

## Conflict of Moralities

"... we choose happiness for itself, ... whereas we choose honour, pleasure, intellect ... because we believe that through them we shall be made happy."

Aristotle: "Ethics."

The road to Dante's "Hell" was paved with good intentions.

### **Why is there need for a new philosophy and social system?**

We live in an age of advanced prosperity, technology and complex social organisations most of which were unimaginable by our forefathers even a hundred years ago.

We have the benefit of the collected thoughts and works of thinkers, philosophers, rulers and statesmen as well as scientists, prophets and religious leaders for thousands of years.

None of these achievements could prevent the tragic and useless sufferings brought on us by cruel wars, ever-threatening violence, bitter frustrations.

We have come to mistrust and disbelieve the teachings, the integrity and advice of authorities of all kinds.

The great increase in human knowledge has resulted in criticising and disproving or disbelieving most traditional systems of order which were accepted in the past as valid, useful—even absolute—directives for a good and satisfying life.

Today we "know better". We have discovered the shortcomings of sectarian religions and the contradictions of morality and we have become disillusioned with the substitutes offered by hypocritical ideologies and social orders. At the same time we find it difficult—even abhorrent—to flout the basic tenets of the existing religions, moralities and social orders. We are afraid of the horrors of the void, the unknown.

Even while we do not accept sectarian religious teachings, we condemn dogmas and do not go to church, we know that we have nothing definite to replace the ordered systems of belief, behaviour and morals. Consequently we send our children to learn **some** systematized explanation of our existence and a code

of behaviour until we can correct and contradict the false information received.

Even when we disregard the rules of contemporary morality or when we break unjust laws, we attempt to justify our actions in terms of the existing order. Our inbred reflexes and social pressures lead us most of the time to avoid identification as rebels against the system.

Even when we are willing to rebel openly against existing institutions we are often stopped by the "establishment", which has at least a systematically codified justification. Whilst we can justify our immediate act of rebellion we can seldom offer an alternative system, fully developed, to offer an answer in codified form ready to replace and improve the existing order.

**(A) Established orders have the advantage over piecemeal reformers** in that they control reality whilst the reformer deals mostly in theories which have not yet been tried out and whose consequences are beyond their control or, even when practised, cause conflicts which debilitate the effectiveness of the new ideals.

An example of the failure of such popular but piecemeal and unsystematic reforms of behaviour patterns was the "permissive upbringing" based on the need to eliminate frustrations from man's life, the theory being that most human conflicts, personality disorders and even physical sickness were caused by oppressive discipline leading to the frustrations of the natural drives of the individual.

This permissiveness (because it is not limited by fitting into a philosophical system or social order) has developed serious conflicts, contradictions and disillusionment amongst its practitioners.

It was easy to follow the early advice: let the children develop as they want to; let them do as they wish, do not force their little "Ids" to act against their desires. It was a little inconvenient to practise "demand-feeding" and to let them throw food all over the place if they wanted to "experiment" and it required some sacrifice to allow them to interfere or even dominate the activities of their parents.

This permissiveness has turned often into sheer tragedy and disappointment when some of the youngsters "did not develop instinctively" or "imitatively" as expected by social disciplines but proceeded to continue their lives without the knowledge that their individual freedoms had limits.

Thus piecemeal reforms, which contain valuable improvements such as social-welfare legislations, abolition of censorship, sexual emancipation, opposition to conscription etc., will not achieve increased happiness unless their aims, objectives and methods are defined, related and integrated within the limits of a whole system, creating order within the interrelations of human activity.

The best ideals can be debased if they are unrelated to life in a community, if they are practised as absolutes. What can be the meaning of Freedom without limits? If each individual, as well as each group or community, were absolutely free to do as he pleased — life on Earth would cease within a short while.

- Similarly correction or replacement of bad measures within existing social orders cannot achieve more than the relief of symptoms of organic faults in the system which are likely to show up in some new form of conflict.

**(B) The anarchistic, rebellious attitude** which advocates the overthrow of authority without a plan ready to supplant the old social order is just as ill-advised as the practice of unlimited permissiveness, with the added disadvantage of violence, disorder, insecurity and the destruction of the means of enforcing some discipline amongst individuals claiming the right of absolute freedom of action for each one of them.

To condemn completely and to destroy indiscriminately existing orders and authorities is immature and harmful. It reminds one of the saying "throwing out the baby with the bathwater". It destroys the good with the bad and still cannot solve the problems, because it does not analyse the causes behind the faults.

**(C) The main reason for the need of a new system of philosophy and social order** is that there is too much contradiction in the explanations available for the meaning of Life and Existence in prevailing philosophies and social orders.

For simple man superstitions and later religions have provided explanations for various natural phenomena.

Humanity had by the XXth Century accumulated a tremendous amount of knowledge in special fields of activity. This knowledge, however, is still in need of correlation and integration in an acceptable synthesis of a world picture and a resulting social system.

