



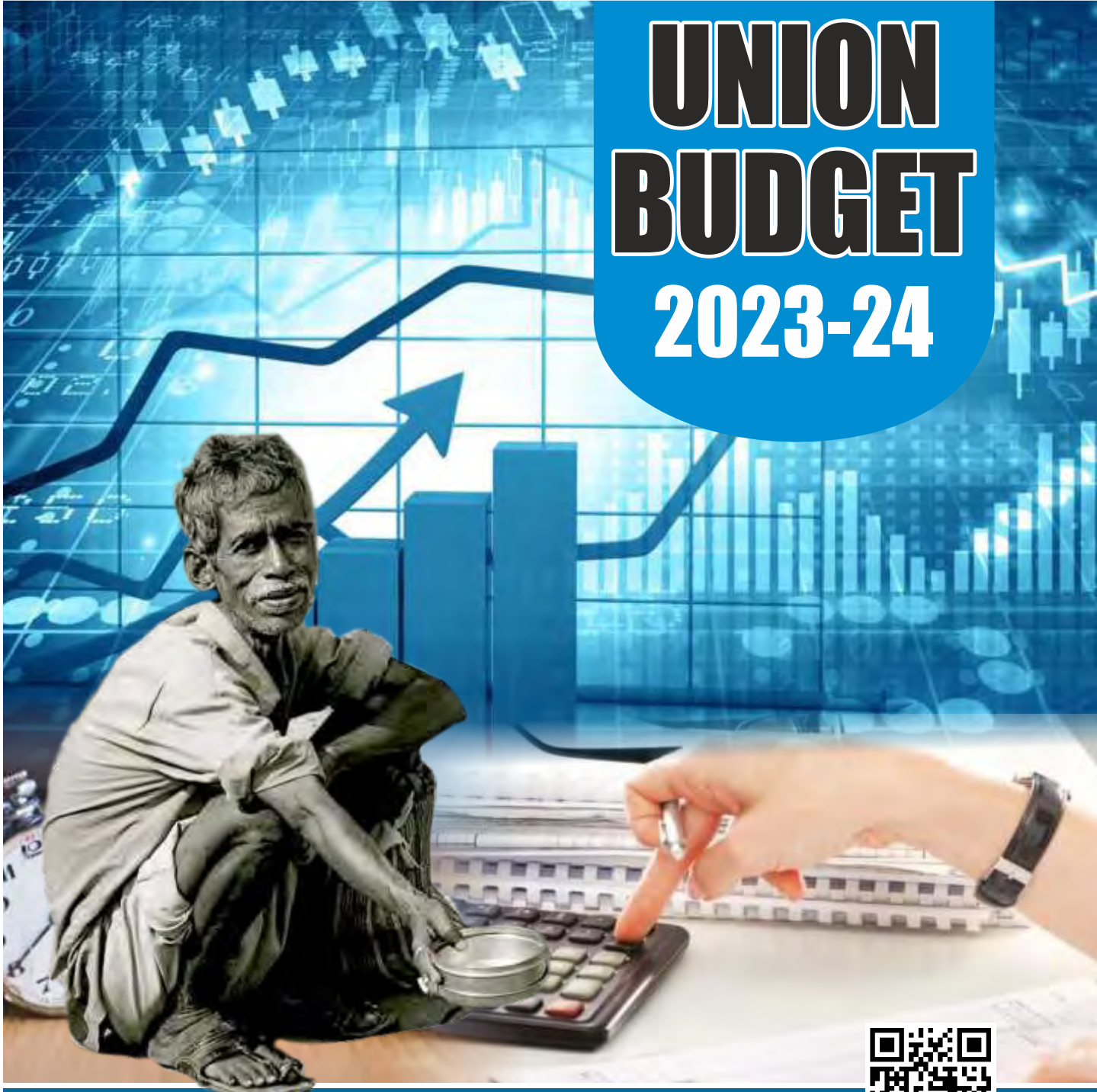
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PROUT

A Journal of Proutistic Views and Neo-Humanistic Analysis

UNION BUDGET 2023-24



09

"THE OVERALL WELL-BEING OF SOCIETY IS THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF A DECENTRALIZED ECONOMY."

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"IN 2014 THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA RECOGNISED TRANSGENDER PEOPLE AS A THIRD GENDER."



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All other beings' lives are for material enjoyment, but human life is for higher pursuits, something more elevated.

– Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

Fundamental Principles of PROUT

1

No individual should be allowed to accumulate any physical wealth without the clear permission or approval of the collective body

2

There should be maximum utilization and rational distribution of all mundane, supra mundane and spiritual potentialities of the universe

3

There should be maximum utilization of the physical, metaphysical and spiritual potentialities of unit and collective body of the human society.

4

There should be a proper adjustment amongst these physical, metaphysical, mundane, supra mundane and spiritual utilizations.

5

The method of utilization should vary in accordance with the changes in time, space and person and the utilization should be of progressive nature.

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

REQUIRED – RURAL ECONOMY BUDGET



he presentation of the Union Budget by the Finance Minister is meant to reflect both short and long-term economic policies and prospects facing the nation. India's economy and the global economy took a tremendous beating due to the Covid pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war.

But as per Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) data, neither employment nor incomes have entirely recovered from the Covid shock. Workforce participation levels remain on an average of five percentage points. Moreover, household income levels (a low Rs 6000 per person) are 90% below pre-covid levels, and household financial savings have reached record lows.

On the other hand, high profits and low corporate taxes have failed to bring in more investment. The burden of creating demand has fallen on the public sector, mainly capital expenditure on infrastructural projects. Therefore, even the efficacy of this strategy is doubtful.

For the ordinary person, the more pertinent question is, while economic growth may pick up again, how it will help the long-standing job problem is an open question. Creating good quality, productive jobs has proved difficult for many countries; India is no exception, but India has performed very poorly in the direct linking of growth to jobs. As a result, the relationship between growth and jobs is almost nonexistent.

So what is the answer to the job problem besides economic growth? First, a particular policy focus is needed on employment itself. It becomes all the more critical as the rate of open unemployment among educated youths in India has reached alarming levels, and this does not take into account women who tend to drop out of the labour force entirely. Public infrastructure spending can be part of the solution since it not only creates direct and indirect jobs but also improves the ease of doing business and helps to create jobs. But to make a difference for micro and small businesses, investment in local infrastructure is needed in thousands of small towns, rural areas, and cities across the country, not just in a few mega projects or metro areas.

Given larger fiscal deficits, there is pressure on the Govt. of India to control expenditures. The pandemic has not affected but has benefited larger firms and more affluent households. The Budget is an exercise in balancing interests, particularly the interests of the commoner. But why should the interest of 90 % of workers who belong to the unorganized sector and contribute more than half the country's GDP be forgotten? Similarly, the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) cannot be ignored at the expense of the large-scale and bigger ones!

Of course, all this is a capitalistic economic approach, but could there be an even better one? Yes — concentrate on the development of the rural economy. In this regard, Prout's founder Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar's words are relevant: "A rural economy should not depend solely on cottage industries, otherwise the economic welfare of the rural population will be jeopardized. If cottage industries are properly organized, rural women will also get ample scope to earn a decent livelihood. Cooperatives and the local administration will have to take the responsibility of supplying cottage industries with raw materials so that they do not suffer from scarcity".

And there is a people's economy that "includes employment for all; the eradication of mass poverty; the development of rural economy; the phase-wise socialization of land into the hands of those who work physically or intellectually for proper production; practical training programmes to impart skills which enable people to find employment in their immediate urban or rural locality; work placement; and the transportation, trans-shipment, loading and unloading of any materials, even if they are not economically viable in the short-term. It is also concerned with the generation of cheap power and the supply of water, which are essential if people are to control their local economies". ●



Democracy and the people

Democracy was and will never indeed be the government of the people by the people and for the people unless Capitalism and money power are taken out of it. So the excellently designed cover is very appropriate and says it all. And as Prout's founder rightly says, people must have the requisite qualifications to exercise their franchise and make a wise choice for electing leaders.

- **Kantamneni Naidu,**
Chennai

Capitalism and Inequality

It is an excellent article highlighting how capitalism, through history, has been the cause of inequality and most of society's problems.

- **Bhakti Singh,** Jaipur

Idle Temple Wealth

What a shame when millions are starving; all this wealth in temples and churches lies idle. Why should this not be put to

better use in the name of humanity?

- **Elizabeth Cooper,** Salem

Water Crisis

It is an excellent article about the grave water crisis facing Earth. It has been said that the next major war between nations would be fought not for land but water.

- **Suman Lekhi,** Gwalior

Coordinated-Cooperation Based Cooperatives

In today's world, for the future of human society, cooperatives for consumption and not capitalism for profit is the answer.

- **Ray D'Souza,** Goa

Race for Reservation

Job reservation which has been prevalent in India since independence has not helped to eradicate poverty. Some sections of society may have benefitted, but most people remain poor. So this is not the answer at all.

- **Manju Dubey,** Lucknow

Forgotten

Santhal Rebellion

It is a less-known story of history. Almost everybody remembers the 1857 Uprising as it is taught in schools, but no one knows what happened two years before that. Thank you, Prout, for publishing this piece of history.

- **Bhagat Ram Bakshi,**
Morena

Tiananmen Square Massacre 1989

What an excellent recap of events by an eyewitness of the horrific massacre of 1989 in Beijing, China. Though the Chinese government tried hard to erase

memory, human beings being what they are, history will never forget, and the fight for freedom of thought and expression continues.

- **Suzie Wang,** Taiwan

Marginalization of the Unorganised Sector

The unorganized sector contributes 50% of India's GDP; still, they are marginalized and neglected. It is shameful, and this imbalance should be urgently corrected.

- **Laxman Jha,** Patna

Energy and Matter

The article is an eye opener on the subtle sciences that pervades all over the universe. As a lot of these is beyond normal human understanding further research still needs to be done to explore these realms of the unknown.

- **Kanika Chatterjee,** Burdwan

Magnificent February Issue

February 2023 issue is magnificent, featuring such important topics: Capitalism and Inequality; Idle Temple Wealth; Water Crisis; Consciousness, Energy and Matter; Phased Implementation of Coordinated Cooperatives; Forgotten Santhal Rebellion of 1855; Recalling 1989 Tiananmen Square, Beijing; Unorganised Sector Is Being Throttled, Further Marginalized. It makes me feel so much more committed to preparing and publishing Prout books every three years to be employed to offer Prout courses in colleges—as there is so much to talk about.●

- **Acarya Dhanjoo Ghista,**
USA

With an MBA, 32-year-old Eliyas Rahman of Dhubri, Assam, could have easily taken up a plum job in a city and enjoyed a comfortable life. He chose to wage a battle against child marriage instead in Assam since 2015 and is bravely fighting against this social evil despite receiving threats to his life. He visits remote villages to create awareness about the ills of child marriage, rampant in the regions inhabited by Bengali-speaking migrants. The parents, mostly illiterate and poor, consider daughters a burden on the family and marry them off at an early age. Rahman's approach is two-pronged. First, he tries to prevent such marriages by counseling the families or alerting the police.

"In 2015 a man in my village had fixed the marriage of his 13-year-old daughter. When I learnt about it, I took to Facebook to mobilise public opinion against it. When that didn't work, I visited the local police station and intimated them about the minor girl being married off," says Rahman. However, the police failed to stop it. Days later, Rahman says he learnt about another impending wedding of a 14-year-old boy with a 12-year-old girl. "I visited the houses of both families, but they were hostile. They said it was an issue between their families and I had no business to interfere. So I took the resistance as a challenge and that's how my fight began," he says.



Subhas Dutta

One Man Army in Assam and West Bengal Against Child Marriage



liyas Rahman

Rahman created Facebook and WhatsApp groups, writing extensively on the ills of child marriage and requesting users to inform him whenever they learn about a marriage involving a minor, assuring he would not reveal their identity. "It paid off. People started coordinating with me. Today, I get at least three to four phone calls from people every day. I work in coordination with the police and Childline (a helpline service for children in distress). Every time I am informed of an impending wedding of a minor, I pass on the information to the police and Childline."

"Sometimes, I send my people to the homes of such minors to try and convince their parents that what they are doing is wrong. Some are convinced, others need police intervention," Rahman says. The social crusader attributes the practice to a lack of education. He says many children drop out of school as their poor parents want them to work. Others do not study due to a lack of schools and colleges in their areas, and their parents marry them off.

Child marriage causes health hazards. It also leads to married minor girls having discord with their in-laws. How will a girl aged 12 or 13 years take up the responsibilities of marital life and bringing up children? As a result, divorce is common. He has stopped more than 500 such marriages."

While in the neighbouring state of West Bengal, Subhas Dutta, the headmaster of Maharajpur High School barely 20 km from Birsingha, the birthplace of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, a champion of women's education. He plunged to combat child marriages, advancing a cause close to the heart of a social reformer over 130 years after his death. After classes, microphone in he went from village to village, canvassing against social evil since 2018 and has played a role in stopping 12 child marriages so far.

The trigger was fresh dropouts from school. "We saw 55 students between classes VII and XII dropping out of school in the past year. Among them 27 are girls and most have been married off at this young age. The students did not take examinations. This has concerned me as a teacher," said Dutta and he was joined by two teachers and a few students on his mission. He has also been taking along beneficiaries of Kanyashree — a Bengal government scheme for the girl child — to spread awareness.

"We are doing a door to door campaign, talking to parents about ill effects of child marriage and the laws on this issue. We are listening to families so that we can find a solution together," Dutta said, adding he was determined to bring back the boys who had stopped coming to school to take up jobs. Recently he succeeded in stopping the marriage of a Class IX girl from his school. ●

DECENTRALIZED ECONOMY

"The overall well-being of society is the ultimate goal of a decentralized economy."

