

**VALUES, POLITICS AND SOCIETY: A DISCOURSE IN POLITICAL
PHILOSOPHY FOR SELF-RELIANCE***

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The importance of values:

Wittgenstein begins his *Tractatus*, devoted primarily to logic and epistemology, with a deterministic logical framework of the world that he describes as “the totality of facts” (1.1)¹ and ends his book with an ambiguous mystical note. W. Julian Korab-Karpowicz’s *Tractatus Politico-Philosophicus* begins with the analysis of such concepts as “politics”, human nature”, “the state”, “freedom”, “solidarity” etc., and contests Wittgenstein’s ontological ideas by the statement: “The world is the totality of values, rather than the totality of facts.”² I shall discuss this with special reference to *Tractatus Politico-Philosophicus*.

It is indeed true that if we cannot disregard facts in our lives, the world that we create as humans is “the totality of values,” and since in our societies we can find different value claims, the values that we support need to be analysed and those that we believe are the right ones must be practically implemented, if we desire to live in happy societies. A political community as a social organization cannot be well governed if as an institution it is devoid of certain values and remains teared apart by a struggle for power and becomes a mere playground for different, mainly commercial interests. Here my argument is that it is the practice of virtue that teaches us right values and makes societies happy and civilized. Virtues are positive qualities of human character. If virtues, such as honesty, industry, justice, courage, sympathy, moderation, and wisdom, are missing from our society, then it gets corrupted. The people who lack virtues develop vices such as “greed, selfishness, jealousy, deceit, lust, sloth, vulgarity, cruelty, and ignorance.”³ These are characteristics of mediocre and evil people. I would only wonder how to eradicate such evils and to convince members of society to cultivate virtues. Virtue education of people through school and college, in addition to family, as the primary institution for children to be trained gradually in positive values may provide an inspiring and optimistic tool for the

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proposed happy society based on virtues. The aim of education is character-building. This is called by Swami Vivekananda as 'man-making' education.

Human beings by nature are neither good nor bad. As human beings we have "a set of dispositions or abilities."⁴ First, we have reason which is our natural ability to think. However, mere rationality without moral concerns could make people vicious and societies unhappy. Hence, we also need to remind ourselves about our ability to reflect on ethical issues. We cannot deny that we are living in a world which is characterized gender discrimination, and male-dominated and power-oriented political institutions. But how do we take this wonderful initiative of cultivating ethical attitude in the world of today, which is, for example, vitiated by the denial of justice to a larger section of people who are deprived of wealth? True, this is a part of the power game with its different successive states of demoralization. We cannot deny that wicked people are still in better position than those who are moral and virtuous in society. "Wicked people are individuals who harm others and use lies, deception, and bribery to achieve their malicious, socially harmful goals."⁵ There may be indeed many of such people around. But without others' cooperation, which begins with understanding of our nature and our abilities, no real change in society towards positive direction is possible.

Human civilization is not one-dimensional, but multi-dimensional. The development of civilizations does not progress along a single path, but it is accomplished by the development of independent cultures, sometimes in different parts of the world, that come into contact and mutually influence one another. Hence, a cultural diversity, if it is engaged in cooperation and mutual reinforcing, rather than in a destructive confrontation, is desirable. It should not be replaced by a cultural uniformity, whether of a Western or of a different origin.

Whether we shall live in good states or corrupted ones depends upon the morals of our politicians and of the moral education of the public at large. Thus, we are to seek for a bold alternative to the power-centered Western culture of modernity, stressing facts and interests rather than values. We know that because of both modernity and post-modernity, the traditional societal values like family and community are under the threat of annihilation and this ultimately can lead to the self-destruction of societies as communities and to a civilizational decline.

Here I would like to argue that we can also rationally speak about both facts and values. There is no reason to remove value claims from a rational discourse to be merely a matter of subjective preference. It is true that “positivism conceals an implicit subjectivism that is present in the cognitive process”⁶ and subjectivism is equally present in our perception of both facts and values.

Why are values, such as goodness, important in human life? Because, without values a society is sure to become a corrupt one. To me, freedom and cooperation are two essential conditions to be fulfilled for a successful democracy. There is no alternative to a successful democracy for peace and sustainable development. *Discussion, debate and dissent are the three essential features of Democracy.* Today we must give recognition to religious ‘tolerance’ and ‘acceptance’ with the logic of religious pluralism that says, “God is one, Truth is one, and one is Perfection, but there are many roads to God, Truth, and Perfection.”⁷ Every country should guarantee this for fruitful international relations as well as peaceful human existence. A hope for a just society would remain as just a utopia if the people of any particular society are not themselves righteous.

