etc.'



1.12. Ethics of a shared faith

Faith, accompanied by religion, is a two-dimensional entity – individual and social. As faith and religion have individual and social aspects within the limits of a particular system of faith or religion, so also the all affiliations of faith and traditions of religion have a larger social implication. That amounts to state that faith or religion is necessarily a collective or a shared reality. Living this socially motivated shared reality requires and has ethical principles and values attached to it, as any game has a set of principles and rules to regulate it. That is what is meant by the ethics of a shared faith.

2. Common Characteristics of Faith

2.1. Divine and human dimensions of faith

Faith is basically a bilateral phenomenon. This two-sided character evolves from the root meanings of the word. Divine and human dimensions are fundamental to it. Faith in God is reflected in faith in human beings. Faith in human beings is symbolic of faith in God, too. The former is the theoretical part and the latter is the practical part. Either of them cannot exist, cut off from the other. They are like two sides of the same coin. God's image is reflected in the humans and the unknown is inherent in the already known.

Moreover, the divine dimension of faith doesn't stand by itself, since the divine does not require anything from the humans. The humans and the creation require a back up. When human beings and the nature are taken care of, the divine gets what it actually deserves. Devotion to the divine takes the route of the human and the natural. The divine and human dynamics of faith is a triangular dynamics of one's self, the other and the divine.

2.2. Religious and non-religious aspects of faith

Faith is substantially a religious phenomenon. But, it is very much a non-religious reality, too. The open-ended meanings of the word shore up its broad scope, too. Faith is not an end in itself and it admits a non-religious path as well as a religious path. The religious way pivots around God, Creator or the Higher Power, whereas the non-religious course focuses on a Cosmic Energy, Great Intelligence, God-particle or Yet-to-be-Known.

Spirit and matter are two components of life. The former is the internal and invisible aspect and the latter, the visible and external aspect. They exist together, are complementary to each other and cannot be exclusively compartmentalized. Both ingredients together create the reality. Faith, conviction or confidence emerges from both religious and non-religious attainments of knowledge and wisdom, with an equal measure of credibility. Life is composed of both paths, as two sides of the same coin.

2.3. Vertical and horizontal directions of faith

Faith is traditionally understood to be oriented towards the vertical direction. But, it admits in an equal measure the horizontal direction, which makes it a complete reality. The vertical direction leads the believer to the world of the unseen, the vertex of life. The horizontal direction introduces him or her to the visible world around. The former is symbolic of the altitudes of life one is oriented to ascend, while the latter busies itself with the magnitudes of life one is expected to expand oneself towards. Both directions together pave the way for accelerating the process of growing up as a human being.

2.4. Individual and social facets of faith

Faith is often misunderstood as an individual affair. But, as a matter of fact, it is equally a social characteristic. As individual is born from the society, so is the society composed of individuals. Therefore, as the focal point in human life, faith occurs not only in individuals but also between individuals and in the society. Although faith takes shape in the individual, it becomes visible only when it is expressed in social life. Faith makes sense only in the harmony of these facets.

In a similar way, the many streams of faith, though they start their journey as individual streams, join each other and flow to the same ocean as one single river. Individual traditions of faith require attaining a larger identity. Transcending the faith of a minor to that of a major is an ever-living process of growing up towards a full-fledged social being. Likewise, individual faith traditions are geared towards ascending to fuller divine altitudes and larger human magnitudes in life. Faith, true to its name, has to grow towards a circle of all faiths.



2.5. The experiential and expressional components of faith

Faith is fashioned by experience and expression, which are its two vital components. It begins with an experience and has to necessarily proceed to an expression. As spirit and body are invisible and visible constituents of the same life, so are experience and expression in relation to each other. Both have their irreplaceable space and role in making faith a reality. They are like thought and deed. What emerges in the interior world has to overflow towards the external world and what takes place in the outer area has to be rooted in the inner forum, as well.

2.6. The result of faith

On account of the variety of backgrounds, there are various inclinations, perceptions and approaches prevalent in the society in the name of faith. But, from a practical point of view, what really matters is the result faith and its related exercises produce in life. The outcome of faith is the criterion for assessing the worth of faith one holds on to in one's life. It can very easily be perceived that much of the human engagement with faith produces hardly any effect in life, either for oneself or for others. No doubt, a fruitless faith is no faith at all. To say the least, what counts in life is the result of faith and faith is justified by its social effects.

'Being a good human being' is the real outcome of faith. This is what is meant by Sree Narayan Guru of Kerala, a poet, saint and social reformer, when he exclaims, 'whatever be your religion or faith, it suffices if you are a good human being'. If one is not a good human being, it doesn't matter if one is a theist or a non-theist and pursues this religion or that religion. He advances the Argument as he states, 'saar saar ko gahi raho, thothaa de udaai', which means 'hold on to the essentials and throw away the non-essentials'. The essential utility of faith is intrinsic to making refined human beings. Faith is supposed to polish the human character as the basic identity of the humans.

2.7. The dynamic reality of faith

Faith is not an abstract notion. It is a dynamic concept. It does not exist by itself. It is not an isolated or an insulated entity. It keeps evolving. It exists in living persons, who are inevitably active and social in character. As an inter-connected reality, it expresses

itself in mutual relations. Faith of an individual or a community necessarily crisscrosses that of the other. Mystical spiritualist and social reformer Kabeer characteristically compares faith to 'flowing water'. 'Sharing one's faith' with the other and 'sharing in the faith' of the other are complementary core elements. In fact, the true brilliance of faith is contained in the vibrant, inter-related and socially revolving character of faith.

2.8. The collective idea of God

The idea of God is at the core of faith or religion and is essentially a collective one. Though an individual or a particular tradition can entertain a limited idea of God, a complete idea of God is always a shared and inclusive one. God is like the electric wire that is laid above the railway line, touching which the train of the engine runs. God is similar to the base note of music, tuned to which the musical instruments are played. God resembles the one who plays the first fiddle in an orchestra, harmonized to which the human beings play the second fiddle. Besides, God can be conceived in terms of common notions, like life, energy, light, intelligence and value. 'God is always beyond', observes Kenneth Leech, a renowned religious thinker. The idea of God keeps evolving eternally and defies all boundaries. Therefore, faith has to be undeniably broad-based, vibrant and ever-evolving, so that the reality of God in its essence can be touched upon.

2.9. Faith an undivided reality

Faith is an integral whole. It cannot be divided. It can be understood only from an overall perspective. Diverse traditions of faith are to be viewed at a glance. Faith is one, though it has various aspects. While having specific qualities, they are grounded in common characteristics. One could be more inclined to one tradition, rightly so. But, one has to be inclusive of other traditions, too. But, one tradition of faith is mine in special and other traditions are mine as well, though may be in a general way. Confining one's self to one's own tradition is a self-defeating tendency. It is also like being a frog in the well. Only a collective sentiment towards all of them does justice to faith.

2.10. Faith a shared heritage

The diverse traditions of faith share a common origin, common existence and a common destiny. They



emerged from the same source, though at different places and at different times. They have the same course of life. More to the point, they are like branches of the same tree. The stem, the roots, the water and the manure that nourishes it and the soil that holds it firm in the ground are the same. Therefore, faith, along with all its aspects, is the gift of the same Creator. It is the common cultural heritage of the human society. The follower of a particular faith has no business to monopolize it either. The varied traditions of faith are to be collectively owned.

11. Faith a motivating force for life

More often than not, people think of faith as the centre of life. But, this is a disoriented view. As a matter of fact, life is the centre of faith and it can never be otherwise. Faith is at the service of life. It is oriented to making life meaningful and effective. Faith makes real sense only when it is in its right place. Likewise, the most basic identity of human beings is not coming from having faith or being religious, but from being human. When life as a human being is the central reality and faith, its supportive factor, faith makes real sense.

Further, faith in the specific sense and religion in the general sense is the source of inspiration required for life. It is the spring of strength and the motivating force for life. It nourishes life and supplies meaning to life. It is the sum and substance of what one thinks, feels, speaks and does in life. Faith is reflected in one's perceptions, attitudes, habits, life style, etc. In truth, faith is the sustaining factor in life.

3.12. The complementary dynamism of faith

Faith is not an item in the life of a person. It is a pivotal force that takes the entire style of one's life into its grip. It involves the whole person of the believer. It extends its range to other believers, too. A spirit of complementariness with all traditions of faith, both religious and non-religious, is the true luster of faith.

All streams of faith are in some way partial in their perceptions and, therefore, 'one completes the other' is the logic of faith as a complete phenomenon. Faith traditions are like a 'mirror' to each other. Believers, including those in scientific inventions, can check the human-spiritual fitness in the interface of the other.

Faith, as an interactive happening, is always an open-ended and inclusive style of life.

3. Interfaith Ethics of Faith

3.1. The genius of individual faith

The individual traditions of faith glow with a brilliance that emerges from their difference from one another. They evolved from the revelation, experience and expression of different prophets and messengers of God, at different cultural contexts of the human history, in terms of time and space. They are like different streams that sprang forth from diverse corners of the earth at different times. Each of them possesses a dignity, distinctiveness and a special set of values. All of them radiate the face of God, though each in its own way.

Therefore, the sacred space they are endowed with cannot in any way be desecrated or taken for granted. The singular luster they possess is not to be violated at any rate. One shouldn't dare to ignore them or sideline them, either. Faith does not admit considerations of great and small, high and low or majority and minority of any sort. One has to extend respect and esteem to each one of them in an equal measure. One has to attempt to learn from them a lesson or two for life, too. This is intended by the ethics of faith.

3.2. The interactive phenomenon of faith

Faith is an interactive phenomenon, without a shred of doubt. But, since it is a conceptual reality and since it does not exist anywhere in a tangible form, faiths cannot interact. Persons having faith interact with each other. Furthermore, interaction explores the other not as a disengaged 'other', but as an extension of one's own being. One believer does not engage with the other as if the other is a passive object.

Further, interaction involves both speaking and listening. It suggests learning from each other. Faith means travelling together as co-pilgrims to the same divine power. It signifies working together to make the given society more qualitative and harmonious. The continuous process of interaction is the genius of faith. This is the principle that guides an interactive faith.

3.3. Interfaith dialogue

'Interfaith dialogue' refers to interaction between individuals or institutions of different religious, spiritual



or humanistic beliefs. The interaction has to be open, positive, constructive and cooperative in spirit. The purpose of this exercise is neither syncretistic nor making an alternative religion. The objective of interfaith dialogue is promoting understanding, acceptance and fellowship between persons or communities of different religions.

The content of the interaction, though may be mainly faith-related matters to begin with, has to be geared towards common concerns and the wellbeing of the society at large. Wider horizons of interaction will keep faith wide-ranging and meaningful. Dialogue among believers of different traditions is an ethical mandate and not just an optional endeavour.

3.4. Interfaith as inclusive thinking

The vital element that keeps the human society as a single unit at the global level is inclusive thinking. One's thought is the central factor from which proceeds speech and action. To think on the whole or to think of one's self excluding others is an anti-life occurrence. In contrast, to have the other included in one's very process of thinking is the pro-active outlook that is elementary to the social character of life. The former is a negative orientation and the latter, a positive direction.

Such inclusive thinking is all the more appropriate when it is a question of faith. As faith itself is a dynamic phenomenon, interfaith is all the more an all-encompassing reality. A true believer has to be open-ended and welcoming in all aspects, lest his or her faith degenerates into a liability. An honest promoter of interfaith philosophy has to possess a mindset that is comprehensive in its orientation. Thinking inclusively is a moral mandate that is symbolic of an honest and grown up believer.

3.5. Interfaith as diverse faces of the divine

The divine is certainly a multi-faceted reality. It has many faces, in line with the diverse perceptions of human traditions. Some traditions subscribe to religious or theistic perspectives and other, to non-religious or non-theistic. Some religious traditions conceive the creator as non-dualistic and some, dualistic. Yet again, several religious traditions conceive the supreme power in terms of gender, that too, as male, female, male-female composite or neither male nor female.

Besides, there are also relational and absolute categories prevalent for the divine. Some search for the divine within oneself and others, in the exterior world and nature. The plurality of the faces of the divine neither can be exhausted nor contested. Interfaith is an all-inclusive approach to the unfathomable mystery of the Creator. The most basic moral duty of human beings is to recognize the diversity of the owner of life and the mysterious ways of the creation.

3.6. Interfaith a common pedestal

Interfaith would mean professing a larger and a combined faith. All traditions of faith are the gifts of the same God to the human race. They are the common cultural heritage of the human society. Besides, all believers have a common origin, a common plateau of existence and a common destiny. No believer has any business to divide what God has designed as a united whole. Interfaith is a mindset that recognizes this eternal truth and motivates every believer to be deeply and progressively committed to the higher and larger dimensions of faith.

The common pedestal of faiths can be very well described as a prism that refracts faith into a spectrum of faiths, which are reflected in varieties of human and divine niceties as well as imaginative and scientific approaches. Celebrating the commonalities of life is perhaps the only way to do justice to the immense diversities with which life here on earth is intended to be. Maintaining such a team spirit among believers of all affiliations is the common code of conduct required of faith itself.

2.7. Interfaith as living universal values

Interfaith is a broad-based commitment to universal values that are inherent in different traditions of faith. Values are at the core of all traditions. Universal values have a standing that is world-wide. All faith-based traditions contain values that are capable of a global reach out, though in a more or less fashion. Similarly, there are secular values that are off the religious traditions, but have a bearing on the global human society.

Interfaith covers a wide range of high-flying values in all religions, such as unity in diversity, world family, non-violence, middle path, anekandvad, peace, love, service, equality, forgiveness, commitment to the



disadvantaged, brotherhood, harmony of the opposites, good thoughts, good words and good deeds and law-centred life.

Besides, non-religious values like hard work, truth, transparency, accountability, commitment, and the like, are all-encompassing values. Fostering interfaith relations and fellowship in itself is a comprehensive value of universal and utmost stature. Interfaith dialogue would mean advancing these universal values, in view of making a better society. Owning these universal values is not an optional matter for believers, but is an obligation by virtue of the moral binding that is inbuilt in them.

2.8. Interfaith as 'one body, many parts'

Faith is like 'one body with many parts'. Body is all about a related existence. It exists as one and functions as many parts. Each part has a clearly allotted space and a given specific role. All the organs in the body are equally important and they celebrate a living solidarity that is par excellence. In other words, the parts of the body partner with other parts to make the whole of the body function in the right way. It is an existence in togetherness.

Similarly, believers of diverse traditions vouch to meet, interact and know each other. They appreciate, admire and treasure each other. They learn from each other, in a spirit of mutual purification and enrichment. They are committed not only to share with the other the merits of one's own faith, but to share in the merits of the faith and the worldview of the other. In this process, rights and duties are harmonized. Faith is no longer just a faith but is inter-faith, which is a two-way process that is geared towards a larger, richer and fuller faith. The very idea of one body with many parts is a pulsating example for the ethical imperative that is interfaith.

3.9. Interfaith as a 'rainbow of faiths'

Rainbow is a rare and unique gift of nature. It contains all seven colours and its shades. All colours are different and none of them can be substituted. When all colours are in their respective place, the rainbow radiates a beauty in difference. Manifestly, beauty is a pluralistic notion and is an enriching factor.

In addition, separated from one another, the colours have no existence and the rainbow ceases to exist. But, together, they make the rainbow and it is a living symbol of collective existence or an existence in

unison. Interfaith is a 'rainbow of faiths' and it celebrates all faiths in a spirit of togetherness in life. Like the colours in the rainbow, faiths become mutually elevating in the wake of an awakening towards a 'we-consciousness' in all believers. The idea of rainbow of faiths radiates a beauty that interfaith is intended to be and that is an ethical ideal in itself.

3.10. Interfaith a partnership of faiths

Interfaith is a way of being parts of the same whole. Life is a question of give and take. Faith cannot be an exception to this rule. It is a massive misunderstanding to think that one's faith is for oneself and the other's faith is for the other. One's faith is for the other as well and vice versa. Faith cannot be owned by any one individual or community, but is to be always owned in a shared manner. In addition, one's faith is instrumental in the purification and enrichment of each other. Faith works as a mirror for the partners.

Furthermore, faith would mean opening up to larger horizons. One cannot open oneself to the divine without being open to other faiths. That is what Pope John Paul II underscored when he stated, 'when you open yourself to one another, you open yourself to God'. Faith functions always in a triangular dynamics. That would amount to state that faith is always a matter of partnership and interfaith, with all its implications, stands for that partnership in a very thought through manner. Partnership of faiths is an ethical command that is designed by the Creator himself.

3.11. Interfaith a shared and sublime value

Value refers to what is worth in one's assessment. It is a perception of what is important in life. It is a principle or standard of behavior as regards what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable. It is an ideal that influences one's attitudes and behaviour. A value is considered a universal value when it is accepted as worth by all people or almost all people. Values cover ethical, spiritual, social, cultural, ethnic and individual arenas. What the large diversity of human cultures hold in common in most places, situations and times becomes almost a rule for all. Accordingly, interfaith relation is a matter of universal merit because of its exceedingly all-embracing character and functions. It envelopes in itself all the human and spiritual values and so it is legitimately



emerging as the most sublime value of universal credit. For that matter, interfaith is capable of ensuring better social prospects for the entire world. Beyond doubt, it deserves and calls for a universal acceptance as the most auspicious and uplifting value for the humans. Obviously, interfaith as the most sublime value is an ethical principle, par excellence.

3.12. Interfaith a shared spirituality

Spirit is 'breath', as per the Latin 'spiritus'. Breath is an air, which flows where it wills and no one can take hold of it. It cannot be the monopoly of any one individual or group. It is an energy that strengthens all those who are inclined towards it, irrespective of dissimilar backgrounds. In fact, spirit is one, despite the fact that it has diverse aspects. Spirit is the shared meeting point of people of all leanings. Spirit is the core of all faith-based paths of life, too.

In the same way, spirituality is one and it is the sum and substance of what one thinks, feels and does in one's life. It also sums up one's experiences, attitudes and approaches in life, in its entirety. Interfaith is a high-minded spirit of sharing the best of life with each other and therefore the spirituality that follows is inevitably a shared property of the humans. Manifestly, interfaith, as a shared spirituality, has in it an innate moral binding on everyone who pursues a spiritual path.

3.13. Interfaith as a shared mission

The diverse streams of faith are the glorious outcome of divine revelation, channelized by exceptional men and women at different places and times. As they were extraordinary divine endowments to the human world, there is absolutely no contradiction in their messages. On the contrary, their messages are corresponding to each other. What is required is interpreting their messages by way of its spirit and not letter. The spirit of the faith traditions, in actual fact, contains the character of interfaith.

As a result, interfaith is truly a shared mission of believers of all traditions. As they disseminate the best of the values what they hold on to the world outside them, so also they need to learn from values from other traditions of the world. This is a shared mission of walking and working together to make an inter-related, value-based and humane society. It is a joint pilgrimage to the same divine and towards a larger

way of living one's life on earth. Interfaith as a shared mission is a brilliant ethical directive by itself.

3.14. Interfaith spirit as the ethics of a shared faith

The meaning, spirit and implications of interfaith elaborated above aren't merely sweet-sounding and cosmetic ideals of life. They have a binding power and that has to be recognized. The above principles and ideals are ethical imperatives for a meaningful human life. Faith, as it is a source of meaning in life, has to uphold the interfaith mandates that are inherent in it. As the most widely accepted motivating force in life, faith has to get transformed into interfaith altitudes and magnitudes of life, so that it makes sense to the human and divine delicacies it claims to offer to the humans. Interfaith implications truly portray the stipulations of the ethics of a shared faith.

Conclusion

Faith, as a dynamic and inclusive reality, for all intents and purposes, is an interfaith engagement. In other words, a shared faith is faith in the proper sense of the word. A shared faith with all its implications refers to the nuts and bolts of the ethical code faith and interfaith contain. The social character of faith can be justified only in terms of interfaith or a shared faith. Partnering faith with one and all, sacred or secular, is the life style of the humans. The ethical demands that emerge from such a life style are to be lived in every thought, word and deed in life, as well. Faith, in the real sense of the word, is interfaith in spirit. It is ever dynamic in its character and is programmed for blossoming towards an ever inter-related phenomenon in life. Interfaith, as a grown up perception of and an elevated approach to life, permeates into persons and groups of all affiliations. It is a vibrant process of 'sharing in the richness of others', while sharing with them the best one holds on to'.

In addition, interfaith is the spirit of a divinely tuned human life as well as a humanly full-blown divine life. Charged with the all-inclusive universal fibre of life, the spirit of interfaith applies to all arenas of social life and leads the society to the sublime altitudes of divine horizons as well as to the magnitudes of human life, two in one. This is in fact the outline of an 'ethics of a shared faith'.



Nuclear Bombs and the Morality Dilemma: Towards 'Global Zero' or Apocalyptic Abyss?

Prof. Tridib Chakraborti & Mohor Chakraborty

The President of the United States, Barack Obama's historic visit to Hiroshima on 27th May 2016 – seventy-one years after his predecessor, Harry S. Truman ordered the unleashing of the forces of total annihilation on the Japanese twin cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – has resurrected the phantoms of the past. In Truman's words, Japan was inundated by a "rain of ruin from the air" for denying acceptance of the terms of the Allied Powers, for which the country had to repay many fold. Such a statement reminds one of the Mahabharata hero, Arjuna's decision, overcoming his moral dilemma (allayed by Lord Krishna's sermon) to fight the Kurukshetra War, knowing full well that his 'Karma' would result in massive destruction and indiscriminate loss of many innocent lives. In any case, down the lane of history, Obama's epoch-making tryst with Hiroshima has brought him the closest to condemning the inhuman Second World War bombings, though it stopped short of an apology. Reading into the President's recent address at Hiroshima, three facets become clear:

First, Obama did not explicitly apologize for the United States' War-time decision to use the August 1945 atomic bombs to end the Second World War. In fact, following Japan's rejection of the Allied force's plea to surrender, Truman was unapologetic and steadfast in justifying his imprimatur "in order to shorten the agony of war, in order to save the lives of thousands and thousands of young Americans".¹ Secondly, Obama implicitly criticized the "terrible force unleashed" at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and lamented the blinding effect of material advancement and social innovation on human beings, which his predecessor had employed to "justify violence in the name of some higher cause."² Thirdly, he reiterated his utopian vision of a world without nuclear weapons, that he had first articulated in 2009, thus calling for a moral revolution, by encouraging nations that hold nuclear stockpiles to "escape the logic of fear and pursue a world without them."³

Given this premise, the present article will try to argue in light of the Hiroshima-Nagasaki incident, whether the use of nuclear weapons can be justified on moral and humanitarian grounds. In conclusion, the article will analyze the essence of President Obama's plea for bringing about a "moral revolution" towards making the world nuclear weapons-free and the path ahead.

Hiroshima-Nagasaki Bombings: Viewed through the Just War Theory

In a striking description of the spectacle of the atomic bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Deputy Commanding General and Chief of Field Operations of the Manhattan Project, Thomas Farrell stated: "I was stunned by what seemed the blasphemy of ordinary mortals toying with forces hitherto reserved to the Almighty."⁴ The astoundingly enormous destructive effects of the twin bombings, with geographically widespread and inter-generational consequences, inflicted irreparable loss on the victims of the attack. Estimating the total casualties has been an extremely difficult exercise, as a result of the extensive destruction of civil installations (hospitals, fire and police department and government agencies), the state of utter confusion immediately following the explosion, the uncertainty regarding the actual population before the bombing and the consumption of many bodies by the raging fires. According to the Manhattan Engineer District's best available figures, of an estimated 255,000 population in pre-raid Hiroshima, the casualty figure stood at 135,000, while in the case of Nagasaki, the pre-raid population and casualty figure were 195,000 and 65,000 respectively.⁵ Besides casualty figures, the debilitating impact on the health and psychology of the survivors of this apocalyptic attack cannot be computed in mere numerical terms. The intensity of devastation brings us face to face with the fact that nuclear weapons are exceptional and humans "need exceptional thinking to deal with them."



Taken from a moralist perspective then, the supra-moral connotations of nuclear weapons have been echoed by scholars like Steven Lee, who believe that nuclear weapons "create a fundamental problem for our moral understanding.... The fantastic destructive power of nuclear weapons seems to place them beyond our moral world."⁶ It is in this backdrop that the present section will attempt to analyze the morality dimension of the attacks, through the lens of the theory of Just War. The doctrine of Just War - the most widely accepted theory on the morality of war - states the limit beyond which war as such becomes in itself a wholly non-human and non-political activity. It determines a point beyond which military force becomes senseless violence and weapons cease to remain weapons of war. Although the principle forbidding indiscriminate warfare pertains to the nature of warfare itself and its own proper laws, so long as this human action remains "by the skin of its teeth, a rational activity at all, so long as war is even conceivably a purposive extension of national policy, so long as war barely remains an affair in which a human being at all above the level of the beasts of the field can ever justifiably participate", the Just War theory cannot be repealed; it can only be violated. This is not because political society has a nature to which military means must be kept subordinate. Rather, the distinction between "combatants" and "non-combatants" asserts that there is both some relation between a civil society and its fighters and yet non-relation or remote relation between them. "The maintenance of this distinction or of this distance and subordination in the relation of combatants to the society they defend, is of the very essence of war, which under any circumstances, may be chosen by those who have not lost all political morality and their political reasons."⁷

Just War theory contains two proportionality conditions, according to which, a war or an act in war is justified only if the damage it causes is not excessive. Besides, the theory lays down a series of conditions, which are divided into two groups: 'jus ad bellum' conditions, concerning the resort to war, directed to political leaders deciding whether to initiate war or whether to respond to another state's doing so with military force of their own; and 'jus in bello' conditions, pertaining to the means used to fight war. They are again directed at political leaders when they

make tactical decisions, for instance Truman's decision to bomb the twin Japanese cities and also at soldiers as they fight from day to day. Since it is usually assumed that the two sets of conditions are independent, a State may be justified in its resort to war but violate the 'jus in bello' conditions in how it fights, or initiates war unjustly, but use only tactics that are morally permitted. The most important 'ad bellum' condition states that the resort to war is justified only given a just cause. The most widely accepted just cause for war is resisting aggression, or an armed attack on one's own or another State, but there can also be a just cause when one State sponsors or allows deadly attacks on another's citizens without threatening the other's territory.

On the other hand, two associated 'ad bellum' conditions state that a war must be declared by a legitimate authority and fought with right intentions, whereas, three final conditions, which concern the consequences of war, pertain to the following: first, a Just War must have a reasonable hope of success; if there is no probability of achieving the just causes, the war's destructiveness will be to no purpose. Secondly, war must be a last resort; if the just causes can be achieved by less violent means such as diplomacy, fighting is wrong. Thirdly, the 'jus ad bellum' proportionality condition, states the destructiveness of war must not be out of proportion to the relevant good the war will do. However, even if there is a just cause and no way of achieving it other than war is available, resort to war in itself can be wrong if the damage it causes is excessive. Furthermore, there are three 'jus in bello' conditions, of which the first, the discrimination condition, distinguishes between the "combatants" and "non-combatants".⁸ In this context, it may be argued that the brutal bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki violate the principle of discrimination - one of the basic precepts of Just War theory - since nuclear weapons are inherently indiscriminate in identifying "combatants" and "non-combatants".

The necessity condition, which parallels the 'ad bellum' condition of last-resort, forbids killing soldiers and especially civilians if it serves no military purpose; this implies that unnecessary force is wrong. Moreover, the 'in bello' proportionality condition forbids the collateral killing of civilians if the resulting



civilian deaths are out of proportion to the relevant good the act would supposedly do; which implies that excessive force is wrong. This proportionality condition is included in Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, which forbids attacks "which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated."¹⁰ Despite their differences, the various proportionality conditions assert that a war or act in war is wrong if the relevant harm it causes is out of proportion to its relevant good.

Therefore, in the case under analysis, both the principles of discrimination and proportionality stood violated, thereby contravening the very spirit and philosophy of the theory of Just War. Neither can the August 1945 attacks be justified by the doctrine of "military necessity," since it is governed by several constraints, viz. an attack or action must be intended to help in the military defeat of the enemy, it must be an attack on a military objective, and the harm caused to civilians or civilian property must be proportional and not excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated. Although the detonation of the bombs in this case helped in the defeat of Japan by forcing it to surrender and terminated the Second World War, this military target was surrounded by a civilian population, upon which disproportionate harm was inflicted. This demonstrated the stunted execution of what Robert Nye has referred to as the morality of means without considering the morality of ends.

Hiroshima-Nagasaki Bombings: Viewed through the Judgment of International People's Tribunal

In light of the above-mentioned interpretations of the doctrine of Just War and the conditionalities therein, the present section would analyze the judgment of the 2007 International People's Tribunal (IPT) on the Dropping of Atomic Bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In its judgment of 16 July 2007, the IPT described the attack and the nature of damage "as indiscriminative extermination of all life forms or inflicting unnecessary pain to the survivors."¹¹ The Tribunal applied the following treaties and customary law in interpreting America's heinous act of bombarding Hiroshima and Nagasaki: St. Petersburg

Declaration of 1868; the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, in particular the Regulations Concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land; the Martens Clause included in the Preamble of the Hague Convention IV of 1907; the Geneva Conventions of 1864, 1906, 1929 and 1949; the Nuremberg Principles; the Charter of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East; the 1963 Judgment of the Tokyo District Court in the Shimoda; and the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion of 8 July 1996, in relation to the Legality or Illegality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons. In this context, the Tribunal took judicial notice and the crux of its judgment may be encapsulated as under:

First, the "Laws and Customs of War", as recognized by The Hague International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1996, "fixed the rights and duties of belligerents in their conduct of operations and limited the choice of methods and means of injuring the enemy in an international armed conflict".¹² In its Advisory Opinion, ICJ considered that the St. Petersburg Declaration provides the basis of International Customary Law derived from the two general principles of International Humanitarian Law applied to this case:

- a). the first principle is aimed at the protection of the civilian population and civilian objects and it "establishes the distinction between combatants and non-combatants". States are prohibited from making "civilians the object of attack" as well as should refrain from using "weapons that are incapable of distinguishing between civilian and military targets";
- b). the second principle prohibits "unnecessary suffering to combatants", accordingly prohibiting the use of weapons "causing them such harm or uselessly aggravating their suffering".

In light of this principle, States do not have unlimited freedom of choice of means in the weapons they use.¹³ In fact, the Opinion summarized the treaty provisions applicable to this case, beginning with the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 up to the present, which establish that by their nature, the use of weapons having indiscriminative effects, violates the treaties mentioned and Customary International Law. The Tribunal also found that the fact, and intent, of waging war on civilian populations is implicit in the choice of weaponry, and therefore does not provide any defence.¹⁴



Secondly, the rules established in the Martens Clause, comprise a large number of International Customary Rules, which inform the practice of the States and prohibit the use of nuclear weapons. This same conclusion was reached by the ICJ when it acknowledged the Martens Clause "as an affirmation that the principles and rules of Humanitarian Law apply to nuclear weapons".¹⁴ Summarily then, in view of these principles, the Tribunal observed that the ICJ's Advisory Opinion regarding the use of nuclear weapons upheld that "the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of International Law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular, the principles and rules of Humanitarian Law".¹⁵ Thus, it considered that the defendants' use of nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki was illegal since the bombing of both cities, made civilians the object of attack inflicting unnecessary and tragic suffering on them.¹⁶

On the other side of the spectrum, the Tribunal, by applying four aspects of International Law in relation to Crimes Against Humanity, considered the following: a. The Second Hague Declaration of 29 July 1899, which prohibits "the use of projectiles, the object of which is the diffusion of asphyxiating or deleterious gases"; b. Article 23(a) of the regulations respecting the Law and Customs of War on Land annexed to the Hague Convention IV of 18 October 1907, which especially forbids the States from employing poison or poisonous weapons; c. The Geneva Protocol of 17 June 1925, which prohibits "the use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases and all materials or devices"; and d. Article (5) (c) of the Charter of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, "for waging inhuman acts against the civilian population during the second World War and the violation of the laws and customs of war".¹⁷ Examined in their totality, the Tribunal noted that Crimes Against Humanity are those crimes that cause tremendous damages to ordinary citizens. These crimes literally destroy humanity, human consciousness, and the ideas and philosophies of civilizations. The following elements were identified as the bases of Crimes Against Humanity: first, if the perpetrator inflicts great mental and physical suffering and/or serious bodily injuries, by reason of inhuman acts; secondly, if the perpetrator was aware of the factual circumstances that

established the character of the act; thirdly, if the conduct was committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against civilian populations; and fourthly, if the perpetrator knew that the conduct was part of or intended to be part of a widespread or systematic attack directly against a civilian population. In view of these elements, the Tribunal established that the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki qualified for its identification as Crimes Against Humanity.¹⁸

Finally, the Tribunal acknowledged the existence of five elements in the definition of War Crimes, viz. deliberate killing; the killing of ordinary citizens and attack on civilians; deliberate destruction of cities and towns; attacks causing unnecessary and excessive deaths; and attacks on unprotected cities to be reflected and established in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.¹⁹ Therefore, in view of the findings of the International Peoples' Tribunal on the Dropping of Atomic Bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the perpetrators were found guilty of having committed War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity, in addition to being guilty of violating general principles of International Law and waging inhumane nuclear attacks against civilian targets. The attacks were deliberately inflicted on unprotected cities, not justified by military necessity, causing the unnecessary and excessive deaths of civilians, which sent shock waves through generations together, remaining as a stark reminder of the evil effects of the injudicious use of science and technology. In fact, the nature and intensity of psycho-somatic damage inflicted on the populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in addition to its lethal effects on generations thereafter, far outweighed Truman's reference to "some higher cause", making the horrors of the crime incommensurate with ideals of humanity, ethics or morality.

Towards A Nuclear Weapons-free World: Utopia or Reality?