In simple terms: there are too many facts; there is too much knowledge, too many choices and interpretations, without a co-ordinated system which would show a clear path towards achieving aims and give clear priorities to the existing conglomeration of part-aims.

To find our way out of the confusion and the disillusionment of our present existence we need a system of social order, not piecemeal reforms nor the complete anarchistic overthrow of authority, the "Establishment", the Status-quo. To devise a new social system to overcome the confusion, contradictions, injustices, hypocrisy and general mistrust of authority is a mighty task.

It must begin with an analysis of the old system in order to discover the causes of their failure, their contradictions and the hidden influences which support their existence.

It must deal with the philosophy of the Self, which will prepare us to deal with ethical problems. We must dwell on questions of values, of happiness and morality until we are satisfied with a standard measure of values to be applied to the behaviour of individuals and other phenomena in our world.

We shall only then be ready to attempt to devise a social system. Social systems in fact are projections, applications of ethics into the fields of activities which we call politics and economics.

## **The Failure of Absolute Transcendental Moralities**

There is an ever-increasing mistrust of the values, the systems of ethics, on which all social orders are based.

What is "good" or "bad" can only be determined by comparison, by measurement against some yardstick, against some standard of value.

The great difficulty in the valuing of actions is the fact that they can be measured according to different standards; that they measure differently against the same standards at different times; and that the same standards of measure applied by different persons produce different values.

There is no absolute standard of measure for values, as there are objectively accepted standards for the measurement of length, time or weight.

Contrary to this basic fact the ethical systems, on which

contemporary social orders, religions and ideologies are built, pretend that their standards of value are absolute.

According to this untenable, unnatural and impractical idea the absolutistic ethical systems — as represented by religions (whose standard of value is the "Will of God" — as interpreted by the innumerable religious sects); by political orders (whose standard of value is the "Good of the Community" as decreed by the leaders) — attempt to bring order into the life of their society by valuing all actions and phenomena mechanically by one set standard of measurement.

While the intention motivating such absolutistic ethics and social orders may be the need to create some temporary order in chaos — the results show up the impossibility and unreality of maintaining social orders based on absolute morality.

New knowledge, new circumstances force a change of dogma. What was supposed to be the absolute "Will of God" or the "Good of the Community" is liable to become error, or even revolutionary, treacherous heresy.

These inner contradictions of the absolute systems of ethics on which all ruling social orders are formally based cause unavoidable conflicts and contradictions within our societies. They create a "credibility gap" which is the polite term for saying that the private citizen does not believe what his leaders tell him and doubts whether his leaders mean what they say at all.

We are taught by religions, ethical systems and even Freudian psychology that aggressiveness is bad.

Contrary to this, everyone knows that in most everyday situations a certain amount of aggressiveness (called "drive") is necessary and in critical situations it is vitally important. In fact the modern ethological psychology of the Konrad Lorenz school considers aggression a basic instinct and a necessary requisite for survival.

We are taught to be ambitious, to seek achievement and eminence, profit and wealth.

But on the other hand society disapproves of individual excellence if it is not promoting community interests. It punishes individual achievement and profit by progressive income taxes. It exploits the achievements of individual effort through "Welfare State" techniques — to benefit the inefficient and lazy as well as the weak.

Such contradictions **force** double standards on all citizens

who attempt to live by the standards of absolute moralities. We all find it impossible to accept and live according to the requirements of any absolute morality or religious teachings or even to conform to the laws and pressures of society.

In a letter published in the Melb. "Herald" (25/3/69) and addressed to that paper's psychologist, who dispenses advice of a general nature, a mother put the following problem: ". . . we wonder if we should teach our children a double set of standards — one for the home and another for 'outside'?"

The reply of the psychologist, whose professional consideration is to help people to adjust themselves to life "as is", is even more typical than the question raised by the parent.

His reply reads: "I don't think that you have to inculcate two complete (!) sets of standards. Most children, and adults too, have different behaviour applicable to different situations—home, social, vocational . . . we all have to tailor our behaviour at times. The fact is that we live in a reasonably conformist society. To raise a "nonconformist" child, then suddenly thrust him into such a social milieu would, in my view, be grossly unfair, whatever the ills of society. On the other hand I must oppose too strict an adherence to conformism, since this can be so destructive of creative thought . . ."

The psychologist clearly accepts the need for double standards of behaviour. He admits the existence of conflict and confusion, however he cannot show the way out except for generalised advice advocating a flexible mode of behaviour. He has no answer to what standards should be taught to children. The solution of this vital conflict is left with the individual — without any guidelines.

So we have a situation where we disbelieve and cannot accept the teachings, the rules, the laws of contemporary moralities, religions or "conformist society". We are left without any systematic guide in a condition of insecurity and lack of direction: without any alternative system of morality which would help us find a new order of values for the choices and decisions we must make.