Again, for a right understanding of a society, we need to understand our time and socio-cultural context. Sometimes we need to be flexible instead of being fixed on certain rigid dogma. War cannot be the solution to our problems today. We should resolve our problems by recognizing the value of freedom and cooperation. In other words, we need to speak not ‘*about* others’, but ‘*with* others’. Dialogue is the best way for resolving conflicts. With these prerequisites let us proceed to have our vision of a happy society where politics is rooted and shaped on values.

Happy Society

In today’s Western civilization, which is dominated by a materialistic world-view, we witness a predominantly self-centered, egoistic and consumerist attitude. This leads modern individuals to *open competition* and *motivational running for power, profit and pleasure* as the *summumbonum*, the ultimate goal of life. Consequently, human lives in society appear in the end to finally decline to unending social and economic conflict, as we currently witness in many countries. In order to rise from this sore human condition and unenviable uncertainty of our future, the relevance of social values like cooperation is important. For establishing a well-governed state and a happy society we propose the followings: (1) cooperation based

on empathy, (2) being happy without harming other's happiness, (3) having a society and state leadership endowed with knowledge and values, (4) imparting education based on values, (5) enacting proper law and their implementation, (6) obtaining political awareness of the citizenry, and (7) the transfer of cultural heritage through families and generations.

It is now time to rethink the impact of the unchallenged Western supremacy and its modern materialism. Our outlook in our social and political thought process should raise its bar from unbridled competitive edge to what is centred on cooperation and empathy (*muditā*). Open penchant for competition often raises an animal instinct in us. Beasts only look after their own interests. They snatch food from the mouth of others to feed themselves. When this animal instinct arises among the mankind, the imminent danger multiplies. A weak person, whose food is snatched by a strong person, is not even spared by the later to be killed. The bottom-line is that in the prevailing social norms, the message of a judgement often “weeps silently” and “discreetly”. To get rid of this situation, the state should be led by the persons, who possess highest wisdom, morality and excellence. “In any country, political leadership should comprise of persons who represent in themselves the highest intellectual and moral qualities.”⁸The state leaders should be conscious of values. They must be accountable, proficient and full of experience on life. They should possess the prowess to assess the advice and opinions of their secretaries and advisors. If they do not have these qualities, very often they would become reliant on their Secretaries, as we see especially in South-East Asian countries including India, and as a result, a bureaucracy infused with corruption poses to be a stumbling block in the direction of development of the country as in India. The oppression on the weaker section and the economic exploitation of the poor by the powerful few becomes the order of the day (i. e. it is an open secret that in India the gap between 5% rich and 95% poor people has been increasing day by day,) with indirect political patronage. The profit earning public sectors are considered in government policies to be sold to Corporate Houses with political patronage in apparently invisible background. No investigating agencies can work independently and honestly because of political control. The Corrupt politicians in order to get them unpunished take shelter to the ruling political party in multi-party political system and change their allegiance to another party that comes to power subsequently. Gradually, the Police

and the Judiciary also would succumb to corruption. The Judges and the Advocates would become accustomed in taking bribes.

It is worthwhile to mention here that anti-corruption and vigilance in the Police and the Judiciary would always be one of the most important pillars of the state. The powers that be in the state administration should be erudite and sincere with high morale. It has been observed that none in the lower level officials finds courage to be involved in corrupt practices, if the leaders of the society are not corrupted. On the flip side, the innocent persons, who are at the receiving end on account of unjust and corrupt practices, do not find any one to depend upon, if the leaders of the state are of questionable integrity. Once a few resourceful political personalities in government are involved in corrupt practices, the citizen in general loses faith in democracy, leaving an awkward impact on the society. This is detrimental to democracy. When the persons in powers ascribe more importance to the interests of their own and the political parties they belong to, the most of the citizens do not see eradication in their poverty and reversal in their misfortune – only a privileged few, who are in power find their fortune soaring high. In South-East Asian countries the growth of wealth of people in political power, either directly or indirectly, is so high that proves the fact of looting public wealth in day-light. This trend results in upholding the interests of those in the helm and deprivation of the masses concomitantly. In terms of national uprising, the economically poor section and the masses from backward and terminal classes are subjected to carry an insignificant role. When the question of leadership of the country and its people comes into play, it cannot be served, unless an unbiased love and warmth is formed to deliver good to the countrymen.