President Obama, in his April 2009 speech at Prague, espoused an agenda of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and counterterrorism that he hoped would result in "the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons." In course of this speech, Obama acknowledged that, "as a nuclear power, as the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon, the



United States has a moral responsibility to act" towards safeguarding the "right of people everywhere to live free from fear in the 21st century."²⁰ Obama's call for a world free from nuclear weapons reflects the cause of the Russell-Einstein Manifesto (9 July 1955) which appealed to scientists from both sides of the Iron Curtain to act upon governments to renounce nuclear weapons with a view towards the abolition of war itself, which subsequently formed the basis of the International Pugwash Movement. More recently, 'Global Zero' – an organization formed in December 2008 – urges "phased verified elimination of nuclear weapons, starting with deep reductions in the U.S. and Russian arsenals." Its Action Plan recommends negotiations to be held between 2019 and 2023, of "a legally binding international agreement, signed by all nuclear capable countries, for the phased, verified, proportionate reduction of all nuclear arsenals to zero total warheads by 2030."²¹

Although President Obama indicated his desire to follow the trajectory he charted in reaching his espoused goal, this agenda has neither been sufficiently supported by his own administration and Party, nor has it captured the imaginations and drives of the US Cabinet. Thus, the lack of political will to support the cause of global disarmament and non-proliferation, whether in the US, other nuclear weapon states or states with nuclear aspirations, has emerged as the most pertinent obstacle. In this context, it becomes clear that, the elimination of nuclear arsenals would not only require time, political will and conviction, but also dramatic advancement of verification and enforcement arrangements. As of now, the complete elimination of nuclear weapons seems too far-fetched and utopian, though the existence of mechanisms to prevent non-proliferation could contribute towards checking the increase in stockpiles. It has, however, to be borne in mind, that since unilateral disarmament by the US or any other State would not prompt all other nuclear weapon States to follow suit, progress toward the long-term elimination of nuclear arsenals must proceed as a co-evolutionary process, under strict instruments of verification and enforcement. Taking cue from Obama's Prague Speech itself, it would be judicious for the international community to follow the trajectory he charted as a long-term goal for total nuclear disarmament, viz. reducing the role of nuclear

weapons in national security strategy; reducing the cache of warheads and stockpiles (possessed by nuclear weapon states); achieving a global ban on nuclear testing; verifiably ending the production of fissile materials intended for use in nuclear weapons; building a framework for civil nuclear cooperation, including an international fuel bank, so that countries can access peaceful power without increasing the risks of proliferation; ensuring that terrorists never acquire nuclear weapons; and finally, strengthening the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty regime and building Proliferation Security Initiative, Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and Nuclear Security Summits into durable international institutions.²²

For the short term, then, the international community could find solace in following Joseph Nye's "maxims of nuclear ethics", with his emphasis on reducing the reliance on nuclear weapons and reducing the risk of nuclear war. Finally, as Schwarzenberger argues, in an unorganized international society which remains divided into separate, competitive and antagonistic loyalty areas, morality should not serve "less as a standard of self-restraint than as a stick to beat others."²³ Neither should nuclear weapons be used again by any nation to whet its ego and demonstrate its military superiority. After all, it was the morality dilemma that prompted King Ashoka, who had, after unleashing the war on Kalinga, and being a silent spectator to the devastation it caused, suffered remorse and repentance, ultimate finding peace in Buddhism.

Endnotes

¹ For details see "Announcing the Bombing of Hiroshima", Statement by the President of the United States, Harry Truman, Washington D.C., 6 August 1945, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/primary-resources/truman-hiroshima/> (accessed on 3 May 2016)

² Text of President Obama's Speech in Hiroshima, 27 May 2016, *New York Times*, 27 May 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/28/world/asia/text-of-president-obamas-speech-in-hiroshima-japan.html?_r=0 (accessed on 3 June 2016)

³ *Ibid*

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JAINISM

Jain Ethics

The Three Jewels constitute the basis of the Jain doctrinal and ethical stance. Right knowledge, faith, and practice must be cultivated together because none of them can be achieved in the absence of the others. Right faith leads to calmness or tranquillity, detachment, kindness, and the renunciation of pride of birth, beauty of form, wealth, scholarship, prowess, and fame. Right faith leads to perfection only when followed by right practice. Yet, there can be no virtuous conduct without right knowledge, the clear distinction between the self and the nonself. Knowledge without faith and conduct is futile. Without purification of mind, all austerities are mere bodily torture. Right practice is thus spontaneous, not a forced mechanical quality. Attainment of right practice is a gradual process, and a layperson can observe only partial self-control; a renunciant, however, is able to observe more comprehensive rules of conduct.

Two separate courses of conduct are laid down for the ascetics and the laity. In both cases the code of morals is based on the doctrine of *ahimsa*, or nonviolence. Because thought gives rise to action, violence in thought merely precedes violent behaviour.

Violence in thought, then, is the greater and subtler form of violence because it arises from ideas of attachment and aversion, grounded in passionate states, which result from negligence or lack of care in behaviour. Jainism enjoins avoidance of all forms of injury—whether committed by body, mind, or speech—and subscribes emphatically to the teaching that "nonviolence is the highest form of religious practice." For Jains, this principle, which manifests itself most obviously in the form of vegetarianism, is the single most important component of their tradition's message. Notable in this connection is the friendship between the Jain layman Raychandrabhai Mehta and Mohandas Gandhi, who considered his interactions with Mehta to have been important in formulating his own ideas on the use of nonviolence as a political tactic.

(Courtesy: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc)

Ethics for Governance: Exploring Emperor Ashokan Edicts

Prof. Sushma Yadav & Harish Kumar

All men are my children, and just as I desire for my children that they should obtain welfare and happiness both in this world and the next, the same do I desire for all men. (1st Separate Edict, Dhauli and Jaugada)

In hard work and the dispatch of business alone, I find no satisfaction. For I consider that I must promote the welfare of the whole world, and hard work and the dispatch of business are the means of doing so. Indeed there is no better work than promoting the welfare of the whole world. And whatever may be my great deeds, I have done them in order to discharge my debt to all beings. (6th Major Rock Edict)

It is hard to do good and he who does good, does a difficult thing. (5th Major Rock Edict)

—Emperor Devanampiyte Priyedarshi Ashoka

Ethics is as an area of study that deals with ideas about what is good and bad behavior: a branch of philosophy dealing with what is morally right or wrong.¹ BBC's Ethics guide defines ethics as 'a system of moral principles' in its simplest form. They affect how people make decisions and lead their lives. Ethics is concerned with what is good for individuals and society and is also described as moral philosophy.² Thus understood, ethics covers the following dilemmas: how to live a good life, tells rights and responsibilities, it is about the language of right and wrong and moral decisions like what is good and bad and benefits thereof. The concepts of ethics have been derived from religions, philosophies and cultural traditions. Emperor Ashoka a unconventional policy of Dhamma had all such elements at its heart.

Why Ethics is needed?

It is largely believed that ethics needs to provide answers. If ethical theories are to be useful in practice, they need to affect the way human beings behave³. Exactly, Maurya Emperor Ashoka's emphasis was

to affect the behavior of his subjects. It is argued that if a person realises that it would be morally good to do something then it would be irrational for that person not to do it. However, all of us sometime or the other do irrational things not in conformity with our own conscience or harm others. Then it is generally said to be unethical conduct.

Ashoka writes in 5th major rock edict that, "It is hard to do good and he who does good, does a difficult thing...sin is easy to commit."⁴ This highlights role of ethics as good of the people. There would be no need of ethics if there were no moral dilemmas. Surpassing of such dilemmas leads to ethical behavior. Buddha faced this dilemma too. First whether to be with his wife and child to enjoy worldly life or to renounce worldly life for finding the cure of universal suffering which he termed Dukkha. Second, after attainment of enlightenment known as bodhi, whether to keep this path of knowledge to himself or distribute this to one and all with maitri and compassion. So most conflict situations throw ethical dilemmas at us.

Ethics also means a fair treatment to all under all circumstances, akin to Jesus Christ's call to do unto others what you want others to do to you. Same with Gandhian Philosophy.⁵ However, leading such a life is exception and not a norm. Thus, there are very few humans who could do this. Ashoka did lead such a life and that's why we are still reading this giant of humanity known in history as the great emperor Ashoka. Similarly, Mahabharata's Shantiparva and Plato's Philosopher Kings do touch upon ethical conduct of rulers in a way.

Ethics can provide a moral compass

It provides us rules and principles that enable us to take a larger view of moral problems. So ethics provides us with a moral map, a kind of framework that we can use to find our way through difficult situations⁶. In the Indian subcontinent this is what



Ashoka tried to achieve through his edicts and instructions.

Ethics is about the 'other'

At the heart of ethics is a concern about something or someone other than us and our own desires and self-interest. Ethics is concerned with other people's interests, of society, with "ultimate goods" and so on. It may connote different things for different persons. So when a person 'thinks ethically' he/she is giving at least some thought to something beyond him/her.

Ethics can be a source of both persuasion or coercion

One problem with ethics is the way it's often used as a weapon. If a group believes that a particular activity is "wrong" it can then use morality as the justification for attacking those who practice that activity.

When people do this, they often see those who they regard as immoral as in some way less human or deserving of less respect than themselves; sometimes with extreme tragic consequences. The recent mindless attack on gay nightclub in Orlando, America by extremist Omar Mateen is one such example. His radicalization made him coercive¹. While Devanampiya Ashoka was equally sure of his way but his method was persuasive. Being a firm Buddhist didn't prevent him from wishing the presence of all sects everywhere²; being a zealous Buddhist doesn't prevent him from reverencing and donating to all Brahmins, Ajivika and Jain ascetics³.

This can well be a lesson for all of us who are debating the issue of tolerance or intolerance, secularism or pseudo secularism. Modern thinkers often teach that ethics leads people not to conclusions but to 'decisions'. In this view, the role of ethics is limited to clarifying 'what's at stake' in particular ethical problems. Philosophy can help identify the range of ethical methods, conversations and value systems that can be applied to a particular problem. But after these things have been made clear, each person must make their own individual decision as to what to do, and then react appropriately to the consequences. Similarly, Ashoka does direct people towards the policy of Dhamma but through persuasion, he gives them ample reasons why it is in their interest. Time and again. Ashoka a policy of

Dhamma inspired by the teaching of Buddha led him to embark on Dhamma missions akin to cultural diplomacy initiated by PM Modi through Yoga Day. The success of Buddhist missions in all directions can hardly be exaggerated.

What is State and Modern Indian State?

State can be described as an ancient institution, going back to ancient Indian Republics, Rome, Greece and theorized by Kautilya, Plato, Aristotle and other classical philosophers. The modern state has evolved with certain unique features such as extensive rule of law, citizenship rights and broad economic and social responsibilities. A state is more than a government. Governments change, but states endure¹⁰. A state is the means of rule over a defined or "sovereign" territory. It is comprised of an executive, a bureaucracy, courts and other institutions. States distribute and re-distribute resources and wealth.¹¹

Ethics for Governance:

Ethics for governance is conceptualised because the concepts of state and government are outdated now. These days the world over the concept of governance is doing round, there could be two meanings related to it. First as it concerns conferring powers on the rulers to rule and second as a process by which authority is exercised.¹² Related to the concept of governance is the concept of good governance, which has qualitative connotations, it is "... among other things participatory, transparent and accountable. It is also effective and equitable. And it promotes the rule of law."¹³ This paper is trying to explore whether Ashoka an system of administration can have some contemporary relevance, because ethics is inseparable from the process and act of governance and edicts of Ashoka do contain state and social ethics.

What we are concerned here is democratic state of India in 21st century and what is expected of it today and how Ashoka a policy of Dhamma can be a source of relevance for it.¹⁴ Ashoka was a monarch and yet in many ways he was democratic in terms of policy of persuasion than coercion, positive tolerance, equal respect towards all social constituents, cultural diplomacy, state ethics and personal responsibility of king and officials, belief in diplomacy and cordial international relations and ways



and means of conducting debates and discussions, forbearance towards all sects, judicial and official autonomy, focus on public works and services, propagation of peace, charity and donations to renouncers of all hue and so on. The view of researchers is that such pragmatic and principled policy can still give the modern Indian state a moral compass to guide behavior and take India where it truly belongs. This view is based on our own understanding of edicts keeping policy of Dhamma of Ashoka in mind, which is nothing but sensitive and ethical conduct of all social constituents in the society. It was a two way process and in Ashoka a concept of Dhamma, emperor too had responsibility towards his subjects. Similarly, Ashoka tried to persuade his people to carry out their duties to state and towards fellow subjects. He wanted to create a social democracy in his empire. He democratized the realm of spirituality and in a way took forward the work of Buddha. So people at lower rungs of society found so much usefulness for them in the policy of Dhamma.

The translation of edicts of Maurya Emperor Ashoka has been taken from the book, 'Ashoka and the Decline of Mauryas,' by Romila Thapar (Third Edition), 2012, Oxford University Press, whose understanding of edicts in turn has been built up on the translations of the edicts done by E. Hultzsch¹³ and J. Bloch¹⁴ among others. Minor rock inscriptions clearly show the emperor's faith in the teaching of Buddha. Included here are Rummindai Pillar Inscription and the Fourth Pillar Edict that deals with system of justice and ethical and conscientious officials.

Major Rock Edicts- 13 edicts and the two separate edicts found at sites in Kalinga.

Minor Rock Inscriptions and the Barabar Cave Inscription.

The Major Rock Edicts

There are 14 major rock edicts inscribed by Ashoka from 256 BC onwards at Girnar near Junagadh, Saurashtra in present day Gujarat. But here, analysis of first 13 is being attempted. They are reproduced here.

Essence of Ethics in the Edicts and their contemporary relevance is mentioned below:

In 1st Major Rock Edict Ashoka writes that all life forms are equally precious. In today's context where man thinks that he is supreme creature and that all flora and fauna owe debt to him, this concern for animal life could give us a sense of sanity. Besides, much controversy over meat eating could be minimized if one looks at it from compassionate and ethical point of view rather than rights based approach. Ashoka terming animal sacrifices as 'evil,' is similar to the event when Siddhartha Gautam had left his palace for the solution to constant human suffering and he saw numerous animals being herded to be sacrificed by King Bimbisara where Gautam asks him to stop this as it has no efficacy for welfare of man. This futility of animal sacrifices is constantly emphasized by Buddha¹⁵ and Ashoka.

The 2nd Major Rock Edict says that the medicinal herbs and roots and fruits have been planted wherever they didn't grow. Wells have been dug and shady trees have been planted for both the 'Use of man and beasts.' We need to notice the equal treatment of humans and animals and also the extra pains taken in transplanting medicinal herbs, roots and fruits wherever they were not naturally found. This emphasis on changing the natural environment for betterment of mankind and thinking out of the box is generally associated with the Western world especially since renaissance, industrialization and democratic revolutions. However, here, roughly 2300 years ago an Indian Monarch took up these humanitarian acts when there was no free press to check indifference of administration, no opposition to pressurize government and no sword of civil society alike Anna Hazare¹⁶ hanging over the ruling dispensation. This wouldn't have been possible without an ethical compass, without a moral pole star to guide policy direction and practice and this was the policy of Dhamma propagated by Ashoka. There was no modern day photo-op in this. The Emperor was ethically tuned to do this from inside. It came from change of mind after he came in touch with Buddhist ethic.

The 3rd Major Rock Edict depicts in the form of state policy what Gautama Buddha had preached when he asked people to take good care of parents



in old age, to maintain good relations with relatives and be together with them and to be a Kalyan Mitra, who is a friend through thick and thin. Buddha too had asked people to support both Shramans and Brahmins and so Ashoka does here. In today's time when social bonds are under stress and families and relations are breaking down due to self-centeredness and uncontrolled ambition, this edict seems to be a lightpost. Besides, governments in our time focus solely on legislations and use of coercive authority of state. Ashoka had in his time put emphasis on persuasion and mass public awareness drive to enhance virtues in his populace. The present Modi regime is doing something similar through public conscience raising campaign of 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao', and voluntarily giving up LPG subsidy. If the mindset of people can be positively impacted, we wouldn't need laws dealing with all aspects of social life to regulate it. If regulatory mechanism and laws alone were sufficient, we wouldn't have had any issues in this country as we have surplus of laws. So exemplary leadership was required in ancient times and so is the need even today.

The 4th Major Rock Edict explains how the virtues and merits of people have increased by practicing Dhamma (meaning proper conduct and respect towards all social relations). This shows Dhamma as policy is intrinsically related to humans, their conduct and happiness. It also talks about 'heavenly chariots and... divine forms'. It is up to readers to accept whether to believe in such supernatural feats. However, meditation is practiced all over the world, be it Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic or others. They do talk of raising dormant mind powers beyond our senses and commonplace living. There are episodes in Pali canonical literature where Buddha and his Arhant disciples are talked of having 'divine eyes or perception' (Divye Chakshu) and amazing powers beyond the realm of humans. However, Tathagata himself exhorts everyone not to believe anything blindly or before first experiencing it oneself²⁰. Buddha emphatically banned the miracle performance for public by any Bhikku, if any monk performed any act; he was exiled from the monastery, though it was no harm to possess them²¹. That too not forsake of it. Buddha's goal till the end remained the end of cause of suffering and suffering thereof.

The 5th Major Rock Edict is important as it informs that the Emperor has spread the Dhamma to Greeks and to other people settled on the West. He also gets it inscribed, which is a commonly held view by the mankind that it is difficult to do good things. Most importantly, it is a classic example to show that the policy of Dhamma was bereft of class and caste divisions. Through officials, it was meant to be spread amongst all sections of India. When Ashoka did this, he didn't do anything different from what and how Buddha spread his teaching to all sections and categories of India for the first time in history. Ashoka, the monarch, had democratized the realm of spirituality first started by Buddha centuries before reformation and protestant movements took place in West.

The 6th Major Rock Edict is probably the most important lamppost for current crop of governments and civil servants in India. Why the teeming masses even today struggle to get the most basic services in our country like drinking water, foodgrains, medicines, primary education, roads and shelter over their heads? The problem is not the lack of resources or finances but an utter lack of ethical mental make up²². Our values guide our behavior and today in our land, there is no moral compass to guide the conduct of our authorities and officials. When Ashoka asks his officials to approach him at all times and on all days, he shows nothing in this world matters more for him than public interest. It clearly points to a view that he wasn't running a government, but a mission, a divine obligation or calling to further common welfare and where his own comforts and conveniences didn't matter.

A lot of Ashoka's mind and Buddhist core values come to fore in this edict. Ashoka saying, "Everywhere I transact public business," goes to show when it is something public, the 9-5 office hours aren't conducive for redressing public concerns. The bit on 'hardwork and dispatch of business' has clear resonance in today's time where most lawmakers and civil servants occupy themselves with legal propriety alone, do lip service and act diplomatic with public, obfuscate masses, make them run from pillar to post, dodge public concerns and think laws, their powers and administrative departments are an end in themselves, while Ashoka clearly grasps the essence



that such things are only means to carry out public welfare. Public welfare alone is the end or humans alone have the substance, bureaucracy is just the tool to do it. It can't overlord the people it is expected to serve at all times. This conduct of bureaucracy is also referred to by Robert Merton in modern times in his critique of bureaucratic authority where 'Instrumental value becomes the terminal value²¹.' Hence, Modi government doing away with useless laws, cutting down on powers of bureaucracy, simplifying laws and procedures is a good start. If it can be continued with right intentions and emphatic political leadership, India can be a force to reckon within a short span of time.

Romila Thapar charges Ashoka of suffering from megalomania²² when he announces that all his administration and acts would be guided by the policy of Dhamma, 'for this is my principle: to protect through Dhamma, to administer affairs according to Dhamma, to please the people with Dhamma, to guard the empire with Dhamma. But in our view when policy of Dhamma is nothing but the ethical striving for good and welfare of all, this charge was overboard. Besides, she neglects other instructions of Ashoka which depict his humility, one such example is: "...And whatever may be my great deeds, I have done them in order to discharge my debt to all beings²³." It rather sounds sincere modesty, where he places no importance to his good deeds as he had only been paying his debts to all beings. Important phrase is "all beings." This directly comes from Buddhist ethic which imagines mankind hand in hand with all nature. This is how the challenges of climate change; global warming, poverty, nuclear weapons and poor public health want us to be acting towards nature and 'all beings.'

The 7th Major Rock Edict has readymade usage in our turbulent and suspicious times. Being an ardent believer in teachings of Buddha doesn't prevent Ashoka from wishing the presence of all sects everywhere. The most serious threat to mankind and civilization is not the climate change, nuclear weapons or poverty but rising and ubiquitous lack of forbearance, which affects all dimensions of society, say, personal, economic, political, business and cultural. Ashoka here guided by Buddha, who had defined forbearance as the single most important

quality in a Bhikkhu. This leads us to be more accepting of differences and not be violent with the unknown or less known others. Here, lies a great lesson for all policy makers and especially for religious fanatics, extremists and rabble rousers that your attachment and reverence for your own sect shouldn't make you desire the absence of all other views and belief systems.

The 8th Major Rock Edict talks about the first visit of Ashoka to the seat of enlightenment of Buddha, Bodh Gaya. He tells before kings used to go on hunts and pleasure trips but now such Dharma tours have been the in-thing where alms are given, question and answer sessions on Dharma are held, emperor meets the aged folks and country people. It can be supposed that besides questions related to Dharma, the problems of life and existence of ordinary people must also have been discussed. Being a monarch in ancient world, certainly, the emperor Ashoka could have done without this effort. Besides, he writes he gets more enjoyments from such tours than from any other enjoyment. This goes to prove that he was a passionate Buddhist and hesitated not a bit in interacting with his subjects. Of course, it can be surmised that if he had had any doubts about his policy, both Dharma and general administrative; he wouldn't have been as regular with such tours as it seems natural by use of the word 'practice.' In other words, in that case, he would have wanted to avoid meeting people. He was a firm man and had no doubts about the policies which he was pursuing.

The 9th Major Rock Edict deals with futility of various rites and rituals. One of the chief concerns of Buddha was to show the futility of various rites and rituals, including animal sacrifice. Time and again, Tathagat would tell people through illustrations, analogies, asking questions, counter questions, logical reasoning that purity of mind alone matters and that we all are the progeny of our thoughts and deeds. If someone did things with noble state of mind, then, happiness will follow him like the shadow which never departs. On the other hand, if someone did something with evil state of mind, then, suffering follows him like the cartwheel which follows the drought animal. Buddha would go on to tell them that these ceremonies were thus useless if our states of mind haven't been



wholesome. Because, this is what the Dhamma or the universal law of nature is.

This is what the monarch is telling in this edict where he calls on people to be respectful and sensitive to all including servants and slaves, to take care of needs of Brahmins and Sramans and make people follow this righteousness. There is a hint of scientific skepticism when Ashoka doesn't entirely write off such ceremonies but says, "They may be effective or they may not be effective." How fair! India has always been a nation of extremes where on the one hand, a human can attain the highest possible states of nobleness and on the other, where vast sections of our society all other than Brahmins and Kshatriyas including women were denied even the right to education. Sati was in custom, and where the most cruel social institution of untouchability prevails even today in thousands of our villages. Even today, newspapers report that women have been stripped, paraded naked or even killed for being witches, for performing black magic on neighbours, where young couples are killed by girl's family members for bringing 'dishonor' by marrying outside the caste boundaries at the dictates of Khap panchayat. On Sept 15, 2015, there was a front page news story in the Hindu, where Supreme Court had to intervene after a Khap panchayat in Baghpat district of Uttar Pradesh issued the fiat that a Dalit girl be raped by men and paraded naked as a punishment because her brother had eloped with an upper caste girl.

The ugly social beliefs, rites and rituals and superstitious acts are all interlinked. For instance, a religious belief exists which says presence of a Dalit is polluting while carrying out some religious ritual. And if a so-called low born accidentally defiles the atmosphere and is punished for this. Aren't the belief and performance of that ceremony both at fault along with the performers? Because it neglected the importance our own state of mind and karma while somebody innocent is blamed. There is ignorance and we call it following the Dharma while Dharma can only be called welfare, harmony and cooperation and love for all beings.

10th Major Rock Edict attacks self promotion by the authorities or people in power. Today's politics is marred by self promotion and personal

aggrandizement where public offices and authority are used to promote own selves, kith and kin, friends and people who have the capacity to pay, for instance, businesses. Ashoka hints that if he publishes his name in his pronouncement he does so as to ensure that people follow Dhamma obediently and not 'for glory and fame' and to avoid 'evil inclinations.' He writes that 'Without extreme effort and without renouncing everything else,' it is difficult to do so. May be, that's why the people who have renounced the world have had more impact on our lives than the householders, for instance, Buddha, Mahavira, Christ, Nanak, mother Teressa. And Gandhi was a householder only in the name. A. B. Vajpayee has been a shining example of forbearance and middle path off beat politics while other politicians behaved quite ordinarily. It can be predicted quite well that if Prime Minister Modi keeps his ethical compass highly tuned to needs of people, he can be a historical figure because so much is going good for India and his leadership is visionary and exciting.

Ashoka further writes, 'It is particularly difficult for the highly placed.' Probably, he is referring to the belief that power is intoxicating and that when power, arms, wealth and women flow like the water in the Ganga, men lose sense of discrimination, allusion is to the view power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. But certainly, he himself didn't flow like a log of dead wood in the Ganga.

The 11th Major Rock Edict describes Ashoka a reverence for Dhamma, his faith in Dhamma and virtues in Dhamma. This edict is in profuse praise of Dhamma and Ashoka says there is no greater gift than the gift of Dhamma. Buddha also said the gift of Dhamma is the greatest. He goes on to tell what Dhamma is. It is good and humane conduct as regards all social relations in and out of the family including towards slaves and servants. Certainly, if the world had followed this ideal, we wouldn't have seen crusades, jihad, and two world wars, there would have been no need of establishing and sustaining the communist states by arms and revolution and hundreds of countries wouldn't have been looted and plundered and made slaves by the greed of imperialism and



colonialism. In turn, the world wouldn't have seen so much bloodshed and intolerance.

The 12th Major Rock Edict too has relevance for our times. Probably, the most relevant edict for our intolerant and strife-torn modern world marked by religious fanaticism. In this edict Ashoka honours all sects and wishes that all sects should know principles of one another. He considers restraint in speech to be most important for advancement of doctrines of all sects as other belief systems might get hurt if one is heedless. He places emphasis on concord than conflict and sharing of good things in one's sect with others. All this is needed more today than ever. After 9/11, there was huge debate in the world about ignorance of Western world about other cultures for instance Islam. Many Sikhs lost their lives in hate crimes as the attackers thought they were Arab Muslims. Here, Ashoka's advice to his subjects to know the principles of other sects and be restrained in speech sounds prescient.

The 13th Major Rock Edict is the famous inscription after the Kalinga conquest where the emperor shows the futility of war and expresses regret and horror at immense devastation and pledges never to wage war again, a promise which he kept till the end. This is the advice he gives to his descendants as well. He tells how far and wide the policy and practice of Dhamma has spread. He replaces victory through conquests by victory through Dhamma. This is similar to what Buddha said it is easier to win a thousand people in a thousand battles than winning the battle against one ownself.

One very important useful bit of information for current policymakers would be to learn from Ashoka where he warns wayward 'tribals' to fall in line or even a nonviolent monarch 'in remorse' can get them killed. This policy can be utilized against mindless violence perpetuated by terrorists, secessionists, Maoists and against rogue elements within system of governance that harm innocent citizens, use power indiscriminately or rather misuse it, one such instance is staging false encounters where innocent civilians are killed in cold blood for monetary reward, promotions or false glory. Ultimately, country as a whole stands to suffer. Legitimacy of government takes a nose dive. Credibility of the Constitution suffers. Youth get alienated. Years of hardwork and resources to contain

secessionism take a beating. Ranks of extremists swell up for a few misplaced personnel choose to put self promotion ahead of national interests. So power should be used with utmost caution. Moreover, it should be a mix of outstanding rewards for abiding the law and furthering the public interest and exemplary punishment for bringing disrepute to wings of the government.

What is inscribed in the first separate Edict of Dhauli and Jaugada sounds a very contemporary exhortation by Ashoka. Here, he famously declares that 'All men are my children.' Thapar used the word 'men' instead of people or members of public. Certainly the ethic of Dhamma has no gender bias. He wishes the welfare and happiness of all his subjects just as he wishes for his own children. In it, there are some gold nuggets for our police and judicial systems. Very interestingly, he instructs his officials while dealing with punishments that 'You should strive to practise impartiality. But it cannot be practised by one possessing any of these faults — jealousy, shortness of temper, harshness, rashness, obstinacy, idleness, or slackness. You should wish to avoid such faults. The root of all this is to be even-tempered and not rash in your work. He who is slack will not act, and in your official functions you must strive, act, and work.'²⁴

In our times, we talk of reaching the benefits to the last person or wiping out the tears from each eye has been the ideal of one of the fathers of the nation. Here, Ashoka demands from his administrators to read out this message to even a single person about 2300 years back. This much importance is given to the judicial propriety and ethics and its reaching even to a single person. Probably Ashoka thought it is they who would suffer if it was deficient.

The Second Separate Edict is a training module for our foreign policy analysts and diplomats. The Emperor assures his neighbouring countries that his intention is not that they should suffer because of him. Rather they 'should trust in him, and should have in their dealings with him only happiness and no sorrow. They should understand that the king will forgive them as far as they can be forgiven, and that through him they should follow Dhamma and gain this world and the next.' Surely, this was a nice way



to take the unconquered territories into confidence and to reassure them as the monarch had a vast standing army to safeguard his people and domain. This would definitely have made his neighbours nervous. However, the method through which the policy of Dhamma was able to spread far and wide by Ashoka was not due to vast army but because his leadership had gems like vision, conviction, cooperation, peace, persuasion, harmony, mutual benefit, faith and truth. The very same qualities which separate legends from the ordinary men and the limited sectarian beliefs from the teaching of Buddha, which is Dhamma.

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- ⁵ One of the favorite hymns of Gandhi was 'Vaishnav Jan toh tene kahiye' meaning people of the lord are those who feel the pain of others. It was part of his daily prayers.
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- ⁷ Omar Mateen, an American, who had allegiance to terrorist organization ISIS gunned down 49 people on June 12, 2016 at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida in US the deadliest mass shooting in the United States and the country's worst terror attack since 9/11.
- ⁸ 7th Major Rock Edict, Romila Thapar, op cit, p. 380.
- ⁹ 7th Pillar Edict, Romila Thapar, op cit, p. 394-396
- ¹⁰ Quentin Skinner and Bo Strath (eds), States and Citizens: History, Theory, Prospects. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 145-67.
- ¹¹ <https://www.globalpolicy.org/nations-a-states/what-is-a-state.html>
- ¹² <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/MENAEXT/EXTMNAREGTOPGOVERNANCE/0,,contentMDK:20513159~menuPK:1163245~pagePK:34004173~piPK:34003707~theSitePK:497024,00.html>
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ C.J. Fuller and Veronique Benei (eds) (2001), Everyday State and Society in Modern India. London: Hurst & Co.
- ¹⁵ E. Hultzsch, Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, vol. I. London, 1888-1925
- ¹⁶ J. Bloch, Les Inscriptions d' Asoka. Paris, 1950.
- ¹⁷ ArE guttara Nikāya, IV, 41, II, 42, II, 207-208 ed. R. Morris, E. Hardy, PTS London 185-1900, Dīgha Nikāya, I 144, ed. T. W. Rhys Davids, J. E. Carpenter, PTS London 1890-191
- ¹⁸ http://www.thehindu.com/*****/lead/id-rather-not-be-anna/article2379704.ece
- ¹⁹ Kalam Sutr, Anguttar Nikay, 3.65, 3.66 this is Buddha's famous charter on free inquiry and questioning. A beacon for all modern day scientists, importantly, Tathagath even goes on to say don't believe even if this is said by Buddha himself without first experiencing it yourself. 'Miracles and Superhuman Powers in South Asian Buddhist Literature. © David V. Fiordalis, 2008
- ²⁰ ManopubbaE gamā Dhammaā, manosemm̄ hā manomayā, Manasā ce padum̄ hena, bhāsatī vā karoti vā; Tato naC dukkhamanveti, cakkaC̄ va vahato padaC̄ . (Dhammapad 1.1) Meaning all bodily and vocal actions have mind as their precursor, mind as their supreme leader; of mind they are made. If one speaks or acts with an impure mind, suffering follows him as the wheel follows the hoof of the animal yoked to the chariot. ManopubbaE gamā Dhammaā, manosemm̄ hā manomayā; Manasā ce pasannena, bhāsatī vā karoti vā; Tato naC̄ sukhamanveti, chāyā va anapāyini. ((Dhammapad 1.2) Meaning all the bodily and vocal actions have mind as their precursor, mind as their supreme leader; of mind they are made. If with a pure mind one speaks or acts, happiness follows him like his shadow that never leaves him.
- ²¹ Robert Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure. Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1957, pp. 195-206.
- ²² Romila Thapar, op cit, p. 219
- ²³ 1st Separat Edict, Dhauli and Jaugada, Romila Thapar, op cit, p. 384-385

Albert Einstein: Ethics Based on Sympathy, Education, Social Ties, Needs

A man's ethical behavior should be based effectually on sympathy, education, and social ties and needs; no religious basis is necessary. Man would indeed be in a poor way if he had to be restrained by fear of punishment and hope of reward after death.

- Albert Einstein, "Religion and Science," New York Times Magazine, November 9, 1930

Albert Einstein: Fear of Punishment & Hope for Reward No Basis for Morality

If people are good only because they fear punishment, and hope for reward, then we are a sorry lot indeed. The further the spiritual evolution of mankind advances, the more certain it seems to me that the path to genuine religiosity does not lie through the fear of life, and the fear of death, and blind faith, but through striving after rational knowledge.

- Albert Einstein, quoted in: All the Questions You Ever Wanted to Ask American Atheists, by Madalyn Murray O'Hair

Ethics in the Contemporary World: A Baha'i Viewpoint

Dr. A. K. Merchant

Recognizing that the world's "prevailing order" was "lamentably defective,"¹ Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Baha'i Faith, said that the solution to the world's problems would be found only in an ethical approach as expressed in the spiritual principles of the world's religions. In a statement addressed to the world leaders, He described religion as "the greatest of all means for the establishment of order in the world and for the peaceful contentment of all that dwell therein. The weakening of the pillars of religion hath strengthened the hands of the ignorant and made them bold and arrogant..."²

Recognition of the vital necessity of a world-embracing vision by the highest leadership in every country and the moral strength to translate it into action so that the millions upon millions of the peoples everywhere may be lifted out of their heart-rending miseries is the first step. Next in importance is acceptance of the natural unity of the human family in which the wellbeing of the individual is identified with the wellbeing of all. Thirdly, ethical principles of themselves have always been ineffective in producing lasting results if divorced from religion and spirituality. The fourth aspect is allegiance to the Law of Harmony as the primary principle of conduct in society. Legal requirements imposed by an external authority of force and power win for themselves only an outward compliance, whereas obedience to an ethical principle would spring from the inner and voluntary choice of the individual. The universal adoption and application of this law to the global problems would certainly provide the solution to much of the present-day unrest and uncertainty. It would mean the end of greed and selfish exploitation of each other; an end to the scandals and scams that keep battering at the fabric of our present-day civilization. The most important action for achieving the betterment of the world is through pure and goodly deeds, through commendable and seemly conduct. The reality of our Age is the interdependence of all peoples, and the institutions and policies which regulate our physical, political,

economic and social life must achieve a world order in which the consciousness of world citizenship, and the planet as our common homeland will find complete expression.

