

there is knowledge, but in theology there is only opinion. So whenever you find yourself getting angry about a difference of opinion, be on your guard; you will probably find, on examination, that your belief is going beyond what the evidence warrants.

A good way of ridding yourself of certain kinds of dogmatism is to become aware of opinions held in social circles different from your own. When I was young, I lived much outside my own country—in France, Germany, Italy, and the United States. I found this very profitable in diminishing the intensity of insular prejudice, and read a newspaper belonging to a party that is not yours. If you cannot travel, seek out people with whom you disagree, and read a newspaper belonging to a party that is not yours. If the people and the newspaper seem so to them. In this opinion both parties may be right, but they cannot both be wrong. This reflection should generate a certain caution.

Becoming aware of foreign customs, however, does not always have a beneficial effect. In the seventeenth century, when the Manchus conquered China, it was the custom among the Chinese for the women to have small feet, and among the Manchus for the men to wear pigtails. Instead of each dropping their own foolish custom, they each adopted the foolish custom of the other, and the Chinese continued to wear pigtails until they shook off the dominion of the Manchus in the revolution of 1911.

For those who have enough psychological imagination, it is a good plan to imagine an argument with a person having a different bias. This has one advantage, and only one, as compared with actual conversation with opponents; this one advantage is that the method is not subject to the same limitations of time and space. Mahatma Gandhi deplored railways and steamboats and machinery; he would have liked to undo the whole of the industrial revolution. You may never have an opportunity of actually meeting anyone who holds this opinion, you will find it a good plan to test the arguments that occur to you by considering what Gandhi might have said in refutation of them. I have sometimes been led actually to change my mind as a result of this kind of imaginary dialogue, and, short of this, I have frequently found myself growing less dogmatic and cocksure through realizing the possible reasonableness of a hypothetical opponent.

Be very wary of opinions that flatter your self-esteem. Both men and women, nine times out of ten, are firmly convinced of the superior excellence of their own sex. There is abundant evidence on

both sides. If you are a man, you can point out that most poets and men of science are male; if you are a woman you can retort that so are most criminals. The question is inherently insoluble, but self-esteem conceals this from most people. We are all, from whatever part of the world we come from, persuaded that our own nation is superior to all others. Seeing that each nation has its characteristic merits and demerits, we adjust our standard of values so as to make out that the merits possessed by our nation are the really important ones, while its demerits are comparatively trivial. Here, again, the rational man will admit that the question is one to which there is no demonstrably right answer. It is more difficult to deal with the self-esteem of man as man, because we cannot argue out the matter with some non-human mind. The only way I know of dealing with this general human conceit is to remind ourselves that man is a brief episode in the life of a small planet in a little corner of the universe, and that, for aught we know, other parts of the cosmos may contain beings as superior to ourselves as we are to jelly-fish.

Other passions besides self-esteem are common sources of error; of these perhaps the most important is fear. Fear sometimes operates directly, by inventing rumours of disaster in war-time, or by imagining objects of terror, such as ghosts' something comforting, such as the elixir of life, or heaven for ourselves and hell for our enemies. Fear has many forms—fear of death, fear of the dark, fear of the unknown, fear of the head, and that vague generalized fear that comes to those who conceal from themselves their more specific terrors. Until you have admitted your own fears to yourself, and have guarded yourself by a difficult effort of will against their myth-making power, you cannot hope to think truly about many matters of great importance, especially those with which religious beliefs are concerned. Fear is the main source of superstition, and one of the main sources of cruelty. To conquer fear is the beginning of wisdom, in the pursuit of truth as in the endeavour after a worthy manner of life.

**Write answer to the following questions:**

1. What is the theme of the text keeping Errors at Bay?
2. How can we avoid errors?
3. What are the causes and sources of our errors?



## WHO WAS TO BLAME?

-Anton Chekhov

As my uncle Pyotr Demyanitch, a lean, bilious high school teacher, exceedingly like a stale smoked fish with a stick through it, was getting ready to go to the high school, where he taught Latin, he noticed that the corner of his grammar book was nibbled by mice.

"I say, Praskovya," he said, going into the kitchen and addressing the cook, "how is it we have got mice here? Upon my word! Yesterday my top hat was nibbled, today they have disfigured my Latin grammar book ... At this rate they will soon begin eating my clothes!"

"What can I do? I did not bring them in!" answered Praskovya.

"We must do something! You had better get a cat, hand't you?"

"I've got a cat, but what good is it?"

And Praskovya pointed to the corner where a white Kitten, thin as a match, lay curled up asleep beside a broom.

"Why is it no good?" Asked Pyotr Demyanitch.

"It's young yet, and foolish. It's not two months old yet."