A similar line of thought we can find in Confucius, who emphasized on the need of initiating the social reform from the highest level. When the driving force behind the men in the high level, chiefly in the royal/political strata of the country is contaminated by corruption, the countrymen are destined to be unhappy; justice in the society becomes non-existent and the country can never be a developed one. The management of politics here lies in the application of ‘divide and rule’ policy where caste and/ or religion play a dominant rule. No quality education, which is based on values, is imparted to the young people of such an unhappy society. On the contrary, a scenario of cooperation builds the foundation of a happy society. Devotion to serve

the interest of others or do well to others is only the proper yardstick of a true and good citizen. This is also the yardstick of religion in the sense of pure spirituality. *I should not commit myself to do something to others in the same way as I do not expect others to do to me and this non-committal is in itself the morality.* In the well-organized society, the dignity of every “station-designation” is dependent on the appraisal of moral responsibility of the same. The dignity of a king / ruler truly depends on his observance of Duty, *Rājadharmā* in the true sense. Similarly, the dignity of democracy lies in the culture of debate which includes discussion and dissent.

It is to be kept in mind that a happy society is based on cooperation, belongingness, love, compassion and empathy etc. Because of the influence of Western modern political thinking, politics, some people wrongly believe, is a battle of winning power in the narrowest and the most negative sense. But in the true sense, politics is the art of good governance which works properly on the basis of doctrines of administration and philosophical theories of good governance. Its aim is a good life of citizens based on their social cooperation. In this perspective (*susāsanam* in Sanskrit), the role of ethics in politics is significant. The source of corruption is political rule without morality. Today, this is one of the main problems not only of the West, but also of the South-East Asian countries.

The idea of denouncing morality gives birth to egotism. It is based on the notion of continuous and unrestricted competition. Because of the progress in Western science, humanity has witnessed unparalleled progress during the last two centuries. At the same time, it has on many occasions displayed moral degradation and idealistic degradation, of which the most striking examples are cases of genocide, especially holocaust. It is obvious that in spite of scientific and technological advances, politics has not improved ethically and has lost its moral strength of freedom. The importance of the moral aspect of politics has been known in India for a long time. *Manusmṛiti* (the Law book by Manu) had spoken of *Rājadharmā* (Virtues/Duties of the Ruler), enunciated what the duties of a king or politicians and rulers should be. Then, keeping in mind the objective of restraining authoritarianism in governance, Manu advised for practicing politics devoid of vices.⁹

A close reading of the history of civilization and culture reveals that if the moral foundation of society is not respected in a country – whether developed or

underdeveloped or developing – it is certain that it should consequently suffer from a political turmoil and this upheaval would weaken the country from within. As a result, the economic condition of this country would get worse, and this would also have consequences on other aspects of life. If people cannot get opportunity to choose among the different available alternatives; if they do not have freedom, their innovative prowess gradually gets obliterated. Their creativity gets stalled. This makes human beings culturally backward and selfish, and thereupon they may forget the finer social values like cooperation, and engage in egoistic pursuits, just to survive. The inevitable outcome of this syndrome is the unrestrained manifestation of greed, violence, venom etc. Hence, we may conclude that no leadership with innovative power grows without a concept of self-determination.

Today almost in the whole world, animosity among various divisive and religious groups is on the increase. Incited by the politicians and media, the increasing manifestation of violence, as it were, exceeded all limits. This is really one of the greatest dangers for today's humankind. And the most destructive outcome of such animosity is war, especially on the world scale. We want to remind here those who want to win by war that “the real power of a society, greater than its military power, is its moral power.”¹⁰ Violence cannot abolish violence.

Though post-modernism is the practical manifestation of globalization, it is burdened with its failure to drive human race to a more peaceful world. It is also a developmental failure. Rather, despite the availability of better technology at disposal, it is now reversing its direction towards primitive society. Post-modernism, by its deceptive process of “deconstruction”, has stirred the foundation of Western civilization. Thoughts of religious fundamentalism are percolating through the holes of this weakness and are making the whole world restless. As we watch, a political class of people are not only misusing some form of institutional religious faith and creating unrest in Middle East and South East Asia, and even in Europe, but they also led the whole world to a serious existential crisis for humankind. Religious fundamentalists are going stronger through the “hole” of the culture of diversity. The fundamentalists, who are using religion, do not believe in values like equality, tolerance or diversity. Their doctrinal training is blind, exclusive and violence-oriented.¹¹ They do not believe in religious pluralism which propagates “acceptance” of the different religions as different possible spiritual ways to reach the highest