Despite the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) adopted in 2003 by 175 countries, corruption is rampant in the majority of the nations of the world. The UN anti-corruption convention requires that nations implement several anti-corruption measures which may affect their laws, institutions and practices. These measures aim at preventing corruption, including domestic and foreign bribery, embezzlement, trading in influence and money laundering. Furthermore, the UNCAC is intended to strengthen international law enforcement and judicial cooperation, providing effective legal mechanisms for asset recovery, technical assistance and information exchange, and mechanisms for implementation of the Convention, including the holding of periodic Conferences for this purpose. As a constant reminder to keep alive the responsibilities and duties of the nation-states the Secretary General of the UN sends out a message on 9th December which is the International Anti-Corruption Day. The United Nations Secretary-General wrote in 2013: "Corruption suppresses economic growth by driving up costs, and undermines the sustainable management of the environment and natural resources. It breaches fundamental human rights, exacerbates poverty and increases inequality by diverting funds from health care, education and other essential services. The malignant effects of corruption are felt by billions of people everywhere. It is driven by and results in criminal activity, malfunctioning state institutions and weak governance. Good governance is critical for sustainable development, and vital in combating organized crime. Every link in the trafficking chain is vulnerable to corruption, from the bribes paid to corrupt officials by dealers in arms and drugs to the fraudulent permits and licenses used to facilitate the illicit trade in natural resources."³ We in India are quite familiar



with the scenario described here. The current Government is striving hard to plug all leaks and maintaining a strict vigil through fresh legislations, law enforcement mechanism, and constant reminder to its Ministers to uphold the highest standards of ethics in the discharge of their constitutional duties and their private lives.

The message cited above further underscored the impediments faced in fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015). Last September [2015] all the nations of the world jointly adopted the Agenda 2030—Sustainable Development Goals, it is my sincere hope that humanity will wake up and not allow the same fate to overtake the achievement of these 17 goals and 169 targets. With half the world's environment devastated and precarious ecological imbalances impacting the globe, Agenda 2030 may be the last chance for humanity to save itself from complete annihilation. According to The Environmental Protection Index (2016), India currently ranks 141 out of 178 countries. Land degradation, ground water decline, indoor air pollution, pollution of rivers, lakes and groundwater, loss of biodiversity, fragmentation and degradation of natural habitats. Climate change is adversely impacting monsoon pattern, crop production, soil erosion, water stress, vector-borne diseases (Malaria, dengue, etc.), wetlands and fish availability. These conditions will further aggravate threatening food production, water availability, all natural ecosystems, health, *inter alia*. The Paris Agreement offers little hope of addressing climate change. Therefore, India represents a paradox of epic proportions as it races towards economic development while simultaneously trying to deal with environmental problems. There are no standard formulas or short-cuts and it is quite evident that corruption cannot be rooted out through laws alone; fostering the value of trustworthiness is the ultimate remedy. Developing capabilities for value-based governance and good citizenship are indispensable to the sustained progress of human beings and the effectiveness of the rule of law. But there is lack of will among policy makers, but more importantly, among the citizens of the country.

A senior advisor to the World Bank is reported to have remarked: "Like ignorance and environmental degradation, corruption is a great enemy of

development."⁴ In the same vein another expert has remarked, "Corruption undermines the State's legitimacy and, in extreme cases, may render a country ungovernable and lead to political instability, chaos or war."⁵ The Bahá'í writings state: "If a man were to perform every good work, yet fail in the least scruple to be entirely trustworthy and honest, his good works would become as dry-tinder and his failure as a soul consuming fire. On the other hand, if he should fall short in all his affairs, yet act with trustworthiness and honesty, all his defects would ultimately be righted, all injuries remedied, and all infirmities healed."⁶

The conditions of our planet and some of the happenings in the country conjure up a range of emotions and call for deep introspection. Bahá'ís believe that with every passing day the complexity of world situation is becoming more and more difficult to fathom, acts of insanity are increasing. In a recent statement by the Universal House of Justice, the supreme governing council of the Bahá'í Faith: "It has become clear that, in different nations in different ways, the social consensus around ideals that have traditionally united and bound together a people is increasingly worn and spent. It can no longer offer a reliable defence against a variety of self-serving, intolerant, and toxic ideologies that feed upon discontent and resentment. With a conflicted world appearing every day less sure of itself, the proponents of these destructive doctrines appear to be becoming more brash and brazen. In the words of Bahá'u'lláh: 'They hasten forward to Hell Fire, and mistake it for light.'⁷ Well-meaning leaders of nations and people of goodwill are left struggling to repair the fractures evident in society and powerless to prevent their spread. The effects of all this are evident in outright conflict or a collapse in the socio-economic and political order. In the distrust that pits neighbour against neighbour and severs family ties, in the antagonism of so much of what passes for social discourse, in the casualness with which appeals to ignoble human motivations are used to win power and pile up riches—in all these lie unmistakable signs that the moral force which sustains society has become gravely depleted...⁸ Indeed, every heart (whether Gandhian or otherwise) that aches at the wretched conditions of the world must strive with determination, and selfless action to save our planet from "the slough of impending extinction".⁹ Upheld by prayer, confident



in the irresistible power of the Will of the Divine, the Bahá'ís, are endeavouring to become willing instruments of the Almighty, channels of the divine power that is shepherding humankind into one fold. Walking the mystical path with practical feet should become the motto of people everywhere, particularly those in positions of decision-making both secular and religious.

Mahatma Gandhi has stated: "Civilization is that mode of conduct which point out to man the path of duty. A performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. So doing, we know ourselves. The Gujarati equivalent for civilization means 'good conduct'."¹⁰ In other words, it is impossible to create a system that is ethically strong without the people involved in it acting from moral principles and this is the *raison d'être* for religion or *dharma*. Until we accept that all people, regardless of caste, creed, gender, class or national status, are equal members of one human family, each with unalienable rights—and act out of that belief—we are likely to overlook the obscene disparities that now divide humankind under all kind of pretexts. Therefore, the real purpose of religion or *dharma* is to promote the acquisition of praiseworthy virtues, betterment of morals and the spiritual development of humankind. We in India are proud of our ancient civilization and the harmonious interface with all cultures and systems of belief. Therefore, we must lead by example and not just pay lip service and fine platitudes.

The following principles¹¹ are equally vital for the effective contribution of *dharma* and the political system to lift the masses of our countrymen from bondage, ill health, poverty and backwardness.

Harmony of religion and science. Bahá'ís believe that truth transcends all boundaries. Scientific and religious truth emanate from the same universal source. They are like the two sides of the same coin. To Bahá'ís, science and religion are as the two wings of a bird that enable humanity to fly to the summit of its potential and propel civilization forward.

Equality of men and women: the Bahá'í faith is probably the only religion to grant full rights to

women. Both men and women are equal partners for the advancement of civilization as we know it. The denial of equality between the sexes in our society perpetrates an injustice against one-half of the nation's population and promotes in men harmful attitudes and habits that are carried from the family to workplace, to political life, and ultimately to international relations.

Bahá'ís are enjoined to be loyal to the government of the country where they reside. However, this love for their native land is extended to the entire planet and all its people. For, Bahá'u'lláh says: "The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens."¹² Prejudices of all sorts—religious, racial, caste, national and political—must be eradicated; prejudices strike at the very root of human life; one and all, they beget bloodshed, and the ruination of the world. So long as these prejudices survive, there will be continuous and fearsome wars.

Participatory decision-making is encouraged: Bahá'ís believe in the value of consultation, a process where everyone, irrespective of any consideration has a voice in making decision. Placing greater importance to the education of the girl child: under the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, a lot has been done but to reach out to the levels already attained in Europe or America there is a great deal more that needs to be done. Education begins in the mother's womb and is as unending as the life of the individual itself. It is a perennial necessity for right living and the foundation of both the individual and the social welfare. The UNESCO document on education in the 21st century titled: *Learning: The Treasure Within*¹³ identified four pillars of education—Learning to Know, Learning to Do, Learning to Be, Learning to Live Together—presents a societal model for ensuring the advancement of civilization, as we know it. "All the human sciences—anthropology, physiology and psychology—agree that there is only one human species, although we differ endlessly in lesser ways."¹⁴ Aggressive forms of behaviour must give way to more gentle ideals. The need for a binding agreement among nation-states demarcating the international frontiers in a just and fair manner, and proportionate reduction of national armaments so that "...weapons of war throughout the world may be converted into instruments of reconstruction and that strife and conflict may be removed from the midst of



men."¹⁵ Likewise, rights of the minority of every sort would have to be guaranteed.

As already noted, the most pressing problems at present threatening the security of the world and of every individual in it may be listed as follows: (a) economic problems and struggle for resources; (b) the problems due to mindless state-conflicts enormously complicated by the proliferation of international terrorism; (c) problems due to degradation of the living environment of our planet. If human life is to go on progressing in a stable and secure manner ethical solutions that benefit the entire planet must be accepted unanimously and implemented without further delay. For bridging the gap between the vast population of the have-nots and the haves and for the establishment of a just and peaceful world Bahá'u'lláh has offered a blue-print in His Most Holy Book¹⁶. I shall mention just three great principles which would revolutionize the social life on our planet. First, a system of income and inheritance taxes designed to assist in the abolition of the extremes of poverty and wealth. Secondly, an obligatory system of profit-sharing by which, over and above a minimum wage, labour would have a definite share agreed upon beforehand in the net profits of a business or industry. This system of profit-sharing would harmonize the interests of labour and capital and put an end to the economic warfare which at present threatens the stability of the corporate world. The third principle is that in a true civilization the state has responsibility for the welfare of all, but on the other hand this responsibility is balanced by the obligation laid on each individual to engage in some useful trade, art or profession. When these teachings were first enunciated over one hundred fifty years ago, they were not anywhere in practice in the world.

Today, so rapid has been the evolutionary progress of human thought and practice under the great exigencies of the happenings and events of the 20th century that all of these great principles are becoming firmly rooted in world-consciousness. If we translate these principles in action we shall see that they not only offer economic security; they would also bring about universal prosperity, for they would establish and preserve a consuming power in the masses of people which would at all times equal the productive power of agriculture and industry. War

would be abolished. Thus, would the world experience a climate of wellbeing never imagined before.

The Bahá'í writings further indicate: "Disunity is a danger that the nations and peoples of the earth can no longer endure; the consequences are too terrible to contemplate, too obvious to require any demonstration..."¹⁷ "Unity of family, of tribe, of city-state, and nation have been successively attempted and fully established. World unity is the goal towards which a harassed humanity is striving. Nation-building has come to an end. The anarchy inherent in state sovereignty is moving towards a climax. A world, growing to maturity, must abandon this fetish, recognize the oneness and wholeness of human relationships, and establish once for all the machinery that can best incarnate this fundamental principle of its life."¹⁸ "It is the next stage in the evolution of this planet—in the words of one great thinker, 'the planetization of mankind'.¹⁹

Bahá'u'lláh has further prophesied that a universal fermentation and horrendous social upheavals would mark the transition from a warlike world to a peaceful one, with an assurance that no specific cataclysmic event would occur that would annihilate all life, as we know it. Ostensibly, the movement leading to world unity must encounter opposing tendencies rooted in stubborn habits of chauvinism and partisanship that refuse to yield to the expectations of a new age. The tortuous suffering imposed by such conditions as poverty, war, violence, fanaticism, disease, and degradation of the environment, to which masses of people are subjected, is a consequence of this opposition. Hence, before the emergence of a united world authority flaws in the prevailing system of governance would make conspicuous the inability of sovereign states organized as United Nations to exorcize the spectre of war, the threatened collapse of the international economic order, the spread of anarchy and terrorism and the intense suffering which these and other afflictions are bound to cause to increasing millions, nay billions. In fact, so much have aggression and conflict come to characterize our social, economic and religious systems, that many have succumbed to the view that such behaviour is intrinsic to human nature and therefore ineradicable.



"Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in and centre your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements."²⁰ "The world is in travail, and its agitation waxeth day by day", was Bahá'u'lláh's warning uttered over a century ago. "Its face is turned towards waywardness and disbelief. Such shall be its plight, that to disclose it now would not be meet and seemly. Its perversity will long continue. And when the appointed hour is come, there shall suddenly appear that which shall cause the limbs of mankind to quake..."²¹ Bahá'u'lláh's appeal for the necessity of using the spiritual powers of religions in tandem with the secular resources of the government and the state. Indeed, in an age of interdependence tackling world-afflicting trials and tribulations a global government is the need of the hour.

For humanity to survive, the human habitat, like that of any other species, must be sustainable. This will not happen if war and a host of other conflicts are allowed to continue. These acts of insanity must be supplanted by an ordered society in which the diversity and richness of the parts must be preserved and nourished. Such approach and attitude must be manifested in restoring the natural equilibrium of our precious environment. "We cannot segregate," Bahá'u'lláh's writings state, "the human heart from the environment outside us and say that once one is reformed everything will be improved. Man is organic with the world. His inner life moulds the environment and is itself deeply affected by it. The one acts upon the other and every abiding change in the life of man is the result of these mutual reactions."²² In his 2014 message the Secretary General appealed to the peoples of the world: "To dismantle corruption's high walls, I urge every nation to ratify and implement the UN Convention against Corruption. Its ground breaking measures in the areas of prevention, criminalization, international cooperation and asset recovery have made important inroads, but there is much more to do. Public services must uphold the highest standards of integrity and ensure that appointments are driven by merit. Public servants, as well as elected officials, must be guided by ethics, transparency and accountability. The private sector also has a crucial role. Good behaviour is good business. Business groups can convert anti-corruption action into firm support for sustainable development..."²³

Dharma or religions as explained above is a powerful motivating force, possessing an inherent power to infuse every sincere follower with the highest ethical precepts for the betterment of societies and lasting peace in the world. Indeed, when teachings of true *Dharma* begin to rightfully influence the forces of science and the market I am confident humanity will move to a higher plane of consciousness—thoughts of love and peace would overcome tendencies towards hatred and conflicts. Bahá'u'lláh assures us that this is Age in which an All-Loving Creator has poured out His most excellent favours, the Age in which His most mighty grace hath been infused into all created things.²⁴

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Ethics in Contemporary World

Vinod Jain

Ethics took shape in two different ways. One, in ancient times, when humans in order to understand environment started asking questions and kept trying to answer them by arguments and conjecture. This took them to what we now know as the religious path. In those earlier times religion suggested how human society began. At that time laws governing human behaviour were made in the name of God. At that time the concept of morality also went in the name of God.

Two, in recent times, that is, during the last few hundred years, development of science based knowledge in a vast variety of fields developed a scientific world view. This world view was not based on opinions based on limited knowledge. This was based on knowledge that was huge, was verifiable and was expanding.

In ancient times due to lack of technology and lack of means, distances appeared to be huge. People were by and large confined to their local areas and had a local or limited view of things. Whereas in recent times the world appears to be such a small place, and people could look at and examine things in a worldwide perspective. Likewise, in two different times ethics was shaped either by narrowness of vision or by breadth of vision.

Despite this, contemporary world is not as modern a world as it is made out to be. Ethical considerations of those who arrange child marriages of their children, who indulge in multiple marriages and triple Talaq, of those who think women as exploitable commodity or of those who believe in and practice caste system and graded slavery, will be shaped by their belief systems and practices.

It is not that these are just remnants of an era gone by. New and more virulent forms of behaviour in the shape of Taliban or terrorism or ISIS

or communalism are spreading their tentacles far and wide in today's world.

The ISIS male leadership have declared that they can within their domain, take away any women they like, buy them or sell them or do whatever they like with them. That determines their morality. Though they claim to be Muslims, neither Islam nor the Quran could come in their way.

Ethics of those who believe in or promote communalism, boils down to this: the other community or persons belonging to it are to be shunned or discriminated against, even if it divides the society or the country.

Morality of some of the believing Hindus would propel them to take action, even violent action, against those who are suspected to have taken beef. But their morality is never known to have helped cows looking for food in roadside dust bins. Even children begging in the streets do not get their attention as much as cows and beef do.

Some leaders of the Hindus, the Muslims and Christians have been telling their followers to have as many children as they can. The recent most examples is of the President of Turkey asking his Muslim countrymen to produce as many children as they can.

It shows that our past is present in our midst in a big way and refuses to leave us alone. It is so all over the world.

Contemporary World

Stone age was a period when humans had learnt to make tools of stone for productive and hunting purposes. But if there is a community (living in the past like the Adivasis) that continues to use stone tools



today, one cannot claim that we are living in Stone Age.

To understand the term 'contemporary world' one has to note the developments that took place over a long period of history. Those developments have determined the meaning of 'Contemporary World'.

Since very early times humans were curious to know about their surroundings. They started asking questions. The attempt to answer questions were based on their limited knowledge about Nature. So their answers to questions were speculative. Reasoning that things are done by somebody or the other, so the unexplained phenomena also must have been done by somebody. The world must have been created by somebody along with its various forms. And because some of the forces of nature are powerful, the creator must be all powerful.

This was the broad context which further gave birth to ideas regarding society and social organization. Ideas regarding religion also grew gradually. Society and religion got intermixed. Ideas regarding ethics grew out of this background. There were some people in the forefront who were giving shape to these ideas. At times those in the forefront introduced their self interest in social organizations, at times the compelling circumstances gave shape to social structures. Position of women in ancient Hindu social organization as well as in ancient Muslim social organization are examples of this.

The Other view regarding nature, life forms, human society is rather a recent development in human history. This is based on Knowledge which is growing with the growth of science. This is not based on speculation. This is based on experiments and facts which are verifiable. These could be modified in the light of information which has greater reliability.

This science based knowledge is universal. Earlier ideas on creation or on natural phenomena were largely religion based. But now science based knowledge is the same everywhere: be it about electricity, magnetism, gravity, nature, life or human evolution.

Earlier some people in some parts of the world believed that they are superior to some others. For example some whites believed they are superior to the blacks. But studies based on blood groups, of intelligence levels, and inter-marriages showed that there actually is no difference between one human and another. Similar studies between males and females showed that there is no essential difference between them except gender. So ideas of human equality got scientific sanction.

Putting it more specifically it may be pointed out that modern science enabled some scientists to trace the origin of human society. Lewis H. Morgan brought to light the character and shape of primitive human society. Hegel showed how human society is in a continuous process. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels developed the materialist view of history. It showed social relations are not decided by any divine will, nor by an abstract concept of morality. Human society originated in the struggle for existence. Its evolution through the ages had material causes.

This goes on to show that society has gradually evolved and that this is a law governed universe, the laws of the universe are knowable. A good number of laws have been found out. The next thing is that these laws can be put to use: Like electricity is put to use by developing and running lights, fans, machinery, railways et cetera, like magnetism is put to many uses, and so on.

Earlier religion suggested how human society began. both the laws governing human behaviour as well as the ethical concepts were made In the name of God. Now that we know that human society evolved from the primitive to modern — we no longer need to believe in creation, we no longer need to feel compelled to believe in morality out of fear of God. We need to be moral because we want to be moral because we should be moral, because it is in our own good to be moral.

When ethical concepts went in the name of God, we were given a set of do's and don'ts. No more. Today we have to consider the situation, apply our minds, choose to decide what is right or wrong, what is moral or immoral.



In the Laws of Manu it is specifically coded that a woman shall never be independent, when in her father's house she will obey her father, when in her husband's house she will obey her husband, when her husband is dead she will obey her son. That was the consequence of divine morality. Human consideration just was not there.

Apart from Morgan, Hegel, Marx and Engels there were countless number of other scientists and philosophers like Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Darwin, Albert Einstein who helped in making the earlier world into a contemporary world. During the period when scientific developments were taking place, movements like The Renaissance, and revolutions like the French also took place. These brought new ideas, values, new ethics that changed the world.

It sounds so natural now to hear Albert Einstein say: "There is nothing divine about morality, it is a purely human affair". He says ethical behaviour should be based on sympathy, education. A scientist has no use for the religion of fear and equally little for social or moral religion. A God who rewards or punishes is inconceivable to him for the simple reason that a man's actions are determined by necessity, external or internal.

Developments in Europe brought with them values of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. With them came ideas and institutions of democracy. These upheavals saw monarchies fading away. Reaction in the form of Reformation led to the growth of fascism in Europe, eventually leading to the Second World War, defeat of fascism and triumph of the democracies. Countries of Europe that have been fighting among themselves for centuries finally decided to co-operate, formed a European Union that now has 28 countries. They cooperate with each other in a manner as never was done by countries before. Conflict is replaced by peace and unheard of prosperity. 'Let's cooperate' was the moral lesson they learnt from the second World War.

During the time of monarchies the people were expected to believe that what the king proclaims or desires is the ethical diktat as well. Similarly when religion was supreme and religious heads held sway, everything dictated by them had both religious and

ethical merit. But with the change of times and the growth of democracy people could decide on ethical/moral questions on the basis of the values of democracy: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, Dignity, Justice.

A defining feature of the contemporary world is the establishment of the United Nations Organization. In 1948 it made a Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These human rights now should form the basis to decide ethical questions. Briefly these rights are:

- A 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.
- A 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this declaration, without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, language, religion...
- A 3. Everyone has the right to life, and security of a person.
- A 4. Nobody shall be held in slavery or servitude....
- A 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
- A 6. Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.
- A 7. All are equal before the law...
- A 8. Everyone has the right to an effective remedy...
- A 9. Nobody shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.
- A 10. Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing...
- A 11. Everyone... has the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.
- A 12. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference ...
- A 13. 1. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement...
2. Everyone has the right to leave any country...
- A 14 ...right to seek Asylum...
- A 15. Everyone has the right to a nationality.
- A 16. Men and women of full age, ...have the right to marry and found a family...
- A 17. Everyone has the right to own property...
- A 18 Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion...
- A 19 Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression,...
- A 20 Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly...
- A 21 ...right to take part in government...



- A 22 Everyone, ...has the right to social security...
 - A 23 Everyone has the right to work,...
 - A 24 Everyone has the right to rest and leisure.
 - A 25 ...Right to a standard of living...
 - A 26 Everyone has the right to education.
 - A 27 ...freely to participate in the cultural life...
 - A 28 Everyone is entitled to a social and international order...
 - A 29 Everyone has duties to the community...
 - A 30 nothing in this statement...
- 21. to deny anyone's participation in government.
 - 22. to deny anyone social security.
 - 23. to deny anyone his/her right to work.
 - 24. to deny anyone rest and leisure.
 - 25. to deny anyone a standard of living.
 - 26. to deny anyone's right to education.
 - 27. to deny anyone free participation in cultural life.
 - 28. to deny anyone to be part of social and international order.
 - 29. to deny anyone to do his/her duty.

Indian Constitution incorporates most of these, so it need not be separately taken note of here. It would be relevant here to quote Indian philosopher M N Roy's definition of morality: "Morality emanates from the rational desire for harmonious and mutually beneficial social relations."

On the basis of the above it would be immoral

1. to give unfair treatment to any human on the basis of his/ her birth
2. to take away anybody's rights and freedoms on the distinction of race, colour, sex, language, religion etc.
3. to deny anyone right to life, liberty and security of a person.
4. to hold anybody to slavery or servitude.
5. to subject anyone to torture or cruelty.
6. to deny anyone recognition that is his/her due.
7. to deny anyone equality before the law.
8. to deny anyone the right to remedy.
9. to subjects anyone to arbitrary arrest, detention, exile.
10. to deny anyone equality to a fair and public hearing.
11. to not presume a person innocent until proven guilty.
12. to subject anybody to arbitrary interference.
13. to deny anybody the right to freedom of movement.
14. to come in the way of anybody seeking asylum.
15. to deny a person his/her right to nationality.
16. to deny a person his/her right to marriage.
17. to deny a person the right to own property.
18. to deny a person the right to freedom of thought etc.
19. to deny someone freedom of opinion and expression.
20. to deny anyone the right to freely assemble.

We have seen above a brief description of UN's declaration of Human Rights. We have also seen how their denial would be immoral. We can now say that to ensure, encourage and promote other persons human rights would be positively moral. Referring to M N Roy's above mentioned definition one can say if we desire to ensure, encourage and promote each others above rights, then a harmonious and a mutually beneficial social relations will happen and morality will grow out of such effort.

A brief glance at a comparison of ancient and contemporary ethics maybe illuminating. Let us take from the pages of Laws of Manu the case of an average Women who would never be independent in her entire life. In her father's house she would be dependent on her father, in her husband's house she would be dependent on her husband and after her husband's death she would be dependent on her son. Compared and examined in the light of UN's Human Rights declaration it shows that she is not born free and equal. She is not entitled to any rights and freedoms. Her right to life and liberty is seriously curtailed. She is being held in slavery and servitude all her life. This is cruel, inhuman and degrading behaviour. Her right to recognition as an independent person is taken away permanently from her. She has no right to any effective remedy. She is not entitled to equality at all. She is not presumed innocent, she is presumed guilty because she is a woman. It is so obvious that she is facing arbitrary interference all the time. She has no right to any kind of freedom of movement. She never had any right to marriage - she was given away to someone by her father. She has no right to own property. Question does not arise of her having any kind of freedom of thought etc. She could never have any kind of freedom of opinion or expression. She cannot exercise any freedom of



assembly. She is not independent enough to have the right to rest and leisure. She is allowed to live, that is the only standard of living she can imagine. She has no right to education. She is not free to participate in any cultural life because she is not even independent.

All our traditional behaviour and ethical practices could similarly be re-examined in view of the UN Declaration of Human Rights in order to update ourselves. This declaration was adopted by the world body with the consent of member countries. So we can say it is a universally accepted and adopted declaration. Now that we have it, we no longer need to rely for our social and ethical behaviour, on our age old local or religious beliefs. We now have a sufficiently broad based basis to rely on.

We have hitherto seen the positive side of the developing human scenario and along with it the United Nation's efforts to provide a better and securer place for all humanity. This also provided a sounder basis for Ethical efforts of humanity in the contemporary world.

Darker side of the contemporary world

Science was helpful in removing ignorance about nature and its phenomena. It opened up door to unlimited knowledge. It appeared to promise a better future for all humanity. Science brought technology and both led to industrialisation. By and large it appeared to be a boon.

Industries needed energy to run them. It was provided by coal and by hydrocarbons. Coal was taken out of coal mines, hydrocarbons were extracted from earth in the form of crude which was turned into petrol and diesel etc. Both coal and hydrocarbons when used were releasing carbon dioxide gas into the atmosphere. It continued happening ever since the beginning of the industrial revolution. This accumulating carbon dioxide has been damaging the global environment and doing considerable harm to humans as well as to most flora and fauna. Generally any substance that people introduced into the atmosphere that has damaging effects on living things and the environment is considered air pollution.

Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas, this is one of the main pollutant that is warming Earth. Living things emit carbon dioxide while they breathe. But it is con-

sidered polluting when released by cars, planes, power plants and other machinery, in the process of burning fossil fuels. Getting into the atmosphere it takes the form of smog and makes breathing difficult. Other greenhouse gas is Methane - which comes from swamps and gas emitted by livestock. Chlorofluorocarbons (CFC's) come out of refrigerators. Another pollutant is Sulphur Dioxide. It results in smog as well as acid rain.

Ammonia is a gas that is released by livestock. It is responsible for the creation of pM 2.5 - a very small diameter particulate matter. It is responsible for smog and because of its small size enters the lungs easily and damages it in a big way. It is responsible for asthma attack among people. In its gaseous form it affects the health of animals and agricultural workers. Ammonia is responsible for changes in ecosystems. Due to which the natural balance of a system is disrupted. In some cases disruption may lead to the extinction of the ecosystem.

Fossil fuels

Burning of hydrocarbons or fossil fuels is a very big source of carbon dioxide emission. This emission warms the atmosphere. This disrupts the global balance of temperature. If the global temperatures rise and global warming takes place then the ice deposition either on the top of mountains or on the Arctic start melting. That precisely is happening, and ocean levels have started rising, creating problems for many human populations, in low lying areas.

Due to rise in population, there is a regular rise in the number of vehicles using petrol / diesel, resulting in greater emission of carbon dioxide. This should be drastically reduced in order to reduce the harmful impacts.

Meat eating

A very large percentage of human population is non-vegetarian. For their consumption a large number of livestock is maintained. The number of such livestock is said to be 1.5 billion. Such a huge population of livestock produces tremendous amount of ammonia, resulting in continuous destruction of the global habitat. Ammonia is far more dangerous than the carbon dioxide. It leads to not only global warming but damages the ecosystems in a variety of ways. The only way to reduce it is by stopping meat consumption by



non-vegetarians, and thereby not maintaining such a huge number of livestock. But could that ever be possible?

The choice is stark. Either keep eating meat and let human Habitat decline to extinction or stop eating meat and ensure the survival of human and all other species!

Biodiversity decline

Human activity endangers other species in a variety of ways. But habitat loss is generally viewed as the largest single cause of biodiversity loss worldwide. When humans convert wild areas for agriculture, forestry urban Development or water projects- including dams, hydropower and irrigation- they reduce or eliminate its usefulness as a habitat for the other species that live there.

All forms of development alter natural ecosystems. Commercial forestry involves road cutting through forests and the harvesting of trees that are important as shelter or food for some species. Dams change river flow patterns, dissolved oxygen levels, and water temperatures and may prevent fish from swimming upstream to spawn. Farmers clear land, withdraw large quantities of water from local sources, and introduce pesticides and chemical fertilizers to the environment. Ranching impacts land physically through grazing and generates air and water emissions from animal waste. Urban Development clears land and paves it, which changes local water cycles by increasing surface runoff and reducing ground-water supplies. It also generates air and water pollution from industrial activities and transportation.

Marine pollution

Over 80% of marine pollution comes from land based activities. From plastic bags to pesticides - most of the waste we produce on land ultimately reaches the oceans, either through deliberate dumping or from run off from drains or rivers.

Oil spills cause huge damage to the marine environment. This is responsible for only around 12% of the oil entering the seas every year. But 36% comes down from drains and rivers as waste and runoff from cities and industry.

Fertilizer run off from farms and lawns is a huge problem for coastal areas. The extra nutrients result in flourishing of algal blooms that deplete the water's dissolved oxygen and suffocate other marine life. This has created enormous dead zones in several parts of the world, including the Gulf of Mexico and the Baltic Sea.

Solid garbage also makes its way to the ocean. Plastic bags, balloons, glass bottles, shoes, package material - almost everything we throw away can reach the sea.

Plastic garbage decomposes very slowly, is often mistaken for food by sea animals. High concentrations of plastic material, particularly plastic bags, have been found blocking the breathing passage and stomachs of many Marine species, including whales, dolphins, seals, puffins and turtles. When this garbage comes back to shore, it pollutes beaches and other coastal habitats...

In many parts of the world sewage flows untreated or under-treated, into the ocean. For example 80% of the urban sewage discharged into the Mediterranean Sea is untreated. It can cause human disease and lead to beach closures.

Toxic chemicals

Almost every Marine organism, from the tiniest plankton to whales and polar bears, is contaminated with manmade chemicals, such as pesticides and chemicals used in common consumer products.

Some of these Chemicals enter the seas through deliberate dumping. For centuries, the oceans have been a convenient dumping ground for waste generated on land.

Chemicals can escape into water, soil, and air during manufacture, use, or disposal, as well as from accidental leaks or fires in products containing these chemicals. Once in the environment, they can travel long distances in air or water, including ocean currents.

It was once assumed that the ocean was so large that all pollutants would be diluted and disposed to safe levels. But they have not disappeared.

Tiny animals at the bottom of the food chain, such as plankton in the oceans, absorb the chemicals as their feed. Because they do not break down eas-



ily, the chemicals accumulate in the organisms. As plankton is eaten by sea animals, and they by higher animals, the concentration of chemicals in higher animals grows.

Animals higher up the food chain such as seals can have contamination millions of times higher than the water in which they live. Polar bears which feed on seals can have contamination levels up to 3 billion times higher than their environment.

Plastic pollution

One researcher who has researched the subject points out 22 facts about plastic pollution. Some may be mentioned here:

1. In the Los Angeles area alone 10 tons of plastic fragments are carried into the ocean every day.
2. 50% of the plastic we use, we use just once and throw away.
3. Enough plastic is thrown away each year to circle the earth 4 times.
4. Plastic accounts for 10% of the total waste we generate.
5. The production of plastic uses around 8% of the world's oil production.
6. Americans throw away 35 billion plastic water bottles every year.
7. Annually some 500 billion plastic bags are used worldwide.
8. It takes 500 to 1000 years for plastic to degenerate.
9. The great Pacific garbage patch is located in the North Pacific Gyre off the coast of California and is the largest ocean garbage site in the world. This floating mass of plastic is twice the size of Texas, with plastic pieces outnumbering sea life six to one.

Population

Human population of the globe has grown drastically during the last few hundred years. Where it used to be well below 1 billion, it has now reached 7.5 billion. Even a large pre-industrialized human population does not put as much stress on nature and its systems as a small industrialized population does. Actually with the growth of industrialization the human population also grew exponentially. So it was natural that we created conditions for ecological disaster.

Even ordinarily a large human population would put huge stress on some of nature's basic resources. A

huge population would need an equally huge amount of water both for drinking and cultivation. According to *UN Water* 75% of planet Earth is covered in water. 97.5% of that is Ocean and 2.5 percent is fresh water. 70% of freshwater is divided into glaciers and ice caps and remaining 30% into land surface water such as rivers, lakes, ponds and groundwater. Most of the freshwater resources are either unreachable or too polluted, leaving less than 1% of the world's fresh water for use.

Naturally then more than two dozen UN bodies state that "By 2030 nearly half of the world's people will be living in areas of acute water shortage." We have started facing it already.

Human beings have been using wood for a variety of purposes. Cutting trees in large numbers puts stress on planet's ecological balance. Jungles absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen. If this is disturbed then most forms of life including human get adversely affected.

According to the Centre for Biological Diversity "the largest single threat to the ecology and biodiversity of the planet in the decades to come will be global climate disruption due to the build up of human generated greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. People around the world are beginning to address the problem by reducing their carbon footprint through less consumption and better technology. But unsustainable human population growth can overwhelm these efforts, leading us to conclude that we not only need smaller footprints, but fewer feet."