"H'm. .... Then it must be trained. It had much better be learning instead of lying there."

Saying this, Pyotr Demyanitch sighed with a careworn air and went out of the kitchen. The kitten raised his head, looked lazily after him, and shut his eyes again.

The kitten lay awake thinking. Off what? Unacquainted with real life, having no store of accumulated impressions, his mental processes could only be instinctive, and he could but picture life in accordance with the conceptions that he had inherited, together with his flesh and blood, from his ancestors, the tigers (see Darwin). His thoughts were of the nature of day-dreams. His feline imagination pictured something like the Arabian desert, over which flitted shadows closely resembling Praskovya, the stove, the broom. In the midst of the shadows there suddenly appeared a saucer of milk; the saucer began to grow paws, it began moving and displayed a tendency to run; the kitten made a bound, and with a thrill of bloodthirsty sensuality thrust his claws into it. .... When the saucer had vanished into obscurity a piece of meat appeared, dropped by Praskovya; the meat ran away

with a cowardly squeak, but the kitten made a bound and got his claws into it. .... Everything that rose before the imagination of the young dreamer had for its starting-point leaps, claws, and teeth. .... The soul of another is darkness, and a cat's soul more than most, but how near the visions just described are to the truth may be seen from the following fact: under the influence of his day-dreams the kitten suddenly leaped up, looked with flashing eyes at Praskovya, ruffled up his coat, and making one bound, thrust his claws into the cook's skirt, and making born a mouse catcher, a worthy son of his bloodthirsty ancestors. Fate had destined him to be the terror of cellars, store-rooms, and combins, and had it not been for education ... we will not anticipate, however.

On his way home from the high school, Pyotr Demyanitch went into a general shop and bought a mousetrap for fifteen kopecks. At dinner he fixed a little bit of his rissole on the hook, and set the trap under the sofa, where there were heaps of the pupils' old exercise-books, which Praskovya used for various domestic purposes. At six o'clock in the evening, when the worthy Latin master was sitting at the table correcting his pupils' exercises, there was a sudden "klop!" so loud that my uncle started and dropped his pen. He went at once to the sofa and dropped his pen. He went at once to the sofa and took out the trap. A neat little mouse, the size of thimble, was sniffing the wires and trembling with fear.

"Aha," muttered Pyotr Demyanitch, and he looked at the mouse malignantly, as though he were about to give him a bad mark. "you are cau-aught, wretch! Wait a bit! I'll teach you to eat my grammar books!"

Having gloated over his victim, Pyotr Demyanitch put the mousetrap on the floor and called:

"Praskovya, there's a mouse caught! Bring the kitten here!"

"I'm coming," responded Praskovya, and a minute later she came in with the descendant of tigers in her arms.

"Capital!" said Pyotr demyanitch, rubbing his hands, "We will give him a lesson. . . . Put him down opposite the mousetrap. . . . that's it. . . . Let him sniff it and look at it. . . . that's it. . . ."

The kitten looked wonderingly at my uncle, at his armchair, sniffed the mousetrap in bewilderment, then, frightened probably by the glaring lamplight and the attention directed to him, made a dash and ran in terror to the door.



"Stop!" shouted my uncle, seizing him by the tail, "stop, you rascal! He's afraid of a mouse, the idiot! Look! It's a mouse! Look! Well? Look, I tell you!"

Pyotr Demyanitch took the kitten by the scruff of the neck and pushed him with his nose against the mousetrap.

"Look, you carrion! Take him and hold him, Praskovya ... Hold him opposite the door of the trap ... When I let the mouse-out, you let him go instantly ..... Do you hear? ... Instantly let go! Now!"

My uncle assumed a mysterious expression and lifted the door of the trap .... The mouse came out irresolutely, sniffed the air, and flew like an arrow under the sofa. ... The kitten on being released darted under the table with his tail in the air.

"It has got away! got away!" cried Pyotr Demyanitch, looking ferocious. "where is he, the scoundrel? Under the table? You wait. ...."

My uncle dragged the kitten from under the table and shook him in the air.

"Wretched little beast," he muttered, smacking him on the ear. "take that, take that! Will you shirk it next time? Wr-r-r-etch ..."

Next day Praskovya heard again the summons.

"Praskovya, there is a mouse caught! Bring the kitten here!" after the outrage of the previous day the kitten had taken refuge under the stove and had not come out all night. When Praskovya pulled him out and, carrying him by the scruff of the neck into the study, set him down before the mousetrap, he trembled all over and mewed piteously.

"Come, let him feel at home first," Pyotr Demyanitch commanded. "Let him look and sniff. Look and learn! Stop, Plague take you!" he shouted, noticing that the kitten was backing away from the mousetrap. "I'll thrash you! Hold him by the ear! That's it .... Well now, set him down before the trap ...."