Truth. On the contrary, they seek to organize the social life on the strength of their exclusive religious dogmas. They seek to establish dictatorship in the name of religion in substitution of democracy which is founded on values like freedom and open-mindedness. They forcefully disapprove different indigenous cultural histories. “In today’s situation of large-scale manipulation and escalating conflict in the world, the peace that humanity desperately needs should begin as peace among religions.”¹²

We may recall here a distinguished historian cum philosopher, Theodore Zeldin. According to him, “Hostility between the religions was generated by learned theologians, who studied the ancient books, recreating what they believed to be a purer doctrine, and urging obedience to it as a cure for all discontents.”¹³ Failure to catch the base tone of diversity leads the life in a state to unthinkable danger. In a state that we can find a diversity of religions, the government needs to be a complex situation in the midst of unending diversity. Future logic seldom remains exclusively programmed. New scenario arises before us. Wise leadership is expressed in leaders’ “dedication to a common good and an ability to reconcile the interests of different groups.”¹⁴ It requires dealing with situations based on their own character. The fundamentalists deal with them in opposite manner. They seek to view everything from a particular standpoint, ostensibly pouring in a mould, commensurate with their mind-set. They are narrow, stubborn and one-eyed. They misuse politics and institutional religion as a means of capturing power. They consider dogmatic belief to be the best. They want to win themselves a place in societies. Therefore, to deal with them we need to solve the contemporary problems with creativity in order to save this society. The passage of reasonableness handed down by Indian tradition may show us the way out in overcoming these negative effects of post-modernism. The advantages of or the rationale behind the supremacy of our innate native culture and that of tolerance of other culture can be adopted. Neither with better development nor with peace could post-modernism benefit us. Today, we are living in a world, which is gradually becoming more and more dangerous. Very little of what will happen in near future is ascertainable now. Yet we can think of a happy society, the foundation of which will be based on morality or a traditional virtue ethics.

Cooperation is one of the most important pillars of a happy society. It is associated with “a common goal, common good, and a division of labour.”¹⁵ It gathers its strength from mutual fulfillment. Its core is in its diversity, mutual respect

and generosity. In a happy society, exploitation, repression, inequality etc. must all gradually disappear. Such a society requires good leadership to stimulate cooperation. Lacking such a leadership may lead to conflict for power. Only a strong leader empowered by moral resolve and restraint can contribute to proficient leadership; create an atmosphere of cooperation in the society. By dint of cooperation, it is possible to bring about an epoch-making transformation in general security, subdual of crimes, health, environment, defense, knowledge of science and technology, law and international regulations based on ethics. Morality demands that a citizen in the true sense of the term should not be selfish and should not hurt others, because his own interest and survival is inter-connected with the interest of others. Vedanta philosophy also teaches the essential identity of all human beings. It says, “whom so ever I hurt, I hurt myself.”¹⁶

The second pillar of a happy society is to think and act for the happiness for all. In principle “everyone should be happy, but not at the expense of others.”¹⁷ But in our today’s societies to be happy at someone else’s expense is common. This makes others unhappy and does not allow us to live in a happy society. We may remember here the idea to the four pursuits of life as preached by Buddha, such as loving kindness, (*maitri*), compassion (*karuṇā*), empathetic joy (*muditā*) and equanimity (*upekṣā*) that train a person for his or her concern for others. The first three are called *bhāvanās*, because they put one’s thought to action, “making-become” and the last one is known as *bhāvanā-nāsa*, because it is inclined to action without *tanhā*, attachment. For example, the way in which global warming is on the rise, its root cause lies in the human greed and the propensity to exploit the natural resources as much as possible. Our knowledge of science and technology may be an irresistible condition in solving this problem, but not enough to be effective (*upāyakaūśalya*). In this matter, we have to be careful enough about consumerism. If we cannot restrain it, we will have to suffer.