As the human population continues to explode, finite natural resources such as fossil fuel, fresh water, arable land, coral reefs and frontier forests continue to plummet. It is placing competitive stress on the basic life sustaining resources. A study by 1400 scientists found that "human consumption had far outstripped available resources. Each person on earth now requires a third more land to supply his or her needs than the planet can supply."

A WHO report shows that environmental degradation combined with the growth in world population, is a major cause of the rapid increase in human diseases, which contributes to the malnutrition of 3.7 billion people worldwide, making them more



susceptible to diseases. "Every three seconds a young child dies — in most cases from an infectious disease. In some countries one in five children die before their fifth birthday. Everyday 3000 people die from malaria — three out of four of them children. Every year 1.5 million people die from tuberculosis and another eight million are newly infected." Overpopulation exacerbates many social and environmental factors, including overcrowded living conditions, pollution, malnutrition and inadequate or nonexistent healthcare, which wreck havoc on the poor and increase their likelihood of being exposed to infectious diseases.

Humans need a New Ethic

As is evident from earlier texts (Hindu, Christian, Chinese or Muslim) humans had realized pretty early the significance of morality for a healthy, better and sustainable way of life. Times changed and with that ethical considerations also changed. We have now reached a stage which is most challenging for entire humanity, indeed for its very survival.

Longish scenario presented above might have surprised some readers. But our changed circumstances and the challenges it presents, calls for an all new ethic, which may at first seem drastic but remains unavoidable.

1. First and foremost moral is to try to drastically reduced the human population from its 7.5 billion present to a hypothetical 1 billion. This is because our small planet Earth cannot take the burden.

The earth can sustain swarms of bees and insects or herds of wildebeest or zebras and the like. But they do not permanently damage their habitat. Humans do. Therefore the moral.

2. The non-vegetarian human population may give up non-vegetarianism so as to avoid the maintenance in large numbers of livestock that is compelling the ecosystem to collapse.

The earth can sustain a number of predators. But these predators cannot exist in large numbers, because they cannot domesticate their prey.

3. The humans must try to drastically increase forest cover to undo the damage they did by drastically depleting forest cover. Their need for wood and nature's ability to provide wood should be balanced by appropriate reduction in human population.

4. The humans must drastically reduce the use of coal and hydrocarbons to safeguard their only environment. Relying more and more on renewable energy is an option open to them.
5. Without losing time humans must drastically reduce, if possible stop, the use of chemicals for the sake of themselves, for the sake of all life forms and for the sake of environment.
6. The humans must stop altogether the production and use of plastic because it does not leave any option either for life forms or for environment. Human ingenuity may search for options.
7. The humans must totally give up the concept of controlling nature. If they want to enjoy nature then first let nature be.
8. The first moral driving force for humans should be to take up the removal and undoing of the damage already done to nature.
9. The humans should develop an ethic that will always encourage them to safeguard and enrich the fragile ecology of planet Earth.

If it has been possible for countless number of life-forms to survive for really long periods in earth's history, why should it not be possible for the "intelligent" human species to do so?

We should not ignore the fundamental reality of planet Earth:

There are billions of galaxies in the universe. Our own galaxy, the Milky Way, is just one of them. The Milky Way has some 200 billion stars. Our Sun is just one of them. Earth is a small planet attached to the sun. There are countless number of life forms on earth. But earth's ecology is fragile. In its life of 4.6 billion years earth has faced five extinctions of life forms.

The last was when the dinosaurs became extinct. Scientist suspects the sixth extinction maybe knocking at our doors already. This time it will be due to the reckless behaviour of the human species. We have seen at the beginning of this paragraph, our beloved Earth, our only habitat, is no more than a speck of dust in this vast and boundless universe. Let us strive to save it.



Ethico - Eschatological Perspective of Death in Early Buddhism

Prof. Bhikshu Satyapāla

The title of this paper as it suggests, mainly aims to deal with an important issue of human life i.e., death which has been in the focus from the centuries in philosophical circles though it is still an unresolved mystery obfuscating the human mind. The famous scripture *Bhagavadgītā*¹ thus runs untiringly, "just as an embodied soul attains childhood, youth and old age through the body, so it attains another body after death. This Self is never born, nor dies". This view of death subsumes the existence of the soul firstly and eternality of the same secondly. However, all religions of the world barring a few like Buddhism, do not describe the death as a horrified and unpleasant dagger hung over the humanity, rather they interpret death as an inevitable phenomenon that does not disturb a being's existence. Accordingly different theories sneaked through the ever - long and endless speculations over the centuries, but to no avail. Regardless of it the misery of death continues its sway over humanity.

In the words of the great philosopher Socrates, as we find in *Apology* which is purported to contain the actual words spoken by him at his trial in 399 B.C.,² "there is a great reason to hope that death is good; for one of two things - either death is a state of nothingness and utter consciousness, or, as men say, there is a change and migration of soul from this world to another. Now if you suppose that there is no unconsciousness, but a sleep like the sleep of him who is undisturbed even by dreams, death will be an unspeakable gain. For, if a person were to select the night in which his sleep was disturbed even by dream, and were to compare with this the other days and nights of his life, and then were to tell us how many days and nights he had passed in the course of his life better and more pleasantly than this one, I think that any man, I will not say a private man, but even the great king will not find many such days or nights, when compared with the others. Now if death be of such nature, I say that to die is gain, for eternity is

then only a single night. But if death is journey to another place, and there, is as men say, all the dead abide, what good, can be greater than this? Wherefore, be of good cheer about death, and know of a certainty, that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death the time had arrived when it was better for me to die and be released from trouble."³ Such are the views of the famous philosophers who considered death though an ontological reality, probed to find if any good exists in it.

The ways people meet death are varied. Some are killed through enmity in wars, fights and so on. Some spend the whole life peacefully and also end peacefully in death. Some others commit suicidal acts to encounter death. In the famous Shakespearean drama 'Antony and Cleopatra', says Caesar, "Took her own way. The manner of their deaths? That so she died; for her physician tells me; she hath pursued conclusions infinite of easy ways to die."⁴ For all, death is just disintegration of the body and the life that disappears in consequence of death and its wherewithal's cannot be witnessed by anyone. Whatever be the mode of death, it is painful. The people who kill themselves by means of suicide, or get killed by means of murders and like, perhaps for them the pain caused by such deaths is better than the pains they encounter in their life. Though death, they only seek a solution to end their present pain. But in reality, the suffering does not end with death. If death is an ontological reality facing us, does it have any ethical value or through ethical exercise, can we modulate death to suit our needs? So we may have to examine this issue from two angles, one cessation of this world which is normally referred to as 'eschatology' and other, cessation of an individual i.e., death.

This issue of birth, life and death in every being brings to the forefront the common issue faced by every one and underlines his relation with the nature



on the one hand and with his fellow beings on the other. The man and the world around him are so much united in a complex relation which guides him to develop an intimate relationship with the world around him owing to the continuous link of his senses with the objects around him which we call broadly by the name 'world'. Therefore he is concerned on the one hand with himself and on other with the world around him which defines and redefines his relation in this ever-changing complex world with which he is united and also considers himself as its inevitable part. But the chief characteristic of change (anicca) in the nature and the world around us imposes the parting of oneself in the form of death which separates an individual from the world. This notion leads him to be afraid of the cessation of this continuous relation, firstly himself, by means of death; secondly, by means of the end of the world with which he is concerned. These two interests have made him a parasite on the world and to ensure his continuous relation, he vis-à-vis his fellow beings defines and demarcates the relations *inter se* so that his relation with the world is well-guarded. But death always eludes him and despite this ethical restriction to safeguard his interest he is tied up with the riddle of his existence and also of the world. If the first problem is at micro-level, which through ethics he attempts to safeguard, second problem relating to the world he tries to safeguard at macro-level, but still the uncertain phenomena around him fails to convince him and so he is again hindered with the doubts regarding the eternity of the world giving rise to the problem eschatological view of the existence of the world.

Ethics is the very foundation of the philosophy that prescribes the guiding principles to encounter the problems of the life. It studies the activities of human beings and pronounces them right or wrong. It examines their influence on one's individual life and society and determines their moral values. It frames the code of conduct or moral duties for human beings to elevate their dormant moral factors, their natures and characters.⁵ As per the lexicon, the word ethics functions both as singular and as plural. As singular, it means the philosophical study of the moral value of human conduct and of the rules and principles that ought to govern it. As plural, these are a code of behaviour considered correct, especially that of a particular group, profession or individual; also the

moral fitness of a decision, course of action, etc.⁶ In brief, ethics is a discipline regarding moral values.

Coming to the eschatology, it is defined by the lexicon, as the branch of theology concerned with the end of the world.⁷ It will be seen in the coming paragraphs that Buddhism without regarding the views and concepts on eschatology, aims to win over death by psychological training and discipline though loosely can be termed as ethics, equivalent of this is termed as '*Sôla*'.

The very first *Sutta* of *Dôgha nikâya* viz., *Brahmajâla-sutta* deals with the ethics followed by worldly beings and also the views people generally hold in relation to the eternity or otherwise of the world. The ethics according to it are divided into three categories viz., minor morality, medium morality and major morality. Such ethics relating to abstaining from taking life, stealing, unchastity, wrong speech, and others fall under minor morality practiced by Gotama; medium morality dealing with such recluses and brahmins living on the providing of the philanthropic and generous still cause injury to seedlings, use hoarded things and so on which are refrained by Gotama and such other practices as listed under major morality which Gotama refrains from. This three-thronged division of morality is not the sole aim of the Buddhists are there is a higher purpose in which purification of the self for attaining liberation (*nibbâna*) from this rounds of birth and death is accomplished since this repeated cycle of birth and death is eternal source of pain. Various practices listed in this division show the anxiety of the people in general about their existence. But ethics for Buddhists are self-imposition necessary for leading a pure life (*brahmâcariya*) culminating in *Nibbâna*. While presenting the views that prevailed in general at that time relating to the eternity or otherwise, Buddha presented four views relating to the end of the world. Buddha called all such views as mere speculations and baseless uncongenial for one's development. He called all such views as merely based on contact (*phassa*), promoting craving (*tâpîha*) and within the realm of sense-fields and therefore untrue. He set aside an old practices which were called by him '*sôlabbata*' (ritualistic virtue) and prescribed ethics which develop the purity of oneself, aiding in concentration, leading thus to arising of wisdom illuminating the truths i.e., pain, its



arising, cessation and the path leading to the cessation.⁸

From the ethical point of view, life of human beings like the complex nature of society is a complex of evil and good. For some ethicists, mere joy and happiness of life are good, while sorrows and suffering of life are evils. Ordinarily, we exhibit this belief in our day to day life, when we try to alleviate our own pain and the pains of others. Some ethicists, however, opine that joy and happiness of life in themselves are not good, but what is good is the overall well-being of individual and society. In short, ethics deal with the activities of human beings, their after-effects and their direct or indirect influence on the fellow beings of society, though the exact nature of ethics is not defined in clear terms, for it depends upon the society and the individuals living in the society who shall commonly agree and fix the ethics to suit their needs. In this sense, ethics is not virtue.

Let us now look from the angle of human life which involves various activities. According to a general classification of the activities whereby a man remains entangled throughout his life, they are mainly of two types viz., intentional activities and unintentional ones. The Buddha called the former as volitional acts since a person performs action through three doors viz., body, speech and mind with volition and such acts are called '*Kamma*' (skt. Karma) in Pāli. The unintentional activities are in the nature of '*Kriyā*', especially the actions of *arahanta* who are not fettered to this world and carry on their life and for residuum of his life-span. The intentional activities performed by an individual or by a group of individuals are of our categories⁹:

- (a) activities which are harmful to the performer (*attantapa*);
- (b) activities which are harmful to the fellow beings of the society (*parantapa*);
- (c) activities which are harmful to both the performer and to the fellow beings of the society (*attantapo ca parantapo ca*); and,
- (d) activities which are neither harmful to the performer nor to the fellow beings of the society (*neva attantapo na parantapo*).

The beneficial activities are morally good for they bring peace and happiness to individual and fellow

beings. Non-beneficial activities are immoral and evil because they erode the bright and moral aspects of life. Life of human beings is thus, from ethical or moral point of view, partly moral and partly immoral. The ethicists determine the moral values of the activities and then frame code and norms of conduct.

Besides all these sorts of intentional activities, there are also some activities of life whereby an individual gets himself involved without having any intention for them. But such activities are barren without any fruition. The consequences of the past volitional actions produce results in present and of present in the future and this is the theory of *Kamma*. Due to chain of causation, a man is bound to the *Sa'sāra* eternally without any respite. In this rotation of the cycle of *Sa'sāra*, two nodes are glaringly visible i.e., birth (*jāti*) and death (*maraṇa*). These two important events in this continuous cycle of existence are the resultants of our actions. By guiding our actions, we can regulate the resultants, but resultants themselves cannot be controlled or changed to suit our desires. Therefore, death which is resultant (*vipāka*) cannot be changed or rather all such features as birth, old age, decease, pain, sorrow, suffering, lamentation and death being the resultants are inevitable arising as a consequence of our own actions. Like an arrow that is discharged from the bowstring finds its destination according to the aim and the capacity of the archer, actions once performed, the performer loses his control on them since such actions are guided to their result according to the natural laws beyond the comprehension of an individual. But in our world, people generally mistake the cause for effect and vice versa and come to treat the decay and death as activities and are totally afraid of them without knowing how to put an end to these deadly fears. Since these are resultants, these can be treated as unintentional activities of life. Therefore the problems of decay, decease and death are most prominent.

Looking from another angle, Buddhists understand that this existence is brought about due to dependent origination (*pācīcasamuppāda*), which forms a cycle with twelve links in which ignorance (*avijjā*) and craving (*taṇhā*) are the chief links. The former is due to lack of wisdom and the latter is due to craving for desires making beings either to crave



for existence due to excessive satisfaction or despise the existence due to dissatisfaction of life. But despite such individual cravings, previous kammic force (*saṃkhāra*) produces result (*vipāka*) and this existence appears with mind and body (*nāma-rūpa*). Therefore, the present body is a resultant of past actions and it ceases due to the exhaustion of the kammic force which gave rise to this mind and body. Just like a lamp is extinguished due to the exhaustion of oil or wick or by simultaneous exhaustion of oil and wick, this body ceases its existence due to the exhaustion of *Kamma*, exhaustion of life-span or both. There is also fourth category of death which is caused because of destructive *Kamma* (*upacchedaka kamma*).¹⁰

The ethicists call the process of decay and decease that makes an individual decadent and unfit for any moral or immoral purpose, as inevitable. Once this process sets in, it makes man dependent and burden on the family or the society to which he belongs. As an out-dated or defaced coin has no value for its holder, so an aged and ailing person ceases to have any value for his family or society. Decay and decease are regarded as enemies of life because they take away all ease and comforts of life.

Death is of many kinds such as natural death and unnatural death, timely death and untimely death, etc. When some ethicists describe death as good, do they include all types of death or some selected types of death only? Again when they describe death as evil, do they frame some code of conduct or norms to avoid such evil death? These questions how best answered do neither lead to any positive solution nor congenial to one's evolution either in this world or beyond (*lokuttara*). When we say the world beyond, it means that situation having reached there is no return (*punabbhava*).

But the problem becomes more serious when the same phenomenon of life say for example death, the last moment of the present life, is perceived by common folks as the greatest enemy of life for it takes the dead one away from all his near and dear ones and leads him to an unknown destiny. Besides, throughout the life-span of one's existence, he is puzzled as to what happens after death. This is one view which may be termed as pessimistic. Again some optimists describe death as a great friend, as it

takes away all sorrows and sufferings of the dying being. Thus the ascertaining of moral or ethical aspect of death becomes more subjective since for the common folks such contrary views develop due to their mixed experience of life and therefore, again the same lead to untruth. As we have seen above that the death is mere resultant consequent to this body which is again a resultant and therefore, both birth and death are inter-linked through this body and mind. So death is an inevitable consequence that is the very nature (*dhamma*) of this body.

Buddha was a free thinker who discarded all traditionally ritualistic ethics and extreme paths. Instead he adopted a moderate path. Through the practice of four *Anupassands*¹¹ (*kāyā*, *vedanā*, *cittā* and *dhammānupassanā*) and a microscopic method of analysis of one's own personality, he realised the reality, the essence of all existent things and being of both the visible and invisible worlds of existence (*saṃsāra*) in following three ways:

- (a) transient are all conditioned things (*sabbe saṃkhārā anicca*)¹²,
- (b) sorrowful are all conditioned things (*sabbe saṃkhārā dukkhā*)¹³,
- (c) all phenomenon are substance-less (*sabbe dhammā anattā.....*)¹⁴.

The path he adopted and preached to others for the easy understanding and realisation of the reality is nothing but the eight-fold path, which is also known as the middle path. The *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta*,¹⁵ the first ever discourse of the Buddha, is supposed to be the earliest source of the teaching of this middle path by the Blessed One. There in the category of the first noble truth, death has been described by the Buddha as one and the last of the four¹⁶ prime threats to human life, viz., birth, old age, disease and death. Although there are innumerable types of sorrows and sufferings rising from various sources, Buddha mentioned only four prime sources of threats to human life, for these four sources cover all dangers which are connected directly with physical aspects of life. Besides, he had also mentioned three¹⁷ other sources connected with the mental aspect of life. There are (a) association with undesirable, (b) disassociation with the desirable, and (c) not being able to achieve the desirable.



The above categorization under the first noble truth does not mean that the sorrows and sufferings which spring from them are of the same nature or of the same degree. Their order beginning with birth (*jāti*) and ending with death (*maraṇa*) represents the successive stages of their arising in the life of a human being, if he dies in his full maturity. Their arrangements also represent various degrees of sorrows and sufferings in succession. What we refer to the cycle of birth and death is nothing but comprising all the four stages of human life beginning from birth and ending of death, though cycle continues to rotate and the departed being arises in another world without any respite. Though death appears as most painful, other stages are of less pain. Thus, it is seen that death is the greatest source of suffering in one's life under the shadow of which all three other threats are hidden which transform a being into death. It is for this reason that every one inevitably faces death, though he fears it¹⁸ and consequently wants to avoid it, as one wants to avoid his enemy, but such situation is an impossible.

Elsewhere, in the canonical literature, death has been described as *Maccu* or *Māra*.¹⁹ It has been portrayed there with all the mythical colours and qualities of *Māra*, the Evil One. On the other hand, the same fact of death (*maraṇa*) is described as an aspect of the phenomenon of truth (*vohārika' sacca'*) leading one towards the realisation of the *Nibbdna* which is the ultimate reality (*paramattha*). Since Buddhism extols the bliss arising from cessation (*nirodha*), the *Arahantas* live in this world as long as their karmic residual life exists and their actions during the present life are mere actions being barren are called '*kriyā*'. For them death is the final end and there is no more rebirth for such realised persons. Many passages in the *Piñaka* literature also praise the death of the *Arahantas*, because they attain complete annihilation of future existence which is known by various names viz., *Nibbdna*, *Parinibbdna*, *Nirupddhisanibbdna* and *Mahāparinibbdna*,²⁰ the ultimate goal of human life.

Thus the Buddhist literature too, presents death in both ways, i.e., evil and good or moral and immoral. The first hand reading of the *Pāli* literature surely puts its readers in a state of dilemma on the problem whether death in reality is evil or good. As shown by

the above distinction, death for the worldlings is certainly evil and for the realised ones, it is the final ending of all existences. So it is conclusive of the fact that those few who strive to attain *Nibbdna*, for them death is a misnomer, though for the common folks such experience is not possible. And death lingers on them like a Democle's sword.

According to the view of some ethicists an evil always remain an evil. It cannot be turned into a good. Again a good always remains good. As darkness and brightness in nature are opposed to each other, so are good and evil. Evil being harmful and unwanted should always be avoided and replaced by good. Death as a fearful evil phenomenon is the greatest evil of life. So this evil death should be avoided by every body. But could anyone avoid death and replace it by any alternative good? No, never. None on this earth can avoid this greatest evil of life by replacing it by some other alternative good. When Buddha, even after attaining the Supreme Enlightenment, could not avoid or replace death by any other alternative, then who else can? The question is what does the Buddhist philosophy suggest to turn the evil death into a good death? This is the most ideal solution to this burning philosophical problem of our life. Here an attempt has been made to answer the question from Buddhist point of view.

The personality of a human being, according to the Buddhist psycho-physiological analysis, is the conglomeration of the five following aggregates, viz.,
(i) aggregates of material qualities (*rūpakkhandha*)
(ii) aggregates of feelings (*vedanākkhandha*)
(iii) aggregates of perceptions (*saiñākkhandha*)
(iv) aggregates of mental formation (*sañkhārakkhandha*)
(v) aggregates of consciousness (*viññāṇakkhandha*)

Life of a being in its present form begins with birth (*jāti*) and ends with death (*maraṇa*) but according to the theory of Karma and rebirth as propounded by the Buddha, it is a beginning less and endless cyclical process in which different stages successively follow one after another, from the past to the present and from the present towards the future. So in the motion of the cycle the being is in continuous motion with respite carrying the heavy burden of five aggregates of clinging as mentioned above and truly the Blessed



One referred to this as the burden and used the word 'khandha' referring to the shoulder symbolically for carrying the burden (pañcakkhandha bhāro).²¹ After fully knowing the causes that condition his present existence. Buddha formulated them in the form of pañcicca-samuppādanaya,²² which is synonymous with the cycle of existence. An individual who is able to comprehend this knowledge can by striving attain final liberation from this cycle itself. All the prime phases including the two pole-points of life of a human being have been very microscopically and systematically analyzed, examined and also with a scientific approach these have been defined by the Buddha himself. Not only this, a detail description of such an analysis of the phenomenon of death is available in the *Piñaka* literature.

In the *Dōgha nikāya* we find in *Mahāsatipātthānasutta* and many other *suttas* of the *Piñaka* literature death defined variously in the following manner:

"tattha katama 'marāya? ya tesa' sattdnam tamhā tamhā sattanikāyā cuti cavanatā bhedo antaradhhāna' maccu, marāya', kālakiriya' khandhāna' bhedo, kalevarassa nikkhepo, jōvitindriyassupacchedo - ida' vuccati marāya""²³

(What is death? The departing of different kinds of beings in the various realms of sentient existence, their leaving, their removal, disappearance, demise, passing away, decease, dissolution of the aggregates and discarding of the body, and destruction of life's faculty and this is called death).

In this limited article, out of these various definitions of death, just one i.e., *Cuti* (leaving) only will be discussed in brief purely from the psychological point of view, towards the evaluation of death whether it is moral, immoral or indeterminate.

The phenomenon of death, when analyzed from purely psychological point of view, is technically termed as '*Cuti*'. '*Cuti*' is also a synonym of death adopted by the Buddhist scholars to refer to the last phenomenon that takes place at the psychological level during one's dying moment. At one's dying moment the *Cuti-citta* belongs to the fifth and the last aggregate known as the *Viññāṇakkhandha*, performs its last function of passing away or falling

(cuti) from its present form of existence. Hence, the psychological phenomenon of death (marāya) is technically termed as '*Cuti*'.²⁴ Now a relevant question that arises here is: what is the nature of *Cuti-citta*?

'*Cuti-citta*' is a name given to a particular kind of consciousness known as the '*vipākacitta*' (resultant consciousness). It is so called since the last dying moment of the individual produces final consciousness which does link to the next birth by giving rise to relinking consciousness. Out of the total number of eighty-nine types of consciousness only thirty-six types²⁵ are grouped as the '*Vipākacitta*', the '*Vipākacittas*' are such types of '*cittas*' which arise as the inevitable results (*vipāka*) of the previous wholesome (kusala) and unwholesome (akusala) deeds (kamma). Again of these '*Vipākacittas*', only nineteen types of '*Vipākacittas*' do the function of the '*Cuti-citta*'.

However, it is to be borne in mind here that all these nineteen types of the '*Vipākacittas*' do not appear at a time during the time of one's dying moment. Any one of these nineteen types of the '*Vipākacittas*' may appear for the last time at one's dying moment in the form of '*Cuticita*' to perform the function of the last consciousness i.e., '*Cutikicca*' popularly known as *maccu* or *marāya*.²⁶ Which of these will appear and to whom will purely depend upon the type of the moral or immoral consciousness that occurs during *marāya-sanna-javana-citta* in his or her previous life just prior to this. The *Javacitta* of the *marāya-sanna-vāthi-citta* of one's preceding life appears as the first rebirth-linking consciousness. *Pari-sandhi-viññāpa* has other two functions to perform in one's life. They are (a) the *Kicca* (function of life-continuum) and the *Cuti-kicca* (function of disintegration of the *Viññāṇakkhandha* from other *khandhas*) of this life.²⁷ As these *Vipākacittas* are either the resultant of the moral activities (*kusala-kamma*) or the resultant of the immoral activities (*akusala-kamma*), the *Vipāka-citta* cannot yield further *Vipākā*. The *Vipāka-cittas* can neither be categorised as the moral consciousness nor as the immoral consciousness. They are indeterminate (*avyākata-citta*). Thus the last function of one's life i.e., death being the physical manifestation of an indeterminate consciousness (*avyākata-citta*) cannot be stamped with any label of moral value whether



evil or good. Death is categorized as an indeterminate phenomenon.

When the nature of the *Cuti-citta* of indeterminate and the phenomenon of death has been described in the ultimate sense as an indeterminate one, then another relevant question arises as to why death has often been presented as the *Maccu* or *Māra* on the one hand being fearful and pain some and on the other as a factor of the first noble truth?

Death, when described or personified as the *Maccu*, *Māra* does not refer to any mythical evil personality living a particular plane of existence. There it refers only to the mental agonies, lamentation, repentance etc., related with the thoughts of death phenomenon and its impending approach at one's dying moment and nothing else. They suppress and oppress the dying being. In this very context it has been described as the *Maccu/Māra* (māretōti māro).²⁸

Buddha, as a practical healer and rational teacher never asked or advised his followers to exert the prevention of the advent of death or replace it by some other alternative, for it is quite impossible for such a thing to happen. What he had advised was only to minimise the causes of sorrows and sufferings was only to the ignorance of the reality of life and particularly that of the death phenomenon, if not possible to uproot them completely in one's life span. Death has been personified as the *Maccu/Māra* only with a view to mould the minds of lowly evolved and to make them realise this stark reality as an universal fact i.e., death.

Death is a reality, because it happens to all mortal beings. It falls on all with so certainty like the falling of the stone thrown in the sky. It is truth, because it is undeniable. Death is an empirical truth for life without death is not complete. Death is an unavoidable, inseparable and integrated part of life. It is a universal truth, because it happens to all living beings of all time residing in all planes of existence of the universe. It is positive, because its understanding always minimizes the sorrows and sufferings of life, leads towards further higher good and makes the dying being morally bold enough to face it fearlessly. Death is also described as truth, because the realization of

the ultimate truth (paramattha-dhamma) i.e., *Nibbāna* purely depends on the realization of true nature of death-phenomenon. Death is categorized as a factor of the noble truth (ariya-sacca²⁹) because after the realization of its true nature, even notorious person turns into noble person (ariya-puggala). A noble person becomes the worthy citizen of a society. Even at the risk of his own life, without being afraid of death a noble person shall perform any such activity which does not harm the society in any way. Death is put under the category of the first noble truth because the realization of other three noble truths is essentially interlinked with the realization of the first.

Apart from the above mentioned method of evaluation of the ethical value of death, there is other way to evaluate its ethical value from the view point of the mode of its occurrence.

Ethical values like good and bad generally are labeled on the modes of death. Modes of death are numerous. But, they according to the Buddhist way of classification may be brought under two broad categories, namely: a) timely death (kāla-marapūra) and b) untimely death (akāla-marapūra).³⁰ There may be another classification in the following two ways namely: natural death and unnatural death. The modes of death like untimely death and unnatural death are more painful than the timely and natural modes of death. So the painful, unwanted, untimely and unnatural modes of death are generally described as the evil or unfortunate end of life.

The comments made by the Buddha regarding the natural and unnatural and timely and untimely mode of death faced by many of his prominent disciples are noteworthy to evaluate the ethical value of such mode of death from Buddhist point of view. Among his prominent disciples, *Godhika*³¹ and *Sappadāsa*³² had met their mature but unnatural death by committing suicide. Again *Santati*³³ and *Ananda*³⁴ had met their self-willed unnatural mode of death. *Bakkula*³⁵ had self-immolated himself and thus had an unnatural death. Although all of them had faced their unnatural mode of death, their deaths are highly praised by the Buddha himself as blameless, for all of them had attained the final stage of sainthood, i.e., *nibbāna* either long before or shortly before the appearance of the *cuti citta*. On the other hand, the



unnatural death as met by *Ciñca*,³⁵ *Cunda*,³⁶ *Sukarika*,³⁷ *Devadatta*,³⁸ *Suppabuddha*³⁹, and the natural death faced by other prominent disciples were not praised by the Buddha as blameless for none of them could attain even the first stage of the sainthood before the passing away of their *cuti citta*.

Mention of some other ways of classification of death viz., *āyukkhaya-marupa*, *kammakkhayamarupa*, *upaccheda-marupa*, *samuccheda-marupa*³⁹ from various angles of life are found in the Pāli literature, but never a single reference of classifying death as *kusala-marupa* and *akusala-marupa* is seen.

The above mentioned various classifications and their careful and minute analysis of death certainly shows that the Buddhist scriptures do not attach any ethical value to the death phenomenon or its modes of approach. Ethical values are attached only to the states of consciousness that occur just before the appearance of the *cuti citta* whether it be the moral consciousness (*kusala-citta*) or immoral consciousness (*akusala citta*) or non-moral or indeterminate consciousness (*avyākata-ahetuka-citta*) or the *Kamma* that is performed at the mental level just before the appearance of the *cuti citta* or before the occurrence of death the last function (*cuti kicca*) of the last consciousness of one's present human form of existence.

From the Buddhist ethical point of view, *Kammas* performed by a person are classified under four categories namely: *Kapuha-kamma* (dark action), *Sukka-kamma* (bright action), *Kaṭṭha-sukka-kamma* (both dark and bright action) and *neva-kapuha-na-sukka kamma* (neither dark nor bright action).⁴⁰ The same can also be classified as *kusala-kamma*, *akusala-kamma* and *neva-kusala-kamma nākusala-kamma* (*kriyā*). The last type of actions in both categories are indeterminate just as death which is indeterminate.

At best one can describe death as an instrument or means, good or bad like money. Money is good only when it brings material comforts, or serves our purposes in life. If it does not help to bring any of these or if it brings undesired consequences, it becomes bad. A man does not desire or possess

money for its own sake, but possesses only for the sake of other things that will enable its holder to have material comforts.

The same may be explained with the help of another simile of a scissors. A scissors may be regarded as good when a successful surgery takes place. But the same scissors may turn to be an evil, when it is not efficacious. Again a scissors or knife can be put to evil uses by killing others or threatening others for some selfish ends. Therefore goodness or badness does not intrinsically exist in the scissors or knife for this is only means. Success or failure of surgery does not depend on the scissors but it depends on the experience and expertise of the physician. The same holds true with the death. Like the falling of leaves from trees, death is a natural and universal phenomenon inevitably functioning in all beings. It is a state of affair. As a fact in itself does not carry any ethical value, so is the case of death. A being faces death helplessly but a man with enough moral courage can change the modes of death and even can face it without the least of fear.

The description of death as an evil or punishment on the one hand is a partial, biased and pessimistic view-point and good or reward on the other hand is also a partial, biased and optimistic view. These partial, biased, pessimistic or optimistic views are always impractical and not helpful for both the dying-being and the rest of the society. These partial views are not helpful for the achievement of peace and tranquillity of mind. These are also not helpful in attaining the highest spiritual goal of life. The right views of the *arahantas* and *Tathāgatas* regarding death is the only practical, unbiased and helpful for they are indifferent to results of actions and their actions are barren (*kiriyā*) and they lead the life as an example without caring the death since it is the last birth for them.

In the real sense, Buddhism as it is represented in its earlier texts like the *Dhammapada*, the *Suttanipāta* etc., find its origin in the form of pure ethics or moral path and not as a so called philosophy and not even as a religion. Of this moral path i.e., the eight-fold noble path, the right view is the first important factor. It is the right view the understanding of which gradually and finally culminates in the form



of wisdom (paññā) through which one becomes capable to evaluate the reality of life and death impartially.