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

The most important economic issue before the leaders of all the countries today is how to increase the standard of living of their citizens through the state's economic prosperity. It is a burning question, especially in those countries which are economically backward. However, the matter is not very simple because, in many countries, people are still directly dependent on nature for their subsistence. Moreover, only people from a few countries have utilized their knowledge and wisdom to solve their economic problems.

Most countries in the world – whether capitalist or communist – have adopted the policy of economic centralization. While the economies of capitalist countries are centralized in the hands of a few capitalists or capitalist institutions, the economies of communist countries are

centralized in the hands of the party. After so many years of economic centralization, how successful have these countries been in improving the people's standard of living? To assess this, the main issue is whether or not economic exploitation has been eradicated and the common people have been guaranteed ever-increasing purchasing capacity. In a centralized economy, there is no possibility that economic exploitation can ever be eliminated or that the economic problems of the common people can ever be permanently solved.

As far as India is concerned, the common people have been led astray time and again by vested interests. Political leaders have made innumerable promises, but they have proved to be cruel hoaxes. The policy of economic centralization stands exposed as merely a strategy to accumulate increasing capital in the hands of the capitalists. On the one hand, the

incredulous masses are kept in good humour by promising them something negligible, and on the other hand, the capitalists go on amassing enormous wealth. If we examine why this is happening, we will find the cause evident. The country's economic policies are formulated by a handful of people who are pillars of capitalism.

There is only one way to stop economic exploitation and alleviate the common people's plight: to implement a decentralized economic policy in all sectors of the economy. Successful planning can never be done by sitting in an air-conditioned office thousands of miles away from the place where planning is to be undertaken. A centralized economy can never solve the economic problems of remote villages. Economic planning must start from the lowest level, where the local people's experience, expertise and knowledge can be harnessed for the benefit of all the members of a socio-economic unit. All types of

economic problems can be solved only when economic structures are built based on a decentralized economy.

The basic question is how to remove the unhealthy influence of a centralized economy. The real issue is, who will bell the cat? If the vested interests fail to be guided by righteous intellect, then people will have to take matters into their own hands. They must create circumstantial pressure from all sides, uniting around the slogan: “Abolish centralized economy to end exploitation; establish decentralized economy.” A decentralized economy is the only way people can attain all-round welfare because it will guarantee economic prosperity and pave the way for individual and collective psycho-spiritual progress. Once people's mundane problems have been solved, they will have greater opportunities to develop their potential in the psychic and spiritual spheres. With the establishment of decentralized economy, economic and psycho-economic exploitation will be eradicated, the gap between the rich and poor will be minimized, and individual and collective welfare will be greatly enhanced. It, in turn, will create greater opportunities for the psychic and spiritual progress of all members of society.

Principles of Decentralized Economy

The first principle of decentralized economy is that the local people should control all the resources in a socio-economic unit. In particular, the resources required to produce the minimum requirements must be in local hands, and the local people must control all the industries based on these resources. Local raw materials must be fully utilized to produce all kinds of commodities necessary for the economic development of a socio-economic unit

The second principle of decentralized economy is that production should be based on consumption, not profit. Most countries have adopted profit-oriented economic systems – that is, production is undertaken for profit. Producers give first preference to those items which bring maximum profit, so everywhere there is keen competition regarding the production of the most profitable goods. India is no exception. To increase people's standard of living, a new production system will have to be introduced. Consumption, not profit, should be the underlying motive in the production field. In a decentralized economy, the commodities a socio-economic unit produces will

be sold in the local market. As a result, there will be no uncertainty in the local economy or the economic life of the local population. In addition, money will be circulated within the local market, so there will be no outflow of local capital. Therefore, the possibility of an economic catastrophe in the local economy will be largely eliminated. In such a system, people's income will have an upward trend and their purchasing capacity will continuously increase. No economic system in the world has been able to constantly increase people's purchasing capacity because economic power is concentrated in the hands of a few.

The third principle of decentralized economy is that production and distribution should be organized through cooperatives. Economic centralization is one of the principal reasons for the past failure of the cooperative movement. It is challenging for cooperatives to succeed in an economic environment of exploitation, corruption and materialism, so people cannot accept the cooperative system wholeheartedly. As far as possible, agriculture, industry and trade should be managed through cooperatives. In these sectors of the economy, private ownership should be abolished in stages. The distribution of commodities should be done through consumer cooperatives. Adequate safeguards for cooperatives will also have to be arranged. The cooperative system is a must and only possible through a decentralized economy. The cooperative system and decentralized economy are inseparable.

The fourth principle of decentralized economy is that the local people must be employed in local economic enterprises. Unemployment can never be



solved unless the local people are fully employed in the local economy. Local people should determine the quantum of minimum requirements and the basic policies connected with their economic well-being. If this principle is followed, the problem of outside interference in the local economy will not arise at all.

The fifth principle of decentralized economy is that commodities which are not locally produced should be removed from the local markets. As decentralized economy aims to develop local industries and create employment for the local population, those commodities not produced within the local area should be banished from the local market as much as possible. The local people must utilize the commodities produced in their area to ensure the prosperity of the local economy.

Economic Transformation:

A socio-economic unit's agricultural, industrial and trade policies will have to be formulated according to the principles of decentralized economy. The maximum utilization and rational distribution of local resources and potentialities to ensure full employment should be prioritized, considering that there should be uniform economic development in all regions of a socio-economic unit. The price of agricultural commodities should be fixed rationally by considering the price of commodities; the cost of labour, raw materials, transportation and storage; depreciation; sinking funds; etc. In addition, this price should include a rational profit of not more than fifteen percent of the cost of production. Agriculture will have the same status as the industry in a decentralized economy.

The industrial system must also be reorganized according to the principles of decentralized economy. If a certain part of a



country is over-industrialized, it will impede the economic progress of other regions. Economic decentralization will not allow such a situation to arise. In a decentralized economy, key, medium and small-scale industries will be managed by different groups of people.

A rural economy should not depend solely on cottage industries; otherwise, the economic welfare of the rural population will be jeopardized. If cottage industries are properly organized, rural women will also get ample scope to earn a decent livelihood. Cooperatives and the local administration must be responsible for supplying cottage industries with raw materials, so they do not suffer from shortages.

All kinds of industrial activities, from key industries to cottage industries, should be organized with the cooperation of the local population. Care should also be taken so that the local people set up private enterprises. Furthermore, local people must be given preference in employment, and all local people should be locally employed. If this policy is followed, there will be no surplus or deficit labour among the local people, and if many people come from outside areas, they will not find a place in the local economy.

In the decentralized economy of PROUT, exporting local raw materials is not supported. Only finished goods should be exported

under certain circumstances. After all the requirements of the local people in a socio-economic unit have been met, the surplus goods may be exported, but only to a socio-economic unit with no immediate opportunity or potential to produce them to meet the requirements of those in that unit. Free trade should be encouraged once self-sufficiency is attained. It will help facilitate increased prosperity, encourage economic parity among socioeconomic units, and lead to the formation of larger socioeconomic units.

Another important characteristic of decentralized economy is that money will always remain in circulation; hence the economy will move at an accelerating speed. The value of money depends on the extent of its circulation. The more frequently money changes hands, the greater its economic value. The greater the value of money, the greater the prosperity in individual and collective life, and the greater the opportunities for all-round welfare.

The overall well-being of society is the ultimate goal of decentralized economy. It is a comprehensive ideal and should be established in each and every socio-economic unit. It will bring about economic prosperity and ensure greater opportunities for the psycho-spiritual elevation of all members of society. ●

UNION BUDGET 2023-24

*Can the Saptarishis
provide a shield and
boost?*

■ Ganesh Bhat Sirsi



M

any countries are facing economic recession and struggling to avoid it

becoming a global depression. India cannot be indifferent to these global events, which are affecting not only the nations but have percolated down to the individual level. In this background, the

union budget for 2023-24, which is said to be the foundation budget of the so-called *Amrit Kaal*, is expected to shield the country's economy against global odds and usher in economic progress. Can it do that?

Saptarishis -seven priorities:

The budget has seven priorities, named Saptarishis — inclusive development, reaching the last mile, infrastructure and investment, unleashing the potential, green growth, youth power, and financial sector.

Inclusive development:

The budgetary allocations for minority development, schemes targeted at the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, the disabled, women and child-oriented

schemes are insignificant and are sops. Therefore, the experience does not evidence any significant impact on the intended beneficiaries in transforming their lives.

Reaching the last mile :

Providing free food grains to antyodaya ration card holders itself cannot reach the last mile that would create equity and social justice. Healthcare, education, employment and social security, etc., are also to be considered. The right way in for this is to guarantee the basic necessities of life to everyone by providing adequate purchasing capacity and not by doles. But, unfortunately, the present or the past budgets are never planned in this direction.

Infrastructure and investment :

The 2023–24 budget has made a huge allocation of Rs. 13 lakh crore for capital expenditure. However, all the infrastructure projects they talk about clearly benefit the private sector. Because of large-scale mechanization, the poor may find temporary wage labour in these projects but not sustained employment; meanwhile, the private

corporations will rake in huge profits.

According to a new report by Oxfam, India's top 1% owned more than 40.5% of its total wealth in 2021. The top 10% of the Indian population holds 77% of the total national wealth. 73% of the wealth generated in 2017 went to the richest 1%, while 670 million Indians, who comprise the poorest half of the population, saw only a 1% increase in their wealth. It would take 941 years for a minimum wage worker in rural India to earn what the top-paid executive at a leading Indian garment company earns in a year. The report also points out that the poor in India "are unable to afford even basic necessities to survive". Many reports, including that of the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), etc., reveal India's wealth and income inequality level and the way tax exemption for the rich and indirect taxes like the Goods and Services Tax (GST) has increased the gap.

Traditional economists support the idea of increased government spending at a time of downward trend in the economy. However, in a situation of vast inequalities between the haves and

have-nots, the beneficiaries will be the rich, not the common people.

Unleashing the potential:

Increasing lending to the agriculture sector itself cannot solve the problems. The government has miserably failed to recognise and address the issues of the agriculture sector. The problems and limitations of the agriculture sector have been taught to students for decades; the experts could have taken time to look into those textbooks. A permanent solution to the agrarian crisis lies in working on Cooperative principles at all levels – cultivation, processing, marketing etc. Unfortunately, the budget has not thought in this direction. Creating an agricultural accelerator fund to support rural start-ups would benefit the knowledge economy entrepreneurs, not the poor farmer.

Green growth :

The green growth priority is in the context of climate change, and investments in green energy and carbon-neutral initiatives need to be made. Budgetary allocations involve only the corporate sector and not communities, which should be at the core of such a transformation.



Youth power:

Youth power through skill development in centres of excellence would create apprentices engaging in the formal economy. These newly skilled youth will populate the informal part of the formal sector and work as cheap labour without any social security benefits or add to the swelling number of unemployed. It is possible to create 100% employment opportunities through decentralized economic planning and giving the right over the local resources to the local people. The government has always avoided discussing unemployment, and so has the current Budget.

Financial sector:

Income tax sops announced in the budget may please the middle class, but they do not gain much against inflation and increasing prices. The 2023–24 budget reduced the surcharge for the rich taxpayers, which will stall the move to increase the share of direct taxes in government revenues. Instead, indirect taxes will be imposed to make up the deficit, and that is the middle and low-income groups who have to bear

the burden.

Taking away more than giving:

The strategy of the current rulers is to camouflage their intentions and methods to work for the interest of their financial backers, the big businesses, by appearing to be compassionate towards the poor. The Union Government has been doing so for several years by pursuing 'supply side' policies favouring businesses. It is behind the façade of pro-poor policies. So, the marginalised sections have been given free food and cooking gas, and farmers have been given some cash, among other things. Politically, it has been successful in claiming to be concerned for the marginalised. Yet, the reality is that the marginalised have been losing far more than they have gained in the last many years, leading to rising disparities and distress.

The Union Budget 2023–24 continues with this strategy. It has announced schemes for the marginalised — for farmers, women, dalits, tribals, workers, senior citizens, medium-, small- and micro-enterprises, etc. These sections get little, and they are forced to become permanently dependent on government support

to make them feel politically obliged to the ruling party. The central government continues to tax the poor and middle class compared to the rich class. Nearly 64% of the total GST collected is from 50% of the people in the bottom rung of society, 33% from the middle and rich, and just 3% from the super-rich. The Atmanirbhar Bharat Scheme announced during the lockdown in May 2020 is another example. Out of Rs. 22 lakh crore, the support to the marginalised was less than Rs. 3 lakh crore; the rest was targeted at and cornered by the corporates.

The government believes that concessions to businesses would lead to higher investment and boost the economy. It did not happen, given the shortage of demand due to the marginalized losing or having inadequate purchasing power. The government's claim that India is the fastest-growing large economy is based on the data of the organized sector, without the correct data of the unorganized sector. Major parameters of the economy fail to explain the savage inequality of wealth distribution in society. In reality, the economy is in decline and is not growing.



The government's priorities are reflected in allocations, but it exercises power to impose cuts and reductions in allocation later to favour the business and bureaucrat lobbies.

Overburdened with borrowing:

The budget relies heavily on borrowing - 34% and 20% goes towards Interest payments; this is a pathetic situation for any economy.