Another factor of hindrance to the way to a happy society is the unhindered population explosion. It is also to be checked. It would be necessary to think of interest, not only of a person, but also of the community as a whole, and the humanity at large. In this community we should ultimately include not only human beings, but also animals, and trees and plants. The perception of inseparable extension of self with the entire universe, mobile and immobile (*īṣāvāśyaṃidaṃsarvaṃ*, everything in

this changing world is pervaded by the One Universal Spirit),¹⁸ should be considered along with the perception on environment. We are in the same verse also advised to enjoy the life by giving and sharing (*tyaktenabhuñjīthāḥ*) and without coveting anybody's wealth (*mā gṛdhaḥ kasyasviddhanam*). It may be interpreted as respect to others' right and property. Any kind of utilization of natural resources beyond one's basic needs is to be interpreted as an act of stealing. Over utilization of the natural resources leads to the deprivation of others from their legitimate use or fulfilment of basic needs. It is, therefore, a kind of restriction imposed on one's excessive possession and a kind of instruction to be duty-bound to others. Our mutual dependence thus is the principal ingredient of symbiosis. It is relevantly imperative to state that so-called developed or rich nations are responsible for consistently increasing the global warming by unjustly and excessively using the gift of nature. Regrettably, so-called summits on global warming have become a platform of politically motivated groups blaming one another (i.e. role of USA or China). The unbounded greed of human beings results only in compounding of conflict - in our family, society and state. Therefore, looking for a good example, we may look at the cultural history of India which emphasizes on our civilization centred on our 'Duties' and not on 'Rights'. For present India it is the high time to apply its philosophy of high moral ideals into practice. And for this we need 'political will' of the Government to implement this. In other words, we need a practical Idealism in politics for a bright future-India.

It is also a traditional view that is put in a new form that in order to build a happy society, citizenry should possess great virtues and the leadership of the society should have profound wisdom. "Leaders' wisdom and citizens' virtues are basic prerequisites of a happy society."¹⁹ It is its third moral pillar. The great virtues of citizens are inlaid in devotion to labour, honesty, courage, lawfulness and love for own country. Wisdom and nobility in politics should be ensured through electoral regulations. Wise and noble persons, persons respectful to holding aloft the culture and those with exemplary administrative acumen, whether or not their numbers are minimal, should be promoted to leadership. This becomes self-explanatory in the light of continuous and terrible deterioration of politicians' morals that can be attributed to unrest and economic crisis prevailing in the political climate of South-East Asian countries. A person protected by powerful persons in society enjoys

special privilege. To get rid of this inequality, the citizenry should get suitable moral education through public institutions, which can make them accountable citizens. The budget for both primary education and higher education with research facilities in India should be increased in terms of the percentage of GDP like China and the USA. However, unlike China and some countries of South-East Asia, Institutions of higher education should be free from any political interference. Universities should remain as a centre of the culture of freedom in ideas, a centre for exchange of views and as a centre of the emergence of a new India.

That is why “education for knowledge and virtue”²⁰ is the next important pillar of a happy society. Education is always be imbibed in a certain social environment. Character-building must be the central point of all education policy for imparting instructions. In a democratic state, citizens enjoy freedom of speech, including the right to criticize the government. Freedom is essential for unfolding of individual’s talent, so that he or she can choose a life path. Cultural development cannot crop up without freedom in ideas. Yet freedom does not mean the right to ‘Go as you like’. Self-regulation and self-control are to be translated into the real freedom, based on one’s choice. The foremost duty of a welfare state is to create and sustain an environment of freedom that can be utilized by its citizens. The twentieth century Indian philosopher Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya held the power of thinking freely as the mother of freedom. He called it “Swaraj in Ideas”.²¹ Freedom is always indicative of cooperation. It is the gift of the culture and *vice versa*. The state has to actively nurture its effort to rejuvenate man’s thought process and talent and, in the process, the uppermost precondition is freedom. Poverty is also a hindrance to freedom. In administration of the state, there is need for a favourable infrastructure for allowing the talent of the poverty-stricken masses to bloom. Essentially, unequal distributions of wealth, artificial organizational rules, perception of inapplicable vision etc., push the civilization to destruction. History is multi-dimensional and is marked by idealistic conflicts and destructive changes. It is not wise to paint history in the same direction. Therefore, for a happy society as well, the importance of open-mindedness and freedom in ideas in a citizen is endless.