Endnotes

1. *Bhagavadgītā* Ch. 11, Verse 13 & 20.
2. 'The Dialogues of Plato' in p. xiv of the Introduction by E. Segal Pub. Bantam Books (1986).
3. 'The Dialogues of Plato' in p. 24-25 of *Apology* trans. B. Jowett Pub. Bantam Books (1986).
4. William Shakespeare, *Complete Works* Pub. Collins, London (1951) p. 1195-6.
5. P.414 of *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* by James Hastings Vol. V.
6. P. 439 of Collins *Concise Dictionary (3rd Edition)*, Reprint 1996 pub. Harper Collins Publishers, England.
7. P. 436 of Collins *Concise Dictionary (3rd Edition)*, Reprint 1996 pub. Harper Collins Publishers, England.
8. *Brahmajālāsutta* of *Dōghanikāya*.
9. *Majjhimanikāya - Sutta No. 51 of Kandarakasutta* p. 5-7 pub. Bombay University.
10. P. 162 of *Abhidhamma Philosophy* by Bhikkhu J. Kashyap.
11. *Majjhima nikāya - Sutta No. 10 - Satipaṭṭhānasutta* Vol. I p. 77 pub. Bombay University. Also *Dōgha nikāya - Vol. II, Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta* No. 9, p. 217.
12. *Dhammapada* verse No. 277.
13. Ibid verse No. 278.
14. Ibid verse No. 279.
15. *Mahāvagga* (Nalanda) Vol. I. 1.7 p. 13.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. "sabbe bhādyanti maccuno",
Dhammapada, Verse No. 129.
19. "maccuvasa" "(Suttanipita P. No. 434 of Nalanda ed.); "māra' pāpimanta" "(Udāna p. No. 139 of Nalanda ed.).
20. (a) 'parinibbātu idāni bhagavā parinibbātu sugato", *Dōgha nikāya* (Nalanda), Vol. II, *Mahāparinibbāna sutta* (3) p. 84. (b) "catutthaijhānā uisshahitvā samanantarā bhagavā parinibbāyi", Ibid p. 120.
21. *Sa'yutta nikāya* Vol. II p. 261 (Nalanda).
22. *Mahāvagga* (Nalanda) Vol. I 1.1. p. 1.
23. *Dōghanikāya - Vol. II Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta* No. 9 p. 223 (Bombay University).
24. (a) *Dōghanikāya Aśvahakathā*, Vol. III, 19 p. 114. (b) "marapāniddeṣe cavanakavasena cuti eka catu pañcakkhandhāya cutiyā samaññāvacanameta", *Vibhaṭṭiga-aśvahakathā* p. 102.
25. "Dvādasākusalāneva kusalānekavādsati chatti'sava vipekkāni kiriya-cittāni vdsati" Abhis. (Revatadhamma), Vol. I, Ch. 1, 29 p. 35.
26. "tattha dve upekkhasahagata santārapāni ceva aśvaha mahāvipākāni ca nava rōpārōpāni ceti ekunavādsati cittāni pavisandhi-bhavaṭṭiga-cuti kiccañi nāma" Abhis. Vol. I, Ch. III, 20 p. 232.
27. "paccāsanna marapassa tassa vōthicittāvasāne bhavaṭṭigakkhave vā cavanavasena paccuppanna-bhavapariyosānā bhāta' cuticittamuppajjītvā nirujjhati". Abhis. Vol II, Ch. V, 84, p. 599.
28. *Visuddhimaggā* (Dwarakadas) Ch. VIII, 2 p. 188.
29. *Millindapañha* (Dwarakadas), Ch. V. 3.6 p. 214.
30. *Sa'yuttanikāya* I. 120f.
31. *Dhammapada-aśvahakathā* III, 78-84ff.
32. Ibid., II. 99 ff.
33. *Majjhimanikāya* III. 124f.
34. *Dhammapada-aśvahakathā* III. 178 f
35. Ibid I. 105 ff.
36. Ibid I. 16.
37. Ibid III. 44 f.
38. Abhis. Ch. V. 80 p. 146.
39. *Majjhimanikāya* (Bombay University) vol. II *Kandarakasutta* (No. 51). P. 5

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Interfaith Dialogue in Contemporary World

Prof. Reeta Bagchi

On entering into a new millennium it is realized that the world we live in and the world that the coming generation will inherit are challenging and different from the past. Rapid advancement in the area of Science and technology has transformed society by transcending narrow grooves of thought. Advancement in transport system, information and communication technology has witnessed unprecedented activity on trade and economic front breaking all barriers between countries. The whole world has turned to a small village and global community of aspirations and endeavors resulting in the evolution of a universal culture and civilization which has brought diverse religious and cultural groups together in every country. On the one hand there is immense progress with economic advancement which has raised the living standard of the people. On the other one experiences the situation of ignorance about each other's ways of life resulting mistrust among faiths, ethnicities, civilizations and cultures which sometimes encourages conflict, hatred and violence. The result world today is divided ideologically in conflicting blocks. The refusal to see any good in others, the claim of the superiority of one's faith and the inferiority of other faiths; attempts to maintain separate identities; the anti-social policy of exclusiveness; the irrational interpretation and a strict adherence to the religious texts; all tend to prevent the development of the scientific temper and the spirit of inquiry. Sometimes the egotism of majority community drives to despair a minority and breed communalism and even terrorism. The result inter-religious bitterness, suspicion and hostility constantly increasing religious exhibitionism and political exigencies lead to varied distortions and perversions. Such virus that is erupting in different parts sometimes disrupts the civilizations by preventing individual and social progress. According to Huston Smith, 'the religious differences historically have exacerbated political divisions. Besides crusades and wars of religions in past there is ample evidence even in

present day of such conflicts. He stressed the need to develop the confidence of mankind among the followers of various faiths'.

Today man looks to find out solutions of the questions:—how to create a global society without wars and violence? How to achieve sustainable development? How to impart cultural dimension to development? How to preserve the unique cultural identity and artistic wealth of the nations, especially of small communities? How to advance the cause of human rights, economic justice, gender justice and a compassionate social order? Life gives us situations not solutions. There is a growing realization in large parts of the world that it is within the reach of mankind to make an effort to build bridges of inter-faith and inter-cultural understanding for peaceful co-existence and progress in all aspects of life. Every civilization has certain unique features which makes it different from other civilizations. So the major cultural and religious ideologies existing in the world are not to be restricted but should develop an understanding through dialogue about each other's traditions to do justice to the human problems. The civilizations do not emerge in isolation but pass through the process of integrated development. There is continuous progress of civilization from cave to forest. With the laying of the territorial boundaries and with the introduction of agriculture; ideas and people were not confined. The later period witnessed industrial period. People needed resources so continued to move across the globe. Earlier days there were fewer barriers across geographical boundaries while later period witnessed several barriers. At the same time commercial and travel needs connected human society into a global village. The increase in migrations in different nations developed a need of good relationship and understanding with the people of other faiths along with their own. Tele-communication and the use of internet connected various communities across the globe into a network of inter-dependence. Today a man is no more confined to his own country or



community but his relation with the people of other parts of globe has extended. All are concerned towards common issues related to political freedom, economic progress, equal rights, social justice and cultural renaissance. As Dr. S. Radhakrishnan writes in his book entitled '*East and West*': 'Today both east and west are tackling the same problem. Whether in east or west, we have contradictions and attempts to solve them to learn from each other and adapt the inheritance of the past to new ever changing conditions and reshape it into a new and living pattern.'

Various countries of the world have witnessed diversity and pluralism with people of distinctive ethnic origin and identity who follow different cultures and traditions. People from different communities share their philosophies to utilize for innovative purposes and contributing in their own way in various political, academic, scientific as well as social fields and making notable contributions all over the world. This could not be possible by single community. The pluralistic societies not only allow broad range of views but are likely to be more self correcting. This spirit of pluralism is against a monolithic characteristic which revolves around a single or rigid concept and exclude everything else. At the same time the plurality presents many challenges. It develops competition and tension followed by inter-personal conflict among members of diverse cultural groups based on differences in thinking pattern, language and culture. There have been religious rivalries in history but in present society ideological and religious strifes can be experienced in many parts of the world. It encourages problems like violence, ethnic riots, injustice, oppression and exploitation. Even many feel a fear of civilizational crisis and threat about losing identity in multi-cultural society. It is believed that our consciousness to face the global challenges is still imperfect. There is need to change the thinking pattern which is possible through wisdom of higher consciousness. Religion has been the major source in the growth of human civilization and a dominant factor in playing crucial role in one's thinking and behavioral pattern. Religion does not live in sects or doctrines but consists in realization of higher consciousness. It furnishes a rational for new ethics of stability. In religions there are wide options and in traditions there is ample flexibility. Each generation can choose for emphasis

the elements that appeal to them most. Religion thus becomes a reservoir and a source of strength for social cohesion and change. It also makes notable contribution to debate on the issues of climate change, preservation of the planet for the future generation and takes up anti-poverty issues by promoting values of prosperity for all through its daily prayers. Throughout history all over the world saints, sages and religious scriptures taught ethics. Centuries later it still has profound resonance and relevance. Buddha, Jesus and Prophet Muhammad all stressed upon common values present in diverse traditions. No founder of any religion has deviated from this fact, and if there is any misinterpretation it is due to the followers and not the religion. So there is imperfection in human mind or personal ego. Major religions of the world have crossed geographical boundaries and have adopted global dimensions. Religious values of compassion and tolerance play important role in developing a culture of peace and harmony among people of different faith and communities by reducing elements which try to create bitterness, conflict and tensions in human mind. Whereas intolerance builds barriers and erects obstructive devices; peace constructs approaches to all that is good and beautiful. There is need to develop understanding of the multiplicity of religious phenomenon which cannot be unified but it is possible to synthesize the spiritual experiences. Mysticism of religions of the world is the basis of humanity. It helps to realize common divine spark within each human being which helps in understanding a common heritage of mankind which brings people closer to each other. There is great need of change of the human relationship from conflict to co-existence, understanding and active co-operation. Every person ventilates his views about a given object according to his attitude and capacity. Since truth is multi-dimensional it is impossible for anyone to comprehend it in totality because of limited knowledge. The partial knowledge is dangerous especially when a person feels that his knowledge is complete and correct. It is therefore imperative to understand others and accommodate other's views even though they clash with ours. Such Interfaith understanding or dialogue among civilizations and religions include broad spectrum of values and contribute to develop awareness for the dialogue by raising the common issues mankind is facing in modern time. Today the



mood is increasingly one of knowing many sided reality through the process of dialogue. The proper understanding of another faith than his own transforms the vision about one's own religion and also the religious heritage of other people. It is only after getting to know the other religious tradition than his own, a person is able to acknowledge and appreciate all the religious traditions. Mainly it develops the understanding that the different faiths are not contradictory but complementary to each other. Essence of all the religions is one, 'many lamps but one light'. There are different groups some majority others in minority. Sometimes minorities constitute majority group. Among them there are differences of opinions. The differences have to be understood and appreciated which requires better understanding based on secular analysis of events. For a harmonious and better quality of life there is need for a national as well as global consciousness which conceives an all-inclusive philosophy. It is a real humanitarian outlook. Also one must not accept ideas uncritically or any idea simply because it comes from a great man. The validity of that idea must be tested analytically. Since it is our thoughts and beliefs which affect our actions any approach to inter-religious harmony has to start on intellectual level with the minimum requirement to start with the good knowledge of diverse religious traditions which are as follows:— 1. The first step towards inter-faith understanding is taken as soon as one starts studying the religions of other people which provides the knowledge of what is common among all and where exactly differences lie and how those differences can be fostered for enrichment of unity. 2. The dialogue partners should be prepared to recognize the uniqueness of the other's belief, ritual or theological systems which actually makes it different as a civilization. 3. The dialogue pattern should accept that the diversity is the very basis of life without which life loses its charm. 4. Dialogue should promote the spirit of accommodation and adjustment to minimize conflict in the society. 5. One must understand that for effective dialogue it is required to understand and appreciate the other's points of view. Criticism of the text is often based on ignorance of the context. The dialogue is an essential part of democracy. It is the process of understanding and respect for the other tradition. It develops understanding based on interfaith and inter-cultural commonalities and differences of

values which helps in conflict resolution by promoting harmony and peace among diverse cultures and faiths. The greatest hindrance in the way of treating the followers of other religions on equal footing has been the traditional exclusivist concept of religious phenomenon which led every religious tradition to regard itself as the sole repository of religious truth. It is based on the belief that only one's own religion is right and everyone else's is wrong. But the Dialogue process aims at excluding such exclusives to promote inclusiveness. In every religious community there are –liberals, secular, fanatical and fundamentalists and cannot be considered only of one category. It is not possible that everybody will agree with one another. It should avoid the mistake of imposing uniformity instead it should be the blending of many cultures worldwide. So it is required to differentiate between dialogue and monologue for effective dialoging. The desire to dominate in the dialogue leads to monologue or opinions that are one-sided and extreme. Dialogue can take place only in true democratic spirit recognizing the right of all concerned. Those who enter in dialogue process should be firmly rooted in their own religious tradition without being sectarian. It requires commitment while holding personal ideological differences towards co-existence in a fruitful manner. It should never become polemics which try to prove the other wrong which is the anti-thesis of dialogue. It is a method of reaching people of other culture and community through interaction from monolithic to plural to a multicultural level of integration at all levels and removal of misunderstanding that are sources of conflict. The religious and cultural diversity is given but today's pluralistic culture is an achievement. This is important for multicultural societies of the world to reduce prejudices and discrimination among minority and majority group members. In this multiple world order which stands in contrast to the unipolar order it is important to realize the contributions of faith community to rediscover insights of various religious and cultural traditions towards new collective spiritual dimensions. There is need to realize, that the truth is one with different ways to arrive to the goal. A global society requires collective approach for peace and justice in this world. A multi-disciplinary approach is required to understand the global issues towards a compassionate and caring social order by promoting positive values among people. The proper



understanding and dialogue with different civilizations in the modern world transcends human mind from the barriers of creed, culture and ideology. It also helps people towards the onward march of democracy and the individual and group rights in multi-cultural civil society. It takes up all the major issues and challenges that are faced by human beings today. The more a nation can harmonize differences at home, the greater will be its ability to contribute to a dialogue at the international level. The deeper and broader the dialogue; the greater will be the understanding among traditions, civilizations and nations. The proper understanding helps in developing co-operation among nations. The stronger is the co-operation among nations, the lesser is the need to spend on arms and military resources. It also can be an indispensable instrument for sustainable culture for peace in the world. Today more than ever youths have opportunities to interact with people of different ethnicities, religions and cultures. For such reason it has become important to promote interfaith understanding in academic circle. This requires intellect to be combined with intuition of higher wisdom. Such ethical approach with great social vision and emotional intelligence help in fulfilling higher objectives. To achieve the goal centers of learning should be established by all religious communities. The study should be different from mere gaining information or with the purpose to know the rival camps for better argumentation. But the requirement for such study should be a sincere desire to know the religions of other people. Such centers of learning where the study of world religions with such an approach is undertaken, would undoubtedly lay the foundation of a durable structure of interfaith harmony. The instruction of such education should not entertain fear among students that may weaken their own faith instead the aim should be regards for other faiths. Such transformed education can develop universal awareness in contemporary world. Success in today's world and tomorrow's depends on being able to understand, appreciate and work with others. It means tolerance or treating others the way one wants to be treated. The education in today's world is spreading widely and also through the media and communication the common men are getting acquainted with the new ways of thought. Traditional values are being reinterpreted to meet modern need. It is based on the realization that the young generation

need to be rooted in present, to face the future on the strength of past heritage. It helps towards social and spiritual progress with the ideal of one mankind. This idea develops a sense of responsibility among individuals as members of one global family. Such values transcend organizational, national and human boundaries. The United Nation has tried to analyze the meaning and value of the dialogue among civilizations to promote peaceful resolution of unresolved conflicts in a great way. It has emphasized that a common humanity unites all civilizations which respects and gives recognition to cultural diversity. The various initiatives have been taken to promote ethnic and religious tolerance, the culture of peace and justice and respect for all religions by establishing educational awareness programme involving all sectors of society. The learning from the series of Dialogue among civilizations, which have been so far held under the aegis of the United Nation and other institutions should be introduced as domestic policies of member countries besides each country has to play a part in promoting tolerance and respect for diversities within the wider goal of the unity of mankind as an essential component of sustainable human advancement in contemporary world. The present society no more imposes barriers but gives way to a new culture of convergence and co-operation among races all over the world. Globalization has many dimensions with benefits and losses need to understand it. It is possible to make the world a safer place with a transformed consciousness. It helps in rediscovering the spiritual and cultural heritage of nations which can help in developing goodwill. In present century negativity towards other communities and their ideology are reducing fast with a new hope. But this hope has not been fulfilled fully. The time is to introspect to find the remedies to meet the new challenges. The interfaith values need to be examined and deeply contemplated upon, which can bring transformation by applying in day-to-day life. Universal values are inherent in every religion of the world need to be clearly articulated in terms of contemporary knowledge of global society. Whatever is one's religious affiliation need to work towards common goal by taking various issues united rejecting the very idea of any clash in faith and practices to write a new chapter in present era. There is the famous proclamation: 'Bring all forces of good together, do not care what be the color, but mix all the colors'.



Ethics in the Age of Commerce- Looking for Benchmarks

Prof. Pramod Pathak and Ms. Ankita Anshul

Introduction

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times; it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness; it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity; it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness; it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair; we had everything before us, we had nothing before us; we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only".

This was how Charles Dickens had described the situation of France and England in his classic novel A Tale of Two Cities way down in the later part of 18th century. How prophetic, as parallels can be drawn even in the present times, some two centuries after his work. As we wade through the thick and thin of the second decade of the 21st century these words sound eerily contemporary. We are into the age of the paradoxes. These are definitely the best of the times. Look at the material prosperity that mankind has achieved. Man thinks he is at the top and he is not wrong. As Moon and Mars are being conquered man finds himself on cloud nine. But these are worst of the times also. Humanity is at its lowest ebb. The rampant quest for prosperity has endangered the very source of sustenance of mankind that is the Mother Earth. As climate change threatens the very existence of life and water that is the elixir of civilization seems to be approaching the vanishing point, humanity seems clueless. Crime rates, suicide rates, divorce rates are also rising parallel to the growth rates and GDP estimates. While United States President Barrack Obama calls for a moral revolution at Hiroshima, the once devastated Japanese City symbolizing the rot and rout of human power, his countrymen are protesting with exasperation in America shouting "we are the 99 percent" They are the American majority, the middle class. Their

point is that despite being a dominant majority they are the victims as the one percent upper class is getting richer while their own middle incomes have stagnated or declined. On the one hand religion and spirituality are increasingly occupying media space, but on the other a study reports that Atheists out number Christians in UK. Social attitudes, then, have become so chaotic that mankind is at a loss to understand what he wants and what to do.

We do need a moral revolution as advocated by President Obama, but the point is where to begin with and when. Probably in United States because it is rich, technologically innovative and in love with idea that technology can solve all the problems. Moreover, they are the most profligate of the societies and given their consumption pattern a beginning can be made there. Some statistics may be worth considering. With only a 4.5 percent share of world population the American share of world private consumption expenditure was 30 percent. Consumption then has to be tempered with consideration because there is flipside to this in that with 22.4 percent of the world's population south Asia had just 2 percent share of world's private consumption expenditure. As far as the question of time is concerned, it is now.

The Present Age

As historians would like us to believe we have come a long way since the Stone Age passing through the chalcolithic, the iron, the industrial and the modern ages. We are now into what is popularly called by historians and Management thinkers as the Information Age. The reason for this fanciful nomenclature is probably the belief that we have access to tonnes and tonnes of information. We have huge storage capacity like never before and our retrieval capacity is at jet speed. We are at a click away from any and every kind of information. So, this is believed to be the knowledge era and hence our society the knowledge driven society. Is it really so? True, we have access to more information ever



before in the past. But can that information be also called knowledge? Perhaps there lies the rub. Information is not knowledge. There are critical differences between information and knowledge. Information in fact may or may not become knowledge depending upon how it is processed and utilized. T.S Eliot's famous words sum it all- "Where is the life we have lost in living, where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge, where is the knowledge we have lost in information." Famous painter Pablo Picasso had rather cryptically remarked- "the genius of Einstein leads to Hiroshima. Information thus is not what matters.

A cue can be picked up from the insightful Ramayan episode when Hanuman is being sent to fetch the *Sanjivani Buti* (lifesaving medicinal herb) to save the life of Laxaman who is lying comatose after being hit by the *Shakti Baan* (the arrow that was shot at him by Ravana's son Indrajit). The *vaidya* Sukhen (doctor as mentioned in Indian Literature) gives the complete description about where to find the *Sanjivini buti* and what it looks like. Equipped with this information Hanuman reaches the mountain *sumeru* where the herb was to be found. But Ravana had played a trick and made all other herbs on that mountain resemble the features of this herb. A baffled Hanuman was not able to identify the herb. Capable and wise he as he was, he lifts the entire mountain and brings it to the *Vaidya* who immediately identifies it and the life of Laxman is saved. The crucial lesson is that information is not knowledge, rather it has to be converted into knowledge by careful understanding and thinking. Hanuman was powerful enough to lift the mountain. We are lesser mortals and do not have that capability. But we fail to realize this and are mad after data. Everyone is talking about big data, everyone is talking about data mining. Data is in big demand and we are giving hardly any attention to the power of observation and insight. Thus data sells. But when data sells it also gets fabricated and cooked and packed as knowledge. This is erroneous. We, therefore, need to realize that it may be the information age but it is certainly not the knowledge age. In fact, the present age is the age of commerce, where everything is being bought and sold for a price that is determined not by cost but by demand. Demand that is not natural but contrived, created by falsehoods for being traded.

Significators of the Commerce Age

These are times of Commerce and everything is a tool or means of commerce, including information. These are the times when everything can be traded, bought and sold. Rather, everything has to be bought or sold. Everything has a price. There are no free lunches in this age of commerce. And why lunches. Even water carries a price. In fact, people have already been advocating a price for air also. Air that was the nature's gift. We are firmly entrenched in the age of commerce. And who knows we will have to buy air to breathe.

Everything is commerce and commerce is everything. Look at the pointers of this age. The very nature of the society has changed. The temperament, the taste, the attitude, the belief, the value system. Everybody wants to make a quick buck. Without doing anything. And even without deserving. Love has become a transaction, a quid pro quo. Relationships are considered to be investments that will be giving returns later. Remember there are no free lunches. Look what is happening? Media that is supposed to educate and inform the society is has become a product that is packaged and sold. So news sometimes is more commercial than educational or informational with the sole purpose being to make it sensational.

TRP is the driving force not the mission of societal change. Everyone is into business. Everything is business. Schools are into business. Universities are into business. Hospitals are into business. Doctors are into business. Ironically temples are also into business. Religion thus is marketed and Gods are being advertised. Image makeover is the name of the game. Doctors need it. Teachers need it. Professionals need it. In fact, everyone needs it. You are not what you are. You are what your image is. And images are made for a price. Two interesting anecdotes are worth recollecting. World famous Violinist Joshua Bell carried out an interesting experiment on himself. He sat in disguise in a metro station in Paris and went on playing his violin. The same Parisians who would pay premium to listen to Bell's notes did not even pay heed to his tune and at best some of them would throw some coins as a gesture of charity. That was in 2007. Famous Indian singer Sonu Nigam replicated



a similar experiment in Mumbai sometime in the month of May 2016 .He sat with his Harmonium on the footpath and sang some of his best hits. The results were the same .For hours no one observed him, until a youth appreciated his voice and gave Rs 12 as a gesture of charity. The same Sonu Nigam charges in hundreds of thousands for his concerts. That is how packaging works. It makes and breaks stars. Commerce and marketing are made for one another.

Actually the marketers never had it so good. This age of commerce is driven by media that creates a need for everything. Even the things that we do not need. Rather, mostly the things that we do not need. And we are buying those things as our reasoning has been blunted by the barrage of information. We have spurious products, adulterated food and motivated research. With just one objective to enhance consumption. Unheeded consumption, unneeded consumption. Commerce and consumption make willing bedfellows comrade in arms.

The Indian Scene

In the wake of globalization India is emerging as an economic super power in the world. Our growth rate has been impressive despite all round recession in world economy. It is primarily because of the fact that 70 percent of what we produce is consumed domestically. This is largely because India does not depend on exports as much as some other countries do including China. It is perhaps due to this reason that we feel the pinch of recession less as compared to other countries. With India's growth, the people of this country are also growing in every respect though, our growth story is not applicable to a large percentage of population. But as India is growing the youth, our largest segment, the youth is becoming more competitive than what it was before and is giving go by to values and ethics in their actions, resulting in giving a go-bye to the values and probity in every sphere of life. There is much greater awareness amongst the younger generation today about what is happening around. They know much more as compared to us when we were their age. But what is perhaps lacking is the value system. The major chunk of the blame lies on the political class, the leaders who are setting wrong examples. What we desperately need is benchmarks to follow, benchmarks to emulate. As the dividing line between the ethical

and the unethical is thinning in the highly competitive milieu ends gain precedence over means. Self-interest has become the driving force at cost of everything. Teachings are not adhered to and values are rationalized by logic.

Where have we gone wrong?

As students of Banaras Hindu University (BHU), we were given identity cards that carried information about Malviyaji, (the founder of BHU) his ideals and his expectations from the students along with the University song. This apart, there was a crisp looking value statement in the form of a direction. It read – 'Riding three in rickshaw; it is unlawful. Abandon it.'

Needless to say that despite reading it umpteen number of times we never cared to think about it, leave aside practicing it. More than three decades down the line, we can still find the practice of riding three in a rickshaw in vogue. Nothing seems to have changed. This is the irony. This is the reality. The all important question is where have we gone wrong? Why value statements remain mere statements to be paid only lip service to. Riding three in a rickshaw is not the issue. The issue is the contempt for all such right codes of living that we call *dharma*. All such rules of society. The paradox is that we seek redemption from such situations by framing more rules. And these too are defined. The people who do so proudly proclaim that rules are for fools. For the worthy, the wise and the strong rules are to be followed.

We need to look inwards as to why codes of living have failed to result in an equitable and just social order where the weakest enjoy the same right as the strongest. We also need to find out if there is a way out? Firmly entrenched into the twenty first century, there is need to look back and critically analyze the last century in its entirety – the various facets, aspects and accomplishments, first. This is needed in order to take it up from there and find out what needs to be done in the present century to make this world a better place to live.

None can doubt that the previous century witnessed exponential growth in every endeavor of mankind. Backed by ambition and information man aspired for the moon. And, yes, he got it. When Neil Armstrong stepped on the moon on 12th July 1969 it proved to be a giant leap for mankind. The progress



in Science and Technology, Economics and Commerce was immense. The march that began with renaissance is still on and humanity has been taking large quantum jumps century after century. By a simple projection it can be confidently said that the present century holds no less promise. May be much more than what can be projected. But we need to ask a question in the same way as T.S Eliot- "with all technological advances and change is mankind happier or wiser than he was hundred years ago". Probably not. Look what ISIS is doing in the name of religion. Look what Ultra Left is doing without believing in religion. Ironically they are doing the same things. Look what is happening in sub Saharan Economies. Look at the arms race, look what corporate world is doing despite talking about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Everybody is talking right and doing wrong. Given the state of turmoil the societies are all over, the greatest challenge even in the twenty first century is making mankind human.

There is need to look inwards and do some soul searching. Why, despite the astronomical rise in institutions of primary, secondary and higher education the problems of the society are still growing? May be, we no longer live in the jungle. May be, we exercise greater control over our environment. And maybe we have reasons to nurse the feeling that we are a much happier lot. But in reality that is just 'statisfaction' (statistical jugglery to create the 'feel good') and not satisfaction. The quality of life of the toiling masses has not changed much. Dishing out data about reduction in number of people living below the poverty line and rise in per capita income is hardly reassuring when hunger and deprivation continues to push people to the brink. Prosperity is far more than statistics about gross domestic product or gross national product or even per capita income. It is per capita happiness. Needless to say that the number of unhappy people has risen. People have greater control over health but less over well-being. Life expectancy has increased but so has suicide rates. Everyone is talking about Customer Relationship Management but no one is bothered about rampant matrimonial discord. Dollar turnover rates have certainly increased but so have the divorce rates. The numbers of high-tech and the trained teachers have grown. But so have the incidents of school kids going on a shooting spree

in classrooms. Why dissatisfaction is growing despite material growth

The problem is not that the world does not have enough. The problem is that some want more than the enough. There was time when Plato's republic was the model. The credo then was – from each according to his capacity, to each according to his need. But these are the days of market economy and Adam Smith's invisible hand rules the roost. Can Social Darwinism as the rule of the market economy be an acceptable principle? Human societies are not jungles where the strong prey on the meek. Human societies are about compassion and camaraderie. They are about love and relationships, and in words of famous Indian leader and visionary M. K. Gandhi "Trusteeship of the poor by the rich." But this is not taking place. The rich want to get richer and they don't mind if the poor become poorer in the process. Certainly there is something wrong. Somewhere along the journey of human experience man seems to have lost his soul. Something strange is going on – the world is becoming richer but the people are becoming poorer. Globalization has brought the different parts of world closer, yet people are distanced from one another.

Life has become business and people a commodity. So there is not just material dumping but social dumping, too, euphemistically called right sizing. People are treated like disposable commodity. The simple reason being that education has failed to inculcate the all-important values of compassion, tolerance and empathy. No amount of development will lead to greatest good of greatest number unless tolerance, good temper and sympathy for the have-nots is present in the hearts of those who have. Development per se is always lopsided. It is the human endeavor that ensures its equitability.

Let us consider the fact that despite tremendous progress in every endeavor of mankind human societies today are fighting wars and living in deprivation, misery and poverty though some pockets of so called affluence may be present. The progress of science and technology and growth in economic terms has failed to make the world a happier place to live in. If the twentieth century witnessed two world wars and devastation of enormous scale, the twenty



first century has already witnessed one high precision war in Iraq in very first decade. With more than eight decades still to come the forebodings don't appear to be less gloomy. There is less of love and more of hatred, less of prosperity and more of poverty of the soul for mankind at large. Compassion and camaraderie are missing. Women fear to venture out as devils dare. What good is after all the so called affluence and material prosperity when the soul bleeds? Even as we plan for settling in the space the news is that some eight to ten million children under the age of five die globally for want of nourishment.

What needs to be done

The question needs to be addressed to sincerely and seriously. There are no easy answers but it can be said with a fair degree of certainty that there has been a systematic dilution of values over the centuries. This can be explained with the help of the example of various epochs as given in the Hindu scriptures. The narrations representing the Hindu eras suggest that the decline in values has been continuous. If *Satyug* was the period where truth and only absolute truth prevailed the subsequent period saw a dilution of this. *Satyug* was symbolized by Raja Harishchandra who sacrificed everything for the altar of truth. The next was *Treta* symbolized by Lord Ram. This was the era when we found some degree of dilution as absolute truth gave way to dharma which became the touchstone. And to uphold dharma it was perfectly fair to kill Bali by deceit. That is why Bali asks Lord Rama why the lord had to shoot his arrow from behind. To this the Lord answered that Bali was on the path of *adharma*. Therefore, to uphold dharma the lord had to kill Bali 'unfairly'. Then we come to next era *Dwapar*, which was symbolized by Lord Krishna. We find that it was loyalty and duty to the state that became the touchstone. So in the epic Mahabharata men like Bhishma were mute witnesses when Draupadi was humiliated in the court room. We also find that even Dharmraj Yudhishtira had to resort to lie in order to ensure Dronacharya's death. And they all did what they did owing to their loyalty to the king or duty to the state. In *Kalyug*, that is the present era it is a no-holds-barred as self-interests reigns supreme. We cannot expect a better state of affairs when dilution of values is almost complete. There is one more difference that is discernible today. In the earlier eras though fairness was compromised

on the altar of some larger interests still there was a feeling of guilt or shame on the part of the wrong doer. But in the *Kalyug* these feelings are conspicuous by absence. And this perhaps is the root cause of the values crisis of the present day society. Shame and guilt have completely disappeared as the benchmarks seems to have changed. Standards of greatness now are based on material criteria.

We need to have right benchmarks to follow. There is lot of wisdom contained in stories as given in our epics. In the Valmiki Ramayana, we have Lord Rama exiled, living in the forest. Bharata comes home and finds out what had happened and is shocked. He does not want his elder brother to be thus banished. So he goes to the forest and begs of Shri Rama to return home. This in itself is a spiritual value – the loyalty, the sense of togetherness, the ability to sacrifice one's own personal gain. Shri Rama, before answering his younger brother, inquiries about the state of affairs in Ayodhya. This dialogue may be more like a treatise on statecraft and management. Shri Rama asks about seventy-five questions to Bharata. Are you ruling the kingdom properly? Are you taking care of the elders? And so on. These questions cover a wide range of topics related to governance of kingdoms. The eldest brother says, 'Bharata, you are the king and you are on top no doubt. But the secret of successful administration is sage-counsel.' The words in Sanskrit are, '*mantra vijayamoolam hi*' meaning right counsel is the root of good administration. Is the younger brother taking the advice of his team? Does he have good counsellors in the first place? Similarly Shri Rama suggests Bharat to focus on right people. He asks 'when you take counsel from people, do you go for numbers or for quality? One sensible advisor is better than a thousand idiotic people to go on giving opinions.'

There are lessons on Time Management. Shri Rama says, 'Do you take up such tasks first, where the investment is small but the rewards are high?' When we manage our time, we need to take up such activities first, where we put in a little time, and the benefits are large. Today, we call such jobs 'high priority jobs.' One of the biggest errors in time management with all of us is that we labor on less important matters.' Doing truly important things first is the crux of good administration. There are lessons



on financial management also. Shri Rama asks Bharata, 'Is your income larger than the expenditure?' He says, 'Bharata, I hope your expenditure is not for the sake of undeserving.' And later in several stanzas he outlines for whom one should spend and for whom should not.

In fact, Lord Ram's life can be a real benchmark for the society gone astray today. When ethics and values are diluted taking right decisions based on *dharma* becomes difficult though critical. These benchmarks help us find out what we have to do. In his role as a son, husband, brother, king or friend Ram stands out in his commitment to *dharma* and one can only pay reverence to his moral authority. Not only Ramayana but Mahabharata, Chanakya-niti and Vidura-niti, Subhashitas including the famous Panchatantra, and in a whole lot of religious, semi-religious, spiritual and other literature of our land, we have ample guidance that is applicable to modern living. There is a lot to learn from not only Indian scriptures but lives of people like Madan Mohan Malviya, M.K Gandhi, Sardar Patel, Lal Bahadur Shastri, and many such people whose life was an epitome of right living. If we can consider these people has bench marks understanding what is right and righteous will not be difficult.

Conclusion

Material prosperity has soared like anything and people are enjoying luxury and leisure like never before. The coffers are full and we have conquered moon and are negotiating Mars. Space is now a sojourn and business corporations are talking about values, ethics and CSR. Managers are lecturing on the spirituality quotient. But there is a flipside too. Peace and

tranquility eludes mankind like never before. Humanity is at conflict with itself. Despite luxury and leisure everyone is on the run in a rat race that seems to be wayward and meaningless. Everyone is talking about spirituality but no one is listening. As we aim for Mars we find that the Earth is becoming uninhabitable. Life expectancies have risen but people are suffering from incurable disease like never before. Prosperity of the few has not impacted in anyway on the lives of the poor. GDPs are rising and so also are increasing frequencies of recessions. Something is definitely wrong somewhere that is the cause of the inexplicable paradox we are in today. There is no answer but to change our cognition and behavior. The way out is looking at the benchmarks that are the epitome of values. And we have plenty of them. They will help us in doing what is right. In the end there is need to once again take a cue from famous poet and philosopher T.S Eliot- "Make perfect your will. Take no thought of the harvest, but only of proper sowing. The world turns and the world changes. But thing doesn't change. In all of my years, the one thing does change. However you disguise it, this thing does not change. The perpetual struggle of Good and Evil." Benchmarks will help Good triumph over Evil.

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• "History shows that where ethics and economics come in conflict, victory is always with economics. Vested interests have never been known to have willingly divested themselves unless there was sufficient force to compel them."

-B. R. Ambedkar

• "An examination of Indian Vedic doctrines shows that it is in tune with the most advanced scientific and philosophical thought of the West."

- Sir John Woodroffe

• "From the Vedas we learn a practical art of surgery, medicine, music, house building under which mechanized art is included. They are encyclopedia of every aspect of life, culture, religion, science, ethics, law, cosmology and meteorology."

- William James

• "India was the motherland of our race, and Sanskrit the mother of Europe's languages; she was the mother of our philosophy; mother, through the Arabs, of much of our mathematics; mother, through the Buddha, of the ideals embodied in Christianity; mother, through the village community, of self-government and democracy. Mother India is in many ways the mother of us all".

