

Ethics Topics

Notebook: First Notebook

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Location: New Delhi, Delhi, India

1. Police constable taking bribe from truck driver to give to seniors
 2. Civil servant accepting a gift of gratitude after doing thing legally
 3. Killing stray dogs
 4. Preventing dogs being exported to Nagaland for consumption
 5. Whether to kill stone pelted charging at the police officer
 6. Right of self determination. Whether it constitutes a right
 7. Derecognition of college which would jeopardise futures of students
 8. Use of hospitality fund of office for personal use
 9. DIG Roopa transferred for exposing special treatment to sasikala in Karnataka jail. Price of honesty. Need to protect whistleblowers. Counter allegations: she leaked report to media. Issue of confidentiality in public administration
 11. Maid problem. Torture by empowered women. Police verification. Whether social security to be provided.
 12. 4 sanitary workers died in Delhi while cleaning a rainwater harvesting pit. They were not provided masks or any other safety equipments.
 14. 5 teachers changed a dilapidated Zilla Parishad school in Maharashtra by taking donation/contribution from people, MLA. Classrooms enlarged, computer lab opened, water purifiers installed. Now it's running to the full. Dedication of a few can create wonders.
 15. Manual scavenging still present due to
 - Social prejudice
 - Govt indifference
- Need to get rid of caste system, improve confidence in workers to lead a new life, enforcing the law, changing attitudes towards open defecation
16. International ethics
 - Need for a rules based international order to promote transparency, fairness and stability in the Indo Pacific region. IOR Arc promote cooperation in the Indian ocean region.
 17. Regulatory misconduct at the v root of corruption . N Ram book : why scams are here to stay
 19. Spanish Football Federation president Angel Maria Villar , FIFA's senior VP was arrested on 18th July/17 for arranging for matches for Spain that led to business deals beneficial to his son.
 20. A molester along with his friend were shot dead in Delhi by a group formed to avenge killing of one assailant's sister. 'We want to correct injustices.' They wrote on the note. Taking law into

one's hand is unethical.

21. Two daily wagers belonging to Musahar community were convicted in Bihar under the Prohibition Act sentenced to 5 years of RI and fine of Rs. 1 lakh each. The state govt calls the law 'a tool of social reform' and it can raise 'nutrition level in the family.' But here a family is getting destroyed.

22. Radio jockey in Mumbai sent notice for criticising BMC for poor roads. Ethical issues involved: accountability of BMC to public, lack of grievance redressal for the public, transparency, freedom of speech of the jockey.

23. Increased cess on compensation cess on cigarettes under GST will pressurise the industry and adversely impact tobacco farmers: Tobacco Institute of India. Use of contraband products will increase. Since 2013-14, annual earnings of tobacco farmers have shrunk by more than ₹5100 crore due to offtake of tobacco for manufacturing domestic legal cigarettes. An ethical dilemma.

24. Compassion Fatigue: Media in the western world devised the term in 1970s. What it meant was that ever-multiplying charity organisations and the demands they made for the sympathy of their donors eventually blunted people's capacity to feel anything for the sufferings of others, whether it was starving children in sub-Saharan Africa or victims of civil wars in places.

25. Villagers in Tamil Nadu are against a n ONGC pipeline recently set up to drill oil in the area. Farmers fear oil spills, soil degradation, loss of livelihood and displacement. ONGC says it is for national good. Money to the exchequer and reduced dependence on oil. Conflict between societal and collective interests versus right to livelihood.

28. Corporate governance cases: sacking of mystry and resignation of sikka

29. Rajasthan district SDO threatens to cut electricity supply if toilets not built within 15 days. Order withdrawn as no drinking water, no reimbursal of funds after building toilets

30. Govt constituted uday kotak committee for corporate governance. Independent directors on company boards will soon have to clear an exam before they can be appointed- on ethics and law (12 June 2019)

31. Leader must be close enough to relate to others but far enough ahead to motivate them. Can use for EI and attitude

32. IPS probationer caught cheating in UPSC exam

33. Natural stream flowing back to life in Kerala, thanks to efforts of district collector

34. CSR spending on health, Hunger, poverty reduction failing this year (2017). Fell by 18.6%. highest spending on education and vocational skills (37%). Highest increase for war veterans

35. KA lynching incident and the role of fake news, illiteracy and superstition. Kannur District Collector launching campaign to teach students to be sceptical and verify source of news

36. Issue of wearing religious symbols in uniform, office: conflict between freedom of choice and secularism, maintaining discipline in the forces, impartiality etc.

