

Satnaja Newsletter

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THE UPANISHADS

'Bring me a fruit from this banyan tree.'

'Here it is, father.'

'Break it.'

'It is broken, Sir.'

'What do you see in it?'

'Very small seeds, Sir.'

'Break one of them, my son.'

'It is broken, Sir.'

'What do you see in it?'

'Nothing at all, Sir.'

Then his father spoke to him: 'My son, from the very essence in the seed which you cannot see comes in truth this vast banyan tree.'

Believe me, my son, an invisible and subtle essence is the Spirit of the whole universe. That is Reality. That is Atman. THOU ART THAT.'

'Explain more to me, father,' said Svetaketu.

'So be it, my son.'

Place this salt in water and come to me tomorrow morning.'

Svetaketu did as he was commanded, and in the morning his father said to him: 'Bring me the salt you put into the water last night.'

Svetaketu looked into the water, but could not find it, for it had dissolved.

His father then said: 'Taste the water from this side. How is it?'

'It is salt.'

'Taste it from the middle. How is it?'

'It is salt.'

'Taste it from that side. How is it?'

'It is salt.'

'Look for the salt again and come again to me.'

The son did so, saying: 'I cannot see the salt. I only see water.'

His father then said: 'In the same way, O my son, you cannot see the Spirit. But in truth he is here.'

An invisible and subtle essence is the Spirit of the whole universe. That is Reality. That is Truth. THOU ART THAT.'

'Explain more to me, father.'

'So be it, my son.'

Even as a man, O my son, who had been led blindfolded from his land of the Gandharas and then left in a desert place, might wander to the East and North and South, because he had been taken blindfolded and left in an unknown place, but if a good man took off his bandage and told him "In that direction is the land of the Gandharas, go in that direction," then, if he were a wise man, he would go asking from village to village until he would have reached his land of the Gandharas; so it happens in this world to a man who has a Master to direct him to the land of the Spirit. Such a man can say: "I shall wander in this world until I attain liberation; but then I shall go and reach my Home."

This invisible and subtle essence is the Spirit of the whole universe. That is Reality. That is Truth. THOU ART THAT.'

Is there anything higher than thought?

Meditation is in truth higher than thought. The earth seems to rest in silent meditation; and the waters and the mountains and the sky and the heavens seem all to be in meditation. Whenever a man attains greatness on this earth, he has his reward according to his meditation.

7.6

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FROM THE CHANDOGYA UPANISHAD



S.Y. Centres & Phone List

Next Edition Coming!

If you have not already done so, please notify additions and corrections, as soon as possible, to:

John Dobbie, phone 02 416 2373, fax 02 416 1202
15 Pleasant Ave, East Lindfield, NSW 2070