The failure, deceit and hypocrisy of absolute moralities has created a strong distrust of **any** code of morality, **any** authority.

To overcome this mistrust the reasons for the failure of contemporary moralities, their standards of value and their validity must come under strict criticism.

## THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

I am a deeply religious person. I believe that there is a purpose in life.

And I am convinced that the overwhelming majority of mankind share in this belief now, have done so in the past and will in the future.

Unfortunately for all of us religions do not seem to give satisfactory answers as to what the specific purpose of life is. Religious teachings appear contradictory to the laws of nature, to the origin of the universe and, worst of all, to the behaviour of men.

The average person has no desire to study theology, philosophy or cosmology before deciding whether the rules of conduct governing his everyday life are right or wrong.

Unfortunately modern man is not satisfied with the validity of moral rules. He finds fault with the scientific assumptions on which they are based and he is critical of the justifications supporting them.

Many important guidelines of behaviour and moralities are not accepted. They are broken every day by both those who profess to teach and bear witness for them and by the average man who longs for rules which he can keep.

### Our "Age of longing"

Our desperate search for believable systems of faith, knowledge or philosophy is as yet unsuccessful. The attempts to revitalise, re-interpret and defend old rules of conduct show only how irrelevant they are to guide — let alone direct — our behaviour.

What are the vital problems in which man wants guidance?

Man wants to do "his own thing". He wants to be free to do what he considers is the right thing for him to do.

How can he ensure that he in fact **has** this right?

What **can** he and what **can he not** do?

Man also wants to have peace. He wants to be protected from others: from authorities and majority groups who can persecute him and from minorities and pressure groups who can force their will upon him.

What are his responsibilities to others and what is the responsibility of the community to him?

One of the best known codes of behaviour is the Ten Commandments. They can be interpreted either as absolute laws, in which case they leave very much to be desired, or as generalised advice for such behaviour as is beneficial to the individual as well as to the community.

The First Commandment is a statement of identification without command.

The Second Commandment contains an absolute command to worship no other God, together with warnings of punishment and incentives for obedience.

The Fourth and Fifth Commandments contain commands together with justifications. One such justification is in the story of the creation of the world, according to which God has worked for six days and then has rested on the seventh day. The command to honour parents is more in the form of a warning which shows the bad consequences of disobedience and the desirable results of obedience.

The other six Commandments are absolute commands such as: do not kill, steal, envy, lie, swear and commit adultery. These Commandments do not contain justifications, limitations, exhortations or provide punishments for the guilty.

The Ten Commandments have been the guidelines of moral behaviour for thousands of years and they have been criticised, violated, re-interpreted and justified by generations of men.

They have not stood up very well to the test of time.

They are accepted as the beautiful expression of the best hopes for ideal behaviour. But they provide confused rules of behaviour and they do not deal with vital areas of behaviour where man needs guidance most.

Where the commands are absolute ("Thou shalt not kill") they disregard the consequences which flow from a rule which is impossible to keep under certain circumstances. These absolute commands carry with them seeds of conflict which turn the defenders of the Law into hypocrites.

They leave the offenders without practical guidance. If the sixth Commandment were taken verbally and absolutely it would require suicidal behaviour at times.

Since the Commandments are closely interwoven with one specific theory of the Creation and since this biblical version of the Creation is used as a justification for some commands, the Ten Commandments are subject to severe criticism.

The greatest weakness of the Ten Commandments is the fact that they do not provide the clear and relevant guidelines for which man is searching.

It seems to me that to preserve the greatest benefit from the Ten Commandments (both for society and for religion) they must be interpreted only as warnings and exhortations towards socially rewarding behaviour. The pretence that they express absolute laws, that they do not contradict life and nature as we know it and that their violation is absolutely mortal sin must be abandoned.

Freed from irrelevant details which are rooted in a limited state of knowledge and in the social and technological conditions of biblical times, the Ten Commandments give wonderfully wise, sensible and timeless advice for human behaviour. They provide a basis for detailed practical rules of behaviour.

## **An Interpretation of the TEN COMMANDMENTS**

1. Persecution — which in the past resulted in slavery — shall be abolished, according to the will of God the Creator.
2. Do not follow ideals which support the exploitation of man by man.  
Do not worship material things because the resulting damage lasts through many generations.  
Those who obey these warnings will avoid great harm.
3. Do not claim to act according to the Will of God unless you can justify it.
4. Keep regular rest periods both for yourself and all of those over whom you hold command.  
Devote these times to the promotion of God's Will.
5. Respect the rights of the old — so that in turn your rights shall be respected by the young.
6. Do not order, aid or commit homicide unless it can be justified by the rules of the community. Even then you shall be responsible for compensation for the harm caused.
7. If you steal—
8. If you commit adultery—
9. If you bear false witness—  
—you will be punished and you will be responsible for compensation for the harm caused.