That is why Buddha asked people to be reflective and critical before accepting any view and not to be dogmatic. What others are saying is important to listen. Buddha speaks of openness and flexibility and avoidance of all kinds of

extremism as he very often says that “truth lies in the middle.” “Oh Monks! Please don’t accept my teaching just out of sheer reverence to me but accept it after critically examining it just as the genuineness of gold is determined by burning it in fire.”²²We also read in the *Kālāma-Sutta*, “Do not believe in anything (simply) because you have heard it. Do not believe in traditions because they have been handed down for many generations. Do not believe in anything because it is spoken and rumoured by many. Do not believe in anything (simply because it is written in your religious books. Do not believe in anything (simply) on the authority of your teachers and elders. But after observation and analysis, when you find anything that agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it.”²³ What Buddha said for the house-holders has a deep significance today. Exercise of morality and reasoning are two sure marks for a good life.

To reflect further on education, in any country it should be made free from narrow politics. The purpose of education is ‘to raise an educated and creative individual’, it should be free of any indoctrination or ideological component.²⁴ Political freedom is not the only solution of the problem. Schools, Colleges and Universities are the fields of different activities of young generation, so they can develop fully as human beings. The society should keep strict vigil in a way that they do not become victim of any mental and moral degradation and of political slavery. Students should be motivated through logical thoughts of education to fight backward social customs and any madness in the name of religion. They should be trained to be persons without malice, daring, opposed to compromise and impartial. Persons of such temperament would save the country from the cultural crisis and decadence in education; help the countrymen in putting in place fresh values.

The provision of placing proper law in statecraft is another pillar of a happy society. It must work for general welfare. It cannot be partial and serve special interests of a powerful lobby. The basis of good law is ethics and such law draws our attention to the highest values. Yet, it is not sufficient for a happy society to only have law to save citizens from being harmed by others. The lack of understanding of compulsion to comply with law and that of discipline do not fetch development in culture. Legal approvals should have their directions driven to the desired results, and this is a civilizational development of a nation. For this end “a positive law cannot be arbitrary, but should always be based on historical experience and tradition of a

country.”²⁵ Any law is established on ideology indicative of observance of the rules and prescriptions carrying traditional ethos. Hence, presence of justice is highly essential in democracy. By the responsible application of the laws and moral obligations, but at the same time preserving some important spiritual traditions, we may have successful democracy. In the political system of democracy, the opposition has the right to criticize the government. However, it should also give recognition to the constructive work of the government. For the successful democracy, the role of responsible opposition members is important. They are called the conscience of the people and the mirror for the government. They cooperate with the government through constructive criticism. They learn to be responsible if they recognize that in spite of our differences, we are all members of one community whose members ultimately share the same spiritual background.

The vitality of democracy largely depends on the culture of debate including discussion and dissent, but this has a positive value. “The silencing of dissent and the generating of fear in the minds of people violate the demands of personal liberty, but also make it very much harder to have a dialogue-based democratic society.”²⁶

Another important pillar of a happy society is citizens’ political knowledge. If we lack political knowledge or do not have political consciousness then we can be easily manipulated. This enables some crooked politicians to work for their interests, rather than for the public good. India is a vivid example of this. Every citizen should therefore be politically informed about what is going in the world and be aware of their rights and duties. The media, which provides information to general public, thus has also an important responsibility in building a happy society by providing “true information about current events in the country and in the world.”²⁷ It needs to present impartial and reliable political analysis of events. But unfortunately, as it stands now, the role of media in many countries, including India, is largely based on yellow journalism which finds its satisfaction as puppet of political parties.

The seventh principle of a happy society and is another essential pillar is the continuity of generations. The ultimate foundation of a happy society, where people can live fulfilling, happy lives, is their culture, which is the work of many generations and gives them a sense of unity. In case of India, in which one can indeed find cultural diversity, the native pluralistic culture is the Hindu culture. What I would like to suggest here is that a happy society cannot be based on cultural relativism, which

in the West has the postmodern form of multiculturalism. Once we make all cultures equal, we lose our identity and even worse may engage in some cultural wars because some cultures will aim at superiority. To avoid this, it is better to use the native culture as the society's foundation and be tolerant to all other cultures. Moreover, we cannot build a happy society without giving a proper place to the oldest institution of humankind, which is the traditional family. Without a family no society can survive. A happy society cannot be founded with a complete break-up of family traditions. The traditional family is the guarantee of the society's future and its native culture. It maintains its cultural unity and at the same time allows for a peaceful co-existence of different cultural tributaries.