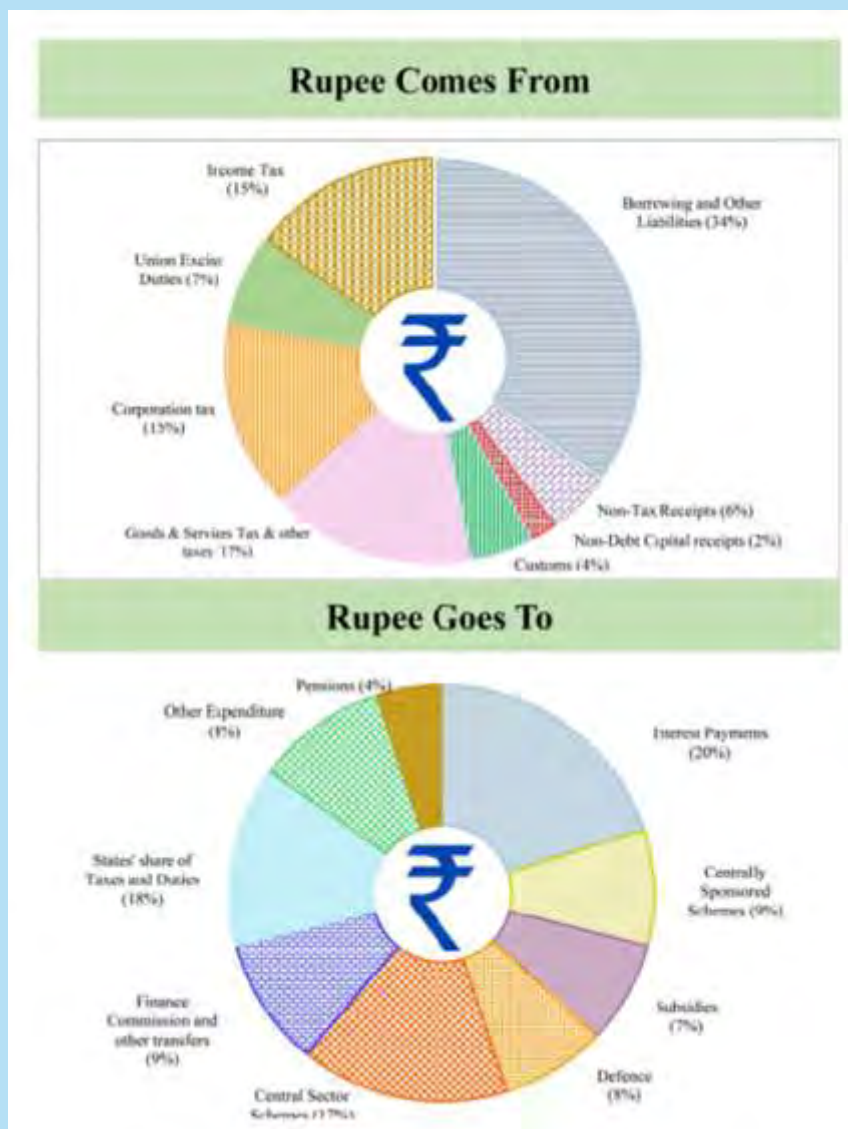
Why not strict measures?

The stock market is a speculative activity, so the trading of stocks needs to be curbed or strictly regulated. However, if the government does not dare to take such steps, alternatively, it can stop the banks from financing corporates against the security of manipulated valuations of shares. Banks have been losing by financing against the security of shares, which are inflated in value by dubious methods. Unfortunately, the government refuses to learn the lesson from the previous and present frauds that are taking place in the share market because the party in power does not want to displease its financial supporters.

The Adani Group shares tanked after the market player, the US-based Hindenburg, published forensic research revealing the modus operandi of scandalous manipulation of share values of the Group to avail investments from Banks. The scale of its operations has become a threat to the very foundations of India's public, private banking and economy.

Impositions of wealth tax, tax on the inheritance of wealth, raising the tax on capital gains, and removing corporate tax expenditures (revenue forgone, which is over 2.5 percent of GDP) are some of the options that can tackle the issue of inhuman inequality in society.

According to Shri Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, the propounder of PROUT, the primary cause of



economic recessions and depressions is the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few. Neither the ruling party's policies nor the union budget 2023 -24 has any proposal or intention to work toward reducing the income gap and concentration of wealth in the hands of few; instead, it is driving it. The ruling party is content with using its 'think tank' for sentimentalized slogans (e.g.- Atmanirbhar, Amrit Kaal, Saptarishi) and not finding an indigenous solution for the economic progress of the society.

With community participation via block-level planning committees, budgets need to be built from below. Citizen engagement and

demanding accountability in making policies, programmes and budgets are critical to transforming their lives. They should be able to bring to account their elected representatives by questioning them continuously and using all democratic institutions. Only such a shift in strategy will create a budget that provides universal access to healthcare, education, welfare and social security and creates equity and social justice.

The so-called Saptarishis of the union budget have neither the capacity to provide a shield to India against the global recession nor the capacity to boost the economy. So where does the Rupee Come from, and where does it Go? ●

A tectonic shift has been behind earthquakes for millennia in the area, including one that flattened the Syrian city of Aleppo in 1138.

TURKEY APOCALYPSE

Its Immense Human Costs

Arjun Prakash

February 6th's earthquake of magnitude 7.8 quake and powerful aftershocks cut a swath of destruction that stretched hundreds of kilometres across southeastern Turkey and neighbouring Syria. It struck before sunrise in harsh weather and was followed in the early afternoon by another large quake, which was big enough to bring down more buildings and, like the first, was felt across the region, endangering rescuers struggling to pull casualties from the rubble. In addition, temperatures in some areas were expected to fall to near freezing overnight, worsening conditions for people trapped under debris or left homeless.

Rain fell on the day the earthquake struck after snowstorms had swept the countryside two days before. Emergency workers worked through another freezing-cold night in a desperate race against the clock to save people trapped beneath rubble after thousands of buildings collapsed. Relatives of victims

armed with pickaxes and crowbars joined frantic rescue efforts in one of the worst-hit Turkish cities, as anguished families said rescue services took too long to respond in some areas. Some international aid is reaching Syria, but access is limited because of damaged roads.

At the time of writing this, the death toll in both countries has crossed 35000 and is expected to rise further as more bodies are being recovered from the rubble. Injured run into many more thousands in both Turkey and Syria. This was Turkey's deadliest earthquake since a tremor of similar magnitude in 1999 devastated the heavily populated eastern region of the Sea of Marmara Sea near Istanbul, killing more



than 17,000. This earthquake was the biggest recorded worldwide by the U.S. Geological Survey since a tremor in the remote South Atlantic in August 2021. The shaking toppled thousands of buildings and heaped more misery on a region wracked by Syria's 12-year civil war and refugee crisis.

Two days later, rescuers raced against time to pull survivors from the rubble before they succumbed to cold weather. Poor internet connections and damaged roads between some of the worst-hit cities in Turkey's south, home to millions of people, hindered efforts to assess and address the impact. Nevertheless, as fears grew for untold numbers buried by the Türkiye earthquake, there were dramatic rescue efforts, including small children emerging from mounds of debris. More than 8000 people have been pulled out of debris in Türkiye alone, and some 380,000 have taken refuge in government shelters and hostels.

Turkish President Erdogan called the quake a historical disaster and the worst earthquake to hit the country since 1939 and said 13 million out of the country's population of 85 million were affected. A state of emergency has been declared in ten provinces for three months. But there was also widespread despair and growing anger at the slow pace of rescue efforts in some areas. Authorities faced criticism from residents of hard-hit Hatay, sandwiched between Syria and the Mediterranean Sea, who say rescue efforts have lagged.

In Syria, residents found a crying newborn still connected by the umbilical cord to her mother, who was dead. The baby was the only member of her family to survive a building collapse in the small town of Jinderis. However, aid efforts have been hampered by the ongoing war and the isolation of the rebel-held region along the border, surrounded by Russia-



backed government forces. In addition, Syria itself is an international pariah under Western sanctions linked to the war. With all this, northern Syria will suffer from the consequences of the earthquakes for "months and months. Simultaneously, communities are hit with an ongoing cholera outbreak and extreme winter events, including heavy rain and snow. In the government-controlled city of Aleppo, footage on Twitter showed two neighbouring buildings collapsing one after the other, filling streets with billowing dust. Syrian state television showed rescue teams searching for survivors in heavy rain and sleet. President Bashar al-Assad held an emergency cabinet meeting to review the damage and discuss the next steps.

Volunteer first responders known as the White Helmets have years of experience rescuing people from buildings destroyed by Syrian and Russian airstrikes in the rebel-held enclave. Still, they say the earthquake has overwhelmed their capabilities.

Mounir al-Mostafa, the deputy head of the White Helmets, said they could respond efficiently to up to 30 locations at a time but now face calls for help from more than 700. "Teams are present in those locations, but the available machinery and equipment are not enough," he said, adding that the first 72 hours were crucial for any rescue effort. The United Nations said it was "exploring all avenues" to get supplies to the rebel-held northwest.

Meanwhile, search teams from nearly 30 countries and aid pledges poured in. On the 7th, India dispatched two Indian Air Force planes C-17 Globemasters, full of aid materials and National Disaster Response Force search and rescue teams, which included women, highly skilled dog squads, medical supplies and other crucial tools required for relief efforts.

But with the damage spread across several cities and towns — some isolated by Syria's ongoing conflict — voices crying for help from within mounds of rubble fell silent. Türkiye is home to millions of refugees from the war. The

affected area in Syria is divided between government-controlled territory and the country's last opposition-held enclave, where millions rely on humanitarian aid to survive. Unstable piles of metal and concrete made the search efforts perilous while freezing temperatures made them ever more urgent as worries grew about how long trapped survivors could last in the cold. Snow swirled around rescuers in parts of Turkiye. The scale of the suffering — and the accompanying rescue effort — were staggering. Many survivors in Turkiye had to sleep in cars outside or in government shelters. Syria is already devastated by 11 years of civil war; the United Nations said 4.1 million people, many of them displaced by the conflict and living in camps, depend already on cross-border

humanitarian aid in northwest Syria and international support efforts are stretched underfunded.

Now the question arises what caused the massive earthquake? Geologically, the area of Turkiye and Syria where the 7.8-magnitude earthquake and its aftershocks have the hardest hit is known for having big quakes, but it had been decades since one this enormous last hit. Geologically this is what happened and why it has caused so much damage. Earthquakes are common in Turkey and Syria as the Arabian Peninsula is part of a tectonic plate making its way north into the Eurasian Plate. As a result, the entire nation of Turkiye is getting squeezed aside. "Arabia has slowly been moving north and has been colliding with Turkiye, and is moving Turkiye out of the way to the west," said Michael

Steckler of Columbia University's Lamont – Doherty Earth Observatory.

That tectonic shift has been behind earthquakes for millennia in the area, including one that flattened the Syrian city of Aleppo in 1138. Recent quakes, such as the 1999 one that struck the city of Izmit, have killed many thousands. Further, this particular region was overdue for a big one. Most of the largest earthquakes in the past century have been along the North Anatolian Fault. And this was a "strike-slip" earthquake. This earthquake occurred because "two pieces of the Earth are sliding horizontally past each other," Steckler says, "It's the same kind of quake that occurs along the San Andreas Fault in California. In this case, the Arabian Plate is sliding past the Anatolian Plate. Geologists warn that more aftershocks are likely. "That whole area, all the pieces of the Earth, will slowly adjust and break and rupture and come to a new equilibrium," Steckler added. The U.S. Geological Survey has recorded over a hundred regional aftershocks, and experts expect they will continue for some time.

The damage caused in terms of material costs to rebuild is yet unknown. Without a doubt, it would run into billions and billions of dollars. Meanwhile, the world sees the horror unfold on television screens and social media around the globe. The untold misery and suffering cannot be described in words or statistics. It is a human tragedy of apocalyptic proportions! Disaster relief is the immediate response to providing food, shelter and medical attention. Money is needed, not old clothes and other sundries people would like to donate. Not only now but also for years from now. Non-Government organizations and charities are willing to help. ●



In Western academic thinking, such questions are questions of moral epistemology, or meta-ethics.



What Right and Wrong Consist of, and Vidyá-Avidyá in a Secular Framework **AN OBJECTIVE MORALITY**

■ Ácárya Acyutananda Avadhúta

Some years ago I started asking myself, what do right and wrong consist of? We know that A and B actions are right, and that X and Y actions are wrong; Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar has given us a lot of specifics in *A Guide to Human Conduct*. But what do right and wrong *consist* of? We speak of right and wrong as having real existences, so what are they made out of?

What I'd like first to do here is

attempt to define what morality is, that is, what right and wrong consist of, what they are made out of – that is, what they are ontologically – in Ananda Marga philosophy. The question is not, for example, “Is killing a chicken for food, when tofu is available, right or wrong?” Supposing it is wrong, the question is, what makes it wrong? And a different, but related, question – can we know that such a thing is wrong, and if so, how can we know? (Supposing

there is not a straightforward answer in *A Guide to Human Conduct*.)

These are crucial questions, and we have all struggled at times with uncertainty about the second question – whether we are able to know what is right and what is wrong – even if when doing so we didn't verbalize the question.

In Western academic thinking, such questions are questions of moral epistemology, or meta-ethics.

In answering the questions I have raised, I will begin by basing my answers, as stated above, on our philosophy, including *Brahma Cakra*, *Vidyámáyá* and *Avidyámáyá*. But in part of this presentation I will do something unusual. I will try to write that part so that it can stand alone in answering the questions, but also so that it will use arguments that do not depend on belief in God or Supreme Consciousness. In that part for secular readers, I will argue (as I don't need to argue for spiritual readers) that there is an objective morality.

The belief that there is an objective morality is known as moral realism. For instance, if it's wrong to kill this chicken here in front of us, is it wrong even if no one knows that it is wrong? If you say yes, you're a moral realist.

I said, "I will try to write that part so that it will use arguments that do not depend on belief in God or Supreme Consciousness." I will do that by arguing basically as follows (see further elaboration later): Even atheists can potentially agree (and a few do agree) that transcendent

experience is the highest good possible for humans ("good" in the sense of "benefit"). Attaining that highest good for oneself positions one to help others attain that highest good, and in most cases if not all, those who have attained it will go on to help others attain it. It is good in a moral sense to facilitate the experience by numerous people of the highest good (if it does not somehow simultaneously do a proportional amount of harm). The experience by numerous people of the highest good is an empirical and measurable (at least theoretically measurable) standard, so any moral principle that facilitates attaining that highest good for oneself (and thus positioning oneself to help others attain it) can be considered an objectively correct principle.