10. Do not envy the belongings of your fellow men since envy is the cause of much lawlessness. Strive to satisfy your desires within the law or else strive to change the law.

## Can Man Change Nature?

Whilst there are a great variety of contradictory basic thoughts in different social philosophies, there are a number of commonly accepted assumptions in all religions, philosophies and social systems.

Partisans of the various conflicting ideologies often claim that the world cannot be saved until all mankind accepts **their** particular kind of wisdom. They claim that the chaos and problems are not a sign of their failure.

Instead of such a missionistic attitude, I aim to find a line of thought which will integrate commonly accepted assumptions and ideas.

**The basic common assumption and starting point of my ethical considerations is the statement that man cannot change nature.**

Nature, the Will of God and scientific truth are accepted as being beyond the power of man to change. All he can do is to learn to live in harmony with them, adjust to the laws of existence, and learn about their workings so that some control can be exercised over human circumstances.

It seems to me that, contrary to this basic and universally accepted assumption, our social and religious systems follow such ideals, and create such requirements and morality which indeed presuppose a complete change in the nature of man.

**The nature of Life is selfish.**

**The nature of human life is also selfish.**

Philosophies, ideologies, social orders or religions which believe (or pretend) that man can be made to behave contrary to his selfish nature are bound to fail.

The tragedy is that in their blind faith they blame their failure on the "bad nature of man", on "original sin", "moral degradation" and other similar phenomena instead of facing up to their own misjudgment. As a result of their absolute, dogmatic moral superiority they set out "unselfishly" to change the nature of man: to impose the impossible on humanity.

The tragedy is that the prophets of these sacred faiths do not even realise the impossibility of their attempts in their own

terminology. How can they hope to change the nature of things created by "their" God?

History records the most horrible cruelties committed against individuals and large masses of people in attempts to enforce compliance with ideals of philosophies, religions or modern ideologies.

I would say that **the failure of religions** to purge the world from evil and **the failure of social systems** to create their utopias and reform the "anti-social" elements of society **is due to the attempts of reformers** from Moses to Marx and to "Danny the Red" **to change human nature** so as to fit their religion, morality and social order.

I suggest that all systems of thought which refuse to face up to contradictions amongst their basic principles and resort to sophisms, inconsistent interpretations, mental and spiritual somersaults, mystic experiences or wishful thinking — in the hope that nature will change to comply with their ideas — are bound to fail.

Such a basic contradiction exists in the Biblical religions and in most western moral codes, philosophies and social orders through the requirement that man subordinate his own interest to someone or something else.

Man is required to love his neighbour, to keep his brother and to consider the interests of society more important than his own. He is given a set of moral rules such as do not kill, do not lie, do not steal, do not blaspheme, do not fornicate. History seems to prove that such moral systems are working only so long as the rules are not in direct vital **conflict with the interest of the individual**.

We can control nature to a degree. We can, for instance, develop some control over our primary instincts and emotions by reason.

We learn by experience that we must place some self-control on our desires in order to avoid suffering. Over-satisfaction and over-indulgence must be avoided to maintain a balanced satisfaction, a state of well-being.

At some stage of development the concept of "time" is absorbed by the child and the primitive man. After this the self, the individual will control his primary urges, instincts or emotional desires and he will be willing to "sacrifice" — that

is to defer — immediate satisfaction in favour of the expectation of some future and greater benefit.

In fact obedience to these rules, which are also referred to as “high moral standards”, depends on the experience of the individual and is similar to the “religious” following of health or safety regulations or the desire to avoid punishment.

**No unconditional, categoric moral sense holds back man from killing someone.** The restraint comes from the teaching and conditioning of society, the threatened punishment, his experience and his conviction that better living conditions come from peace and order in his community. When society instigates killing in wars the decisions of the individual are influenced by pragmatic and not by categoric moral considerations.

**Life is concerned with the promotion of its interests.** Depending on individual experience, time and other influences, the various decisions which individuals make over what serves their interests may be wrong. There may be errors of judgment — mistakes caused by uncontrolled emotions, wrong instincts, bad timing, false hopes, lack of knowledge etc.

**Man will, however, not act against his interests knowingly or instinctively. (Sacrifice, heroism, protection of the young, suicide etc. — all serve the purpose of some future, expected benefit.)**

Life happens to be made in such a way that the motive force of each individual living organism is its self-interest and not subordination, social conscience or love towards others. Co-existence depends on common interest. Otherwise no moral sense, unselfish love, religious dogma or social decrees will ever prevent killing, inquisitions, wars, crime and rebellions.

The morality of brotherly love, with everyone working for the benefit of others, is a very nice ideal. If it were possible to change the nature of life in general and human nature in particular, a system based on unselfish motives might solve many problems of our existence.