Evils of Exclusivism vs Open-mindedness:

The principal strength of any country depends on cordial relationships among different community groups and on their ability to work together, having reliance on common languages, traditions, customs and values. An important role is played here by religious tolerance and "acceptability" of other's religions. If different customs, different food habits and different beliefs are not totally opposed to each other in a society, the diversity may be considered to be its strength. Just as truth could be known in different ways, the different mode of worshipping of God should be accepted in any country. The real religion is not opposed to reason and science. The three characteristics - life, freedom and cooperation - are highly important in the annals of Indian civilization. Through the journey along greater freedom and moral fulfillment, human life is fulfilled. Open-mindedness has been glorified in the *Rigveda* - "May open thoughts from different directions bring about our growth (*Rgveda*)."²⁸ It is interesting to remember what Will Durant remarks in his book *Pleasures of Philosophy* on that consumerist society, which develops in countries that blindly imitate the exclusive materialistic culture of the West. According to Will Durant, "The last stage of the matter is the gang-men rule. Criminals flourish happily in our large cities, because they are guaranteed the full protection and cooperation of the law. If they belong to the Organization, or have friends in it, they have every assurance that if they commit a crime they will not be arrested, that if they are arrested, they will not be convicted, that if convicted they will not be sent to jail, that if jailed they will be pardoned, that if unpardoned they will be permitted to escape."²⁹ It seemed that Will Durant, who wrote his book a long time ago, was

completely right in visualizing what in the name of Western democracy is happening today in many countries including India. Plato, who in the eighth book of the *Republic* makes a critique of democracy, visualized the real welfare of the society, which cannot be separated from virtue. A combination of virtuous philosophers and visionary rulers in a political entity can lead us the real welfare of the state, to a good state that is a protector of a happy society. This is the ultimate Platonic vision of the philosopher King.

In this context, it should be kept in mind that there is no way to ignore the role of religion in human society.³⁰ The idea that religion and logic have enmity with one another is incongruous and faulty marked by transgression. Unadulterated or pure reason or logical thoughts find harmony amidst conflicts. In the root of pure spiritualism lies unconditional love for the universe. Spiritualism also demands, “The way and the yardstick in which you judge others, you will also be judged in the same manner with the same yardstick.”³¹ Therefore, in the notion of modern state-craft we have to overcome the boundaries of the religious knowledge at personal level. While speaking on values, we cannot, pause awkwardly only with the aspect of so-called morality associated with any institutional religion. A philosopher, whose mind is flourishing with open-mindedness, cannot accept any institutional religion unhesitatingly and blindly.

3.2 It is interesting to recall here M. K. Gandhi’s vision of ideal society which he calls ‘Rāmarājya’. The broad outlines of Gandhi’s vision of ideal society can be found in ‘Hind Swarāj’ and the collection of his Speeches. The happy society for Gandhi is grounded on the ‘moral evolution of the individuals. ... As long as the people are not morally grown, genuinely non-violent, self-regulated, and learn to cooperate voluntarily among themselves, there is no possibility of Rāmarājya.’³² Gandhi wants to have integral link of politics to morality. He dreams of a society “where all persons are equally treated irrespective of their caste, colour, religion, sex and so on.”³³ In Gandhi’s thought, ‘Rāma’ stands for fearlessness. This is the kingdom of justice and love. Gandhi also does not admit all unworthy competition and advocates the principle of cooperation. Unfortunately even in India, though just after independence the Central Government policies were little bit influenced by Gandhi’s ideal, the subsequent Governments’ policies are far from this Gandhian ideal. As a result we see politics without any place of morality, and politics

has become now the art of achieving power by any means and not as a means of good governance in India today.

We must stop the blind imitation of the West and begin the practice of politics as the art of good governance based on moral and spiritual values as articulated in India's Cultural heritage which propounded a 'Duty-based' instead of 'Right-based' model of civilization. This would bring sustainable development on the one hand, and peace and prosperity on the other. This would be, I believe, the first step towards Self-reliant India (*ātma-nirbharabhārata*). But Self-reliance cannot come into existence unless we rely on innovation instead of imitation, co-operation instead of immoral competition, duties instead of rights, freedom instead of slavery in thought, critical reflection and scientific attitude instead of blind faith in dogmas and over all on moral and spiritual values like love and empathy.