(For instance, if adherence to some idea of how *ahimsá* should be interpreted in a particular situation can help people to attain transcendent experience, then that idea captures an objectively correct moral principle.)

Now let's get back to the question, "What are right and

wrong made out of?," and add, "Or are they just concepts?" There do exist concepts of right and wrong, of course, but simultaneously there are natural phenomena, of some kind, that they are concepts of, so that is what we want to get at. (The view that right and wrong are natural phenomena is called moral naturalism.)

Those phenomena are a reality, not an illusion, and they cannot exist in *Nirguna Brahma*, so they must exist somewhere in the Cosmos, somewhere in the *Saguna Brahma* domain of the Cosmic Cycle. Within *Saguna Brahma*, there are not, broadly speaking, many choices. There are *Purusottama*, *Mahattattva*, *Ahamattattva*, and *citta*. Right and wrong must exist somewhere in the Cosmic *citta*, mustn't they, for what else consists of enough substance? They must be certain configurations of *citta* in a certain *kośa* of the mind, mustn't they, that is, structures made out of mind-stuff? The *citta* is sometimes called the "objective mind" because only it is crude enough to take the forms of objects.

But when P.R. Sarkar has





spoken of “good deeds [*satkarma*], or *Vidyámáyá*” and “evil deeds [*kukarma*], or *Avidyámáyá*” (“How Should Human Beings Live in the World?”), it is hard not to think that *Vidyámáyá* and *Avidyámáyá* must be prominently involved.

I think that the answer to what right and wrong consist of must meet a number of requirements:

Right and wrong must be found in the *citta*, and in human *citta*. If right and wrong as natural phenomena exist anywhere in the Cosmos outside of human minds (for instance in portions of the Macrocosmic *citta* outside of human minds), then in order to have senses/feelings (as we often do) that certain actions are right or wrong (adjectivally), our minds would need to have the experience of referring to those phenomena outside our minds when we evaluate any action or proposed action by ourselves or by others. I don't have such an experience and haven't heard others talking about it, so I think that right and wrong

are not phenomena outside of human minds.

And they must exist in the *citta* of humans, since animals don't commit right or wrong. Whatever animals do is natural for them, and is controlled by the Cosmic Mind.

Those configurations of *citta* will be caused by *Avidyámáyá* operating within human *citta*.

Avidyámáyá is the Cosmic force of extroversion that prevails as the *gunás* tighten their grip on Consciousness throughout *saincara*, and *Vidyámáyá* is the force of introversion that generally prevails in *pratisaincara* as living beings, initially with a dim apprehension of the Goal, face clash and, through struggle, attain cohesion on more subtle levels, resulting in the waning of the *gunás*. *Vidyámáyá* and *Avidyámáyá* are locked in an eternal fight throughout the Cosmos – “The fight between *Vidyá* and *Avidyá* will go on forever.” (*Problems of the Day*)

The fight that goes on is a fight not only in the minds of living beings, but it goes on within the minds of living beings also.

As so far described, *Vidyá* and *Avidyá* seem, as forces, to be symmetrical. But within our philosophy, it is easy to understand *Avidyámáyá* as a causative, creative force, less easy to understand *Vidyámáyá* in that way. *Avidyá* pushes and is pro-active. *Vidyá* pulls and in fact does not create anything completely original; it only works its art with what *Avidyá* has already created, in the process of pulling it all back into the invisible kingdom of *Nirguna Brahma*.

To understand *Vidyá* and *Avidyá* as forces, we want to know what the force of each consists of. We know that the *gunás* are binding forces; force is their nature, exerting force is what they do. And it should be clear that *Avidyámáyá* is just the collective force of the *gunás*. In our philosophy we usually speak of the *gunás* as forces of “crudification”, and speak of *Avidyámáyá* as the force of “extroversion”, but crudification and extroversion are just different names for the same thing.

The *gunás* create. They crudify Consciousness into *Mahattattva* (*Bhaerava* in the Tantric framework), then *Mahattattva* into *Ahamtattva* (*Bhava* in the Tantric framework). Then the *citta* gets crudified out of *Ahamtattva*, and successive stages of *citta* get crudified out of each previous stage. The *citta* is crude enough to take the forms of objects. Some of the mental objects of the Macrocosm are what microcosms perceive as and treat as physical objects external to their minds. But everything that, for microcosms, are their own mental objects (such as a picture in my *citta* of a long-departed college friend) are likewise (simultaneously) among the

mental objects in the Macrocosmic *citta* created in the process of crudification by the *guṇas* and subject to the potential energy thus created that attempts to powder down those objects back into, eventually, *Nirguṇa*. Each thought, perception, and emotion in my mind is a structure made of *citta*, and each is subject at every moment to the push of *Avidyámáyá* and the pull of *Vidyámáyá*.

A component of *Vidyámáyá*, *samvitshakti*, comes into play when *Vidyámáyá* gets the upper hand over *Avidyámáyá* in influencing a person's *citta*. Another component of *Vidyámáyá* is *hláđiniishakti*, and two components of *Avidyámáyá* are *vikśepashakti* and *ávaranīi shakti*. Their roles in the push and

pull should also be analyzed on some occasion.

Now, if *Avidyámáyá* and *Vidyámáyá* were completely symmetrical to each other, then just as *Avidyámáyá* consists of the three *guṇas* that we know, *Vidyámáyá* would have to consist of three "counter-*guṇas*" working to opposite effect – to subtilize, not crudify. But in *pratisaincara*, when *Vidyámáyá* reigns, neither are any counter-*gunas* involved, nor do the *guṇas* we are familiar with turn around and push in an opposite, subtilizing, direction. *Guṇas* can only crudify. The *guṇas* that we know are present in *pratisaincara*, but they are not of course helping in the subtilization project, rather they are resisting it (while gradually, "reluctantly", we

can say, waning).

Tayohsiddhih saincare pratisaincare ca. This means "Puruṣa and Prakṛti find their fulfilment in *saincara* (extroversial movement) and *pratisaincara* (introversial movement)." This may sound at first as though *pratisaincara*, as well as *saincara*, is an expression of *Prakṛti*. However, we know that no material cause, no raw material, exists except consciousness (that which gets crudified in *saincara* and then subtilized in *pratisaincara*), and the *guṇas* are forces of crudification, not subtilization. The Purport of this *sūtra* clarifies that "This appropriation of objectivity by *Prakṛti* depends on Her ever-increasing (*saincara*) **or - decreasing** (*pratisaincara*) influence on *Puruṣa* [**bold added**]." *Pratisaincara* is the product of the **absence**, to one degree or other, of the influence of *Prakṛti*.

Since *Avidyámáyá* never disappears, even in *pratisaincara*, the struggle of living beings is a struggle against the *Avidyámáyá* that operates within their unit minds, impelling them toward crude pleasures and the selfish actions with which they pursue those crude pleasures. At times the *Avidyámáyá* in their minds can even prevail over the *Vidyámáyá* in their minds, resulting in negative *pratisaincara*.

The term *parāshakti* offers us a clear example of the asymmetry between *Avidyá* and *Vidyá*. But let's get eventually to *parāshakti* by first asking, if the subtilization that takes place in *pratisaincara* is the effect of the **absence**, to one degree or other, of the *guṇas*, does that mean that there is no pushing force at all in *pratisaincara*? There is a pushing force, and it is the *kundalīnī*. But in *Brahma Cakra*, the phase of **creation** is *saincara*, which is why *Shambhulīunga* is

continued. on pg 48....





ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY and Peoples' Economy

The economy should also include employment for all, the eradication of mass poverty and the development of the rural economy

■ Prof. R.P. Singh

A developed economy should consist of four parts – the people's economy, the psycho-economy, the commercial economy and the general economy. This quadri-dimension of the economy is a vast expansion on the contemporary and co-contemporary conceptions of economic activity.

People's Economy

People's economy deals with the essential needs of the people in general – the production, distribution, marketing, shipping, storage, pricing, sales, freight charges, pro-forma costing, and all

related activities of such essential needs. Most importantly, it is directly concerned with guaranteed minimum requirements such as food, clothing, housing, medical treatment, education, transportation, energy and irrigation water. Continuous improvement in and ready availability of these requirements is the key factor in people's economy.

The minimum requirements can be assured through guaranteed purchasing capacity, which should be enshrined in the constitution as a fundamental or cardinal human right. It will give the citizens of the

country legal power if their minimum requirements are not met; hence the necessity of purchasing capacity will be reinforced by constitutional law. As people's economy will deal with minimum requirements and people's subsistence problems, it must take precedence over other parts of the economy.---DBT vs Incentives to Cooperative.

People's economy should also be concerned with developing private and cooperative industries. Private industries would be limited in size and scope to prevent monopoly production and

exploitation and would be required to function as cooperatives once they grow too large. Cooperative industries are the best means of independently organizing people so that they take collective responsibility for their livelihood.

People's economy also includes employment for all; the eradication of mass poverty; the development of the rural economy; the phase-wise socialization of land into the hands of those who work physically or intellectually for proper production; practical training programmes to impart skills which enable people to find employment in their immediate urban or rural locality; work placement; and the transportation, trans-shipment, loading and unloading of any materials, even if they are not economically viable in the short-term. It is also concerned with the generation of cheap power and water supply, which are essential if people are to control their local economies. Finally, it includes economic decentralization, cooperative dynamo and block-level planning.

Economic Democracy

In all countries where democracy is in vogue today, people have been

deceived into believing there is no better system than political democracy. Political democracy has no doubt granted voting rights but has snatched away the right to economic equality. Consequently, there is gross economic disparity between the rich and the poor, immense inequality in people's purchasing capacity, unemployment, chronic food shortages, poverty and insecurity.

The type of democracy prevalent in India is also political democracy, which has proved to be a unique system of exploitation. The Indian constitution was created by three groups of exploiters: the British imperialists, the Indian imperialists and the ruling parties representing the Indian capitalists. All the provisions of the Indian constitution were framed, keeping an eye on furthering the interests of these opportunists. To hoodwink the masses, the people were granted the right of universal suffrage. As a result, millions of Indians are poor, superstitious and illiterate. Yet, the exploiters repeatedly win over the electorate through such practices as making false promises, intimidation, gross abuse of administrative power, and vote rigging. It is the farce of

democracy. Once they form the government, they can indulge in corruption and political tyranny for five years. The same absurdity is repeated in the subsequent elections – whether on the provincial or state level.

The prerequisites for the success of democracy are morality, education and socio-economic-political consciousness. Leaders especially must be people of high moral character; otherwise, the welfare of society will be jeopardized. But today, in most democracies, people of dubious character and those with vested interests are elected to power. Even bandits and murderers stand for election and form the government.

The days of political democracy are numbered. PROUT demands economic democracy, not political democracy. To make democracy successful, economic power must be vested in the hands of the common people, and the minimum requirements of life must be guaranteed to all. It is the only way to ensure the economic liberation of the people. PROUT'S slogan is: "To end exploitation we demand economic democracy, not political democracy."

Economic Decentralization

In economic democracy, economic and political power are bifurcated. That is, PROUT advocates **political centralization and economic decentralization**. Political power is vested with the moralists, but economic power is vested with the local people. The principal goal of the administration is to remove all the impediments and obstacles preventing the people's economic needs from being met. The universal aim of economic democracy is to guarantee the minimum requirements of life to all members of society.

Nature has been kind enough to provide abundant natural

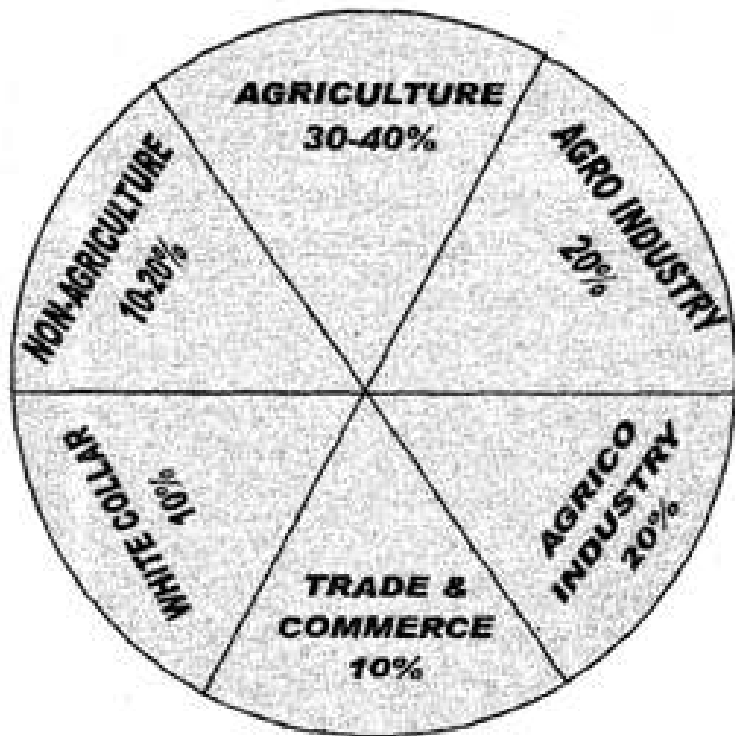


resources to every region of this earth. Still, she has not given guidelines on how to distribute these resources among the members of society. This duty has been left to the discretion and intelligence of human beings. Those guided by dishonesty, selfishness and mean-mindedness misappropriate these resources and utilize them for their individual or group interests rather than for the welfare of the whole society. Mundane resources are limited, but human longings are limitless. Hence, for all the members of society to live in peace and prosperity, human beings must adopt a system that ensures the maximum utilization and rational distribution of all resources. To achieve this, humans must establish themselves in morality and create a congenial environment for morality to flourish.