But, since nature cannot be changed to suit the dream of those moralities and social systems, they are inherently incapable of solving social problems and conflicts.

The insistence by the representatives of these contradictory systems of thought on trying to enforce their religious or worldly authority only discredits them and leads to the corrosion of their influence even in matters where they may have been helpful. We are clearsighted enough to realise the hypocrisy of the leaders who pretend that their systems work for the benefit

of all — when in fact they exploit the fears, the credulity, and the insecurity of the masses. We kill, we lie, we fornicate — and the moralists twist all their absolute, categoric rules to justify or excuse anything we may do — if it suits their purpose and the interests they have at stake.

We suspect deceit and look for ulterior motives when people claim that they are “unselfish” and that they act for our benefit just because of the morality of love.

We know the truth about ourselves. We know that we want what is good for ourselves. We know that we are selfish. We expect others to be the same. Therefore we suspect that behind the slogans lurks deception, pretence, hypocrisy—ready to trap, subjugate, defeat and exploit the unwary.

It is preferable to deal with someone whom we can trust, who states his own interests openly. Until we can establish a basis of trust, until we are forced to suspect the ulterior motives of an adversary, until we are afraid to be deceived — lasting peace is not likely.

**To solve social conflicts we need a social order which is not contrary to nature,** which can be practised consistently without the need of hypocritical explanations to smooth over inner contradictions and which can be put to work without first having to change human nature.

## God is not Love

The core of the failures of western moralities is their futile claim that “God is LOVE”.

It follows from this assumption that acts of love are RIGHT and acts which are not motivated by love are WRONG.

As a result of such moral assumptions we are forced to live a life of confusion and hypocrisy. Many necessary acts appear to be wrong whilst unnecessary sufferings, natural disasters and other “acts of God” seem to contradict the idea of a loving God.

Because this morality has a strong hold on western man (in fact he has no other widely accepted moral order) everyone attempts to justify his actions and the actions of his party, his nation, his class in terms of “love”.

We go to war out of love of country. We justify the exploitation of others by love of our family. We invent fairytales about how our actions will benefit those whom we oppress —

and so prove that, in fact, we are acting out of love. We enforce sacrifices on soldiers and others despite their objections and sanctify their heroism on the altar of Love.

Whilst the "Establishments" ask the blessing of the God of Love for their wars, at the other end of the social spectrum some rebels against the Establishment ridicule these efforts with such slogans as "Make love — not war".

There are religious believers who take this morality of love seriously and hope that their non-violent, pacifist attitude will make wars go away — in the name of a true God who is Love.

History, however, shows that devout religious disputes — as well as pacifism — lead to butcheries just as cruel as do any other conflicts. (Inquisitions; Wars of the Reformation; India and Pakistan conflicts; Ireland etc.)

The inner contradictions of this morality of Love cannot be resolved — no matter how poetically beautiful it is, how emotionally moving or how divinely inspired it may be.

In fact the confusion and hypocrisy resulting from this untenable ideal, from this unnatural moral standard, is one of the main causes which lead to the moral decline within westernised societies.

The first step to resolve many social conflicts must be the renunciation of this impossible dream.

The hypocritical pretence "that acts of love are right and must be approved and rewarded whilst other acts are wrong" must be replaced. The morality which will replace the present confusion would clarify and separate the rights and the responsibilities of the Individual as well as those of communities and it would define the limits of responsibility of one "self" towards others. It would require the impossible, unnatural standard of behaviour to act "selflessly" or "unselfishly" in the name of "love" as a moral imperative.

## God is Purpose

A better hypothesis to explain the meaning of existence and as a standard of morality seems to me the proposition that God — the "First Cause" — has some purpose in the Universe, with Existence, with Life and within that with Human life. The basic function, the vital motivation of all life-forms is: action in the interests of the **living unit**. This holds true for the most complex and the simplest organisms — or selves. It follows that if

Human life is organised to harmonise with the pattern of the Universe and the general motivation of Life, then its standard of behaviour — its standard of right and wrong — must be "selfish".

## Selfishness is not Immoral

In our world the formally accepted moral values are still based on "unselfish love" even though there is a tacit understanding that so long as one's general behaviour pretends to follow the customary patterns one may get away with murder (in war, self-defence, some cases of abortion and euthanasia etc.).

Since we live in such pretence it is customary to abuse anyone who criticizes openly such basic tenets of morality as "love" and "unselfishness".

Before I evoke this automatic condemnation, let me specify that my AIM is exactly the same as that professed by all conventional codes of morality, religion or ideology: a peaceful and happy society on earth.

The loose usage of the terms "selfish" and "unselfish" carries the implication that these qualities have some automatic moral values. We are inclined to presume that everything "unselfish" must be good and everything that is "selfish" must be bad.

In fact ALL actions, as all facts of nature, MAY be "good" OR "bad" depending on their effects measured by the requirements of some set standard.