37 Professional ethics: doctors over-charging patients.

38 Rohtak SP Jashnadeep Randhawa sends family injured in accident right in front of his official residence to hospital on his official vehicle

39 Chanda Kocchar giving loans to Videocon family which has turned into NPA: Quid pro quo, conflict of interest, corporate governance (as she did not go on leave pending her investigation

and Board's decision to exonerate her)

40 Panchayat in Sirsa in Haryana resolves to marry off their daughters to HHs that have functional toilets: Role of society in changing behaviour and attitudes, role of films in persuasion (toilet:Ek prem katha)

41 Delhi protesting against felling of trees for constructing residential colonies: environmental and rights based ethics

42 Pathalgadi movement in Jharkhand: anti-establishment, self-rule movement gathering steam. People losing faith in govt and state. Need citizen-centric administration, ethical governance and greater devolution and subsidiarity to strengthen PRIs

43 Govt. amends FCRA to exempt foreign donations to political parties from 1976 retrospectively. To circumvent Delhi HC judgement holding Cong and BJP guilty of foreign donations. Can lead to foreign interference. Issue of ethics in IR and accountability in governance

44 'cvigil' mobile app launched by EC to for citizens to report electoral malpractice when MCC in force

45 Ex-maoist Budra Kubasi and wife now a teacher in Odisha. But faces threats from Maoists

46 SC explains relationship between law and citizens: A citizen is accountable to the law, which gives him wings to realise his aspirations. In return, the law demands obeisance from the citizen. When vigilantes involve themselves in lynchings, they put their accountability to the law on ventilator.

47 Nelson Mandela's legacy: Expanded our capacity to rethink politics in terms of empathy, forgiveness and values

48 Mumbai's **wall collapse, and Elphinstone Bridge Collapse**- reflect corruption, incompetence in infra planning and governance and lack of accountability.

Quotes: 1.They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety. (Benjamin Franklin). 2. The mentality of enmity can poison a nation's spirit. (Liu Xiabo). 3. In the infancy of societies, the chiefs of state shape it's institutions; later the institutions shape the chiefs of state (Charles De Montesquieu). 4. Condemn none: if you can stretch out a helping hand, do so (Swami Vivekananda). 5. I turn on the TV and I see these grown people screaming at each other, if we don't get our civility back we're in trouble (Emmylou Harris-American song writer and Grammy winning singer). 6. All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others (George Orwell). 7. The very important thing you should have is patience: Jack Ma. 8. I have learnt silence from the talkative, toleration from the intolerant, and kindness from the unkind; yet, strange, I am ungrateful to those teachers: Kahlil Gibran. 9. Intolerance is itself a form of violence and an obstacle to the growth of a true democratic spirit: Mahatma Gandhi. 10. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit: Aristotle. 11. In politics, nothing happens by accident. If it happens, you can bet it was planned that way: Franklin D Roosevelt. 12. Anyone can carry his burden, however hard, until nightfall. Anyone can do his work, however hard, for one day. Anyone can live sweetly, patiently, lovingly, purely, till the sun goes down. And this is all life really means: RL Stevenson. 13. The history of free men is never really written by chance but by choice; their choice! : Dwight D. Eisenhower. 14. Hope itself is a species of happiness, and, perhaps the chief happiness that this world affords; but like all other pleasures immoderately enjoyed, the excesses of hope must be expiated by pain : Samuel Johnson. 15. The human race has had long experience and a fine tradition in surviving adversity. But we now face a task for which we have little experience, the task of surviving prosperity: Alan Gregg(The famous musician from New Zealand). 16. Leadership is not a popularity contest ; it's about leaving your ego at the door: Robin Sharma. 17. The observer, when he seems to himself to be observing a stone, is really, if physics is to be believed, observing the effects of the stone upon

himself: Bertrand Russell. 18: A good life is inspired by love and guided by knowledge. :
Bertrand Russell

Ethics

- Study of what is right and what is wrong
- Set of standards society or individual places on itself to guide behavior, choices and actions
- Branches of ethics: meta, normative/descriptive, applied