Economic decentralization means production for consumption, not production for profit. Economic decentralization is impossible under capitalism because capitalist production always tries to maximize profit. Capitalists invariably produce at the lowest costs and sell at the highest profits. They prefer centralized production, which leads to regional economic disparity and imbalances in population distribution. On the other hand, in the decentralized economy of PROUT, production is for consumption, and the minimum requirements of life will be guaranteed to all. All regions will get ample scope to develop their economic potentiality, so the problems of a floating population or overcrowding in urban centres will not be allowed to arise.

Unless a country attains optimum development in industry and other sectors of the economy, it can't be highly developed. If more than thirty to forty-five percent of a country's population is engaged in agriculture, there will be excessive

BALANCED ECONOMY



pressure on the land. Such a country cannot become highly developed, nor can there be balanced, decentralized development in all sectors of the economy. India is a classic example of this. Presently about fifty-five percent of India's population is dependent on agriculture for its livelihood.

In all the democratic countries of the world, economic power is concentrated in the hands of a few individuals and groups. In liberal democracies, economic power is controlled by a handful of capitalists, while in socialist countries, economic power is concentrated in a small group of party leaders. In each case, a handful of people – the number can be easily counted on one's fingertips – manipulates the economic welfare of the entire society. When economic power is vested in the hands of the people, the supremacy of this group of leaders will be terminated, and political parties will be destroyed forever.

Political Democracy or Economic Democracy

People will have to opt for either political democracy or economic democracy. That is, they will have to choose a socioeconomic system based on either a centralized or decentralized economy. Which one will they select? Political democracy cannot fulfill the hopes and aspirations of people or provide the basis for constructing a strong and healthy human society. The only way to achieve this is to establish economic democracy.

For the success of economic democracy, the economic welfare of all people must be enhanced step by step. It, in turn, will lead to greater opportunities for the spiritual emancipation of human beings. Finally, it should be remembered that economic democracy is essential for the economic liberation of human beings and for the universal well-being of all – including plants and animals. Furthermore, economic democracy will devise ways and means to effect the smooth progress of society by recognizing the unique value of humans and non-humans - animate and inanimate. ●

Humans are social beings; collective existence is fundamental to our nature. Society is necessary for the full range of human expression. Without it, humankind could not have tilled the ground, built the pyramids, crossed the oceans, composed sacred hymns, or walked on the moon. No lasting, modest or monumental human achievement has been possible without a social structure. So the word “society” conveys a sense of collective living. But the innate spirit of a society involves more than just collective existence; it also implies people moving together. So society has two essential characteristics: collective existence and collective movement. Further, this cooperative movement should be united. So a definition of society should include a sense of moving together in unison.

Each person possesses strengths and weaknesses, abilities and shortcomings. Some have intellectual capacity but little strength or skill; others have brawn but lack intellect; and still, others possess neither great physical nor mental ability but have a charming personality or great integrity. Each has strengths, but none possesses all-round ability. All of us are dependent on the complementary capacities of others, so we mutually benefit by living and working in a cooperative spirit.

But coordinated, mutually beneficial activity does not, in itself, constitute the ideal spirit of society. There must also be a magnanimous breadth to our

The Concept of SOCIETY

“Not only are we socially interdependent, but with the advancement of culture, our mutual dependency increases.”

■ Ravi Logan



cooperation. Where there are competing nation-states, antagonistic power blocks, or hostile ethnic or religious groupings, humanity becomes divided, and each social group tries to exist at the expense of others. What is needed is one human society that encompasses all humanity.

Establishing Social Bonds

The durability and resiliency of social unity are determined by the nature of the mutual interests which bring people together. A common source of social cohesion is mutual self-interest, and, in some situations, mutual self-interest is very effective in uniting people. For example, among people

trying to free themselves from oppression, their joint fight creates a powerful unity. But this social cohesion, forged in pursuing a common cause, may soon dissolve when freedom is attained. Narrower self-interests then reassert themselves, and a self-dividing tendency arises. So it occurred in many nations that threw off colonialism in the post-World War II era, where a rise followed their national independence in tribal, regional or ethnic antagonisms.

Consider the post-war history of India. The people of the Indian subcontinent were united in their struggle for independence from Great Britain. But, as independence was being settled, Pakistan separated from India. Soon after independence, conflict began between India and Pakistan, sometimes erupting into open conflict. Then, in the early 1970s, West and East Pakistan fell into civil war, with Bangladesh eventually establishing itself as a separate nation. The tendency of societies to self-divide around self-interest creates many sorts of social groupings so that even within the same nation, there may be numerous subgroups. Taking India again as an example, there are several religious groups — Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and Sikhs. Among the Hindus, there are yet further subdivisions based on caste, and the castes are, in turn, subdivided into sub-castes.

What would be the result if self-interest were followed to its logical conclusion? Shall we finally declare each family a society unto itself? But then, who would provide for the orphaned, the outcast, the widowed and the wanderers? Obviously, self-interest cannot properly serve as a basis for humanity's unity. A strong and universal society can never arise out of narrow motivations. If society were formed only on this basis, many would become



isolated from the collective movement, and society would lose its essential quality of moving together in unison.

In today's world, group self-interest has strained and frayed the social fabric, sometimes rending it completely. Humanity is without strong unity. We cannot move unitedly, despite the immense challenges that confront us. We need a sentiment capable of forging resilient and universal social bonds. The alternative to mutual self-interest is mutual love. Love is by nature inclusive. A society based on mutual love would bring all into its fold.

Social Justice:

All people are socially dependent. Some boast of being self-reliant and can eke out independently. But this is ridiculous, as all the tools and amenities they use and benefit from have been created by the very society they claim to be independent of. For example, they may grow their food but purchase their shovel and rake at a hardware store.

Not only are we socially interdependent, but our mutual dependency increases with the advancement of culture. As human

culture develops, there comes greater complexity of social relations, advances in science and technology, new media of communication, refinements of artistic expression, diversification of industry, etc. All this necessitates more specialization of skills and roles. Inevitably, our reliance on others grows.

The sensible way to adjust to our increasing social interdependency is not through striving for self-reliance but through becoming more nurturing, helpful and collaborative in our relations with others.

Each of us holds the same inherent worth; we possess common existential importance by virtue of all being the progeny of the same earth and cosmos. Therefore, if we accept our common origins, we must also accept our common and inherent right to benefit from the social institutions established for human welfare. But, when society comes under the control of those who lack social consciousness and act out of self-interest, many are deprived of their rightful access to society's benefits. It also occurs when a large portion of the population becomes tolerant of exploitation

and denies a level playing field for others.

Exploitation and denial of opportunity are not just problems of the downtrodden and oppressed. Social oppression affects everyone. The parasitic activity of those who exploit others not only leeches the vital force of the exploited but diminishes the vitality of the whole society.

Social oppression occurs in most nations. However, due to unnatural social divisions, the absence of cooperative zeal, and a lack of resistance to injustice, a few big capitalists, party bureaucrats, corrupt politicians, and military strongmen can abuse their power and cause great suffering.

Socially conscious people must establish a genuinely human society. It would be a society for humanity imbued with a collective spirit, and its cooperative movement would be motivated by mutual love. In such a society, people would value their interdependency and vigilantly safeguard social justice.

Social Dynamism:

Human culture continuously evolves. We constantly alter our physical and psychic environments, creating new conditions that must

be progressively adjusted lest society loses its dynamism.

If social dynamism is not impeded by self-interest, oppression and exploitation, then society will be better able to maintain its progressive bearing and harmonious movement. As a result, there will be minimal impediments in the flow of human endeavours, and society's vast potentiality will get freely expressed. But if a lack of collective spirit obstructs social dynamism, then human nature's baser, brutish side gets expressed. As a result, humanity experiences holy wars, ethnic cleansing, imperialist conquests, cultural genocide, civil conflicts, and other evils.

While such sordid activities have smeared the innate nobility of humanity, our potential for social dynamism is never lost. Higher human aspirations, however, suffocated, cannot die altogether. On the contrary, the human urge for freedom from bondages eventually reasserts itself. Our longing for liberation is the dominant motive in our social evolution, ensuring that human society will be resiliently dynamic.

Due to this inherent dynamism, revolt against oppressive rule and outmoded

traditions and philosophies is inevitable. Reactionary elements can forcibly check the rise of progressive change, but this suppression only heightens the human impulse to break the grip of social shackles. Tyrants can be exceedingly ruthless and inflict great suffering on the oppressed mass, but their iron-fisted rule can never permanently stop society's advance. When the irrepressible wave of collective spirit resurges and brings a greater measure of freedom, the dynamic rhythm of cooperative living regains its natural momentum.

The dynamic movement of society does not move forward randomly or by cosmic whim. Human wisdom is needed to maintain the well-adjusted advance of the social order. The wisdom of the social reformers does not come from classroom and textbook training; it comes through immersion in political struggle. They are forced by circumstance to expand their understanding of solutions to human problems.

We may find defects in the philosophies or strategies of these revolutionary leaders, but we should not devalue the spirit of their efforts. We should instead appreciate that their dedication





stems from great feelings of love, which expresses the true spirit of society.

Social Progress:

Society is the moving together of all in unison. But toward what purpose is our collective movement undertaken? If our social existence lacks a clear purpose, our human potential will not be properly expressed. We may put astronauts on the moon but not form strong psyches; we may create powerful technologies for

all to use but not resolve the alienation of the human spirit. Society does not exist only to provide for our physical needs. Our collective movement is not of the same nature as the activity in an ant-hill. Society possesses a purpose beyond providing for biological survival; its inherent rationale is to assist the holistic development of the totality of our human nature.

Our human nature has three aspects: physical, mental and spiritual. Each of them requires

nurturing, and each benefits from collective living. No aspect of our three-fold nature should be neglected by society. But this alone does not make clear the goal of our existence, nor the purpose and direction of social movement. The culmination of human achievement lies in spiritual attainment. Only through spiritual experience can we satiate our restless human longings and be liberated from the bondages built by desire. Special importance should therefore be given to developing our higher human faculties – our capacity for selfless love and our potential for transcendental experience.

If spirituality provides the ultimate goal for individual existence, then society's ultimate *raison d'être* is to support the spiritual endeavours of its members. According to PROUT, social progress should be defined as humanity's concerted and united effort to help each and every human's journey to the destined cosmic realization. The collective body of those people who are cooperatively engaged in this endeavor to move toward cosmic realization is the true human society. ●





A common but curious sight of the Indian bazaar is the eunuch, commonly called hijras. They beg from merchants and traders who quickly, under threat of obscene abuse, respond to the silent demand. ON occasions, especially festival days, they press their claims with boisterous and ribald singing and dancing. At the same time, they perform a certain complex social function. They are expected though unwanted visitors at wedding parties and birth celebrations where they demand their share of the general largesse. Seen solely as one element in the fabric of contemporary society, the



"In 2014 the Supreme Court of India recognised transgender people as a third gender."

The Repressed EUNUCHS

 Karunakshim Vatsalam

life of a hijra in India is 'an alternative social role which caters not only for the temperamental misfits but also for disavowed yet persistent needs of the community as a whole. Like the vast Indian underworld, those living on the fringes, the beggars, the touts, petty criminals, sex workers and the eunuchs have been much neglected.

Eunuchs were once common over the width of Eurasia. They are fleetingly referred to in ancient Assyrian and Babylonian stelae (inscribed stones) and became popular servants. In the Muslim world, they were the perfect choice as harem guards and rose to power as chamberlains, governors and

even generals. They were slaves in Anglo-Saxon England and survived in Italy well into the nineteenth century, singing castrato roles in opera and the Vatican's Sistine choir.

Yet today, eunuchs have died out everywhere except in the subcontinent. Here they are still not uncommon figures in the poorer parts of the larger cities. It is believed that about seven and a half lakh are still surviving. Modern Indian eunuchs dress as women and arrive uninvited at weddings and birth celebrations. They dance and sing and make jokes. From the poor, they extract money in payment for the good luck their blessings are supposed

to impart. From the rich, they take larger sums by threatening to strip unless paid to leave; terrified middle-class party givers will give them anything as long as they go quickly. They are volatile and can sometimes be violent.

Eunuchs have been an integral part of Indian society since time immemorial. Eunuchs were prized as guards of harems and as companions by kings and emperors. An estimated 5–6 million eunuchs live in India. In modern-day India, eunuchs often live a ghetto-like existence in their own communities. They make a living by dancing and celebrating births and marriages but often resort to other means to make both ends meet. Yet, the community is also beginning to make a mark in the national mainstream. A member of the eunuch community, Shabnam Mausi, was elected as a member of the legislative assembly in 1999. Others have been elected as mayors and municipality presidents.

Yet despite their frequent public appearances, very little is known about the Indian eunuchs. They are fiercely secretive and, of their own choice, inhabit a

shadowy world of ambiguity. They trust no one and hate being questioned about their lives; if they are pressed, at best, they will slam their doors in your face. Like most things in Delhi, the curious position of the eunuchs in Indian society can be explained by the head-on collision of two very different traditions; one Muslim and one Hindu. Eunuchs are referred to in Vedic texts. In those early days, the position of eunuchs was at a level even lower than the Untouchables. By the time of the Mahabharata, their position had improved very little. To be a eunuch was a curse; no one was allowed to accept alms from them or consume food prepared by them, and they were excluded from all sacrificial rituals. Gone are the days when the presence of eunuchs in marriage functions and at the birth of a child was considered auspicious.