My uncle slowly lifted the door of the trap .... the mouse whisked under the very nose of the kitten, flung itself against Praskovya's hand and fled under the cupboard; the kitten, feeling himself free, took a desperate bound and retreated under the sofa.

"He's let another mouse go!" bawled Pyotr Demyanitch. "Do you call that a cat? Nasty little beast! Thrash him! thrash him by the mousetrap!"

When the third mouse had been caught, the kitten shivered all over at the sight of the mousetrap and its inmate, and scratched Praskovya's hand .... After the fourth mouse my uncle flew into a rage, kicked the kitten, and said: "Take the nasty thing away! Get rid of it! Chuck it away! It's no earthly use!"

A year passed, the thin, frail kitten had turned into a solid and sagacious tomcat. One day he was on his way by the back yards to an amatory interview. He had just reached his destination when he suddenly heard a rustle, and thereupon Caught sight of a mouse which ran from a water-trough towards a stable; my hero's hair stood on end, he arched his back, hissed, and trembling all over, took to ignominious flight.

Alas! Sometimes I feel myself in the ludicrous position of the fleeing cat. Like the kitten, I had in my day the honour of being taught Latin by my uncle. Now, whenever I chance to see some work of classical antiquity, instead of being moved to eager enthusiasm, I begin recalling, *ut consecutivum*, the irregular verbs, the fallow grey face of my uncle, the ablative absolute .... I turn pale, my hair stands up on my head, and, like the cat, I take to ignominious flight.

#### Answer these questions

1. What is the main idea of the text who was to Blame?
2. Describe how the baby cat behave when it encountered with a mouse for the first time.
3. Describe the change in the behavior of the cat with the passage of time.
4. What does the text suggest? and what moral does it teach the readers?

## A TALE

- Bishweshwor Prasad Koirala

This is a tale of long long ago, when human beings were in competition with the gods. The gods, ever fearful of defeat in their life-and-death struggle with the demons, did not hesitate to request the help of mere mortals like Dadhichi and Dasharath. But whenever any of these inferior mortals aspired to become gods through penance, the gods grew wary of their erstwhile allies. That is why the gods sought to destroy the penance of people who abandoned all worldly pleasures. Their most successful emissaries of destruction were celestial nymphs.

In those days, one man realized that supreme knowledge could not be found in cities and villages. Among men, he felt, the path to godhood was blocked by social obligations and by the love of family and friends. So, to win supreme knowledge and godhood, he went to dwell alone in a remote jungle.

He lived in a small clearing surrounded by lofty trees. He ate wild roots and berries and drank water from the sparkling river that flowed by his hut. The air was filled with the songs of birds and the gentle murmur of the river. If a man could transcend his earthly condition anywhere on earth, that clearing was the place.

To triumph over the flesh, he squatted in front of seven-tongued fires in summer and plunged into ice-cold water in winter. He fasted for many days. Eventually, after much labor, he conquered his flesh and mind and lost his soul to God, achieving a state of unceasing meditative trance.

Now one full moon followed another. The seasons changed. The trees lost their leaves, put on new leaves, flowered, and lost their leaves again. Wild flowers blossomed and withered. The grass around him grew tall while the grass beneath him died. Termites built their nest on his legs. Yet the sage went on sitting motionlessly, in a deep meditative trance.

The leopards and cobras, the deer and the hare, surrounded him in perfect harmony. The fawns pressed through the ring of lions to cuddle up with him. Anxious not to break the tranquility of the holy place, the tigers and bears tiptoed meekly by. Only the young animals frolicked in the clearing.

Suffused by inner light, he achieved a state of unending ecstasy. He felt the brilliance of a thousand suns exploding within him. Has his goal then been accomplished?

When the sage's penance started to threaten the seat of heaven, and while he was still immersed in his long trance, Indra, the king of the gods, sent the comeliest and adroitest nymph of his court to the hermitage.

The nymph stripped off her clothes and stepped into the river, playfully sprinkling its water. She looked as vibrant, as majestic and enchanting, as a Himalayan peak touched by the first rays of the sun. Knee-deep in the river, she stooped to fill her hands with water, appearing as pure and chaste as the rajanigandha flower. Loveliest of all were her breasts, pointing downwards towards the water like twin raptors ready to pounce on their prey.

At that very moment, while the nymph was still in that spellbinding posture, the sage's eyes involuntarily opened. He did not see the changes around him; he did not notice the overgrown clearing, nor the termite hill which rose up to his chest. Instead, his gaze fell on the nymph. The sage perceived no disparity between his inner peace and the maiden who was now quivering like a willow sapling against the current. She was the living image of his last stage of penance, or the incarnation of his undying passion.