Without such measurement all actions are neutral as far as moral value is concerned. All actions are originated in the interest of a self and therefore ALL actions are selfish. Some actions are calculated to promote an immediate interest but some other actions are based on some instinct or some faint hope or expectation of success which may fail.

The value of an action depends on its results and consequences. Many so-called "unselfish" actions result in great harm and become ethically wrong, whilst many so-called "selfish" actions provide great benefits and are ethically good.

We must be clear on the point, then, that selfishness and unselfishness "per se" have no moral qualities except in the view of some dogmatic, bigotted, unrealistic morality.

I certainly do not crusade for "immorality", crime, cruelty, exploitation of men by men, war, lovelessness or hate.

On the contrary. But I claim that most of the troubles and sufferings of humanity originate in the errors and unnatural methods of "unselfish love" which conventional ideologies have raised to the high pedestal of "sainthood" beyond the reach of reason.

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Primitive man found most natural phenomena "beyond his understanding".

The few clever men of the tribe, the witch-doctors, shamans, philosophers, soothsayers, prophets, rulers, politicians and scientists showed a historic and practical trend towards monopolising the power to interpret the laws of nature.

In early times, with no widespread education and independent thought, it was easy to prevent the masses from realising the limitations, the pretence, the deceit and the fallacy of the leaders.

Today this deceit is still maintained but the masses are sceptical, mistrusting and openly critical of the established authorities, moralities, religions and ideologies.

The only reason why today's average man puts up with the pretence of accepting the order maintained by these systems is that he does not know a better alternative system for maintaining order. And order is a vital necessity in the complex and dangerous way of life led by modern man.

I suggest that my re-examination of social orders, ethics and philosophies will result in a social system capable of replacing the present orders and which will make possible the realisation of the aims which cannot be realised by the methods of existing systems.

I believe that we can generate trust and co-operation once we cease pretending "to love our neighbour" and to be "unselfish" — when in fact we make agreements and compromises for peace only out of sheer selfish interest. The truly "unselfish" peace is simply the unconditional surrender; it is the peace which follows after the lion has devoured the lamb.

**When we stop pretending** to pacify opposing interests by asking for "sacrifices" — instead of driving hard bargains as in any business negotiation;

When we face up to the fact that ordering children about or letting them do as they please is not a sign of love but a need of our convenience;

When we confess that unselfishly loving our neighbours or

"turning the other cheek" will not stop them from damaging our garden, stealing our car or even forcing us into slavery —

**Then shall we begin to shed the morass of moral deceit, pretence, lies and unnatural play-acting. Then we shall begin to act openly, according to a set of natural and openly confessed, practicable, justifiable and trustworthy moral principles.**

## MORAL REFORMATION

I suggest that the standards of value of absolute moralities such as "The Will of God" or "The Good of Society" can represent only **one facet of values**. These standards can measure only the "social value" of phenomena: that is what benefit or harm an action causes to the community.

I consider that one single, absolute standard of value is not capable of measuring phenomena in a realistic manner. Absolute moralities claim that the only possible value is the benefit of an action to one common good, whatever that is deemed to be. In their view an action which does not promote the common good cannot be valuable.

In opposition to this I shall attempt to show that "social values" only accidentally and occasionally coincide with the value of an action to specific individuals.

**Social value is not at all the same as the value to the individual.** The value of phenomena to society is not necessarily the same as the value to the individual, indeed **there is often a conflict of interest between what is good for society and what is good for the individual.**

Personal sacrifices may be utterly destructive for the individual involved without any guarantee or assurance that the results will be of benefit to the community. Absolute moralities demand and justify such subordination of the individual to the "common good" as leaders of the community or the army or spiritual leaders happen to decide from time to time. The human sacrifice demanded by the shamans of the pagan world and suicidal missions ordered by generals are justified by the same moral standards.

No-one believes any more that the values declared by the shamans or generals are the only values nor that the values declared from time to time by changing community leaders are absolute values.

I expect that, **by showing the invalidity of absolute moralities and validating in their place two independent but complementary value systems, we shall replace the disreputed, hypocritical, contradictory and impractical "high" moral standards and categoric moral obligations with positive, non-contradictory and practically acceptable value systems.**

## Public Morality

In absolute ethical systems the purpose of valuing phenomena — the object of measuring the value of actions — was to find how good or how bad they were from the point of view of one absolute standard of value.

If an action was in accordance with the "Will of God" or for the "Good of the Community" then it was judged good. If the action did not conform to these moral standards — then it was bad, "shameful".

Even undetected deviations from these moral absolutes or thoughts of criticism were branded "sinful" or "dishonest".

In defence of their authority moralities employed the strongest personal enforcer of conformity: fear. We were brought up with imprinted feelings of guilt which prompt us "instinctively" (without criticism) to accept "absolute" moral standards, that is: whatever is held to be the "Will of God" or the "Good of the Community" or the "Law of the Land", at any given time.