It is blatantly wrong and unjustified. According to Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, the founder of Neo-humanism and Prout: “Jiivátmá is neither a male nor a female, nor a hermaphrodite. For the proper expression of one's latent saṁskáras [reactive

momenta] one gets reborn into the body of a woman or a man or sometimes a hermaphrodite. There is no question of high or low, superior or inferior, noble or ignoble because whatever might be the sex of the body. Depending upon the nature of the saṁskáras there is either the predominance of the tendency to attract (saṁyojanii shakti) or the predominance of the tendency to be attracted (vibhájanii shakti). The nature of the force of attraction is to draw the object of enjoyment towards itself, and the nature of the force which is attracted is to move towards the object of enjoyment. When there is dominance of saṁyojanii shakti in one's latent saṁskáras, the disembodied soul attains a female body for its outward expression, and conversely where there is a dominance of vibhájanii shakti, it attains a male body. Where there is an approximate balance between the two, the disembodied soul attains the body of a hermaphrodite. Of course, even in the hermaphrodite the balance between saṁyojanii and vibhájanii shaktis is not perfect; there is a slight tilt in favour of one or the other. That's why some hermaphrodites are more inclined towards masculinity, and some, femininity”.

“a person's own sense of being male, female, some combination of male and female, or neither male nor female” -- Britannica Dictionary Definition

Yet today, giving birth to a hermaphrodite is still considered by simple Indians to be one of the most terrible curses that can befall a woman. At the same time, the blessing of a hijra is deemed to be unusually potent. It can make barren women fertile. It can scare off evil spirits. It can nullify the evil eye. In the streets, eunuchs are jeered at, sometimes even pelted with rubbish. Yet, at a low-income family's most crucial and most public celebration, at a marriage or the birth of a male child, the



absence of a hijra would almost invalidate the whole ceremony. The eunuchs themselves have aided the merging of the two traditions. They no longer guard harems; instead, as in the Mahabharata, they dance for a living. They no longer dress like a man as they did in the Mughal court; instead, they deck themselves in jewellery and cosmetics and wear saris. Nevertheless, they retain many of the characteristics of their courtly forbearers. According to Manucci, 'among the Muslims they are the strictest observers of the faith.'

The position of eunuchs in Islam was always very different though they were common in Muslim society. They were considered free from the taint of sexuality and were thus especially suitable to guard sacred relics. The shirt of Prophet Muhammad in Cairo was guarded by eunuchs, as was the Great Mosque in Mecca. Pilgrims – hajjis would kiss the eunuchs' hands on their way to see the Kaba, the holiest shrine in all Islam.

Dedicated courtiers, undistracted by families, soon rose to powerful positions, first in Mamluk Egypt, then in Ottoman Turkey, but most prominent in Mughal India. The kings, princes, queens and princesses all placed great confidence in them. All people of quality had eunuchs in their service, and all other officials, servants and slaves were bound to account for all they did to the eunuchs. As officials, singers, dancers and conjurers, they were prominent figures in Delhi.

When the Mughal court was disbanded by the British, Muslim eunuchs were exposed for the first time to the other Hindu traditions of eunuchry. In typical Delhi fashion, the two traditions merged, and the eunuchs became subject to a very Indian compromise.

Anyone today who comes across them casually can easily see



why they are so rude. Yet one does not happen to spend very long with them to appreciate how India, then as now, has turned them into what they are, how it has brutalized them and forced them to anesthetize their own sensibilities. Thrown out of their house and rejected by their families, they come together for protection. In the streets, they affect the manners of a pantomime dance to gain attention and make buffoons of themselves but are quick to take offense. With little possibility of much fulfilment in this world, they look to the next; they are forever visiting temples and mosques (for this, they revert to their male clothes) and going on pilgrimage to Hindu and Muslim shrines over the subcontinent. In this strange mix of piety and bawdiness, they directly recall the world of Dargah Quli Khan and the Muraqqa-e-Dehli.

The eunuchs all live like a family. The 'guru' is the mother, her daughters the 'chelas'. The whole system was highly structured within and outside the household. Just as every household of eunuchs

has its walls, each has a well-defined 'parish' where its members can operate. Violations and poaching in another's household are referred to a special council of eunuchs from India and Pakistan, which meets annually.

They would finish the household work early in the morning before going off on their rounds. Every household of eunuchs has a network of informers —sweepers, dhobis, midwives — who report the imminent births and marriages in their districts. The eunuchs would get ready in auto rickshaws and head for their first stop on the list. On the way, they would pick up a pair of musicians, one who plays the harmonium and the other table. They would walk on the streets clapping their hands, behaving quite differently from the way they did inside the household. When money was given, they would withdraw, bowing and scraping.

According to activist Dr Santosh Kumar from the transgender rights group Rista, there are an estimated five million transgender people in India,



commonly known as hijra. This definition also includes transsexuals, cross-dressers, eunuchs and other gender orientations. While some businesses are becoming more inclusive, activists feel more needs to be done. to activist Dr Santosh Kumar from the transgender rights group Rista, there are an estimated five million transgender people in India, commonly known as hijra - a definition that also includes transsexuals, cross-dressers, eunuchs and transvestites. While some businesses are becoming more inclusive, activists feel more needs to be done.

In 2014 the Supreme Court of India recognised transgender people as a third gender in a

landmark ruling; Justice KS Radhakrishnan, who headed the two-judge Supreme Court bench, said:

"Transgenders are also citizens of India and they must be provided equal opportunity to grow. The spirit of the Constitution is to provide equal opportunity to every citizen to grow and attain their potential, irrespective of caste, religion or gender. It is the right of every human being to choose their gender. Recognition of transgenders as a third gender is not a social or medical issue but a human rights issue". It ordered the government to provide transgender people with quotas in jobs and education in line with other minorities, as well as key

amenities. The judges asked the government to treat them in line with other minorities officially categorized as "socially and economically backward" to enable them to get quotas in jobs and education. are also citizens of India and they must be provided equal opportunity to grow. The spirit of the Constitution is to provide equal opportunity to every citizen to grow and attain their potential, irrespective of caste, religion or gender. It is the right of every human being to choose their gender. Recognition of transgenders as a third gender is not a social or medical issue but a human rights issue".

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That is yet to happen. Yet strikingly, eunuchs have no bitterness in their hearts. Through no fault of their own, for the deformity or genetic accident, they find themselves marginalized by Indian society, turned into something halfway between a talisman and an object of ridicule. Yet, in their own way, they seem fairly content with their lives and do not rail against the fate that has left them with this role. They all pray for their welfare in this life, but in the next, they feel it is in God's hands. ●



The Sorry State of Armed Forces Tribunals

■ Bhupendra Singh

"Five years are taken for pension disputes of our soldiers to get adjudicated."



The Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) was set up in 2010 as a special judicial forum to address the legal grievances of armed forces personnel, both serving and retired. It was to have 17 benches in 11 locations across India. Instead, it has almost 19,000 pending cases, which is but the least of its problems. With a sanction of 17 benches in 11 locations across India, the Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) currently operates with just four Benches in three locations.

The Armed Forces Act governs the functioning of the

AFT. An AFT bench comprises one judicial and one administrative or expert member and functions only when the quorum of two members is complete. While a judicial member is either a retired Supreme Court or high court judge, an administrative member is a former defence personnel or civil servant.

The tribunal has just four Benches in three locations, two in Delhi and one in Chandigarh and Lucknow, with thousands of cases awaiting final adjudication. Some undecided cases include petitions filed when the tribunal was set up 11 years ago. The government, too,

has admitted to a shortage of members in AFT benches. Against the sanctioned strength of 34 members, only 11 — four judicial members and seven expert members — are occupied; the Parliament was informed in March 2021.

In 2016, there were six serving judicial members and 11 administrative members. Five years later, however, this figure has come down to four and seven, respectively. Resultantly, 13 benches of AFT are non-functional where no hearing takes place. Two of the four judicial members have been on extension since October

2019. Even though there are many vacancies in the AFT, the Government has made little effort to fill them up within a reasonable period. As a result, it has caused a decrease in the strength of the judges. Dispute over new service rules for tribunal members is the primary reason for the appointment delay. The Supreme Court cleared the validity of the service rules in November 2020, which directed the Centre to set up a body to oversee appointments to all tribunals. Instead of complying with this directive, the Government, in January 2021, filed an application seeking clarification on a few directions related to the service rules.

After all these years, experts began to feel that the creation of AFT didn't help much in disposing of grievances of armed forces personnel, who are being treated as "second-rate citizens. A top military lawyer said, "Around the time AFTs were being set up, there were about 9,000 pending cases in civil courts, and now there are about 19,000 pending cases after the creation of AFTs. Hence, the

pendency has rather increased on the creation of AFT".

According to Rajiv Manglik, secretary of the AFT Bar Association, the inordinate delay by the government to make new appointments is why the AFT benches continue to work without having full strength. "The government must begin the process of appointment at least six months before a vacancy arises". He also felt the government failed to ensure its armed forces get speedy justice. "Government is treating armed forces personnel as second rate citizens. Members of the forces are not permitted to make unions and associations, therefore, for them AFT is the only platform to raise their voice. However, their right for redressal of grievances through the judiciary is also not being met".

Another retired military lawyer, Major Navdeep Singh, practicing in the Punjab & Haryana High Court, said, "The shortage of members affects all tribunals, not only AFT." "The rules for tribunals promulgated by the government compromising

their independence were declared unconstitutional by the SC and still certain applications for clarification are pending in the court, thereby leading to delay in appointments," he said.

When cases from high courts were transferred to AFT, the oldest pending lawsuit had been filed 13 years before. The situation hasn't improved with AFT's establishment, where the oldest case pending dates back to 2010, Manglik said, adding that it takes five years for pension matters to get adjudicated.

Lieut. Gen. H.S. Panag (Retired), who had been a member of AFT, Chandigarh bench, was of the view that it is entirely up to the government whether it wants the tribunals to function effectively. "I have seen in the past too that even after the selection process, the final approval from the government was inordinately delayed. Moreover, after the initial years, the litigation started going up, not only because the bureaucracy sat on the implementation of AFT judgments, but challenged several of them in the Supreme Court," he added. ●



The Fight Over Land and

Genetically Engineered

AGRICULTURE



 Mitchel Cohen

War Within The War

Ten months before Russian troops poured into Ukraine, that country's President Volodymyr Zelensky signed a bill into law authorizing the private sale of farmland, reversing a moratorium that had been in place since 2001. An earlier administration in Ukraine had instituted the moratorium to halt further privatization of The Commons and small farms, which oligarchs bought up and concentrated in fewer hands.

The marketization of farmland is part of a series of policy “reforms” that the International Monetary Fund stipulated as a precondition enabling Ukraine to receive \$8 billion in loans from the IMF. However, despite the pandemic,

In an envisioned future Russia hoped to become “the world's largest supplier of ecologically clean and high-quality organic food”

there has been “wide-ranging opposition from the Ukrainian public to reversing that ban, with over 64 percent of the people opposed to creating a land market, according to an April 2021 poll.” Additionally, the IMF loan conditions required that Ukraine reverse its ban on genetically

engineered crops and enable private corporations like Monsanto to plant its GMO seeds and spray the fields with Monsanto's Roundup. In that way, Monsanto hopes to break the boycott by several European countries regarding its genetically engineered corn and soy.

The thesis of this essay is that agricultural competition over land use between the U.S. and Russia—two gigantic capitalist countries with the most powerful nuclear arsenals in the world—is a neglected but important force driving the war in Ukraine.

The U.S. government has for the last decade wrestled with Russia over who controls the energy pipelines through Ukraine into Europe and in what currency costs for that so-called “natural” gas and oil are to be paid. At the

same time, the war's disruption of Ukraine's wheat harvest and the historic droughts hitting the U.S.'s "wheat belt" have driven the cost of bread worldwide through the roof. As a result, United Nations officials are making dire predictions concerning the world's grain supply.

In the Middle East, millions who spend more than a third of their income on food are being hit hardest by the war's impact on the global food supply. Yet UN agencies have begun to divert sacks of grain that had been earmarked for other war zones to Ukraine, leaving the people of Yemen and refugees from many areas in desperation. In peaceful times, Ukraine harvests 80 million metric tons (MMT) of grain, including wheat, corn, barley, rice and millet. Russia and Ukraine supply more than 25% of the world's wheat. Russia recently overtook the U.S. and Canada to become the top wheat-exporting country in the world; Ukraine is the world's 6th largest wheat exporter.

So how much of the predicted food system collapse is a result of the war's disruption of grain harvests, and—a question few in the U.S. mainstream media are asking—how much are skyrocketing food prices caused by plain old capitalist rivalry between two of the main grain-exporting countries of the world?

Competing Systems for Growing Crops :

Six years ago, Russian President Vladimir Putin sought to seize economic opportunities around the growing of food by opposing genetically engineered agriculture and Monsanto's Roundup, the world's most widely used herbicide; he initiated a program to eliminate pesticides and genetically engineered crops from Russia's fields. The goal was to out-compete the U.S. and Canada as the world's number one and two grain exporters by going organic, which mattered especially in Europe with its stricter laws regarding the import and planting

of GMOs. Monsanto had planned to open its first plant in Russia, but in June 2016 Russia's State Duma adopted a government bill banning the cultivation and breeding of genetically modified plants and animals, except as used for scientific research purposes. A few weeks later, Putin signed federal law No. 358 prohibiting cultivation of genetically engineered crops. The law also made it illegal to breed genetically engineered animals on the territory of the Russian Federation.

Putin had said he envisioned a future in which Russia would become "the world's largest supplier of ecologically clean and high-quality organic food." He called on the country to become completely self-sufficient in food production: "We are not only able to feed ourselves taking into account our lands, water resources; Russia is able to become the largest world supplier of healthful, ecologically clean and high-quality food which the Western producers have long lost,



especially given the fact that demand for such products in the world market is steadily growing.”