Slowly, the sage rose. Still fully experiencing his inner state of bliss, he advanced towards the glistening maiden. Soon after, they married in the jungle and made preparations to return to society. Just then, a great king and his entourage came to pay homage to the famous recluse. But, upon seeing the sage's young wife, the pilgrims turned away in dismay and shock.

The sage and his wife built a house in a village. Like their neighbors, they tilled the soil and led a simple domestic life. In the course of time they became the parents of two boys. They helped their neighbors in any way they could, nursing their sick, feeding their hungry, and bestowing upon them innumerable acts of kindness.

But their neighbors could never forgive his fall. They eyed with suspicion the erstwhile saint erecting a cow shed. At the sight of his wife carrying water from the well, they thought 'Is she an evil seductress who caused the saint's downfall?' And yet the sage never ceased to experience the ecstasy and bliss he felt in the jungle.

### Write answer to the following questions:

1. What is the text entitled 'A Tale' about?
2. Describe the relationship between gods and human beings in Ancient times.
3. Define penance and describe why did human beings practiced it in ancient times.
4. Why did gods try to destroy the penance of human beings?
5. How did the beautiful nymph destroy the hard penance of an ordinary man who was about to gain heavenly position through his penance?

## THE TURBO-PROP ENGINE

The efficiency of a turbo-jet engine varies with the speed and altitude at which it operates. *Whilst* it is very efficient at supersonic speeds and high altitudes, it is not suited to the low speeds involved in taking-off and landing. Under these conditions, thrust augmenters or after-burners are often required to boost the power, and this entails heavy fuel consumption and restricts the range of the aircraft. *On the other hand*, propeller-driven aircraft cannot attain speeds much in excess of 500 m.p.h., *whereas* at low speeds they have a much better performance. Since subsonic speeds are still acceptable for most civilian airliners, a type of engine known as the turbo-prop was developed, which combined some of the advantages of both jet and piston-driven engines.

In the turbo-jet, the turbine is required to develop enough power to drive the compressor only, *whereas* in the turbo-prop engine, it must supply power also for the propeller to which it is coupled by means of reduction gearing. As the propeller rotates, it drives rearwards a much larger column of air than that which is expelled from the jet-tube of the turbo-jet, but at a much lower velocity. **Consequently** it is quieter than the turbo-jet, since the volume of noise produced by an aircraft engine increases with the velocity of the air column. Most airports are situated in or near large centres of population, **with the result that** any reduction in the noise level is a decided advantage. Furthermore, a large proportion of the energy of the products of combustion is needed to drive the compressor and the airscrew. As this proportion increases, so the amount of thrust developed in the jet-pipe diminishes. In consequence, the destructive blasts of hot gas which emanate from the jet-pipe of the turbo-jet while taxiing on runways or taking-off are greatly re-duced.

The main disadvantage of the turbo-prop engine is, of course, the limitation imposed on speed by the airscrew, as a result of which, it is likely to become obsolete on all except short-haul aircraft.

A more recent development in jet propulsion is the ducted-fan jet, in which the turbine drives a multi-bladed fan enclosed in a duct. A

## FREEDOM

- Gerorge Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)

### UNIT 1

Now remember, ladies and gentlemen, I have no time to talk the usual old nonsense about freedom tonight. Let us come to business. What is perfectly free person? Evidently a person who can do what he likes, when he likes and where he lies, or do nothing at all if he prefers it. Well, there is no such person: and there never can be any such person. Whether we like it or not, we must all sleep for one-third of our lifetime; wash and dress and undress; we must spend a couple of hours eating and drinking; we must spend nearly as much in getting about from place to place. For half the day we are slave to necessities which we cannot shirk, whether we are monarchs with a thousand servants or humble labourers with no servants but their wives. And the wives must undertake the additional heavy slavery of child-bearing if the world is still to be peopled.

These natural jobs cannot be shirked. But they involve other jobs which can. As we must eat we must first provide food; as we must sleep we must have beds and bedding in houses with fireplaces and coals; as we must walk through the streets, we must have clothes to cover our nakedness. Now, food and houses and clothes can be produced by human labour. But when they are produced it by their labour, and then steal it from them. If you are too lazy to get about from place to place on your own legs you can make a slave of a horse. And what you do to a horse or a bee you can also do to a man or a woman or a child if you can get the upper hand of them by force or fraud or trickery of any sort, or even by teaching them that it is their religious duty to sacrifice their freedom to yours.

So beware! If you allow any person, or class of persons, to get upper hand of you, they will shift all that part of their slavery to Nature that can be shifted on to your shoulders; and you will find yourself working from eight to fourteen hours a day when, if you had only yourself and your family to provide for, you could do it quite comfortably in half