Justice (that is, rewards for "good" actions and punishment for "bad" actions) was administered to encourage ethical conduct and aspiration.

The authority of absolute ethics is based on the "absolute" knowledge of what is good and bad. Social orders based on absolute ethics expect, of course, to know absolutely, without any doubt, what is good and bad for their societies.

It is this false assumption of "absolute knowledge" which has brought absolute ethical systems into disrepute.

Our knowledge changes demonstrably and consequently any rigid system of thought which attempts to disregard new facts, experiences or discoveries must become outdated, inadequate, primitive, superstitious and incapable of dealing with reality.

**Absolute ethics can claim the right to function as the final authority to judge what is good or bad only by presuming to be in possession of absolute knowledge.**

Only the acceptance of such a presumption can give society the "absolute" right to judge and punish actions which it presumes are against the supposed benefit of society.

**If this presumption of absolute knowledge is not valid — as it is not — then obviously the function of ethics, which is not absolute any more, must be limited.**

The previously categoric, absolute, unchanging, transcendental nature of ethical values has disappeared — in fact and practice it disappeared long ago — as something unnatural and untenable, something which existed only in the realm of fairy tales or inexplicable mystic experience.

**I shall refer to this limited form of ethical order as PUBLIC MORALITY.**

The function of this morality is defined by the retention of the valid function of the absolute ethical systems after the elimination of their presumed omniscient qualities concerning what is the absolute good for every individual person or living thing or the inanimate universe.

**The function of PUBLIC MORALITY is, in a simple definition, to protect the community from harm.** Accordingly its standard of value will not be an unchangeable, absolute definition of what is "good" and morality will cease to pretend guiding or forcing people to achieve a prescribed form of happiness or eternal life. The standard of value for public morality will be constantly changing with the meaning of "harm" in a fashion similar to that in which laws — designed for the protection of the safety, freedom, property, etc. of the citizens — change.

## Individual Morality

Since I have limited the area of validity of public morality, it is obvious that some phenomena, which have been previously subject to the valuations of the absolute ethics, require some other system of valuation providing an order of importance.

**The phenomena excluded from the authority of PUBLIC MORALITY are those which in absolute, single moralities promote the "good" of society, the benefit of the community, the happiness of the individual.** All of these phenomena are measured against the standards of value presumed to be known as the "Will of God", the "Good of the Community", the "Laws of Nature". Compliance with the requirements and the interpretations of the various standards is to be rewarded by "Happiness" either in this life or in another one following death.

There are quite sizeable groups of individuals who accept the various frameworks of value-orders such as a religion, a

political system, a philosophy or an ideology as their guidelines to happiness. However the number of different formal sects of religion, of philosophies and ideologies is very great and growing. The number of individual deviations from these is innumerable.

There is no one-and-only path to happiness; there is no absolute definition of happiness; and the quality of happiness is subject to both objective ("as it is presumed to be") and subjective changes (depending on the changing mental and physical condition of the individual).

**I shall refer to this area of ethical activity as INDIVIDUAL MORALITY. The object of INDIVIDUAL MORALITY is the study of the nature of human happiness. Its function is the creation of a system of rules to be applied as a guide for the achievement of happiness.** Since there is no absolute definition of happiness, the values expressed by this system of ethics are valid only for the individuals who voluntarily accept them as their guide to their happiness.

The subject of INDIVIDUAL MORALITY is, then, the individual—the self—motivated by nature's inbuilt urge for self-furtherance. Individual Morality is concerned exclusively with the interest of **the** individual to achieve happiness. It is not concerned with the interests of other individuals. The **protection** of their interests, as we have seen, **is the function of PUBLIC MORALITY.**

The removal of the presumption that ethical systems and morality must or can express absolute values and requirements leads to the elimination of two separate kinds of contradictions inherent in contemporary ethical and social orders.

**Firstly, it eliminates the contradictions** created by changing knowledge. We shall not be damned to eternal death because we act against presumed knowledge of tradition, superstition, religion or a social system. We shall refuse the authority and validity of any social system or morality to order and force us to behave in any prescribed way either "for the benefit of society" or for the "salvation of our souls".

We shall recognise that the cause of the inconsistency which permits one action at one time and punishes the same action at another time is the interests of the leaders of society. As we all know, practice proves that there is no "absolute justice".

**The second kind of contradictions** to be eliminated stem from the hypocritical pretensions of contemporary ethics and social orders, namely that the benefit of society is automatically

good for the individual. Even though no-one believes uncritically in this kind of propaganda nowadays, there still lingers a significant traditional belief that unselfish, sacrificial actions are meritorious.

The invalidation of the absolute morality — and specifically the separation of PUBLIC and INDIVIDUAL MORALITIES — will clarify this set of contradictions. It becomes clear that the functions of these two moralities are different and opposite.