Name, phone no., address, birthdate

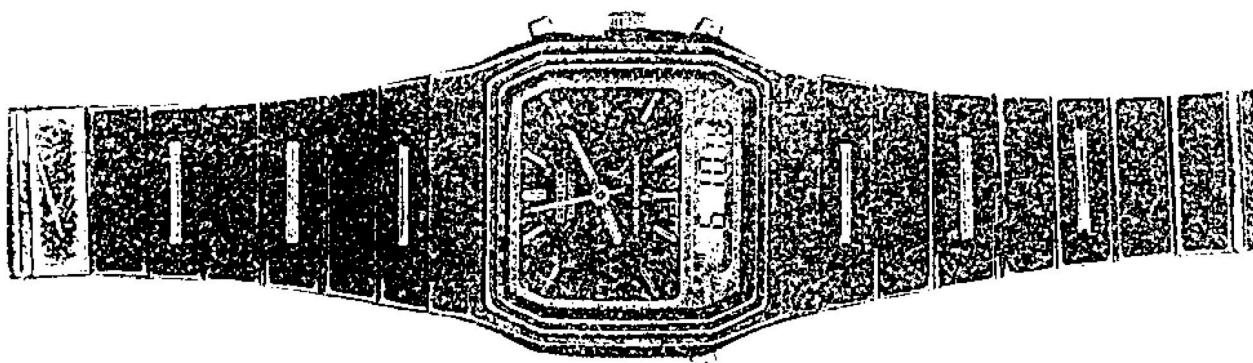


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MANS WATCH FOUND

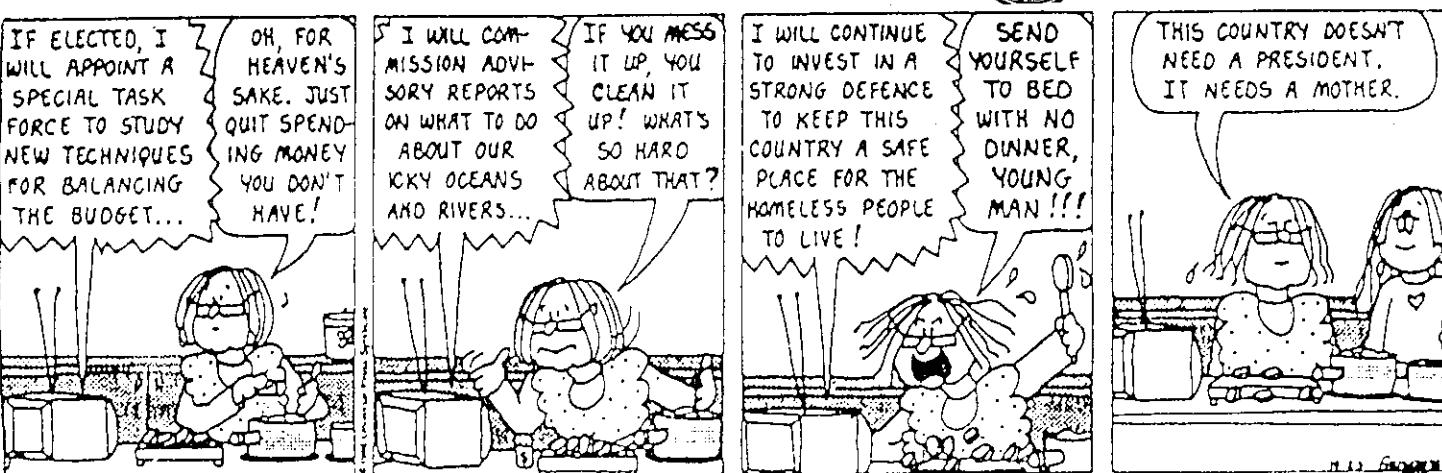
Behind altar at Burwood. Maybe someone on setting up the puja before last.
See Aneil at Burwood - 747 4835.

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The hankering for money goes away in Sahaja Yoga. You are so blessed that you start getting whatever you like. Another way, even before your Lakshmi principle is satisfied, is that if you get your self-realization you can short circuit the whole thing and then also you can enter into Mahalakshmi principle. But you have become overly rich and if that richness has gone into your head and you think no end of yourself, then there are still some chances of getting into Sahaja Yoga. For example, if a very rich man gets sick, or his children start misbehaving, or suddenly he gets a bad reputation, some sort of a shock for his right side can push him to the center. "Left sided people are who are suffering too much because they are poor, because they are lethargic, because they don't know how to get to their jobs and they have no ambitions, nor do they compete—in a way they are in a better situation than the rich because they don't have to worry so much about income tax—as if they have solved their problems by having no income, no car."

With everything that you possess, so-called, you have a problem till you develop a complete detached feeling about it. "So then what happens to you that when you start, all these problems are creeping up. In India specially I have seen people become generous—very miserly people also become generous. They become so fed up with their so-called wealth, they start distributing it and giving it away."



How do you mean, "fair"?

Economists are not merely dismal, it appears, but selfish and unco-operative, as well

SOMEBODY, presumably Groucho Marx, once offered the following advice: "The secret of success is honesty and fair dealing. If you can fake those, you've got it made."

If you aren't smiling, you may be cut out for economics. Students of the subject are trained to regard self-interest as the force that decides economic choices. It is easy to imagine cases where cheating is advantageous. The economist's view is: others will see that the logic of the situation calls for cheating, so you had better cheat, too. This idea pervades the literature. But here's a disturbing thing: it may be having some effect. Nothing personal, but economists are an unpleasant lot.

The evidence is in a new paper by a team of one economist and two psychologists from Cornell University*. It reviews several behavioural studies. In one, first-year graduate students were asked to take part in an experiment. They were given some money, and told to divide it into two accounts, one "private", one "public". Money in the private account was given to the student at the end of the experiment. Money in the public account was pooled, multiplied by a factor of more than one (the exact figure varied), and then divided equally among all the students.

For society as a whole, as it were, the best thing is for the students to put all their money into the public account. That creates the biggest pie, which is then shared equally. But for each individual student, the best thing is to put everything into the private account. That way, you get back all your own stake, plus a full share of the pool provided by the suckers. The study found that economics students contributed, on average, 20% of their stakes to the public account. Students of other subjects contributed 50%.

The researchers then asked the students to explain their actions: had they worried about whether their decision had been fair? Nearly all the non-economists said yes, they had worried. The response of the economists was different.

More than one-third of the economists either refused to answer the question regarding what is fair, or gave very complex, uncodable responses. It seems that the meaning of "fairness" in this context was somewhat alien for this group. Those who did respond were much more likely to say that little or no contribution was fair.

ECONOMICS FOCUS

Another study involved a game played by an "allocator" and a "receiver". The allocator was given \$10 and asked to divide the cash between himself and the receiver. The receiver could either accept the division (in which case, both parties kept the sums proposed by the allocator) or refuse it (in which case, both got nothing).