The 2016 laws were designed to implement Putin's earlier proposals “to protect the Russian market and consumers from GMO products, as their use could have unforeseen consequences. Russian agriculture minister Nikolai Fyodorov believes Russia must remain a GM-free country. At a meeting of deputies representing rural areas organized by United Russia, he said the government will not ‘poison their citizens.’” United Russia is Russia's largest political party, holding 2/3 of the seats in Dumas. It was a far different response than that provided by the government of Ukraine. Despite large protests against GMOs and the foreign corporate land grab, and although Ukrainian law had prohibited private sector farmland ownership, Ukraine's government negotiated a multi-billion dollar loan from the International Monetary Fund that stipulated a removal of the blocks to GMO production that was “transforming millions of pristine acres into [a] poisoned wasteland. Eco-genocide for profit.



Monsanto's dirty hands are hugely involved.”

In the last 30 years, the takeover of domestic agriculture by GMO crops has been part of U.S. war efforts. Following the U.S. “shock-and-awe” bombing of Iraq in 2003, L. Paul Bremer—the U.S.-appointed administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq—issued Order 81. Officially titled “Amendments to Patent, Industrial Design,

Undisclosed Information, Integrated Circuits and Plant Variety Law,” the edict prohibited farmers from saving seeds from genetically engineered crops and made it illegal for them to replant those seeds, thereby serving as an enforcer of Monsanto's patents. Bremer's edict was part and parcel of the IMF's “structural adjustment program” (SAP)—the subject of major protests in Ukraine 11 years later in 2014. The IMF's SAPs mandated the purchase and planting of Monsanto's genetically engineered seeds as part of its requirement before allowing for ending military hostilities and opening up Iraqi agriculture to cultivate GMO crops.

Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, the author of much of U.S. foreign policy, portrayed American aid this way: “To give food aid to a country just because they are starving is a pretty weak reason.” For Kissinger, the withholding of food as well as its selective distribution, is to be used as a weapon in the achievement of U.S. foreign policy objectives. And so, the United States systematically dumps cheap genetically



engineered products saturated with pesticides on foreign markets, undermining local producers and forcing them to purchase the patented seeds from the company manufacturing them, along with the pesticides needed to kill off the plants' weedy competitors. Uprooted from their lands, local producers become dependent on the United States and its corporations, and many try to flee across the border to the United States.

In his 2001 book, *A Cook's Tour*, chef Anthony Bourdain presented a very unexpected take on Kissinger, one worth savouring: "Once you've been to Cambodia, you'll never stop wanting to beat Henry Kissinger to death with your bare hands. You will never again be able to open a newspaper and read about that treacherous, prevaricating, murderous scumbag sitting down for a nice chat with Charlie Rose or attending some black-tie affair for a new glossy magazine without choking. Witness what Henry did in Cambodia—the fruits of his genius for statesmanship—and you will never understand why he's not sitting in the dock at The Hague next to Milošević."



One note on Milošević and Kissinger: As brilliant a quote as this is by Anthony Bourdain, to compare Milošević with mass murderer Henry Kissinger is an error. Milošević was posthumously *cleared of all crimes* by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, which, after his death, ruled in 2016—contrary to years of U.S. and particularly Germany's denunciations—that there was *no evidence* that Milošević had "participated in the realization of the common criminal objective"

and that he "and other Serbian leaders openly criticized Bosnian Serb leaders of committing crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing and the war for their own purposes" during the Bosnian War.

With the advent and proliferation of genetically modified crops in the 1980s—a technology intimately tied to the widespread application of pesticides and, in particular, Monsanto's Roundup—the tentacles of globalization expanded outward into control of the world's food supply. Moreover, those private commercial patents were (and continue to be) enforced by U.S. military power.

And so, Leticia Gonçalves, for ten years the head of Monsanto's operations in Europe and the Middle East, was not worrying over the new Russian anti-GMO and pesticide laws. "We still believe that Ukraine and Russia both are long-term opportunities for our business and we want to make sure we are in a position to accelerate our business growth despite the short-term geopolitical and macroeconomic challenges," she said. ●

To be concluded

From ancient times human beings have struggled against their obstacles. Struggle is the essence of life. Those who cry for disarmament are enemies of human beings. They are reluctant to fight even against criminals. Of course, with the spread of civilization human beings will not attack the unarmed and the weak. Unfortunately, there are many persons in this world who think of themselves as civilized but mercilessly crush the helpless and the innocent. The pitiable destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki bears witness to the uncivilized action of the so-called civilized nations. Though they are culturally advanced, they are most backward in civilization. They should sit at the feet of the Indian Adivasis and learn about civilization. Those who possess atom and hydrogen bombs have to be taught the lesson that this universe is for human beings and not for demons. More powerful weapons have to be invented to counteract these uncivilized persons.

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

The Power of Normalizing Beliefs

Michael Zimmerman

Generations have passed since legal slavery ended. However many working class people today are still exploited.

This essay examines several historical examples of normalizing beliefs or ideas and how those concepts have profoundly impacted society. We start our analysis with a theoretical mistake made by Adam Smith, the originator of capitalist theory. Next, we briefly examine various normalizing beliefs in establishing and persisting slavery as an institution. We then observe several normalizing thoughts concerning wage labour and Shrii P.R. Sarkar's alternative proposal regarding work. Finally, we conclude the review with a brief

assessment of Shrii Sarkar's three-tiered economy.

At the end of English and European feudal society the philosopher and so-called “father of capitalism”, Adam Smith, published in 1776, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of The Wealth of Nations*. In what would become Smith's seminal work, he asserted an economic sphere of life separate and distinct from all other social relations and interactions. This was his fundamental mistake. The callous cleverness of Smith's idea, as critiqued by Duncan Foley, was that:

“It is possible to separate an economic sphere of life, in which

the pursuit of self-interest is guided by objective laws to a socially beneficent outcome, from the rest of social life, in which the pursuit of self-interest is morally problematic and has to be weighed against other ends. This separation of an economic sphere with its presumed specific principles of organization, from the much messier, less determinate, and morally more problematic issues of politics, social conflict, and values, is the foundation of political economy and economics as an intellectual discipline (Foley, 2006, p. xiii).”

Smith's separation of life into various spheres supported his





conception of 18th-century society: the product of slow but persistent 800 years of social upheaval, invasion, and colonization that transformed feudal society. Likewise, his conception of economics was something we would recognize today as a developing capitalist society and carried with it the inherent understanding that the whole of society benefited from the self-interest of a few. The relentless pursuit of self-interest can be converted into moral good; what benefits a few at the top will trickle down to all classes of society.

A few years earlier, in 1759, Smith published a lesser-known work, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (TMS). In this work, Smith explored elements of human nature and what he called “mutual sympathy”. Yet his definition extended only to individuals. For Smith, sympathy, originating in self-interest, was not a sufficient vehicle for developing a theory of ‘universal benevolence’ which was the purview of the divine” (Doris, 2020, p. 4). In the last edition of the TMS, published in 1790 just before his death, Smith viewed social movements for justice and universal welfare as impossible.

Instead, he pleaded for everyone to respect and obey the existing political and economic system as a “natural order”, regardless of the stark social injustice it caused (Doris, 2020).

As expressed initially by Smith, political economy has been subjected to many modifications over the ensuing centuries. Yet, this separation of life into discrete spheres has persisted in subsequent variations of capitalist thought. Shrii Sarkar rejects the basic premise of capitalism as expressed in both of Smith's works discussed above. Indeed, as Sarkar said, he propounded Prout to express the Vaedika teaching of *Samgacchadhvam*, that all people may enjoy, but not abuse, the universe's resources. The base of Prout is the ethical and moral principles of yama and niyama and the elimination of superficial differentiating feelings toward people who may appear different from ourselves. Sarkar asserted, in many different ways, that cutthroat exploitation in business, despite whatever pious religious show one might make, directly violates dharma.

Smith's conception of “mutual sympathy” was limited to individuals, not whole classes of

people. His construct was not based on deep empathetic social and economic justice principles. Accordingly, Smith's theory did not provide an alternative to deeply embedded beliefs regarding slavery. If we briefly examine slavery before, during, and after Smith's time, we perceive how powerful leaders controlled public opinion by normalizing dreadful ideas. They used the Biblical narratives of Noah cursing and casting out his grandson Canaan in the curse of Ham in addition to God placing a mark on Cain for killing Abel: these narratives led to the claim that all the people of Africa were thus cursed and inferior to Europeans. In the 16th to 18th centuries, they introduced the concept of separate races that had never existed before. Later the pseudo-science of phrenology and social Darwinism were also created to justify the same racism. After the end of the U. S. Civil War, with the enactment of the reconstruction amendments to the U. S. Constitution, slavery was outlawed. However, thousands of innocent black men were arrested on false charges and forced to work for free in the “convict release system” as virtual slaves for Southern business

owners. Note the treatment and suffering of migrant labour were equal to that described above. However, we limit our narrative for the sake of brevity.

These examples, while not inclusive, aid in understanding the social conventions, the *normalizing beliefs*, utilized to justify exploitation. This first occurred in the form of historical slavery, and later in today's racial discrimination. An ignored and unspoken issue within orthodox macroeconomic analysis, that extends our understanding of normalizing beliefs, is that slavery was the original capital. The enslavement of millions of indigenous and later African people throughout the Americas created tremendous wealth that jump-started the European and American empires (Marx Das Capital Volume I, Chapter 26; Forstater 2005; Williams 1944/2000).

Generations have passed since legal slavery ended. However, many working-class people today are also exploited. Forced to work for their survival,

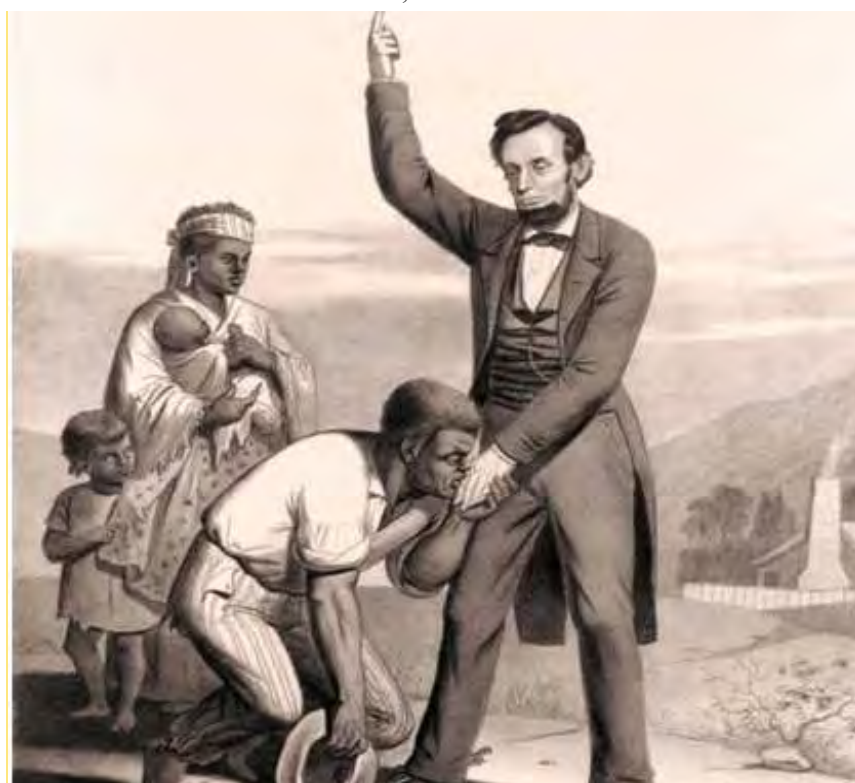
they are paid minimum wages by businesses under great pressure to increase profits and decrease costs for their investors. Exploitation still occurs: it has only mutated and become more subtle. Sarkar instructed us to understand how Vaeshyan exploitation occurs throughout time. An element of such analysis includes understanding the normalization of belief systems, not only concerning the above examples but also those that frame how we

perceive work.

The contemporary macroeconomic concept of marginal productivity theory (MPT) is another normalizing belief. MPT asserts income distribution between shares allocated to traditional definitions of land, labour, and capital is a technical issue (Alchian & Demsetz, 1972), and therefore labour receives its just share. Yet, MPT normalized the notion that labour should receive much less than the investors of capital. Shrii Sarkar rejects the premise of the MPT and specifically addresses unemployment in *Proutist Economics* (Some Specialities of Prout's Economic System), in which he states that Prout:

“... supports maximum modernization in industry and agriculture by introducing the most appropriate scientific technology, yet modernization and rationalization should not lead to increased unemployment. In Prout's collective economic system, full employment will be maintained by progressively reducing working hours as the introduction of appropriate scientific technology increases production. This is not possible in capitalism (p. 15).”

This is a subtle assertion concerning the distribution of



income. It necessitates a change in thought beyond the historical limitations of income distribution between shares attributable to land, labour, and capital based on the MPT. Such a change would not be possible without a change in social relations between workers and management: a change in the historical distinctions between labour and capital.

Neo-classical economics claimed to abolish social classes and conflicts between the classes. It asserted that income distribution was purely a technical issue and that everyone receives their share. In the United States, this narrative has led to stagnation in real incomes between the bottom 99 percent and the top One percent (Dumenil & Levy, 2011). That is, the income of the wealthiest One percent has skyrocketed, while the income for all other workers has not risen in real terms.

The use of technology and the distribution of income has confounded economists since, for example, John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Economics*, published in 1821. Economists had previously asserted the theory of compensation: the optimistic canonical view that labour displaced by technology would be reabsorbed elsewhere in the

economy (Roncaglia, 2017). Mill, in that 3rd edition, finally acknowledges that technologies may be “very injurious to the interest of the class of labourers (sic)” (Heilbroner, 1997, p. 124) due to their labour-saving nature. However, they are injurious only due to the persistence of a *normalizing* thought or behaviour: the marginal productivity theory's justification of growing income inequity.