INDIVIDUAL MORALITY directs each individual to the achievement of his optimum happiness—as he sees it. PUBLIC MORALITY provides the limitation and protection against any damage caused by one individual to other individuals.

Therefore each individual becomes morally free to achieve his happiness without the need to pretend publicly that he is acting for the benefit of the community or to justify himself hypocritically by the distortion of religious explanations. At the same time all actions will then be judged by the public in the open knowledge that they are motivated by some kind of self-interest which can be ascertained frankly and, if necessary, provisions can be made to protect other members of the community from eventual harm.

Such elimination of contradiction and hypocrisy from contemporary moralities will not only provide more valid foundation for a social order — it will go a great way towards the restoration of trust and credibility in authority.

## **What Results do I expect from the Creation of a "New" Social System?**

Can significant, valuable improvements follow if, as I claim, the different approach does not completely invalidate existing religions, moral and political systems?

The basic change envisaged is the consistent application of the following assumptions:

1. WE CANNOT CHANGE NATURE ONLY CONTROL IT TO A DEGREE.

(We must adjust our aims to what nature is known to be. Can we know what is basic and unchangeable in Nature and what can be changed?)

2. THERE IS NO ABSOLUTE KNOWLEDGE. (Facts, revelations, inspirations change in the view of new knowledge. The basis of an acceptable system of thought and social order is a credible hypothesis — a belief uncontradictory to facts, a common denominator integrating commonly held basic hypotheses of various philosophies.)
3. THE VALIDITY OF "ABSOLUTE, SINGLE, TRANSCENDENTAL MORALITIES" IS LIMITED.
4. "UNSELFISHNESS" DOES NOT EXIST. PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION, MORALITY MUST ACCEPT THE FACT OF SELFISHNESS AS THE UNCHANGEABLE BASIC NATURE OF ALL LIFE-FORMS.
5. INDISCRIMINATE "PROGRESS" and **any** kind of achievement are NOT NECESSARILY VALUABLE.
6. THE ELIMINATION OF FALSE PREMISES PERMITS THE CONSISTENT APPLICATION OF ETHICS TO SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND THIS IN ITSELF CREATES A NEW SYSTEM OF VALUES — A NEW SOCIAL ORDER BETWEEN THE EXISTING EXTREME, UNNATURAL, IMPRACTICAL AND SELFDESTRUCTIVE SOCIAL ORDERS.

I do not want to defeat any existing religion, philosophy or social order for the sake of creating a new one.

I contend that the old orders have fallen into disrepute — certainly without **MY** interference — because they are not capable of achieving what they themselves claim; their explanation of how nature works does not satisfy us and therefore we become agnostics who are not able to believe the propositions offered by codified religions.

This does not even mean that we are non-religious or even anti-religious. To me religion means the belief of hypothesis that (1) existence has been created for some reason and not by accident and (2) that there is a purpose in life toward which we progress.

I do not want to defeat morality or change the ideal morality. We ought to follow the values of what is good and what is just, because they should lead to happiness. But I contend that moralities have fallen into disrepute because of contradictions, inconsistency and a hypocritical disregard of the fact that people have been forced to live "immorally" and use some vague double standards owing to the fact that the values of accepted moralities are unnatural and do not lead to happiness.

### **I EXPECT THE FOLLOWING CHANGES:**

1. The contradictions and double standards of morality will be eliminated.
2. This will validate morality. We shall be able to practise what we are required to do instead of living in a web of pretence and make-believe, carrying the burden of some original sin.
3. The motivation of all actions can be faced squarely without the hypocrisy of covering up natural reasons which are today considered immoral.
4. Trust and credibility may be restored.
5. The object of morality will be brought into harmony with nature instead of morality attempting to change nature. It will be recognised and accepted without blame that each living unit — each self — may follow his own interests. This will be clearly recognised in contrast with today when it must be hidden behind some disguise of pretended holy and binding interests of the community.

The most important result of the separation of PUBLIC and INDIVIDUAL MORALITIES will be the differentiation between the obligations of the Individual and the requirements of the community. The individual has no automatically binding obligations towards anyone but himself. He may accept, in a voluntary or contractual form, obligations towards other individuals: members of his family, his community, his nation. But these obligations are not unconditional nor "categorical" as moral duty is considered.

6. The outcome of these changes will be the release of the individual from the exploiting bondage of communities, sovereign nations, absolute moralities, hell-threatening religions and public opinion which have power to direct, judge, punish, exploit or reward individuals who become their involuntary captive subjects.

**The Individual will be set free** when the functions of communities are restricted.

Communities will lose the power to misrepresent PUBLIC MORALITY as the means of enforcing missionistic beliefs and the material interests of sectional pressure groups.

The function of communities will then be the protection of the equal rights of their voluntary members against harm and damages.