- Will Durant

Value Education for Universal Well Being and Happiness: Towards Peace and Sustainable Development

Dr. Anita Devraj & Dr. Kuldeep Agarwal

1. Introduction: Universal Well Being and Happiness

Globally, the society today is caught in the grip of distressing problems like drugs, violence, racism, terrorism, decline of education and breakdown of the family unit. The psychological state of the people of the world is a complete wreck as we see unchecked desires and base instincts at work wherever we look. What is being called into question is humanity itself. The very foundation of our civilization and the criteria by which we define humanity are in great peril, creating an unprecedented crisis of humanity and human nature.

There is no other solution to these problems than realizing a human revolution in each individual. As each group seeks their separate roots/origins, and as society fractures along a thousand fissure lines, what is needed is an inner reformation in the depths of peoples' lives to transform the egoism that justifies the subjugation of others and replace it with a distinct current of humanism that genuinely strives for co-existence amongst all people.

Such a humanism will have to focus on a sense of "self" which is quite different from the concept of individuals so deeply rooted in different cultures. Unlike the isolated individuals, the self has an inherent depth and breadth that reaches out and links up with all the people, the natural world and the cosmos as one organic whole. Nothing can exist entirely on its own, in complete isolation. All phenomena arise from mutually interdependent relationships and naturally influence one another. In the same way, no human being can exist in a state of total isolation. It is the mutual interdependence of things and human beings that is more important than the individual view of existence.

The first priority before us is that people, irrespective of their backgrounds, learn to get on with one another as fellow human beings; understand each

other and forge bonds of friendship. As people learn to exist harmoniously together, they can come to see one another's good points. This opens the path to learning about each other. We have no choice but to begin from here.

The struggle for peace does not lie in some far off place. Taking action for our friends and treasuring those around us constitute admirable activities for peace. Such seemingly ordinary efforts might seem insignificant and far removed from the goal of world peace, but the essential basis for peace lies only within human beings.

In the words of Soka Gakkai International President Daisaku Ikeda "The earth belongs equally to everyone. It revitalizes all human beings, transcending racial, ethnic and national distinctions and supports the flourishing of culture. A vibrant well-spring of pure altruism, of compassion surges from its soil. If everyone were to awaken to these facts and take action based on these, there would not be the slightest doubt that we could build true world peace and human harmony." So instead of stubbornly focusing only on the differences between people that just leads to rejecting or shutting out certain persons or groups of people, let us nurture and promote this new humanism - a humanism that gives utmost consideration to how to enable others to reveal their potential, how to establish better human relations and how to create the "greatest possible value".

2. Values

Values can be viewed in many different ways.

2.1 Universal and Eternal Values

There are three universal and eternal values: *Truth, Beauty and Goodness* or *Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram*. All human beings are in search of these three, though what they mean can vary in relation to place and time. The main branches of Philosophy are based on these three. Metaphysics/Ontology, Epistemology and Logic search for truth or satyam. The



idea of Goodness or Shivam is analyzed and explored by Ethics. Aesthetic studies the concept of beauty or sundaram. Therefore, when we think of values, we have to think of these three, which are closely linked to life.

2.2 Three kinds of conflict leading to three kinds of values

The philosopher, Bertrand Russell, talks about three kinds of conflict:

- Man (Humans) with Nature
- Man (Humans) with Man (Humans)
- Man (Humans) with himself (themselves)

This leads us to yet another three kinds of values:

- those related to preservation of nature or natural environment;
- those related to living in peace and harmony with fellow beings. This value can be linked inter alia with communal harmony, national integration, international understanding, etc.;
- those related to one's personality and inner peace. This can be linked to self development, spirituality, ethical values, personal conduct, well being, etc. Family values and code of conduct at work place or professional ethics may also find a place here.

2.3 Constitutional Values

The Constitution of India spells out certain values that should be taken care of by all abiding citizens of the nation. Some of these values inter alia are those related to:

- Democracy
- Socialism
- Secularism
- National Integration
- International Understanding
- Equality & Equity
- Social Justice
- Positive Discrimination
- Rights & Duties of Citizens
- Nationalism/Love for the nation/Nationalistic Feelings

2.4 Religious Values

India is perhaps the only country or one of the very few where all religions/faiths flourish, e.g. Bahai, Buddhism, Christianity, Jainism, Judaism, Hinduism,

Islam, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, etc. There may be different cults/sects/groups within these religions, e.g. Sanatan Dharma and Arya Samaj in Hinduism; Shia and Sunni in Islam; Catholicism and Protestantism in Christianity. One way of looking at values is to cull them out from religious scriptures/teachings/preachings. When one delves deep into it, one finds that all religions teach or preach common values. It is worthwhile to identify the common values of all religions. This may be termed as interfaith values. Of course, this should not be confused with rituals.

In Ancient Hindu philosophy, there is mention of four values termed as Purusharthas. These are Dharma (Right conduct according to scriptures), Artha (acquisition of worldly riches in pursuance of Dharma), Kama (enjoying worldly pleasures as permitted by Dharma) and Moksha (self realization or ultimate liberation from the cycle of rebirth).

Buddhism prescribed the Middle Path. Jainism preaches Ahimsa (non-violence).

2.5 Scientific Humanism

Modern Thought teaches us the value of scientific humanism. It propagates the idea of living a life based on rationalism. Scientific Temper is an important postulate in this paradigm. Truth, objectivity and intellectual honesty are essential components of scientific temper.

2.6 Behavioral Values

Identifying and inculcating behavioral ethical values is a common way of approaching value education. There are hundreds of values identified by various Agencies/Organizations/Individuals. The idea is to develop all round balanced persons who are good human beings and abiding citizens. Character building is a crucial component of any meaningful educational endeavour.

2.7 Values for Sustainable Development

UNESCO had observed the Decade of ESD (Education for Sustainable Development), which has gained currency globally with the realization that this mindless appropriation/exploitation/destruction of nature in the name of development is bound to result in extinction of all humankind. UNESCO has defined ESD as "education promoting development that is



environmentally sound, socially equitable, culturally sensitive and economically just". Obviously sustainable development can be viewed as a desirable, unavoidable value essential for human survival. It has 4 components: Environment, Society, Culture and Economy. This implies four kinds of values connected with each one of these, viz. Environmental Values, Social Values, Cultural Values and Economic Values.

"We hold the future in our hands, together, we must ensure that our grandchildren will not have to ask why we failed to do the right thing, and let them suffer the consequences." UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, 2007

The concept of sustainable development was described by the 1987 Brundtland Commission Report as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"

There are four dimensions to sustainable development – society, environment, culture and economy – which are intertwined, not separate. Sustainability is a paradigm for thinking about the future in which environmental, societal and economic considerations are balanced in the pursuit of an improved quality of life. For example, a prosperous society relies on a healthy environment to provide food and resources, safe drinking water and clean air for its citizens.

One might ask, what is the difference between sustainable development and sustainability? Sustainability is often thought of as a long-term goal (i.e. a more sustainable world), while sustainable development refers to the many processes and pathways to achieve it (e.g. sustainable agriculture and forestry, sustainable production and consumption, good government, research and technology transfer, education and training, etc.).

The Earth Charter is a declaration of fundamental ethical principles for building a fair, sustainable and peaceful global society in the 21st century. It serves as a base of ethical principles inspiring the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and promotes an integrated approach to global issues. It was the product of a decade-long, world-

wide, cross-cultural dialogue on common goals and shared values. The project began as a UN initiative, but was carried forward and completed by a global civil society movement. It was launched as a people's charter in 2000 by the Earth Charter Commission. The Earth Charter sets out fundamental principles, such as:

- Building democratic societies that are fair, participatory, sustainable and peaceful and securing the Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations;
- Protecting and restoring the integrity of the Earth's ecological systems;
- Ensuring that economic activities and institutions at all levels promote human development in an equitable and sustainable manner;
- Affirming gender equality and equity as prerequisites to sustainable development;
- Providing transparency and accountability in governance, inclusive participation in decision-making and access to justice;
- Integrating the knowledge, values and skills needed for a sustainable way of life into formal education and lifelong learning.

3 Education Policy Documents in India

3.1 Education Commissions

Our various Education Commissions have from time to time, brought in changes in the curriculum to make them more relevant to the needs of the 20th century which has ushered the world into an era of technology. The Secondary Education Commission 1953, popularly known as "The Mudaliar Commission", tried to link Education to life in such a way that certain values could also be brought in. Linking Education with democracy, it observed "Citizenship in a democracy is a very exacting and challenging responsibility for which every citizen has to be carefully trained. But in a democracy, if it is anything more than the thoughtless exercise of the vote, an individual must form his own independent judgment on all kinds of complicated social, economical and political issues and, to a large extent, decide his own course of action".

— To be effective, a democratic citizen should have the understanding and the intellectual integrity to sift truth from falsehood, facts from propaganda and to reject the dangerous appeal of fanaticism and preju-



dices. He must develop a scientific attitude of mind to think objectively and base his conclusions on tested data. He should also have an open mind receptive to new ideas and not confined within the prison walls of out-moded customs and beliefs. It should neither reject the old because it is old nor accept the new because it is new but dispassionately examine both and courageously reject whatever arrests the forces of justice and progress". There could not have been a fuller statement than this in conceiving the global spirit of education.

The scope of this area of study was further broadened by the Education Commission (1964-66), known as the Kothari Commission, by designating it as Social Science. It was considered as a body of knowledge which helps the students to acquire knowledge of their environment, an understanding of human relationships and certain attitudes and values which are vital for intelligent perception of the affairs of community, the state, the nation and the world. The position of the child was conceived in a total global frame of which the community, state and nation form significant parts. The study of social sciences was not simply to be concerned with providing knowledge or understanding of social phenomena but was extended to the development of desirable attitudes and value system within this global framework. The entire thrust was to make humans complete in their intellectual, social and personal attributes and social sciences was to be considered as an effective medium.

3.2 National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986

The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 extended the concept further. In the framework suggested by it, at the plus two stage, though the education essentially remains diversified, a common minimum core was suggested for all the streams, which is all encompassing in nature. It conceived of broad general themes relevant to the needs of present social and cultural demands of the country and its aspirations in the form of **10 Core Elements**, as follows:

1. India's freedom movement
2. Constitutional obligations
3. National identity
4. Common cultural heritage
5. Egalitarianism, democracy and secularism

6. Equality of sexes
7. Protection of environment
8. Removal of social barriers
9. Observance of small family norms
10. Inculcation of scientific temper

The themes envisaged by the National Policy were global in character. It was thought that they will not only help in bringing in a secular and scientific society but also help to cultivate values in the mind of the child. By relating events and narrating stories about our freedom struggle, national leaders and the sacrifices done by people like Mahatma Gandhi, Subhash Chandra Bose and others, it is expected it would develop a positive attitude towards our nation.

3.3 National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2000

Section 2.1 of NCF 2000 recommends, "Since India is the most ennobling experiment in spiritual co-existence, education about social, moral and spiritual values and religions cannot be left entirely to home and the community. School education in the country seems to have developed some kind of neutrality toward the basic values and the community in general has little time or inclination to know about religions in the right spirit. *This makes it imperative for the Indian school curriculum to include inculcation of the basic values and an awareness of all the major religions of the country as one of the central components.*"

Section 2.2 of NCF 2000 describes the Common Core Components. It says, "The need for strengthening national identity is being felt now much more than ever before. As such there is a strong plea for promoting national integration, and social cohesion by cultivating values as enshrined in the Constitution of India through school curriculum. With this in view, the ten core components identified in the *National Policy on Education*, 1986 need to be reaffirmed. They are as follows: The history of India's freedom movement; The Constitutional obligations; the content essential to nurture national identity; India's common cultural heritage; egalitarianism, democracy and secularism; equality of sexes; protection of the environment; removal of social barriers; observance of the small family norm; and inculcation of scientific temper.



The Fundamental Duties, as laid down in Article 51A of Part IV A of the Indian Constitution, also have to be included in the core components. These are to: (a) abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem; (b) cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom; (c) uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India; (d) defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so; (e) promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood among all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of woman; (f) value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture; (g) protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers, wild life and to have compassion for the living creatures; (h) develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of enquiry and reform; (i) safeguard public property and abjure violence, and (j) strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement. These core components need to be integrated in school curriculum in a suitable manner. It is envisaged that they would help in instilling a nationally shared perception and values and creating an ethos and value system in which a common Indian identity could be strengthened."

3.4 National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005
Section 3.8 of NCF 2005 states: "We live in an age of unprecedented levels of violence, with constant threats posed by intolerance, fanaticism, dispute and discordance. Ethical action, peace and welfare are facing new challenges. War and violence occur due to unresolved conflicts, though conflicts may not always lead to violence and war. Violence is one of the many possible responses to conflict. Non-violent conflict-resolution skills could be nurtured and applied constructively to disputes between the individuals, groups and nations. The space for peace education within the framework of National School Curriculum document is compellingly clear in the light of the escalating trends of, and taste for, violence globally, nationally and locally. Education is a significant dimension of the long-term process of building up peace – tolerance, justice, intercultural understanding and

civic responsibility. However, education as practiced in schools often promotes forms of violence, both real and symbolic. Under these circumstances, the need to reorient education and therefore the school curriculum takes priority. As a value, it cuts across all other curricular areas, and coincides with and complements the values emphasized therein. It is, therefore, a concern cutting across the curriculum and is the concern of all teachers.

Education for peace seeks to nurture ethical development, inculcating the values, attitudes and skills required for living in harmony with oneself and with others, including nature. It embodies the joy of living and personality development with the qualities of love, hope and courage. It encompasses respect for human rights, justice, tolerance, cooperation, social responsibility, and respect for cultural diversity, in addition to a firm commitment to democracy and non-violent conflict resolution. Social justice is an important aspect of peace education. The concern for equality and social justice, which refers to practicing non-exploitation towards the have-nots, the poor and the underprivileged and creating a non-violent social system, is the hallmark of education for peace.

Similarly, human rights are central to the concept of peace. Peace cannot prevail if the rights of individuals are violated. Basic to human rights are the values of non-discrimination and equality, which contribute to building a culture of peace in society. These issues are interrelated. *Peace education is thus a host of overlapping values.* Peace education must be a concern that permeates the entire school life – curriculum, co-curriculum, classroom environment, school management, teacher-pupil relationship, teaching-learning processes, and the entire range of school activities. Hence, it is important to examine the curriculum and examination system from the point of view of how they may contribute to children's sense of inadequacy, frustration, impatience and insecurity. Also, there is a need to consciously counter the negative influence of the increasing violence around them, and its representation in the media, and in its place promote a reflective engagement with more meaningful aspects of living an ethical and peaceful life.



Education in the true sense should empower individuals to clarify their values; to enable them to take conscious and deliberate decisions, taking into consideration the consequences of their actions; to choose the way of peace rather than violence; to enable them to be makers of peace rather than only consumers of peace."

4 Value Inculcation

It is evident that value inculcation will have to be made an integral part of education at all levels. In a culturally pluralistic society like that of ours, value education should be directed to foster among children universal and eternal values, oriented towards the unity and integration of the people of India. The content of value education will have to be drawn from various sources - national goals, universal perceptions, ethical considerations and character building. In addition to the values that are concerned with the elimination of obscurantism, religious fanaticism, violence, superstition, fatalism, exploitation and injustice, value education should also have a positive content. Inculcation of values like honesty, truthfulness, courage, conviction, straight forwardness, fearlessness, tolerance, love for justice, dependability, compassion, etc. will help in creating balanced individuals and a humane society. Value education should particularly aim at creating an awareness that there is always a hierarchy of values in the value system of a person and that whenever there is, somehow, an incomparability between two values, he/she should be able to give higher priority to the rightly deserving values, particularly those concerning the well-being of the society at large in comparison to those related to the individual, family, caste, etc. Character building, which is closely related with the inculcation of values, should be of practical nature implying thereby determination on the part of the individual to pursue right kind of values even in the face of heavy odds.

4.1 Nationalism and Love for the nation

Another urgent need is to consciously develop national spirit and national identity. Education, as an instrument of social transformation, should ensure that its beneficiaries and products demonstrate a national consciousness, a national spirit and national identity which are essential for national unity. This necessitates inclusion of specific content in the school curriculum designed to nurture national identity. The cur-

riculum as a whole should help in promoting development in the pupils of a profound sense of patriotism, non-sectarian attitudes, capacity for tolerating differences arising out of caste, religion, region, language, sex, etc. and ability to choose between alternate value systems, all directed to the sustained pursuit of unity and integrity of the country.

Strengthening of national identity and unity is intimately associated with taking pride in our cultural heritage. There is a need to bridge the existing schism between the system of education and the country's rich and varied cultural traditions. Students should be made to realize and appreciate the ancient glory of our beloved country. A major role of education should be to bring about the fine synthesis between change-oriented technologies and the country's continuity of cultural tradition. The compositions of our culture and unity in diversity, which is the main theme of our national unity, should be reflected in the content and processes of education at all stages of school education. The process of education should be characterized by efforts to promote culture through education and education through culture.

Education should help in making our younger generation aware of the need to reinterpret and re-evaluate the past and adapt the new practices and outlook, appropriate for a modern society. It should be made clear that India has made a rich contribution to knowledge in the world, including scientific and mathematical knowledge. India was the Vishwa Guru in ancient times, and even today it has the potential to be that. The main objectives should be to promote national pride and cultural identity; as well as to foster national integration and greater understanding amongst different groups of the people of India.

4.2 Global Perspective and International understanding

The school curriculum, while promoting national identity and unity, should also strive to create among the pupils an awareness of the necessity to promote peace and understanding between nations for the prosperity of all human beings. The ancient Indian dictum of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam still holds true, in spite of several human made walls that have emerged in today's world. It implies universal brotherhood - all human beings, irrespective of nationality,



race, class caste, creed, sex/gender, are members of one family. It leads to love for all human beings. The curriculum should reflect some of the major issues facing the world today such as disarmament, avoidance of nuclear war, prevention of violation of human rights, gender equality, etc. it will make the pupils aware of the concept of world as a family of nations, the distinct culture of each nation and the interdependence among nations in different spheres. The school curriculum, while enabling the pupil to root oneself in the abiding national cultural traditions and value frame, should also enable him/her to learn and appreciate the new and emerging international community of humans.

4.3 Protection of the Environment and Conservation of Natural Resources

The indiscriminate destruction of the environment and use of environmental resources, especially the non-renewable resources in nature by humans have been upsetting the earth's ecological balance. Unfortunately even some ambitious national developmental programmes, when not based on careful consideration of their consequences in terms of the ecology in the long run, may become sources of serious hazards for ecological balance. There is an urgent need for tapping new alternative sources of energy and development of new technology aimed at the protection of environment. This brings into focus the paramount need to create consciousness of the environment among all sections of the society. The school curriculum, therefore, should attempt to create a commitment on the part of pupils to protect the environment and conserve nature and its resources so that the ecological balance, especially the balance between humans and nature, could be maintained and preserved. It should also promote an awareness of the need to counter pollution, whether caused by affluence or poverty, and of the impending energy crisis due to the ever increasing consumption of fuels available in nature and the exhaustion of these fuels at an alarmingly rapid rate. The school curriculum should highlight the measures for protection and care of the environment, prevention of pollution and conservation of energy. It should also highlight the inter-dependence between the material environment and the plant and animal (including human) life for survival, growth and development. The significance of renewable and non-conventional energy resources

should also form an important component of the curriculum.

4.4 Rationality and Open-mindedness

The curriculum should develop in the pupil well defined abilities and values such as the spirit of inquiry, objectivity and the courage to question. There is a need to design various educational programmes in such a way that they would enable the learner to acquire problem solving and decision making skills. The curriculum should promote development of qualities such as open mindedness, commitment to free inquiry, a habit of seeking more evidence before arriving at conclusions and a readiness to revise assumptions and hypotheses based on fresh evidence coming to light, all leading to the inculcation of scientific temper.

4.5 Constitutional Values: Democracy, Socialism and Secularism

The Constitution of India proclaimed the country to be a democratic, socialistic and secular country.

Democracy implies freedom and rights for all citizens. Freedom goes hand in hand with responsibility, rights with duties. Thus democratic values should lead individuals not only to struggle for rights and freedom, but also to fulfill their duties and responsibilities towards the nation and society.

Socialism implies equality, equity and egalitarianism. Gaps between the classes, (the rich and poor), castes and any other categories should be minimized. The State (and by implication all citizens) should work towards this end by contributing to national development, rather than self development.

Secularism implies absence of a State religion; it also implies equality of all religions and the right of every individual, whether from a minority group or a majority group. It does not, and should not, mean appeasement or shunning of a particular religion, or a group of religions, whether that/those of majority or minority. Secularism does not mean absence of value education. Inculcation of values and spiritual development do not contradict secularism.

The curriculum should take care of these values.



4.6 Gender Equality, Equity and Justice

Gender Equality, Equity and Justice has now become a very important and extremely relevant global issue. Respect and appreciation for the opposite sex/gender is a value, which has to be essentially inculcated by all. It needs to be ingrained into the minds of our children and youth that all genders are equal and have equal rights; no gender, including transgender, is inferior or superior. On the other hand, girls/women are competent and as capable as men and are not inferior in any way. Women have proved in innumerable ways that they do not lag behind in any field, either physically or mentally or emotionally. Boys/men have to do away with the knowledge and understanding that they have nurtured for so long that their masculinity can only be proved by dominating over girls/women. In order to inculcate this so very important value in our mindset, it is imperative that we make conscious efforts by including *Gender Equality, Equity and Justice* in a big way in all our educational endeavours.

5. Value Education for Peace and Sustainable Development

According to Nelson Mandela, "*Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world*". It becomes even more important if it has to deal with Peace and Sustainable Development. Values have to be brought to the forefront in our entire education system. It has to be based on the principles and values that underlie sustainable develop-

ment and deal with the well-being of all four dimensions of sustainability – environment, society, culture and economy. Education should be locally relevant and culturally appropriate and so take into account local needs, perceptions and conditions. It becomes more meaningful and relevant if all forms of education -formal, non-formal and informal are engaged. In order to achieve this end, it becomes important that we use a variety of pedagogical techniques that promote participatory learning and higher-order thinking skills, which will promote lifelong learning. This will further help us in accommodating the evolving nature of the concept of sustainability. The content should take into account context, global issues and local priorities, that will build civil capacity for community-based decision-making, social tolerance, environmental stewardship, an adaptable workforce, and a good quality of life. *Value Education for Peace and Sustainable Development* must focus on an interdisciplinary approach because values do not pertain to a single discipline; all disciplines can contribute to values.

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Sikhism

- 1) Sikhism is a practical religion. It does not consist in a certain set of beliefs or mere words. Religion does not imply wandering to shrines and tombs, or following austerities of Yogis. Sikhism is a way of life, something to be lived according to a pattern. Its main virtue is simplicity. There is no supernaturalism or mythology on which it rests. It does not believe in devils or angels or heavenly spirits.
- 2) Sikhism is a universal religion.
- 3) Sikhism is opposed to all ritualism and formalism.
- 4) Sikhism does not enjoin blind faith. Blind obedience to an external authority is dis-couraged. The death of the intellect can not be a condition of the life of the spirit. Faith does not start with sumises or absurdities.
- 5) Sikhism is a faith of hope and cheer. Though it affirms Karma, it recognises the possibility of the modification of one's Karma with the grace of the Guru or God. It does not lead to despair and defeatism.
- 6) Sikhism is a democratic religion. The decisions of the Sangat are regarded as resolutions having the force of law (Gurmatta) Guru Gobind Singh Sahib vested the authority of the organisation in the Panth.

The word 'Sikh' means a disciple. So Sikhism is essentially the path of discipleship. The true sikh remains unattached to worldly things just as the lotus keeps its blossom over and above the surface of water. The Sikh must do his duty to his family and to the community. The main thing is leading a pure and moral life, full of noble deeds and kind words. A Sikh does not regard fasting, austerities, pilgrimages, alms-giving and penance as important things.

(Courtesy: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Sri Amritsar)

Over-growing Chaos in the Contemporary World: Need for an Ethical Revolution

Dr. Alok Kumar Gupta

World today is sitting on powder-keg. Globe has been reduced to a zone of chaos. Globe, as mirror of problems, ceases to be a cosmos. Problems are writ large as corruption, terrorism, cold war, hot war, indiscriminate killing, greed, global warming, environmental degradation, and climate change to name but a few. These manifold and multi-level challenges cannot be resolved through policy interventions as they are largely artificial and consequences of human fallibility. Geometrical growth in population and consequent depletion of resources have caused resource crunch, prompting men to interfere with nature that left nothing that we eat and use as natural. Global community is suffering on account of health hazards and nature's fury. Neither peace is sustainable in such a world; nor ethics. Root cause of all evils is depletion of human morals, values and ethics in the world. Therefore, need of the hour is to first arrest the sagging morals and then devise means and mechanism to make men moral. World today is in need of an 'Ethical Revolution'.

Causes of Ethical Crisis:

(1) Politicization and Criminalization of Religion: Religion came into existence for emancipation of mankind from all evils and to keep them on path of values and morality. All religious text emphasises on human values and good behaviour towards fellow-beings. Marsilio of Padua, the great philosopher in his book *Defensor Pacis* while trying to settle the conflict between the Church and State, advocated that religion and religious priests supplement the role of police, by preaching them good behaviour and values so that they do not resort to crime and ill activities. The same was later emphasised by Machiavelli even though he is considered to be a pragmatist thinker who advocated the means and mechanism of acquiring power and maintaining it by foul means.

Religion has always been inter-mixed with politics. The entire history of the evolution of Holy

Roman Empire is replete with the history of conflict between Church and State. The way spiritual authority endeavoured to overpower and subjugate the temporal authority. The entire Europe was drenched with the blood of serfs and peasants on the pretext of fighting a 'religious war' i.e. crusade. Voltaire rightly pointed out that Holy Roman Empire was neither Holy, nor Roman and nor even an empire; owing to its highly fragmented polity. Medieval Europe was perhaps the worst phase of power struggle between religion and politics. Undoubtedly, religion and religious authorities (spiritual saints) were responsible for the whole episode that was sheer an immoral act, and worst form of ethical crisis. Power hungry Pope and other ecclesiastical authorities revealed the worst of immorality and ethical crisis that they were suffering from in their assertion against the King and other political authorities.

Christianity's civilizing mission to the countries of Asia and Africa was again an unethical mechanism to plunder the wealth and exploit the innocent people of these under-developed continents. Things are not different even in the contemporary world. Religion in the contemporary world stands highly politicized and criminalised too. It is being used as an instrument by vested interests for their selfish ends. As advocated by Samuel P Huntington in his classic "Clash of Civilizations" the world is a witness to conflict between and among religious groups. Islam and Christianity are standing like gladiators in some part of the world. Hindu and Muslims are in the role of enemies in another part of the world. Such fault-lines along religious beliefs and practices are being exploited by religious and political leaders to acquire power and also to maintain power. As mentioned above, the medieval Europe was drenched with the blood of serfs and peasants on the name of religious crusade to protect the establishment of Holy Roman Empire. History seems to have been repeating itself in the contemporary world. International terrorist organizations like Islamic State and al-Qaeda are able



to sustain their activities on the basis of religious affiliations and faith. They have been interpreting their religious texts in a manner to suit their violence on the name of *Jeihad*. Therefore, religion as a tool of ethics-building and its sustenance stands degenerated leading to ethical crisis world over.

The cases of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church, allegations of sexual exploitation on Hindu saints, discovery of the den of saints and sheers as fortified with arms and ammunitions, and use of religious places for secret anti-state and anti-social activities, in recent history speaks volume about the degradation of ethics and sexual morality within the clans of religious and spiritual leaders. This is indeed an ethical crisis as to the spiritual leaders who were supposed to preach morals and ethics to their followers have been found implicated themselves in worst form of crimes.

(2)Growing Population:

Growing population is another major cause of all evils that the globe is a witness to. The ever-rising population has created tremendous pressure on resources on planet earth. According to a World Bank report the population on earth has reached to three and a half times more than the available resources on earth can sustain. Therefore, there is scramble for resources which has given rise to several kinds of conflicts among the mankind on earth. Politics of oil and gas widely prevalent all over the world is one such conflict that has engulfed the whole world and has been causing havoc to innocent life and people. Energy and other resources have become more precious than life. Nation-states have started fighting over their sovereignty on sea and Oceans as they have understood that it is a rich source of food and many other resources. Rising population has precipitated indiscriminate use of environment leading to its degradation with consequences like climate change and global warming. Accordingly, unregulated rise in population has transformed men into 'Hobbesian men' in the 'state of nature' who are solitary, nasty, selfish, and brutish. What exists on earth today is like Hobbesian 'state of nature' where life of man is short and the rule that exists is 'kill whom you can and take what you can'. Population growth thus has made man increasingly immoral accelerating an ethical crisis on earth.

(3)Growing Consumerism:

The advent of LPG (Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization) has ushered men into an era of ever-growing consumerism. Almost everything is being governed by market. The human relationship has been reduced to the relationship of a buyer-seller relation. Market functions on just one principal i.e. profit maximization. Service to society and nation is the immediate casualty. Business-houses in their urge of profit-maximization have become increasingly greedy. The economic crisis that ensued in USA and engulfed most parts of Europe and other countries of the world was the direct consequence of greediness of the businessmen and industry. Market lacks ethics and business world is in the midst of an ethical crisis that has made the life of individual a hell. Consumerism has reduced even sectors like health and education into a business activity where students and patients are mere consumers and are treated in accordance with the rules of the business: profit and exploitation. Consumerism is a widely rampant phenomenon in the world today that has led to severe ethical crisis.

It was the culture of greed that was allowed to subvert and undermine the financial institutions, at the management level, which went on to give a lethal set of perverse incentives geared towards maximization of shareholder's values on a short-term basis. On the name of financial innovation the business professionals started exploiting the loopholes and it became the order of the day. The regulatory bodies functioned in connivance with the businessmen and this arbitrage increasingly trumped socially useful purposes. Regulatory bodies are men from planet earth only, hence it is hard to find whether they exist for regulating the interest of common people and investor against the business houses, or it exists for facilitating the business houses at the cost of common man's interest. Finance and politics, to put it precisely the nexus between the profit and power, led the countries to the brink of collapse and consequent loss of economic autonomy, as the intervention of external agencies, including the IMF became imminent. However, the failures of economics, of regulation and standards of corporate governance, are essentially secondary causes of the crisis. The root cause lay in a failure of ethics, and not just business ethics, but the most basic human sense of ethics.

(4) Growing Materialism:



With the advent of science and technology the world has become increasingly materialistic. Nearly one per cent of the entire population on earth has grabbed above 90 per cent of the total wealth of the world. All this could be made possible by sheer exploitation of the rest of the 99 per cent of the population. The ever-growing accumulation of wealth speaks volume about the growing materialism in the world. Rich as well as the middle class have largely become comfort-loving beings who are creating all the comforts of their life all for their own benefit by exploiting the rest. They have lost all ethics and have perpetuated an ethical crisis on the globe. When the common masses are reeling under drought, crop loss, poverty, hunger, and unemployment the rich, the business people, the political leaders are celebrating functions with much fan fair and extravagance. There goes the famous maxim that there are people in the world who run for miles together to eke out square meal a day and on the other hand there are people who run miles to digest food and get rid of their protruding belly. It is indeed an ethical issue that there are people who are dying of hunger on the one hand; whereas on the other, there are people who are dying of overeating. This is all because of inequitable distribution of wealth and resources on the earth. Ill and imbalanced distribution of resources is the direct consequence of growing materialism in the world. We have become so materialistic that we have been reduced to diehard selfish individuals. Therefore, growing materialism in the world is another major cause of ethical crisis on the globe.

5. Technological Revolution:

Ever since industrial revolution took place the world has progressed with revolution in the field of technology. Each technological innovation further smoothened the life of men and reduced the distance and other modes of communication between men and men. Latest being the revolution in the field of telecommunication. This led to innovation of internet and ever-growing expansion of the virtual world. Collectively addressed as cyber world, has further contributed towards the ethical crisis. Today all information good or bad is available at the click of a mouse. Software professionals who were responsible for growth of the cyber world, are also responsible for the cyber-crime. The newly created virtual world has given rise to 'politics of bandwidth', 'cyber

terrorism', and consumerism. It could facilitate communication across the world but also made easier the perpetuation of crimes across border. Cyber world on the one hand has helped mankind in myriad of ways, on the other hand have made them increasingly vulnerable to cheating and fraud. It has contributed towards corrupting the human morals that too at an early age when the young mind are not even mature.

Therefore, growth of technology which facilitated mankind in different ways also brought many kinds of ill impact on human society and ethical issues with itself. However, it is not the technology that should be blamed; because God gave us iron and other metals to build house and facilitate ourselves smooth and secured life; we created guns and armaments with the same iron and metal, to kill human being and humanity. Therefore, fault lies with the human race itself, and at the root of all these faults are the downswing of ethics and morality.

Instrumentalities of Ethical Revolution:

Therefore, one need to go by the textbook suggestions of Karl Marx that we have enough interpreted the world, now the time is to change it. Therefore, the deliberations above are just a bird eye view of the ethical crisis that the contemporary world is a witness to. Millions of pages could be produced towards explaining the crisis and its causes; but it is not going to lead us anywhere. Therefore, the need of the hour is to arrest the crisis and put it on the reverse track. This is not an easy task, as since the pre-Socratic days the philosophers have been philosophising about an Ideal State where individual beings are moral beings and what prevails is common good of all. However, the world rather than improving and man becoming moral, has increasingly deteriorated in all walks of life and men have gone on to become increasingly immoral. It is ironical that almost all era of human so-called economic progress has produced corresponding philosophers who defined and re-defined ethics and morality and preached about the same. Yet the changes on the ground were always antithetical to what they preached. From Socrates to Plato to Immanuel Kant and Hegel, each of the philosophers deliberated at length for the need of an ideal state where men are able to exercise and enjoy their liberty in best of the ways. However, with each successive generation the ethics have gone down and are on the



downward swing for ever. Need of the hour is to devise means and mechanism to arrest it and reverse it. Indeed, it is not an easy task in this given world of complexity, vastness and over-populated.