Fairness calls for an equal split. But what does self-interest tell the allocator to do? Only a non-economist could ask. The answer is: keep \$9.99, and give the receiver one cent. The receiver will not refuse because one cent is better than nothing (and self-interest does not understand spite). Note also that the game was played just once for each pair, so there was



no reason for the receiver to refuse in the hope of prompting a better offer next time. As before, the study found that economics students "performed significantly more in accord with the self-interest model" than non-economists.

Other studies have found the same. A survey asked 1,245 randomly selected college professors how much they gave to charity each year. About 9% of the economics professors gave nothing; the proportion of professors in other disciplines giving nothing ranged between 1.1% and 4.2% (despite generally lower incomes than the economists). The median gift of economists to big charities such as the United Way and viewer-supported public television was substantially smaller than the median gift of non-economists.

The prisoner's dilemma—a game where two players have to decide whether to co-operate with each other or cheat—

has long been of great interest to economists. The key feature is that for each player, "defecting" secures the best outcome regardless of what the other does. But if both players accept this logic and defect, they end up worse off than if they had co-operated. The Cornell team conducted an experiment involving 267 prisoner's dilemma games. Economics students defected 60% of the time; non-economists defected 39% of the time.

Does training in economics make you mean—or is it just that mean people are somehow attracted to economics? To find out, the Cornell team did a further experiment, to see whether students became more or less "honest" in a hypothetical situation, after doing some economics. They compared three sets of students: the first took a course in mainstream microeconomics, taught by an instructor with an interest in industrial organisation and game theory; the second took a similar course, but taught by a specialist on development in Maoist China; the third took a placebo (astronomy).

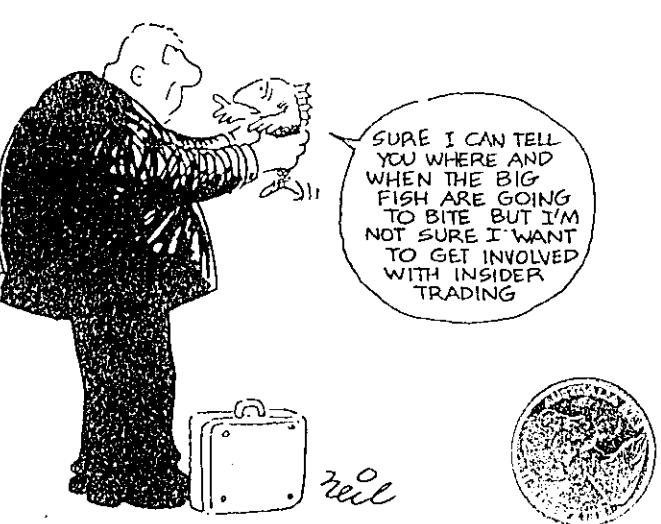
Across a range of questions, the pattern was consistent: the first set contained the largest proportion of students who became less honest; next came the second set; honourably in the rear were the astronomers, with the smallest proportion of students who became less honest.

Perhaps, then, there is a public interest in curbing the study of economics. Or alternatively—a conclusion that this column would prefer to endorse—economics needs to take psychology more seriously. The fact is that people do co-operate more than the self-interest model (useful though it is) seems to predict. As the Cornell team points out, recent research sheds light on one reason for this.

Imagine a world in which people move from one prisoner's dilemma to the next (ie, the real world). If people can choose their "partners" freely, and if honest types can spot each other in advance, co-operators will be able to interact selectively with each other—and will therefore do better than cheats. Experiments have shown that people are surprisingly good at telling co-operators and cheats apart, even on the basis of what seems to be limited information.

So there you have it: narrowly self-interested behaviour is ultimately self-defeating. Economics practised with that in mind could become the uplifting science. If economists can only incorporate a bit of psychology, they've got it made.

* "Does Studying Economics Inhibit Co-operation?" By Robert Frank, Thomas Gilovich and Dennis Regan. Journal of Economic Perspectives, Spring 1993.



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"This acquisition instinct is now ending up into something which is very cheap, vulgar, and immoral. The fondness for showing off is so much that you are sometimes shocked.... See where we have ended up into our acquisition instinct. Such rotten things we are eating," like cheese which smells so horrible. "If you take that cheese, you cannot smell anything rotten. Even if they go to hell, they won't feel bad because the smell will be the same. Where should we put them? They are so immune to that dirty smell. It is absolutely sub-human."

The acquisition instinct becomes a political ascent, aggressing other countries and people. "So the whole attitude of human beings changes. They think, 'We are the lord. We can hate anyone. We aggress anyone. We can be arrogant with anyone. We can demand anything. We can take away anybody's wife, take away anybody's child.... As a result, the love is lost.... Compassion is lost.... With that you also develop... a sense of 'my' and 'mine.'" God has created everything so how can we say that something is ours?