There are several ways to alleviate wage and unemployment pressures and improve the distribution of minimum necessities to all, including an increase to State and Federal minimum wages, universal basic income (UBI) schemes, a job guarantee also called the employer of last resort programs that act to purchase slack labour and a broad interpretation of Sarkar's suggestion regarding adjustment of working hours (Hickel, 2020). Combining all four would alleviate some difficulties associated with significant income and wealth disparity. However, the general problem associated with each of the above arrangements is that they leave resource ownership and profits in private hands. Indeed, Sarkar stated that his suggestion regarding adjustments to working

hours is not possible in a capitalist system. As an alternative, Prout offers the concept of a three-tiered economy.

In the first two tiers, profits flow to the small business owners and the cooperative's members, respectively. However, the third tier of large, technically complex concatenated firms that significantly impact the economy and the environment are treated as public goods: profits are a public good to be reinvested by the government for the welfare of all.

It is noteworthy that small and medium-sized entities do not generally harm the economy or the environment because they do not use significant resources nor cause significant pollution. However, larger corporations have harmful impacts and often use their wealth to corrupt legislative and regulatory bodies, legally or illegally. Thus, key industries require significant oversight.

A configuration of the economy into three tiers is not possible while the activities of life appear separate and distinct. Since Smith's time, the economic sphere, defined as capitalism, has been guided by laws promoting self-interest and profit. The global capitalist system has no higher guiding principles and often denies such principles even exist. Capitalism, as a sphere of activity, separates itself from the political, religious, spiritual, and other social spheres of life through its cardinal principles of self-interest and profit. The organizing principles of those other social spheres are not as well defined and are morally problematic. Their values, often corrupted by the influence of big money, frequently accelerate social conflict. Only by integrating the various spheres of life, artificially separated by Smith's theory almost 250 years ago, can society restore *prama*, dynamic balance. ●

To be concluded



continued. from pg

the fundamental positivity. “If *Shambhūliunga* be the fundamental positivity, then the *kulakundālinii*, lying at *Svayambhūliunga*, we may call the force of fundamental negativity.” (*Ananda Sūtram* Chapter 4) Nothing completely new can be created in *pratisaincara*. So though the *kundālinii* as such, like many phenomena as such, exists only in *pratisaincara*, the ultimate source of it must lie in *saincara*.

It seems to me that when the *guṇas/ Avidyāmāyā* operate, the effect of their force is like stretching a rubber band. The force that stretches a rubber band imparts a potential energy, an equal and opposite force, to the rubber band itself, since the rubber band tries to return to normal. So I think that *Vidyāmāyā* is like the force with which a rubber band tries to return to normal, to equipoise. Only *Nirguṇa Brahma* represents near-complete equipoise, so the entire creation will always be trying to return to *Nirguṇa Brahma*. As soon as some of *Nirguṇa Brahma* gets crudified, even a little bit, there will be a force of *Vidyāmāyā* trying to pull that crudified part back, and that is what *Vidyāmāyā* is. Living beings will experience that force as a longing for the Great, that is, they will feel an attraction by the Great, and each clash will awaken that longing so that they can find cohesion, each time, on a higher level on which they have become free from at least that one clash. As far as I can tell, the attraction of the Great is just the recoil of the crudifying force of the *guṇas*, and the *kundālinii* is a component of the attraction of the Great that vertebrate beings are fortunate enough to have within them. Living beings will experience that force as a longing for the Great, that is, they will feel an attraction by the Great, and each clash will awaken that longing so that they



can find cohesion, each time, on a higher level on which they have become free from at least that one clash. As far as I can tell, the attraction of the Great is just the recoil of the crudifying force of the *guṇas*, and the *kundālinii* is a component of the attraction of the Great that vertebrate beings are fortunate enough to have within them.

As mentioned, the term *parāshakti* offers us a clear example of the asymmetry between *Avidyā* and *Vidyā*; that asymmetry is to be found both in the Macrocosm and in the microcosm. Whether in the Macrocosm or in the microcosm, *parāshakti* is a pushing *shakti*, a pushing force, a driving force. In the Macrocosm it exists only at *Shambhūliunga*; at *Svayambhūliunga* there is no such pushing force. And in the microcosm, at least in vertebrate microcosms, it exists only in the *kula* at the base of the spine, not at the *sahasrāracakra*.

In this state of crudity the *parāshakti* [introversial pervasive force] that is lying in a quiescent state as the *jīvabhāva* [finite

subjectivity], is called the *kulakundālinii* [“coiled serpentine”, or force of fundamental negativity]. (*Ananda Sūtram* Chapter 4)

In the dark clouds of the minds of *kundālinii*-less animals, invertebrate animals, the attraction of the Great begins to manifest as a tantalizing, yet simultaneously infinitely remote, infinitely confusing, stir. Since there is no pushing force that could have created the newly subtle desires they must be having (relatively subtle desires, subtler than they had experienced before), those desires must automatically pop into the mind, or rather relatively subtle *citta* must automatically form itself into such desires, simply because it has been freed to do so as the *guṇas* wane. And that kind of process could be a factor in the origin of the virtuous, selfless intentions that human beings are capable of also. But in humans, especially humans whose *kundālinii* has been awakened, the *kundālinii* must play some role in the appearance of righteous thoughts. ●

(to be concluded)

Struggle Must Go On

- Shrii Shrii Ānandamūrti

T

he struggle must go on in every sphere of life – social, economic, mental and spiritual. Wherever there is the economic exploitation of the poor, a struggle will have to be waged against the exploiter. And wherever humanity is exploited in general, struggle against the exploiter is a must.

Where there is linguistic exploitation, the struggle should be directed against the oppressive language. If you are exploited in the mental sphere, if anybody tries to demean you, you will have to struggle against the person. If in the mental sphere, anybody designs to deprive you of your moral rights against that person also, you will have to struggle. And if in the spiritual sphere, you want to reach your Supreme Father, but some special force in the world obstructs your spiritual progress and creates obstacles on the path of your spiritual progress and upliftment, in that case also, you will have to struggle against that force.

In fact, life is a big struggle – rather the sum total of infinite struggles. Several battles constitute a war. Hence the saying of Bhagavān Shrii Kṛṣṇa that once on the battlefield, you should never worry under any circumstances; you should only bear in mind that your aim is noble, and when the aim is noble, glorious and good, victory is inevitable. Simply throw those forces that create obstacles, like thorns on your path, into the dustbin. A task that may appear extremely difficult for a single individual may be light work for eight or ten persons. And the same task will appear extremely easy when thousands of people are together.

So my advice to you is: “Do all your work unitedly.”

Samānii va ākūtiḥ, samānā hṛdayānivah [“Let our aspirations be united, let our hearts be inseparable”]. Do all your work unitedly. No work is hard for you, and no work is difficult. Move forward easily and smilingly, solving all the problems of the world. Your victory is assured. It is within your grasp. When anyone does some virtuous work, Parama Puruṣa is with that person. Under such circumstances, one need not even pray, “O Lord, give me more strength,” because since Parama Puruṣa is with you, He will surely give you more strength. In fact, He is always giving you more strength.

So my advice is: “Move ahead” – *Yuddhasva vigatajvarah* [“Struggle must go on”]. ●



ACTIVITY



Mumbai University Holds Talk on Neo-humanism



Prof. Hubnath Pandey, Hindi Department, and Chief Editor of Hindi Shodhwari Patrika of Mumbai University, and Prof. Bhagyashree Verma, Department of English, organized a special lecture on Shri Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar's contribution to Neo-humanism among research students on 11 February 2023.

The Central Secretary of Ananda Marga Pracharak Samgha, Acharya Divyachetnananda Avdhuta, gave a lecture on the said subject. While Dr. Suman Bala, former professor of English, University of Delhi, gave detailed



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information on how to write a research journal on Neo-humanism. Dr. Avinash Kolhe, Department of English, Ruparel College, University of Mumbai, also spoke on the subject.

Acharya Divyachetananda said, "Shri Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar was the first person to expound the philosophy of Neo-Humanism in history. Neohumanism is an ever increasing circle of love, and love in action. The understanding that we are all interconnected goes beyond humanity, and includes the animals, plants, and the inanimate. And this love arises when we see that we have a consciousness hidden deep within, a consciousness that bears witness to all our thoughts. when we realize that our very existence depends upon that consciousness, and when we learn to identify with that consciousness, then we find that the exact same consciousness is in everything! We don't just feel love for all, we are all. It is both an internal realization, and an external practice.

Besides being a philosopher and a spiritual master, he has published about 500 books on many subjects like economics, sociology, science, agriculture, history, women issues, education etc. Apart from this, Shri Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar himself has composed 5018 Prabhat Samgiita songs."





PBI, UPLF and GP Demand Justice for All

Members of Proutist Bloc, India (PBI), Universal Proutist Labour Federation (UPLF), Girls Proutist (GP), and PBI, Vidarbha, held a sit-in protest at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi 16 February 2023. The protesters voiced their concerns over the problems of poverty, unemployment, farmer's plight in India, and demanded a separate Vidarbha state.

The protesters held placards and banners, demanding that the government take immediate steps to address the issues faced by the people of India. They chanted slogans, highlighting the dire situation of poverty, unemployment, and the plight of farmers across the country.

Speaking to the media, PBI's National Convener Acharya Santosananda Avadhuta said, "We have been raising our voices for years, demanding that the government take the necessary steps to address the issues of poverty, unemployment, and the plight of farmers. However, our voices have fallen on deaf ears. The government seems to be more interested in their political agenda than the welfare of the people."

The Universal Proutist Labour Federation (UPLF) spokesperson, also present at the sit-in protest, said, "The unemployment rate in the country is at an all-time high. The government needs to create more jobs, especially for the youth. It is crucial to ensure that the youth of the country have a secure future and are not left in a state of despair."

Girls Proutist (GP), also a part of the sit-in protest, highlighted the plight of women in the country, especially those in rural areas. Girl Proutist leader Madhusmita Das said, "The government needs to take steps to improve the living conditions of women, provide them with better healthcare facilities, and ensure their safety and security."

Madhukar Nistane, the convener of PBI, Vidarbha, said, "There is a strong ground for statehood to this region. Since the beginning, Vidarbha has been continuously neglected. A very little portion of Maharashtra's budget is allocated to Vidarbha, which hardly suffices to fulfil the needs of this region. Despite holding 2/3 of the minerals and 3/4 of the forest cover of Maharashtra, Vidarbha has had inadequate industrial development. Most of its coal and other mineral resources are sent to other parts of the state and the country, which has led to the shortage of power and under-development of other industries in the region. In the last 15 years alone, more than 45,000 farmers have committed suicide in 11 districts of Vidarbha. The condition of agriculture is pathetic and there is a complete lack of industries in the region. All the state governments till now have been insensitive to the needs and aspirations of the people of Vidarbha, therefore, PBI demands full statehood to Vidarbha."

The protesters urged the government to take immediate action to address these pressing issues and work towards the betterment of the people of India. They demanded that the government take a more proactive approach to address the issues of poverty, unemployment, and the plight of farmers.

The protesters reiterated that they will continue to raise their voices until the government takes the necessary steps to address the issues faced by the people of India. They gave a memorandum of their demands to Prime Minister Modi.



RU Holds a Two-day Seminar at Andhra University



NSS CELL, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam & Renaissance Universal (RU) organized a two day seminar on Yoga & Meditation on 27h & 28h Jan 2023 at NSS Bhavan, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam.

Prof. K Ramesh Babu, HOD, Dept of Yoga & Consciousness, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, spoke about the eight parts of Yoga and advised gathering to practice it everyday.

The program began with the singing of Prabhat Samgiita "Jaya Shubhra Vajradhara" by Avadhutika Ananda Madhumalika, RS(L), Mumbai. Shri Narayan Panda, Retired Deputy General Manager of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, presided over the function. He delivered a welcome speech and explained how the definition of Yoga given by Shri PR Sarkar, the founder of RU, is different from others'. He talked in detail about the techniques of Yoga.

Acharya Viitamohananda Avadhuta, Central Secretary, RU, Kolkata, was present as the chief speaker. He explained the actual derivation of Yoga. He said Yoga is the unification of unit mind with Cosmic Mind (Samyoga yoga ityukta jivatma paramatmanah) as per the aphorism expounded in Ananda Sutram composed by Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, the founder of RU. He revealed that RU's founder Shrii Shrii Anandamurtii was not only a great Yoga teacher, but has also written more than 500 books on a wide range of subjects, including Philosophy, language, literature, history, economics, yoga psychology, science, art, culture, metaphysics, agriculture, education, Neo-humanism etc.

Shri AVV Kameswar Rao, AGM of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, anchored the whole program & gave a vote of thanks to all dignitaries and staff of NSS cell. Acharya Sudattananda Avadhuta, Avadhutika Ananda Madhumalika Acharya and Aadhunika Ananda Rupatiita Acharya taught asanas, other exercises like Kaoshikii, Tandava to about 80 participants, who were the students of Andhra University. The program was organised by Narayan Panda, Secretary, RU, Visakhapatnam.



Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

IN SILENCE

NIIRAVATÁ MÁJHE KE GO TUMI ELE
GHANAGHOR GHÚM BHÁMGÁTE
GHUM BHÁMGÁLE

JHAṬÍKÁR GHÁTE NEVÁNO DIIPETE
JINÁNA SHALÁKÁṬÍ JVÁLÁLE
GHUM BHÁMGÁLE

NIIRAVATÁ MÁJHE KE GO TUMI ELE
GHANAGHOR GHUMA BHÁNGÁTE
GHUM BHÁNGÁLE

SÁJÁNO BÁGÁNE CHOṬÁ KHELÁGHARE
JÁRÁ ÁSE TÁRÁ CALE JÁY DÚRE
TÁDER PATHER NISHÁNÁ ÁJIKE
DIIP JVELE DIYE JÁNÁLE

In silence
O, who were You that came
To arouse me from
Slumber deep
And awakened me.

Struck by a tempest
With the lamp blown out
You lit the lamp of knowledge.

In a decorated garden
In a small playhouse
Those who came

Went far away.
Signs on their path
You showed today
By lighting the lamp.



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