(1) Critical Reform in Social Justice: Social Revolution

World has largely been a witness to political revolution owing to social problems. Such revolutions in the past were either crushed with high hands or were successful in change of political regime, or even led to political reform. All such political reforms and change failed to mitigate the causes for which it was organised. Sooner or later the same social problem continued to exist and in certain cases with further escalation of the existing problem. Accordingly, there is first the need for a social revolution. Social equity demands that it is society itself that shall have to take the cudgels into its own hands and bring changes. It means that the change must start from the bottom on a revolutionary scale. If it travels up it shall purify and rectify the top. We cannot keep waiting for the top to do something good or worthwhile in the interests of social good and justice. One can only imagine the kind of protest that are organized for selfish interest of communities based on ethnicity, caste and religion; can do wonder if they are organized for purifying the society and for prevalence of honesty and integrity. Therefore, the critical reform must begin at the bottom of the society by organic intellectuals of different communities.

(2) Critical Political Reform:

Critical political reform would also be possible only from the bottom of the society. It is because the political leaders of different hues and belonging to different political parties are birds of the same feather flocking together. Therefore, it would be foolishness to accept anything worthwhile from our political leaders. They shall keep fooling the common man to serve their vested interests. These political elites fight their power battle on the turf of common men, who are never the beneficiaries in any manner. Therefore, political reform must not mean a reform in the form of government or electoral reform. This would not help as the political leaders across the parties will try by all means to keep the things in their own favour. Therefore, it is common man who shall have to take the onus of initiating the political reform by rejecting

their representatives who are motivated for power and electing those who are motivated for service. This could be made possible only when the common man raises itself above caste, creed, ethnicity, religion and all other such parochial outlooks and considerations. Here again the role shall be constructively played by the organic intellectuals as they alone can discipline their brethren and control them to behave, driven not by their own vested interests but by common interests of all.

(3) Critical Economic Reform:

The present mode of economy is set on the profit motive and commodification of everything. There is close nexus between economic and political power. One thrives on the other. One can only imagine that we are living in a country where farmers are committing suicide for paltry sum of money on the one hand, are there are people who are running away with thousands of crores of rupees to foreign lands to excuse themselves from the clutches of law. People are dying of hunger as they stands pauperised because of the pitfalls of the capitalist system of growth and development. Crony capitalism is the most glaring example of this nexus. Political parties are spending more than Rs. 500 crores on image-building of their Prime Ministerial candidates and are spending over Rs. 30000 crores to 35000 crores on elections to the national Assembly. It is quite obvious that such a vast amount of money could be made available only by business and industrial houses. Therefore, the immediate need is to break this nexus. So long the nexus exists, expecting that corruption of different sorts shall be mitigated is nothing but fooling ourselves. Therefore, it stands established beyond doubt that ethics does not mean anything for political leaders and business people. Their parasitic relations help each other to grow and keep their political and economic power intact.

Even the model of development that exists is "Development by the Way". What it means is that somewhere somebody is to be benefitted through developmental projects; that are why projects are conceived and initiated. Simple reason behind is that individual as a business house funded the election of the ruling party; and once in power the ruling party has to compensate the business house or the industrialist; that the projects of development are



prepared and awarded. Development thus happens is by the way and the common men are benefitted by the way. Therefore, there are unplanned developments that take place which are highly lopsided. Areas which are developed are, developed again and again and precious money of the exchequer is wasted and drained out, just to facilitate someone somewhere. What could be more unethical than this model of development? Reckless policy making and motivated implementation of the same is initiated by the untrained, uneducated, ill-motivated and unethical policy-makers. This model of economy could be rectified only when above-mentioned political reform is done and a social revolution takes place. Greed of political leaders and business people has led to deterioration of the very quality of globe and considerable destruction of planet earth. Mankind is now in the midst of fury of nature every now and then. Therefore, the prevailing model of development on account of connivance between politics and economy is grossly unethical and requires to be addressed at earliest.

(4) Sustainable Development:

Consumerism has abducted sustainability. Materialism has jeopardised the concept. Growing population has made the sustainable development almost unsustainable. Whole World is talking about 'sustainable development' but rather than development becoming sustainable it is turning increasingly exploitative of the nature. Therefore, to make the sustainable development meaningful first we need to control population growth world over. A sort of revolution is needed for that because earth has witnessed a 'population explosion' over the last few decades. This explosion requires be controlling and putting on downward track at a faster pace for at least next four to five decade. Sustainable development would be really sustainable only when growth of population is in consonance with it

(5) Critical Educational Reform:

Education is the positive instrument of engineering human nature and that would make man moral beings. Fact remains that education is happening around the world, yet the problems are aggravating rather than abating. Prevailing system of education has produced more and more of 'intellectual criminals' rather than 'intellectual assets'. These intellectual

criminals are more harmful to globe and its beings rather than criminals on the law-books who are out to kill others for their survival. A criminal may kill one, two or a hundred of people but intellectual criminal strikes at the very root of society. Therefore, intellectual criminals are the most dangerous of the species on earth.

Rampant problems are the product of a mental malady hence can be rectified only through a mental medicine, i.e. education. Education is happening as well as been increasing quantitatively all over the world. Everything is wrong with the prevailing system of education as it has been producing 'students and professionals' only as commodities for the fast globalizing markets, who are motivated for profit-maximization rather than service. Market always functions on the basis of 'cheating and unethical practices'. The rule of the market is the Hitler's oft quoted statement "If you repeat a lie hundred times it becomes truth". People also understand but they are not trained enough 'not to get swayed away by it'. They always analyse the advertisement and the market, yet they get influenced by it and support the market by purchasing the goods and services; the way they support and elect their political leaders in spite of knowing that the person that they are voting for is a criminal, corrupt and is good for nothing. Therefore, there is an imperative for a 'worldwide discourse on education' to decipher the right content and process of education that will produce moral individuals. An education system which will build and strengthen the ethical ethos of citizens in a country is first and foremost task before the society.

The ideal system of education apart from imparting knowledge, information and analytical ability must entail the following:

First and foremost objective of education must be to produce moral beings. Moral citizens will be both 'good men' as well as 'good citizens'. This could be made possible through inclusion of the spirit of total education as envisaged by Sri Aurobindo (philosopher saint), i.e. training of body, mind and soul together. Yoga both mental and physical; will be instrumental in this endeavour. Yoga must be made a mandatory part of curriculum and be administered



each morning to each individual alongside other knowledge.

Secondly, education must be state-sponsored. Entrusting education in private hands would lead to wrong experimentation and would create anti-social beings. State, governed by 'men of wisdom' alone can articulate the nature of man, needed for unity, integrity, peace and prosperity of the state. It can set standards for moral and ethical beings. Accordingly, from crafting to administering the curriculum; it must be into the hands of 'men of wisdom' the onus for which must lie on state.

Thirdly, the wholesale purpose of education should be to make justice prevail in society. The meaning and content of justice as defined by 'men of wisdom' should mean 'due performance of functions by every individual for which they have been trained'. Moral individuals will never try to interfere with the functions of others; as their motives will be service rather than profit and accumulation of wealth. Rulers must be trained into the art of governance; businessmen into the art of producing and distributing in a fair manner; teachers and other professionals into art of their profession in the spirit of service to society, rather than profiteering.

Last but not the least, the content and process of education should be such that it should identify the nature, capacity, and capability of each individual for which they are destined and accordingly trained. Businessmen ending up as rulers and teachers would be detrimental to objectives of education. Distribution of functions according to capacity of individual could be ensured only through moral education. 'Good men' as 'good citizen' would lead to justice and perfect society. A doctor must not be allowed to open his own clinic; a teacher must be prohibited from commencing a coaching institute and private tutoring; an engineer must not be allowed to go for his private consultancy if he is in government's service. This is essential to arrest the growing ethical crisis owing to degradation of 'service' into business and becoming a victim of profiteering. Hence global discourse on education must precede any other discourse like terrorism, globalization, environmental degradation, and climate change etc. This discourse is essential to

set the tone and tenor of process of education and its content in the country.

6. Critical Political Reform:

Political reform is not about changing one form of government into another; as it would not lead to a change of men in authority. Men by all means would remain same, and hence nothing would change qualitatively. What is needed is reform of political leaders. A Constitutional Amendment and amendment in the Representative of People's Act must be initiated through which the qualifications for people's representatives must change. Only those who are unmarried should be allowed to contest elections. With huge populations across countries in the world and in our own country there is no dearth of such people. The search for such leaders must start early and at the age of 18 years when they pass their class twelfth, should be sent to 'School of Governance' where they must be trained into art of government, governance, and law and policy-making for at least five years. Only the fully trained and competent professionals from such institutions be allowed to contest elections.

Secondly, those who are admitted to such institutions for training in the art of governance and leadership must be put on oath that they shall not have any private property of their own and that they shall be prohibited from entering into the institution of marriage. This may sound difficult at the initial stage but history is replete with such examples where such people arose on political forum and rendered their services to the nation. Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Abdul Kalam Azad are to name but a few. Therefore, this is not a herculean task to find such people. I can assure that once initiated there would be flood of such characters that are ready to sacrifice their property and family for the larger and common good of their country-men. There is no doubt that world is full of unethical people as we see all around; but this is also true that there are plenty of people who are ethical and moral individuals and ready to serve the country and their country-men. It is because of the presence of such people that our society is still holding on amidst a severe ethical crisis. There is no dearth of such nationalists of pure variety in the country. Institution of family and private property are the greatest competitor of loyalty to state and service to state; hence it must be abolished for rulers. All their need



shall be taken care by the state coffers, as it is happening even today. It is under such circumstances that one can envisage an ethical revolution in his or her country.

Conclusion and Suggestions:

Ethics has been defined variably by different scholars and philosophers. However, the common understanding about the same is that it is a set of principles of right conduct. It could also be a theory or a system of moral values. It also means the study of the general nature of morals and of the specific moral choices to be made by a person. It could also be understood as the rules or standards governing the conduct of a person or the members of a profession. World has enough of Axiology (the branch of philosophy dealing with values, aesthetics, or religion). World also has produced enough of Casuists (a person who studies and resolves questions of right and wrong of conduct). In spite of all Axiology and Casuists present and saints and preachers, the world is at the cusp of a severe ethical crisis and is in great need of an ethical revolution. Situations have gone alarming where the very planet earth on which we all reside is all set on a path of destruction; because of human folly.

Rousseau was right when he advocated that 'the natural man' has degenerated into a 'denatured man'. Rousseau found that there are two instincts which must be supposed to constitute our original nature. One of them is self-love or the instinct of self-preservation. "His first law is to attend to his own preservation; his first cares are those which he owes to himself." If men were not endowed with this instinct by nature, they would have perished at the very start. It must be regarded as good because it enables us to preserve ourselves. The second is sympathy or the gregarious instinct, or the instinct of mutual aid. Had we not been equipped by nature with this instinct, we would have found the struggle for existence too stiff and perished in it. What mitigates the rigors of the struggle for existence is the spirit of mutual help. Family rests upon this instinct. This too must be judged to be good, because it is beneficial in its operations. Since these two instincts have been shown to be good, man must be assumed to be good by nature and not evil.

Rousseau further writes that these two primordial impulses, self-preservation and sympathy, are bound to come into clash sometimes. Self-love would impel a mother to satisfy her hunger, but sympathy for her child would dictate that she give the food to the latter. In this way, conflict between the two sentiments—to do what is necessary for one's preservation and to help others—creates a problem for everyone. Since both of them cannot be satisfied, the individual is compelled to effect a compromise between them. Out of such continual compromises is born a new sentiment which is known as *conscience*. This sentiment cannot be a product of reason, for reason has not yet made its appearance; it cannot also be a product of education, for education presupposes admonitions about right and wrong which have not yet come into existence. Conscience is older than reason and older than education; it is a gift of nature.

Conscience arises to solve the conflicts between the two primordial instincts of man. It proves sufficient for this task so long as conditions of life remain simple. As soon as life grows complex, its inadequacy for the purpose becomes manifest. It turns out to be insufficient because of its blindness, because of its inability to distinguish between right and wrong. After all it is a sentiment; its role in life is to impel the individual to love the right and hate the wrong. It does not teach him what is right; it can only move him to do the right when he comes to know it from some other source. In short, it is moral force and not a moral guide. For guidance it has to depend upon another faculty which develops in man.

This is reason. Reason teaches an individual what he should do but cannot make him do it. It is conscience alone that impels him towards the right. In other words: reason determines the end for us; it tells us what is right and what is wrong. On the basis of this knowledge supplied by reason conscience becomes the architect of moral life. It is thus clear that for Rousseau both reason and conscience work together in enabling an individual to establish harmony between self-love and sympathy and develop other sentiments. The clause "Sentiment urges reason to the right path" means only this that reason by itself cannot make an individual follow the right path indicated by it; for this the impelling force of



conscience is needed. A problem, which is bound to crop up, is that if mankind is good by nature and gifted with sentiments of love and sympathy then what made him bad? His answer was—Pride—that if we can give up pride we can cease from all comparison with other men and simply go about our destiny. Rousseau says that man abandons the path to the perfection of his nature and goes astray when he allows self-love to be transformed into pride. The natural instinct of self-preservation leads an individual to seek only those things, which satisfy his real needs; they are few and easily met. But if he goes beyond them and seeks to have more than what is necessary or more than what his neighbours have got, he allows self-love to degenerate into pride and takes a step which ultimately leads him away from the life which alone would have been in complete accord with his nature. When pride is able to seduce reason, our elemental instincts become distorted, and we begin to develop along lines, which are contrary to our nature. The art and culture, which is built up under the sway of pride, has denatured the man. Therefore, a natural man for Rousseau was an individual who so far is able to keep his elemental instincts as intact in the course of his development, he remains natural. He becomes unnatural or denatured when these instincts are distorted or suppressed. The original man or the 'natural man' is nothing but pure instinct free from all artificialities and at liberty to do anything. The most truly natural man would be one who had perfected his nature. Under such circumstances Rousseau gave the clarion call 'Back to Nature'. He advocated. 'If we want to save ourselves, if we wish to reach the perfection of which our nature is capable and which

can be regarded as our natural destiny, we must renounce pride and be content only with self-love and sympathy, which are natural to us. We must rescue reason from the sway of pride, if it is to guide and instruct conscience in its task of establishing harmony between self-love and sympathy.' This is the meaning of Rousseau when he asks us to *return to nature*.

Rousseau becomes relevant today in many ways and his philosophy could be tailored and adopted to our need. Abolition of private property and family as suggested above for the rulers is because of given frailty of human nature. Rousseau later suggests ways and means as to how a denatured man could be transformed into a natural man. He asked for regulation of private property as he held this institution of unregulated private property as the serpent in society and the root cause of all evils. He wrote a treatise on education in his *Emile* where he made suggestions how human nature could be engineered to make him a natural man. He was greatly guided by Plato in his endeavour as he borrowed many of the premises from Plato's *Republic* to which he understood as one of the finest treatise on education that ever was written. Therefore, Rousseau and Plato are far more relevant today than they were during their era. The key to "Ethical Revolution" lies in education which is the last priority for most governments of the world today. The prevailing content and process of education is wrong. Therefore, we must endeavour to initiate a revolutionary discourse on education to trigger an ethical revolution to save mankind and planet earth.

Guru Nanak Quotes

- Burn worldly love, rub the ashes and make ink of it, make the heart the pen, the intellect the writer, write that which has no end or limit.
- Death would not be called bad, O people, if one knew how to truly die.
- I am neither a child, a young man, nor an ancient; nor am I of any caste.
- Even Kings and emperors with heaps of wealth and vast dominion cannot compare with an ant filled with the love of God.
- Those who have loved are those that have found God.
- I am neither male nor female, nor am I sexless. I am the Peaceful One, whose form is self-effulgent, powerful radiance.
- Dwell in peace in the home of your own being, and the Messenger of Death will not be able to touch you.
- Owing to ignorance of the rope the rope appears to be a snake; owing to ignorance of the Self the transient state arises of the individualized, limited, phenomenal aspect of the Self.
- There is but One God. His name is Truth. He is the Creator. He fears none, he is without hate. He never dies. He is beyond the cycle of births and death. He is self illuminated. He is realized by the kindness of the True Guru. He was True in the beginning. He was True when the ages commenced and has ever been True. He is also True now.
- Whatever kind of seed is sown in a field, prepared in due season; a plant of that same kind, marked with the peculiar qualities of the seed, springs up in it.
- There is but one God. True is His Name, creative His personality and immortal His form. He is without fear sans enmity, unborn and self-illuminated. By the Guru's grace He is obtained.
- Nanak, the whole world is in distress. He, who believes in the Name, becomes victorious.

Contemporary Islamic Ethics and Ideology of Terrorism

Dr. Arunoday Bajpai

The term 'ethics' is derived from the ancient Greek word '*ethikos*', which is derived from '*ethos*' meaning custom or habit. As such ethics has two meanings. First, it refers to a set of moral principles which guide the human conduct and behaviour in different situations. These principles determine the right and wrong of human conduct. Second, ethics is a branch of philosophy, which is concerned with the systematic study of moral principles. The ethics as a code of conduct for various human activities and vocations, change, evolve and adjust with changing conditions. The Greek thinkers had sanctioned slavery, which continued for many centuries, however, it is unthinkable in the contemporary world. As new fields of human activities emerge, which require distinctive management and regulations, the new codes of ethics also evolved. Thus, now we have medical ethics, environmental ethics or business ethics and so on.

The association of ethics with religions has been a common pattern in all religions of world. Religious codes have prescribed norms and ethics for the betterment of human beings, survival of social order and its growth and development. In order to adjust religious ethics with changing conditions, secularization of religious ethics has been a common pattern in many religions like Christianity, Hinduism, Shintoism and others. This has facilitated not only the adjustment of religious ethics to new conditions, but also has promoted the growth of modern secular ethics like justice, rule of law, human rights and so on. For example, renaissance in Europe led to secularization of Christianity and subsequently the evolution of secular ethics, which have been adopted by many societies in modern times. This process is still going on as globalization tends to facilitate not only interdependence among nations, people and societies, but also emergence of certain common norms of conduct, known as global ethics. Yet the experience of secularization has not been uniform for all religious ethics. Islamic ethics appear least affected by the process of secularization, as its pure

and classical framework still prevails in Muslim societies and has become a benchmark for their polity and social relations. This has become controversial in view of rise of ideology of Islamic terrorism and violence in its various avatars, which now afflicts not only the West Asia but also many parts of the world. It is alleged that the radical Islamist groups, seeking justification from the Islamic ethics, are threat to democratic order in the world. The radical Islam refers to 'the politico-religious pursuit of establishing - if necessary by extreme means - a society which reflects the perceived values from the original sources of Islam as purely as possible' (Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations, Netherlands: retrieved 2016). Thus, the complex relationship between contemporary Islamic ethics and the ideology of terrorism needs deeper understanding.

There are two perspectives for analyzing relationship between Islamic ethics and the ideology of terrorism. First viewpoint claims that the Islamic terrorism is a fanatical perversion of Islam which deviates from its true teachings. The original contents of Islamic ethics have been perverted due to various internal and external factors and the perverted Islamic ethics is crystallized as the ideology of modern terrorism. They call for a Western-style modernization of the Muslim world to tame the radical Islam. The second perspective claims that the nature of terrorist threat is very much Islamic and it is not so much deviation from Islamic tradition but an appeal to it. Al Qaeda's ideology draws on two traditions to legitimize itself: one classical, the other modern. The argument goes that historically and theologically Islam has not been a religion of peace as it sanctioned jihad and warfare against unbelievers. From its very inception, Islam formed a unitary state bent on military conquest. This classical tradition was revived and re-activated in the name of maintaining 'purity' of Islamic tradition as ordained by Prophet Mohammad. Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab in 1744, called for a return to a pure and unadulterated form of Islam closer to the



ideals of the Prophet. The Indian Muslim scholar, Abu Ala Maududi (1903-1979) condemned the degraded nature of all contemporary Muslim communities. Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), the chief ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood fused the history of Mohammed's travails with a revolutionary vanguard-type ideology supporting unlimited warfare. Thus, under this argument the revival of classical tradition, rather than deviation from it, is the ideological basis of contemporary Islamic terrorism (Blond: 2005).

Both these perspectives are valid to some extent, yet they are contradictory. Their contradiction is apparent, because both select a different ethical content of classical Islam to analyze its contemporary nature and relate the same to the ideology of Islamic terrorism.

The genesis of both of these perspectives lies in the ethos and history of classical Islam. Similar ethos of peace and struggle to preserve religious domain are found in other religions. But why it is Islamic ethics which has come now to sustain the ideology of terrorism. In other words, there are two fundamental questions: whether there are specific circumstances which perverted the Islamic ethics in the present form or whether there is something unique to Islam itself, which, by nature, is bound to lead to the ideology of terrorism. The first perspective gives affirmative answer to the first question and the second perspective gives affirmative answer to the second question. Both these perspectives need deeper analysis at two levels: contents of Islamic ethics; and comparison to other religious ethics, to derive home the point that both these perspectives are partially correct but not contradictory and yet not adequate to understand the relationship between contemporary Islamic ethics and the ideology of terrorism. Understanding of this relationship is the main theme of this paper.

Islam originated in the heart of the Middle East (Mecca in Saudi Arabia) in early 7th century and subsequently spread to rest of the Arabian Peninsula and West Asia, Europe, Central Asia, South Asia, South-East Asia and Africa. Traders, Political rulers and missionaries played leading role in the expansion of Islam. At present, Muslims constitute 23 percent of the total world population. It is the second largest religion after Christianity. Islam is a

monotheistic and Abrahamic religion, based on the teachings of Qur'an, which were revealed to Prophet Muhammad by God or Allah through archangel Gabriel from 610 till the death of Muhammad in 632. Islam, literally meaning surrendering to God or peace, accepts Allah as a source of all creations and does not admit any mediator to approach him. Allah is supreme and absolute and cannot be visualized by human beings. Surrendering to his authority is the purpose of life of human beings. Muhammad's preaching of monotheism and racial equality, was not appreciated by the elites of Mecca, who forced Muhammad to flee to Medina in 622 along with his relatives and followers. It was in Medina that Muhammad established his political authority on Islamic principles and proclaimed the first Islamic political document called the Constitution of Medina. This was also for the first time that The Islamic principles became the basis of political and economic order, a tradition which continues even today. Here also Muhammad has to fight many battles to save his state, but finally he succeeded in uniting Arab tribes in to a single religious polity.

Muhammad's death in June 632 led to the origin of post of Caliph, the religious and political head of all Muslims. Abu Bakr, a close aid of Muhammad became the first Caliph. This tradition continued till the abolition of the post of Caliph following the defeat of Ottoman Empire in the First World War in 1918. It should be noted that Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the chief of ISIS, has tried to revive this position as he has claimed himself to be the Caliph of Islamic State in 2014 in the same tradition. The system of Caliph also led to the differences within the community and gave rise to two dominant Muslim sects Shiite and Sunni. Shiites do not believe in the rule of first three Caliphs, whereas Sunnis recognize all Caliphs succeeding Prophet Muhammad. The crux of difference is that the Shiites claim that the Caliph should be nominated by Prophet or belong to his family and should have pious virtues, whereas Sunnis claim the Caliph may be elected by people and may not have pious virtues. That is why Shiites does not recognize first three Caliphs succeeding Prophet, as they were not nominated by Prophet, nor were linked to his family lineage. These differences were perpetuated and solidified in other arenas. Among all Muslims, Sunnis constitute 85 percent, whereas Shiites are in minority



as they constitute nearly 15 percent of all Muslims. However, in certain countries like Iran, Iraq, Azerbaijan and Bahrain, Shiites are the majority community. Today, Shiites under the leadership of Iran are locked in political rivalry with Sunnis led by Saudi Arabia for the regional hegemony in the Middle East. Shiite-Sunni fault line has both positive and negative impact on the growth of terrorism in West Asia. Negative impact is seen in the sense that both try to limit the expansion of each other and positive impact is seen in the sense that both try to locate new areas and strategies of influence to outwit each other. Shiite-Sunni fault line is likely to have a focal point in future also in any ideological and political debate on the Middle East extremism.

Islamic Ethics: In spite of the fact that there is one divinely revealed and mandated Islam, the precise delineation of Islamic ethics poses some difficulty as there are in existence many Muslim interpretations of Islam. Besides Shiite-Sunni differences, there are various schools of theology, law, mystical traditions including Sufi orders and brotherhoods, spread over vast area from North Africa to South-East Asia and Europe and America, which offer diverse codes of Islamic ethics. The Quran states that Islam is the universal religion and is a mercy to all creatures. Islam is a religion of peace. As a universal faith, that has been subject to diverse interpretations. Yet there are some fundamental ethical principles of Islam, which are accepted by mainstream Muslim communities. Islam offers a living demonstration of qualities to which all human beings can relate: compassion, mercy, tolerance, and love. (Praja: 2003). The Hadith of Gabriel mentions the five pillars of Islam: testimony or *Shahadah* (Declaration that there is one god and Prophet is the messenger of that God); Prayer five times a day or *Salat*; Alms-giving to poor or *Zakat*; Fasting during *Ramadan* or *Sawm*; Pilgrimage to Mecca or *Hajj*. All believers are expected to follow these actions. These actions are designed to improve and protect human ethics: prayer refrains one from indecency and evil; fasting teaches Muslims how to live with ethical principles and values; *Zakat* is taken from the rich to be given to the poor in order to sanctify the former and clean them from their sins; the pilgrimage (*Hajj*) trains Muslims to develop characteristics like patience, endurance, and altruism and so on. (Al-Aidaros et al: 2013)

The nearest equivalent for Ethics in Arabic is the notion of *akhlaq* meaning principles of good conduct. It is based on the teachings of *Qu'ran* and the norms contained in *Sunnah* and *Hadiths*. *Sunnah* are the codes of normative principle of behaviour espoused by Prophet during his life time and *Hadiths* are the codification of actual application of those norms by Prophet in practical conditions. Both Shiites and Sunnis accept the authority of *Qu'ran*, *Sunnah* and *Hadiths*. Another Arabic word which is employed interchangeably to *akhlaq* is *adab*, which means manner, attitude, or behavior. However, there is a distinction between the two notions. While, *akhlaq* is concerned with the theoretical explanation of good human conducts, the *adab* is concerned about the practical actions and manners of good and bad conduct. Also, *akhlaq* is used in two contexts: as a science of right and wrong of human conduct; and as code of good character. In the latter sense, it prescribes to refrain from immoral conducts such as cheating, corruption, discrimination, lying, stealing, murder, assault, slander, rape, fraud, and etc., and enjoins virtues of honesty, compassion, sincerity and loyalty. Hashi (2011) identifies following features of Islamic ethics:

1. Like John Locke and Mahatma Gandhi, Islam also holds that human beings are born with good character (*fitrah*) that disdains from immorality and instills morality. Hence primordial human nature is always good. According to Prophet those actions are evils and bad with which original human nature does not feel comfortable.
2. Islam equates ethics with religion and religion with original human nature. Thus morality is the sign of good religious faith in Islam and vice-versa.
3. In the account of *Qu'ran*, the human character displays two set of attributes: positive and negative. While positive attribute is given by Allah as original nature, the negative attributes are acquired by human beings in their subsequent ages of life.
4. In Islamic ethics, *akhlaq* is not just a personal affair but also a matter of social affairs. It means it guides people not only in improving their personal character but also in their relations with other people. Al-Aidaros (2013) also finds that comprehensiveness is the main feature of Islamic ethic. Islam is very clear in everything related to this world. Islam provides guidance for Muslims in every situation. The



message of Islam extends across time and covers all matters of this world and the hereafter. Islamic ethic is also universal code of conduct, which teaches universal justice and human equality. Due to its universality, it applies to all people in all times, irrespective of their caste and creed. In brief, the Islamic morality covers all aspects of human life of all people in all times. Thus, moral relativism has no scope in Islamic ethics.

5. Islamic ethics is transcendental, because determination of good and bad conduct is the function of *Allah*, who is the source of all morality. This means legislation of ethical code should not be based on utilitarian criterion or human reason but on divine scriptures. This also denotes that any deviation from ethics is defiance of *Allah*.

6. Human conducts are judged to be ethical or otherwise on the basis of two criteria: They are done with good intention and they are in tune with divine texts (*Shariah*). This creates serious problems about relationship between ends and means as other religious ethics emphasize on the sanctity of both.

7. Islamic ethics grant all people the right to enjoy their natural rights like liberty and freedom, but that should not be at the cost of accountability and justice. This limits the scope of individualism and individual freedom. As individual interest and personal satisfaction are very much related to the public welfare and collective interest, egoism has no place in the Islamic moral system. The entire human race is considered as one entity; therefore, the interest of each and every one of this entity matters. Thus, nudism or homosexuality may be individual preferences, but they are prohibited in Islam because they go against public morality or decency.

8. Islamic ethics is based on the principles and norms not on people's sanctions. A demand of majority may be wrong, if it goes against the norms. Democratic and utilitarian principles cannot be applied to Islamic ethics. The collective interests are also based on norms not on utilitarian hedonism. Even if majority supports homosexuality, it is immoral in Islam. This denotes the absoluteness and finality of Islamic ethics.

The above points throw light on the nature of Islamic ethics. Besides, Chapter 17 of the *Qu'ran* prescribes a practical code of conduct to human beings: worshiping only to God; being kind, humble and honourable; moderate in expenditure; ban on mercy killing due to starvation; ban on killing except

for just cause; do not commit adultery; take care of orphaned children; keeping promises; being honest and fair in interactions; and humility in claims and beliefs (Nigosian: 2004). These norms are like the Golden Rules, which were accepted by the Parliament of World Religions including Islam in 1993 under the *Declaration Toward a Global Ethics*.

Jihad: *Jihad* is a most controversial and misunderstood concept in Islamic ethics. This is cited as the link between mainstream Islam and ideology of violent terrorism. The critics *Jihad* argue that Islam and Muslims are openly hostile and intolerant towards other communities. They refer to the Qur'anic verses that exhort the believers to fight the infidels, they point to the battles of early Islam and the eventual confrontation between the Crusaders and the Saracens or Moors, and now, the contemporary stereotype of the Arab terrorism. Islam is still imagined as threatening, fanatical, violent and alien by world's media (Kabbani: 2016). *Jihad* is a prescribed method to preserve the Islamic ethics. It is also called as the sixth pillar of Islam. The most problematic aspect of *jihad* is its apparent association with violence for religious purpose.

Jihad is Arabic word which means striving, struggling, or persevering. It refers to the religious duty of Muslims to maintain the religion. A person engaged in *jihad* is called *mujahid*. The *mujahideen* is the group of *mujahids*. In Quran, *jihad* is cited many times in the sense of striving to serve the purposes of God on this earth. *Jihad* works at two levels: at personal level meaning struggle to purify one's souls; and at social level to struggle to preserve Islamic faith as ordained by Allah. The former is referred to as '*greater jihad*', whereas latter is called as '*lesser jihad*'. On the basis of scholarly study of the history and practice of *Jihad*, it emerges that *Jihad* is a means to protect the purity of human soul as well as Islamic faith. Violence is not the first choice but the last resort under the practice of *jihad*. Violence is permitted under certain conditions only after all peaceful legal, economic and political means are exhausted. We can compare *jihad* with the measures adopted by the United Nations Security to maintain international peace and security. The Security Council goes for the use of force only when other peaceful means for maintaining security are exhausted. Ibn Rushd, in his



Muqaddimaat, divides *Jihad* into four kinds: *Jihad* by the heart; *Jihad* by the tongue; *Jihad* by the hand and *Jihad* by the sword. Thus armed struggle or holy war should not be equated with *Jihad*, but it is just one aspect of *jihad*.

Jihad as armed struggle is to be declared only by a proper authority (Imam) in the collective interest of the community and the principles of 'just war' have to be followed. Also, Warfare in the name of God is not unique to Islam. Other faiths throughout the world have waged wars with religious justifications (Kabbani: 2016). The use of violence by terrorists does not come under the category of jihad sanctioned by Islam. In fact, the concept of jihad has been hijacked by many political and religious groups over the ages in a bid to justify violence.

After discussion on the nature and contents of Islamic ethics, a comparative analysis of Islamic ethics is required to identify its unique elements, which support ideology of terrorism in the present context. First, the Islamic ethics as contained in *Qu'ran* and *Sunnah* were much advanced in comparison to ethical practices of pre-Islamic Arab tribes. Thus, Islamic ethics introduced monotheism in place of polytheism, human equality and sense community (*Ummah*) in face of fighting tribal clans; humility and piety in place of tribal egoism and manliness, moral accountability in place of heedlessness and so on (John Kelsay: 1992). In fact, the fundamental purpose of coming of Prophet was to establish moral accountability in place of the prevailing heedlessness in the pre-Islamic Arab society.

Second, if we compare Islamic ethics with the ethics of other religions in 7th century, its norms and principles may not be considered inferior to Christianity or other religions of that period. In fact, during the golden age (800-1100AD) of Islamic culture, Muslim enjoyed general standards of living equal to preceding Graeco-Roman civilization and European were living in the semi-barbarous squalor and restricted regime of feudalism. The irony of the history is that at the very moment when Europe, prodded by contact with Islamic culture in Sicily and Spain and by the crusaders, began to recover from its prolonged dark ages, Islam entered declined towards obscurantism from which it has helped to recue Europe (Praja: 2003). The renaissance in

Europe led to the separation of religion from political and social life and laid down the ground for the emergence of secular ethical norms like democracy, justice, liberty etc, which were based on human reason rather than on religious scriptures. Thus, Christianity and its religious code became confined to personal domain of human life. This secularization process has been experienced by all religions to adjust their ethics with changing circumstances.

This secularization process has not only been ineffective in Islam over the years, but has taken reverse course on many occasions. There have been may attempts in modern times to renew Islamic ethics to changing times, but finally they have resulted in revival of classical Islamic ethics. From Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1917-1898) to Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897), from Muhammad Abdurrahman (1849-1905) and Rashid Rida (1865-1935) to Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) from Ruh Allah Khomeini (1920-1989) to Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah, the motif of renewal, based on the sources of Islam is common. For all these interpreters, contemporary Muslim finds in a similar situation to that of the Prophet, where heedlessness abounds and they need reminding of similar solutions as found in classical Islamic ethics (John Kelsay: 1992). Thus, secularization process is reversed as the prevailing socio-political and economic conditions are to be changed as per the norms of classical Islamic ethics rather than the vice versa. Thus, it is not surprising that Islamic revolution rather than democratic revolution takes place in Iran in 1979; Arab Spring results in Islamic revivalism, fatwas are issued to enforce Sharia code from time to time, Turkish President declares Muslim women to produce three children and keep away from contraceptives in 2016, or a Muslim youth kills 50 people in a homosexual night club in America in June, 2016. There are ten Muslim countries where homosexuality may be punished by death. These countries are: Yemen, Iran, Mauritania, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, United Arab Emirates, and Iraq (notwithstanding its new, U.S.-supported constitution). Both Shiite and Sunni Scholars alike subscribe that homosexuality is banned and punishable by death in *Qu'ran* and *Sharia* (McCarthy: 2016).