Concluding Remarks:

From what has been said thus far, in no way, we do consider returning to our past; rather, we are considering moving ahead like a flowing river, by connecting the freshness of the present with our traditional, ancient moral and spiritual values imbedded in contemporary culture. Understanding of the past by only orthodox way is deadly for the human race. Of course, we inherit traditions, but the gradual uprising of our civilization and culture lies in adding to such traditions and going ahead. This in itself is animated tradition. This can also be called "Traditional Modernity." Relevance of place and time makes values befitting to the age. Those, who are against reforming or adding to the old practices and thoughts, as we see some people with mediaeval mind-set following certain religious doctrines, are orthodox and ritualistic in the name of "puritanism." They are opposed to progress, and are conservative. We should oppose their acts of obstructing the current of deliberation embedded with open-mindedness from being submerged in the "sand-bed of puritanism." Today we should also get a proper mix of fresh knowledge and gift of science with values. The relevance and the significance of these logical thoughts do not only lie in persons or society or state life, but also in the logic, which corresponds to the harmony between the nature and us. Here in lies the importance of a political philosophy which advocates values as essential feature of politics as the art of good governance. We do not want to settle for conventional answers to the contemporary problems that bother us in the socio-political sphere of human existence. In political

philosophy we have to reach the heart of our concern and opened up contemporary discourse to an exciting possibility.

References:

1. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (English/German Edition), transl. C. K. Ogden. London: Kegan Paul, 1947, p. 7.
2. See, Korab-Karpowicz, *Tractatus Politico-Philosophicus*, 7.2021, p. 104. Henceforth all references to the text of this book will contain only section numbers.
3. Ibid, 2.443
4. Ibid, 2.5
5. Ibid, 2.5261
6. Ibid
7. *Tractatus Politico-Philosophicus*, 7.631
8. Ibid, 10.32
9. *Manusamhitā*, translated and enunciated (in Bengali) by Murari Mohan Senshastri, chapter on *Rājadharmā*, Dipali Book House, Kolkata, 1994, pp. 243 – 289.
10. Ibid, 8.512
11. Such as fundamentalists and terrorists having different names and in the name of Islam they are active through- out the world. Vote-bank oriented politics is giving support to such groups by recognised political parties in many countries in South-East Asia.
12. Ibid, 7.632
13. Theodore Zeldin, *An Intimate History of Humanity*, Atlantic Publishers, 1994, p. 266.
14. *Tractatus Politico-Philosophicus*, 10.33
15. Ibid, 10.14
16. Swami Vivekananda, see “Karma Yoga” in *Complete Works*, Vol, 1, Advaita Ashram, Kolkata, 1992, 109.
17. *Tractatus Politico-Philosophicus*, 10.2
18. *Īṣaponiśad*, 1
19. Ibid, 10.311
20. *Tractatus Politico-Philosophicus*, 10.4
21. Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya, “Swaraj in Ideas,” a lecture delivered in October, 1931 under Sir Ashutosh Memorial Lecture Series organized by Charu Chandra Roy at Chander Nagar and published in *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, 20 (1954), 103-114.
22. “Tāpācchedāccanikaśātsuvarṇamivapaṇḍitaiḥ/ parīkṣamadvacogrāhyaṁBhiksabe! Na tugaauravāt” - Shantideva’s *Tattva-Saṁgraha*, kārikā No. 3587.
23. *AnguttaraNikāya*, vol 1, PTS edition, 2012, 188-193.
24. *Tractatus Politico-Philosophicus*, 10.43
25. Ibid, 10.56
26. See the text of “The Annual Rajendra Mathur Memorial Lecture” delivered by Amartya Sen and organized by the Editors Guild of India in New Delhi on Feb 16, 2016.
27. *Tractatus Politico-Philosophicus*, 10.63
28. See “Ā no bhadraḥ Kratavo YantuViśvataḥ” - *Rigveda*, 1.89.10.
29. Will Durant, *The Pleasures of Philosophy*, New York: Simon and Chuster, 1929, p. 208.
30. In a speech delivered on 18th November 1896, Swami Vivekananda said that religion is to be adjudged in the touchstone of logic and this would eliminate the superstitions connected with the religion. As early as it is done, it would appear better. “Sooner it is done, the better. If a religion is destroyed by such investigations, it was then all the time useless, unworthy superstition, and the sooner it goes the better...All that dross will be taken off, no doubt, but the essential parts of religion will emerge triumphant

out of this investigation.” - *Reason and Religion*, see *Complete Works*, vol. 1, Advaita Ashram, 1992, p. 368.

31. Mathew, 25/31-45
32. Y.V. Satyanarayana, *Marx and Gandhi*, Visakhapatnam: Andhra University Press, 1988, pp.112-113.
33. *Ibid*, p. 113