The process of globalization and the use of modern means of communications, in place of tempering, have helped in the revival of classical



Islamic ethics. With ethics of globalization, the globalization of Islamic ethics is also taking place (Ignatieff: 2013). This revivalism and continuation of classical Islamic ethics discounts the view that the ideology of terrorism is the result of perversion of Islamic ethics. However, the prevailing purity of Islamic ethics rather than its perversion is problematic. There is nothing unique in the Islamic ethics per se, which directly promotes terrorism. But the global political, economic, and social conditions in the non-Muslim world are so much changed that the purity of Islamic ethics finds itself at odds with them. Since the source of most of the much of change, modernization and advancement have been the Western countries, the classical Islamic ethics experiences great dissonance with the Western culture and civilization. It has taken the form of crisis in Muslim world to save the Islamic ethics from the undesirable Western influence. This explains the hatred and ill will towards the West harbored by extremist and conservative sections of Muslim society. Present-day radical-Islamic Puritanism is in principle far more intolerant than traditional political Islam and has a much stronger anti-Western orientation. Whereas adherents of traditional political Islam see it as a challenge to seek alternatives to the Western political, legal and economic system, radical Islamic puritans see the West as a destructive enemy of Islam that is to be combated with all possible means. On the other hand, the Western world views radical Islam as a threat to democratic legal order (Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations, Netherlands: Retrieved 2016).

The view that the violence and war are inherent in Islamic history and culture cannot be endorsed. There have been many religious wars in Europe also with considerable use of violence. After all, in ancient and medieval times, all religions approved monarchy and did not disapprove war and violence by rulers. The notion of Jihad in its original form does not endorse violence by terrorists, who may, however, try to justify their violence in the name of jihad. Then what explains the mindless violence of Islamic terrorists. Bruce Hoffman (1988) classifies terrorism into two categories: secular-political terrorism and religious-political terrorism and concludes that there are significant differences in the ethical foundations of the two groups. The religious-

political terrorists view violence as sacramental act or divine duty. Terrorism, thus, assumes a transcendental dimension and its perpetrators have none of the political, moral or practical constraints in using violence that affects secular-political terrorists. This is oversimplification of a complex issue. There is no difference in the violence used as a tool by Irish Republican Army, Indian Naxal groups and Al-Qaeda, however, their motives may differ. For all terrorists, violence is a tool to attain political or religious objectives. When extremist groups of any brand are faced with a strong adversary, they do not any other option than to use violence to attain its objective.

The relationship between Islamic ethics and the ideology of terrorism is not simple and straightforward. The root cause of ideology of terrorism is neither the perversion of Islamic ethics nor the sanction of violence in the form of jihad by those ethics. Rather, it is the absence of secularization of Islamic ethics to avoid their head on collision with the vastly changed political, economic and social landscape in the boundaries of Islamic world. Some of the fundamental features of Islamic ethics like their divine source, their absoluteness and finality, their universal and comprehensive reach to all human beings, hamper their secularization in the long run. The purity and correctness of Islamic ethics cannot be challenged, but their reach to non-religious spheres of human life may be separated. This is the only practical solution that the Islamic ethics may live and thrive as code of conduct of personal life along with modern conditions.

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The Role of Environmental Ethics in Contemporary Society

Dr. Bibudharanjan

Ethics is an axiological theory. It is the science of values. It deals with norms or standards to evaluate human conduct. Let me make it clear that moral philosophising and application of moral standards is not limited to philosophers. Every human being philosophises about values. Everyone uses moral theories. Philosophy, however, is the only discipline engaged in the study of moral theories as one of its subject. Philosophers attempt to justify the theories they propose. The problem of philosophising arises quite naturally when anyone begins to reflect upon his or her moral practices questioning the justification of actions. Ethics has a practical purpose. Knowledge of moral practice must not be conceived as a purely theoretical knowledge of moral phenomena, but as practical knowledge about how we ought to live. The philosopher is called upon to give a blueprint of becoming good in different stations of life. This is called applied ethics. Philosopher deliberates upon and tries to suggest possible solution to the problems faced by society. Ethical principles can be applied to life because ethics is meant to provide effective guidance for successful living. Ethics does not ask for the impossible. If we are enjoined to live upto certain moral principles, that means it is possible to follow them. Applied ethics is thus an inevitable reality; it assumes even greater significance in today's world of complex commercialism and confusing value crisis. And because of this the man of the present day is found to be either indifferent or sceptical about ethics and some even treat it as irrelevant and even detrimental to progress.

Now let me give an example one of the problems that the present society faces. The Biosphere is now at risk. The earth's ability to sustain life and therefore economic activity is threatened by the way we extract, process transport and dispose the vast flow of resources. Resources and ecosystem both come from the earth. Forests for example not only produce the resource of wood fibre but also provide such ecosystem services such as water storage habi-

tat and regulation of atmosphere & climate. Industrialisation has provided us with material prosperity unequalled in our history. It has also created environmental threats to us and future generations. The very technology that has enabled us to manipulate and control nature has also polluted our environment. Each year more than 150 million tons of toxic wastes are pumped into the air we breathe, more than 41 million tons of toxic wastes are produced and 15 million gallons are dumped into the nations waterways. The world watch Institute in its report concluded –

"As the twenty-first century begins, several well-established environmental trends are shaping the future of civilisation. This includes population growth, rising of temperature, falling water levels, shrinking cropland per person, collapsing fisheries, shrinking forests and loss of plant and animal species".

This is a real danger and ethics has a definite role to play and this is done by environmental ethics. It raises fundamental questions how we ought to live. Environment constitutes what is in and around us. Ethics comprises establishment and preservation of values for the welfare of entire creation, with the presupposition that if we want to live in peace, then we must see that others are enjoying peace.

Ethics points out that the natural eco-system deserves our respect as a bonafide member of earth's living community. Eco-system is not just there to serve as a means to achieve human end. They have values in themselves.

We should not deceive ourselves into thinking that because many environmental problems involve technical issues, they do not raise ethical questions as well. The myth of objectivity that sometimes surrounds science can obscure these points.



It would be a mistake to think that some abstract ethical theory can resolve environmental controversies. Ethical suggestion provided ignorant of science and technology will not contribute to resolution of environmental problems. Both science and ethics are essential if we hope to make meaningful progress in meeting the environmental challenges that confront us. Genuine motives for environmental concern are likely to be many. The fact that we find positive values for so many environmental functions means that an economic system which allocates resources according to economic values must take account of the positive economic values for environmental quality.

We must also learn how to live in a world of never ending disagreements about what we owe to each other and to our environment.

Environmental issues raise a number of ethical questions. What is the extent of the environmental damage produced by present industrial technology? How large a threat does this damage pose to our welfare? What values must we give up to halt or slow such damage? What obligations do firms have to future generations to preserve the environment and conserve our resources?

Environmental ethics is the guiding principle we draw keeping in view the concept of conservation, sustainability and moral responsibility. Companies have to bear the responsibilities of environmental conservation and sustainability of resources for the common good of humanity.

The competition for sustainable product is increasing. By adopting the principle of sustainability, businesses break the old vicious circle of exploitation of resources, production and waste into a virtuous cycle of production, consumption, recycling and back to production. The sustainability principles have their inner dynamism to allow the regeneration of resources and saving of ecology.

It is true that there is no possibility of returning to nature or of stopping scientific and technological development. If an attempt is made in this direction our move will be impossibility. The solution to this problem lies in not stopping the technological development but technology can be used to protect the environment. What is most important is that there should be mass participation and awareness which can influence policy makers to map their policies so that the basic needs of every being in the environment is fulfilled. My last appeal is to protect nature otherwise we will perish. Choice is ours.

Basic Articles of Sikhism

- 1. Unity of God:** There is but One God. He is Unborn, Omni-potent, Infinite, Formless, All-knowing and All-pervading.
- 2. Equality:** All men are equal. God is our Mother & Father and we are His children. There is none high or low on account of birth, sex, position or riches.
- 3. Faith:** One must have perfect faith in the Guru. The word Sikhism literally means the way of the disciple. The disciple must follow the Guru's word.
- 4. Love of God:** We can love God only when we cease to love ourselves. We must first destroy the ego {haumai}.
- 5. Character-building:** If the mind is impure, it cannot deserve union with Divinity. Guru Nanak Sahib says: "Truth is no doubt great, but greater is truthful living." The development of character is the only foundation on which the edifice of discipleship can be raised. Conquer the five deadly sins-lust, anger, greed, attachment and pride. Morality is an important step in the path of discipleship.
- 6. Nam Simran:** The practice of the Name is an-essential duty of a Sikh. The Guru seeks the dust of the feet of those who remember the Name and make others remember it. Simaran is the practice of the presence of God. It is God-vision. As we think, so we become. It is by meditation that we attain to the glory and greatness of the Almighty.

(Courtesy: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Sri Amritsar)

Ethics - A Pathway to Human Development: Thought of Gandhiji and Sri Aurobindo

Dr. Sanghamitra Patnaik

"The individual is always supported by the life around him as every human being is his fellow worker and assists him whether by association and union or by strife and opposition".

-Sri Aurobindo

Introduction

Development signifies overall capacity-building of the people to have various options in life. It is a process of integrating human being and nature to ensure progress and prosperity for the future generation. Security is the pre-requisite in achieving progress. The main objective of the state and other associations within the state is to provide socio-political, economic and environmental security that will help in creating the suitable milieu for human development. Thus the process of development is very much predetermined by 'Good Governance' – the instrument of the state. Governance is the most crucial human activity that involves people. It is as old as the human civilization. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences (New York, 2006). It involves the process of decision-making and the process by which the decisions are executed. Primarily, both the aspects revolve round the people and the associations formed for their welfare. Government as an instrument of the state plays a key role in decision-making and its implementation. When both the processes of governance take care of the people, it is called as good governance. People should be involved in both decision-making and its implementation to make it an effective government leading towards development. Thus, the people both as part of the government and governed should be in action in conjunction with the nature to ensure a better life for the generation next. The Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and teachings of Sri Aurobindo reflect the cardinal principles of empowering human life to work for sustainable human development.

So, good governance as prescribed by Kautilya should be based on Rule of Law, merit, justice and equality with people's welfare as its primary goal. The eight determinants enumerated by United Nations like, participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, accountability, equity and inclusiveness, effectiveness and responsibility (UN Conference Nov 2006) subscribe more or less to his views. The indicators of good governance as identified by United Nations find its manifestation in the principles of Mahatma Gandhi. The concept of good governance needs to be studied with reference to the basic principles of Mahatma Gandhi's Non-Violence, Satyagraha, Sarvodaya, Religion and politics and principle of Trusteeship.

Gandhian Concept of Power

Gandhi perceives power not as an instrument to dominate other by force or to be used against anybody/entity. Power according to him gets expanded when it is shared with others. The base of his ethics of power is very much dependent on who exercises it. Here, power is derived from the people and should be used for people's welfare. A government that is not involving the people in the process of governance cannot be termed as a vehicle of good governance. Thus, transparency is the prerequisite of good governance as the people are kept informed of all the processes of governance and their opinion is ascertained on a regular basis. His concept of power embraces the techniques of Non-Violence, Truth and Satyagraha not coercion.

Non-Violence, Truth and Satyagraha Ensures Socio-Political Security

Non- Violence

Non-Violence or Ahimsa is considered as the base of Gandhiji's political philosophy. He applies it for the first time in politics in a mass scale. He perceives non-violence as a positive force. According to him Non-violence is never a weak submission to the will of the evil. The highest violence could be challenged



by highest non-violence. It is the technique of silently defeating and destroying evil from the root through strong will and fortitude and exchanging love for hatred.

Non-Violence is very much inclusive by nature. It comprises of truth, inner purity, fearlessness, non-possession of property and perseverance. Truth can be realized by non-violence. He said, "For me, truth is the sovereign principle which includes numerous other principles. This truth is not only truthfulness in word but truthfulness in thought also and not only the relative truth of our conception, but the absolute Truth, the eternal principle, that is God." (<http://www.mkgandhi.org/truth/intro.htm>)

Supported by fasting, non-violence exerts moral force against whom it is directed. It cleans up the body, mind and soul. Fearlessness can be achieved through strong moral conviction. It is required on the part of the individual to realize the true power of non-violence. A coward person cannot exercise the power of non-violence. It requires moral courage and patience.

Satyagraha

Satyagraha in its literary sense is "Agraha in Satya" means holding fast on to Truth. It is a technique of pursuing truthful ends through purest love. For him non-violence and Satyagraha are synonymous. As a moral force, it can be used by the individual and the communities in both domestic as well as public life. It is always considered as a weapon of the strong person to fight against injustice, wrong deed, oppressions and exploitations. It aims at public welfare and not limited by narrow selfish interests of the individual. It is considered by Gandhiji as the inalienable right of the individual.

Satyagraha follows a definite and strong code of conduct. A true Satyagrahi possesses the courage to sacrifice and suffer for the cause of Truth and public welfare. He never submits under pressure or fear. He is expected to be a person of self-discipline, self-control, purity of mind and actions. Satyagraha is distinguished from passive resistance. Passive resistance is a weapon of the weak whereas Satyagraha is practiced by a person of courage and fortitude.

Swaraj, Sarvodaya & Trusteeship-Building up of Economic Security

The word Swaraj means self-rule and self-restraint, and not freedom from all restraints which 'independence' often means. (YI, 19-3-1931, p. 38) Swaraj is to purify and stabilize our civilization. The very essence of our civilization is that morality is important in all our affairs, public or private. (YI, 23-1-1930, p. 26) During the early years Indian's Freedom Movement, he emphasizes that Swaraj is meant for everyone, and it is particularly meant freedom from poverty. He says Swaraj should be a government based on morality. (Navajiban 5.11.1925) He emphasizes on economic liberty of the common people. His ideas of Swaraj are reflected in various occasions at various places as following:

- In order to end the exploitation of the masses political freedom must include real economic freedom of the starving millions. The congress, therefore declare that any constitution.... Agreed toshould provide..... For the following : (20 points agenda including free primary education" a living wage, Progressive taxation and reduction in military expenditure) (Resolution on Fundamental Rights and Economic Changes (Drafted by Gandhiji 31.03.1931)
- "I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country, in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which there shall be no high class and low classes of people; an India in which all community shall live in perfect harmony. There can be no room in such an India for the curse of untouchability or the cause of intoxicating drunks and drugs: women will enjoy the same rights as men.... This is the India of my dreams. ("Statement to Reuter Aden 3.9.1931)
- Swaraj of the people means the sum total of Swaraj (self rule) of individuals. Our villages can be revivified only by a revival of village industries.... Under Swaraj based on non-violence nobody is anybody's enemy, everybody contributes his or her due quota to the common goal, all can read and write and their knowledge keeps growing from day to day. Sickness and disease are reduced to the 'minimum'. No one is a pauper and labour can always find employment.... it should not happen that a handful of rich people should live in jeweled palaces and the millions in miserable hovels" (Harijan 25.3.1939)



- "Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus every village will be a republic or panchayat having full power.....in this structure composed of innumerable villages; there will be ever-widening, never ascending circles. Life will not be pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages till at least the whole becomes one life..... no one is to be the first and none the last. ('Independence' 21.07.1946.)
- His notion of democracy under Swaraj meant empowerment of every Indian....
- Democracy must in essence, therefore mean the art and science of mobilizing the entire physical, economic and spiritual resources of all the various sections of people in the service of common good of all." (Talk 12.03.1939).
- "My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest. That can never happen except through non-violence." (Harijana 18.05.1940)
- "Corruption and hypocrisy ought not to be inevitable products of democracy as they undoubtedly are today; nor majority a true test of democracy."

Thus Mahatma Gandhi's Swaraj reflects all the elementary principles of good governance. It emphasizes on a continuous effort on the part of the government for the socio-economic welfare of the poor and weaker sections. His booklet "Constructive Programme its meaning and place" published in 1941 highlights different programs of action in socio-economic fields such as Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability, village industries, village sanitation, basic education, adult education, education in village health & hygiene, economic security, empowerment of Women and Schedule Tribes etc.

Sarvodaya

The idea of Sarvodaya reflects in the word itself- Sarva and Udaya. Sarva means all and Udaya means upliftment. So Sarvodaya stands for the welfare of all. Commitment to the welfare of others is the core theme of Sarvodaya- a governing principle of good governance. Kautilya's Arthashastra, a masterpiece of treatise on diplomacy and state craft mentions that the ruler should take care of his subjects as "In the happiness of the subjects lies his happiness, in their

welfare his welfare. Whatever pleases himself he shall not consider as good, but whatever pleases his subjects he shall consider as good.(Kautilya, Arthashastra, Book-I, Chapter VII.)

The essence of Gandhi's views of governance is inferred from the following statement by Gandhi in 1936: (Socialism of My Conception, pp. 140 - 141).

"Man's ultimate aim is the realization of God, and all his activities, social, political, religious have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God. The immediate service of all human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavor, simply because the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with it. This can only be done by service of all. And this cannot be done except through one's country".

According to Gandhi the individual can only realize his true nature within the family, the community, the nation and the world. Self-actualization can only be realized within the society, not beyond it. He is of the opinion that true moral action elevates others and is not means to exploit the weak and the ignorant. Gandhi's vision of Sarvodaya is innovative, engaging and stimulating when he says: My idea of Village Swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbors for its own vital wants, and yet inter-dependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. (Socialism of My Conception, pg 145)

Trusteeship

Trusteeship is the epicenter of Sarvodaya. It is a strategy adopted to resolve the conflict and disagreement in the society. It strives to bridge the gap between 'haves and have-nots' through general welfare irrespective of various differences based on caste, religion, sex or occupation.

Trusteeship is based on the principle of social transformation. The trustee is considered as the repository of all talent and wealth that can be used for the common good. The trustee is called upon to relinquish the worldly goods those surpass his actual needs. He would voluntarily redistribute his material wealth among the poor. It enhances his credibility as



a conscientious contributor to the common good. Gandhi's concept of trusteeship helps to balance the natural asymmetries between individuals and communities.

The primary focus of good governance revolves round the village or the small community. It is the foundation on which the superstructure of nation is built up. It is the center of expanding concentric circles interlocked at many different points. The 'village' is the symbol of 'power with' fulfilling our multiple personal and social obligations in a very compressed, close and compact form. It reflects the principle of 'Swadeshi' by using and serving one's immediate surroundings- religious, political and economic through shared local efforts.

Gandhi confirms Kantian idea of innate moral dignity of all human beings. According to him though the head is higher than the soles of the feet, both are equally important for the physical well being of the whole human body. No individual is allowed to dominate the other on the basis of his talent or wealth. Each individual's role is equally important for growth of the society and nation

End and Means

Gandhiji's idea of end justifies the means contests Realist ideas of public morality and private morality and Kautilya's dual standard of morality. Deliberating on the Ends and Means he says:

"They say that 'means are after all means'. I would say that 'means are after all everything'. Indeed, the Creator has given us limited power over means, none over end... The means may be likened to a seed and the end to a tree; and there is the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree. Means and end are convertible terms in my philosophy of life." (M.K. Gandhi, 17-7-1924).

He further explains the End and Means relationship through the following example:

If I want to deprive you of your watch, I shall certainly have to fight for it; if I want to buy your watch, I shall have to pay for it; if I want a gift, I shall have to plead for it; and according to the means I employ, the watch is stolen property, my own property, or a donation. Thus we see three different

results from three different means. (M.K. Gandhi, Hind Swaraj (22-11-1909). According to Gandhiji, if freedom is gained through immoral means, it would be nothing more than "English rule without the Englishman." (Ibid. 255.) He ridiculed the nationalist conception of independence as "a change of masters only" (M.K. Gandhi, 1946) or "a mere change of personnel," (CWMG, 27, 369)

Gandhi's alternative vision of self-rule appreciates the self-organizing capacity of the Indian village. (Mantena, 2012). He is very critical of political violence supported by "secret societies". (CWMG 18, 304). He believes that Swaraj should be acquired by the people instead of putting demand for it. He says "everyone will have to take it for himself." (Gandhi, Hind Swaraj, 10, 305-306) It has to be acquired by building up power from within. This demonstrates empowerment of the masses and capacity-building for self-rule. In Hind Swaraj, Gandhi associates the path to self-rule with a program of Swadeshi—the pursuit of self-reliance. (Ibid., 310-311). He insists on close connection between the means and the end by showing the example of expecting roses by planting noxious weed. He says, we reap exactly as we sow. (Gandhi, Hind Swaraj, 10, 286-287)

Religion and Politics

For Gandhiji, religion and politics are inseparable and indispensable for each other. He never rejects politics in favor of morality. For him both politics and religion share common goal – welfare of the common people. It is the gist of all religious scriptures of the world. He says the clearest possible definition of the goal and its appreciation would fail to take us there if we do not know and utilize the means of achieving it. He is principally concerned with the conservation of the means and their progressive use. He feels that the progress towards the goal would be in exact proportion to the purity of our means. (M.K. Gandhi, 1933).

He infers that immoral action by man is responsible for all kinds of evils and crisis. It is the religion that prescribes a certain code of conduct to regulate human behavior. No religion propagates for achieving selfish interest by rendering harm to other individual. He believes in Universal Religion based on humanism. By religion he does not mean any



particular sect. It emphasizes the belief in the ordered moral governance. Any attempt to separate religion from politics would certainly pave the way for destruction of the society. According to Mahatma Gandhi, politics divorced of religion would make individual corrupt, selfish, unreliable, materialistic and unrealistic. Politics without religion according to him is like a death-trap because it kills the man from within.

In 1920, Gandhi wrote: 'Let me explain what I mean by religion. It is not the Hindu religion, which I certainly prize above all other religions, but the religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and whichever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature . . . which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself, known its Maker and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself. (*Young India*, 1920).

The Gandhian vision of sustainable development is very much interlinked with his principles of good governance. It discards the Western-centric model of development that emphasizes on the promotion of individual growth and self-advancement, the harnessing of nature, the increased use of markets for the distribution of economic goods and services. Gandhism is very much concerned with the use of Nature and natural resources, the ways in which society is governed and also about how public policy is made and implemented.

The Gandhian vision of Sustainable Development revolves round the idea that human being is a part of nature, rather than apart from nature. Gandhiji emphasizes on ten characters of sustainable development:

- Natural resources available on the earth should not be used with an element of greed.
- Human beings should follow the principle of non-violence towards inanimate materials because overuse of such materials also amounts to violence.
- Women should be given their rightful place in all spheres of human endeavour.
- Bottom-up shared view is preferred to the top-down authoritarian commands.
- Conservationist approach prevails over the consumerist, self-destructive approach.

- Taking care of the downtrodden and sharing with the poor and the destitute in society is a moral obligation towards them.
- Emphasis on a simple, need-based, austere and comfortable lifestyle.
- All development leads to self-reliance and equity with social justice.
- Ethics and self-discipline in the use of resource is a prerequisite of sustainable development.

Gandhiji's vision aims at fulfilling individual's basic needs by advancing social equity and technical capacity towards sustainability. To Gandhi, nature and non-human life form an integral part of development. The Gandhian model of development aims at protecting nature by creating an ecological society that lives in harmony with nature. He insists on the synchronization of economic activity with social progress and environmental protection. Gandhiji's views on sustainable development are very much reflected in the eight UN Millennium Development Goals(<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>). The goals are:

1. To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. To achieve universal primary education
3. To promote gender equality and empower women
4. To reduce child mortality
5. To improve maternal health
6. To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
7. To ensure environmental sustainability
8. To develop a global partnership for development

Indian Constitution subscribes to the Gandhian Principles of governance in Directive Principles of State Policy (http://india.gov.in/sites/upload_files/npi/files/coi_part_full.pdf) as reflected in the following Articles:

- To organize village panchayats (Art. 40).
- To secure living wage, decent standard of life, and to promote cottage industries (Art.43).
- To provide free and compulsory education to all children up to 14 years of age (Art. 45).
- To promote economic and educational interests of the weaker sections of the people particularly, the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.
- To enforce prohibition of intoxicating drinks and cow-slaughter and to organize agriculture and animal husbandry on scientific lines (Arts. 46-48).



The Goals are socially just and economically inclusive. The focus is not upon individual advancement, but upon protecting the common future of humankind. Mahatma Gandhi emphasizes on the need of adopting new patterns of consumption that reduce the levels of consumption and change what is consumed and by whom (sustainable consumption). This would create the conditions necessary for equitable development.

Gandhian Principles: Action Plans for good Governance & Sustainable Future

The Global Greens, an international network of Green parties and political movements at the Global Greens Conference in 2001 emphasizes on six Gandhian principles:

The Ecological Wisdom

- To live within the ecological and resource limits of the planet.
- To protect animal and plant life, and life itself that is sustained by the natural elements, namely earth, water, air and sun.
- To be extra-careful in using the resources of the planet for the future generations.

Social Justice

- It emphasizes on the equitable distribution of resources to meet basic human needs-a pathway to ensure personal and social development of all.
- The eradication of poverty
- The elimination of illiteracy; and
- Evolving a new vision of citizenship based on equal rights for all individuals, irrespective of gender, race, age, religion, class, disability, wealth and health.

Participatory Democracy

It emphasizes on:

- Individual empowerment through access to all relevant information required for decision-making
- Access to education
- Strengthening grass-root institutions to enable people to participate who are going to be affected by the decisions.
- Commitment of elected representatives to the principles of transparency and accountability in governance.

Non-Violence

The principle of non-violence focuses on:

- Peaceful resolution of conflicts instead of war
- Creating the platform for better understanding by mutual respect for each other's culture traditions and values.
- Complete elimination of the use of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction and the fear of terrorism
- Strengthening the United Nations as the harbinger global peace ,security and human dignity.

Sustainability

Sustainability is termed as the key-stone of good governance. It requires the following:

- To allow everybody to have the fair share of the earth's resources.
- Quality of life should have the predominance over the capacity for consumption
- Human needs should replace human greed of a few
- Ensuring greater resource and energy efficiency through use of environmentally sustainable technologies
- Encouraging self-reliant economy to the greatest practical extent.

Respect for Humanism

- The respect for human rights and dignity should be considered as the common religion of the world. It believes in the following:
 - Recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples including rights to land and to self-determination Acknowledgement of indigenous people's contribution to the common heritage of national and global culture
 - Recognition of the rights of ethnic minorities
 - Ensuring gender equality in all spheres of life

Gandhian Ethics in the Contemporary World:

The above analyses highlight the role of ethics in the shape of economic cooperation and interdependence and peaceful means of resolving the conflict, common moral values and less use of Military force. Today, in a globalized era, market forces shape the local, national and international governance. During Gandhian period, globalization was expanded through establishment of colonies. Today, establishment of



market and MNCs (Multinational Companies) are very much instrumental in expanding globalization. There is no necessity of establishing colonies. The strategy adopted here is to send investment and by-products of that investment into the local market without any restrictions. The aim is to convert the developing society into a consumerist society, not a productive society. It can be termed as 'neo-liberal Washington consensus.' So the recent trend of business is to make money out of money by investing in stock market instead of using money for productions which can fulfill the necessary demands of the society, generate employment and bring in self-sufficiency.

Thus, good governance is to focus on inclusive, self-reliant and productive society instead of a dependent consumer society. Nations should embrace the Gandhian principle of Swaraj- to rule oneself. A principle of self-control, swaraj is freedom of body and soul. A developing country cannot be truly free till it is dependent on consumer goods imported from developed countries. The people of developing countries are becoming good consumer, instead of becoming good citizens. This tendency of being a good consumer is the first sign of slavery. The recent trend of globalization is to make rich people/countries, richer and poor, poorer. According to Chomsky, one of the outcomes of globalization is it reduces the influence of national government. Globalization seems to be weakening the power of individual countries to control their own wherein major decisions are made at a global level (Fox, 2001). As Noam Chomsky pointed out in the era of globalization, the developing countries have two options: Either they have to follow the developed countries or they have to innovate how to make themselves developed. Gandhi's principles of good governance are for universalizing the benefits of globalization.

Gandhiji points out the ethical value of limitation of power, effective governance, accountability and justice. He develops a global and intercultural perspective of all religions. For him, social reconstruction and welfare of the poor are not considered as charity.

Gandhi's concept of 'Sarvodaya' is based on a healthy give- and- take relationships between the individual and society. Each contributes to the other's

moral, spiritual and socio-economic development, happiness and prosperity. Sarvodaya is built up on the firm foundation of truth and non-violence. It envelops social welfare in its entirety.

Gandhiji's concept of religion based on humanism manifests in the goal of each and every political institution to work for human rights, peace and prosperity. He does not feel the urgency of segregating religion from politics rather he points out the indispensability of religion to strengthen politics, political institutions and governance starting from local to global.

As a pragmatist, Gandhiji advances the idea of redefining power by adhering to Truth and Non-violence. He emphasizes on the concept of 'power with' instead of 'power against'. According to him people's welfare is the epicenter of power and effective communication helps to create a strong base to connect the people with one another with trust and understanding – a path way for sustainable development.

Sri Aurobindo's Ethics of Social Development
Self-Realization of "I" in "WE" is the mantra of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of 'Social Development'. For him, the ideal of human existence personal and social would be its progressive transformation into a conscious outflowering of the joy, power, love, light, beauty of the transcendent and universal Spirit. According to Sri Aurobindo, the true development lies in knowing individual's future mental and spiritual destiny and his place in the cycles of Nature instead of discovering what man has been in his past physical and vital evolution as analyzed by the modern Science. Through looking inward, he gets back to himself, to the root of his living and infinite possibilities. The potentiality of a new and perfect self creation unveils before him. He discovers his real place in Nature and opens his eyes to the greatness of his destiny. He says 'Existence' is infinite and therefore is beyond any definition and illimitable Reality figures itself out in multiple values of life. It begins with a material figure of itself, a mould of firm substance into which and upon which it can build,—worlds, the earth, the body. Here it fixes the essential law of its movement. The law is that all things are one in their being and origin, one in their general law of existence, one in



their interdependence and the universal pattern of their relations. Each realizes this unity of purpose and being on its own lines and has its own law of variation by which it enriches the universal existence.

He emphasizes that the individual is distinguished from the less developed creatures by a greater power of individuality, by the liberation of the mental consciousness. It enables him finally to understand more and more of himself and his law of being and his development. The liberation of the mental will enables him to manage the materials and the lines of development under the secret control of the universal 'Will'. It empowers him in the end to go beyond himself, beyond his mentality and open his consciousness into that from which mind, life and body proceed.

The individual is always supported by the life around him as every human being is his fellow worker and assists him whether by association and union or by strife and opposition. It is a help towards the divine purpose in him. According to Sri Aurobindo, he does not achieve his destiny as the individual Man for the sake of the individual soul alone. It aims at achieving for God in all as well as above all and not for God solely and separately in one.

The object of all society should be first to provide the conditions of life and growth by which all individual according to their capacity may travel towards this divine perfection. Freedom and harmony express the two vital principles of variation and oneness. Freedom of the individual coordinates harmony of the individual's forces and of the efforts of all individuals in the world. These are the two conditions of healthy development.

All mankind is one in its nature, physical, vital, emotional, mental in spite of all differences of intellectual development ranging from the poverty of the Bushman and negroid to the rich cultures of Asia and Europe. (Aurobindo, p.66)

In modern times this society is the nation. Enrichment of the national life leads towards the development of total life of the humanity. The individual is not limited and cannot be limited by any of these groupings. He is not limited by his nationality. If by a part of himself he belongs to the nation, by

another he exceeds it and belongs to humanity. And even there is a part of him; the greatest is not limited by humanity. He belongs by it to God and to the world of all beings and to the godheads of the future.

The community stands as an intermediary value between the individual and humanity. It exists for one another and to help to fulfill each other. The individual has to live in humanity as well as humanity in the individual. The nation or community is an aggregate life that expresses the Self according to the general law of human nature and aids and partially fulfills the development and the destiny of mankind by its own development and the pursuit of its own destiny according to the law of its being and the nature of its corporate individuality.

As the individual lives by the life of other individuals, so does the nation by the life of other nations, by accepting from them material for its own mental, economic and physical life. It has to assimilate this material, subject it to the law of its own nature, change it into stuff of itself, work upon it by its own free will and consciousness, if it would live securely and grow soundly. (ibid, p.71). Any imposition of the principle or rule of another nature upon it by force or a de-individualizing pressure poses a threat to its existence. As the free development of individuals from within is the best condition for the growth and perfection of the community, so the free development of the community or nation from within is the best condition for the growth and perfection of mankind. (Ibid) Thus the law for the individual is to perfect his individuality by free development from within, but to respect and to aid and be aided by the same free development in others. His law is to harmonize his life with the life of the social aggregate and to pour himself out as a force for growth and perfection on humanity.

The law for the community or nation is equally to perfect its corporate existence by a free development from within, aiding and taking full advantage of that of the individual, but to respect and to aid and be aided by the same free development of other communities and nations. Its law is to harmonise its life with that of the human aggregate and to pour itself out as a force for growth and perfection on humanity. The law for humanity is to pursue its upward



evolution towards the finding and expression of the Divine in the type of mankind, taking full advantage of the free development and gains of all individuals and nations and groupings of men, to work towards the day when mankind may be really and not only ideally one divine family, but even then, when it has succeeded in unifying itself, to respect, aid and be aided by the free growth and activity of its individuals and constituent aggregates.

Ethics - the Driving- Force for a Sustainable World

Unfortunately, today religion is interpreted in its narrow sectarian and institutional meaning and is isolating and insulating individual from one another. Ethics of Gandhiji stands the test of time for its universal character. Individual should think about the common interests and misery instead of concentrating on his own selfish interest. He makes the individual to discover truth by thinking of his neighbor, who represents humanity in miniature. Sri Aurobindo wonderfully narrates "when men and nations are drawn close together and partially united though in an inextricable, confused entanglement of chaotic unity, when they are being compelled to know each other and impelled to know more profoundly themselves, mankind, God and the world and when the idea of self-realization for men and nations is coming consciously to the surface,—it is the natural work and should be the conscious hope of man in such an age to know himself truly, to find the ideal law of his being and his development and, if he cannot even then follow it ideally owing to the difficulties of his egoistic nature, still to hold it before him and find out gradually the way by which it can become more and more the moulding principle of his individual and social existence"(ibid, p.72). Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo are very much optimistic about the power of the ethics to begin the world over again- a driving force of the contemporary world for the generation next.

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