Values

- Set of beliefs to evaluate a particular situation or people
- Can be positive (optimism, tolerance, perseverance, confidence etc) or negative (pessimism, intolerance, overconfidence etc)
- Affects our behavior
- Helps in placing relative importance to objects or situations

Morals

- That subset of positive values that helps in differentiating good from bad
- Honesty, integrity, commitment etc
- Ethics is "morality in action"

Sometimes moral convictions can be harmful. Eg: commitment is a moral value. But excessive commitment to one's religion is fanaticism

Organizational integrity

- Includes ethical principles of workers/ officers in the organization+ work culture+ ethical standards of the organization, and their interaction
- Determines the output and productivity of the organization

Ethics for IPS

- Teach ethics rigorously in NPA
- Senior officers who train young probationers on the field also need to be instill a sense of ethics and responsibility.

Should rituals continue?

- Although rituals associated with superstitions and religions, many rituals like convocations, award ceremonies go unnoticed
- Even Buddha, Ashoka, Mahavira in ancient India criticised and questioned rituals. But rituals have stood the test of time
- Need ethics and aesthetics in rituals . Ethics: based on dignity and equality, Aesthetics: should have some inherent beauty

Changing the idea of religion

- Religion currently based on blind -faith. Need to reorient it towards rational thinking
- This can be done through a focus on life-before-death rather than life-after-death
- Irrational religiosity is a crime against humanity: women and children most vulnerable victims. eg: Child abuse in church, rapes among God-men

Ethics in journalism

- Needs to be objective based with proper fact checking.
- Purpose of journalism: "defined by function news plays in the lives of people" in *Elements of Journalism*
- Credible organizations have: code of editorial values, glossaries for contentious terms, and policy guidelines to cover certain disturbing developments
- Report on suicide victims with care

History of the civil services in India

- Maurya times: amatyas were the topmost servants. Qualifications: Loyalty and integrity. Severe punishments for corruption and a system of spies to keep track of servants
- Delhi Sultanate: iqta system where land given for services to the state. Qualification: loyalty to the ruler. Offices loosely defined unlike Maurya
- Mughals: manasbdari and jagirdari system. But since it was not hereditary, nobles led extravagant lifestyles by exploiting the poor
- EIC: initially, recruited by nomination of directors, leading to massive corruption. Later by open competitive exam from 1854 based on Macaulay committee.
- Open recruitment age increased to 18-23 to allow university graduates to join ICS.

Business Ethics: Some Issues

- Coca-cola plant in Palakkad, Kerala had to shut down after residents complained of excessive withdrawal of groundwater. Plant later forced to reduce intake, construct rainwater harvesting structures
- Bhopal Gas Tragedy: worst industrial disaster, due to negligence. Had to pay \$470 million only, instead of \$10 billion
- Humanize and democratize financial capitalism by: nationalising banks 1969, forming SHGs like SEWA, Grameen Bank
- Companies Act and SEBI Act to protect shareholders' interests.
- CSR under section 135, Companies act 2013

Ethical issues in Indian politics

- Legislators engage in unparliamentary language in Parliament
- Personality-centric politics
- Breakdown in dialogue between treasury and opposition
- Polarising issues and demagoguery leading to weakening of institutions
- Hardening of exclusivist collective identities: caste, religion, ethnic
- Favour of politician who can mobilise resources, including money and muscle power.
- Very little robust debate

Self-interest vs egoism

- Self-interest is awakened attention of one's self towards its own desires or good. eg: Studying for exams, washing hands before eating.
- Egoism: Only entity that matters is one's own self, all other persons are entirely worthless.
- Two types of egoism: Individual egoism and communitarian (focus on the family, caste, religious or national community)
- Self-interest is a virtue: self-interest of two persons who recognise each other's value may conflict but such conflicts can be resolved because deep down, they share a moral framework
- Egoism is a vice: Egoist has no morals. They do not care about children dying in hospitals, men getting lynched, or rape of girls.
- A poor who steals to feed his family is not an egoist but self-interested individual.

Why recent environmental and developmental problems: An ethical perspective

- Problem with the nature of economic growth: Its economics assumes that nature in situ is of no value and becomes valuable only when exploited and enters market process
- This attitude has devalued even women and women's work as most of it takes place outside market process. Patriarchal attitude
- Basic reason for failure on poverty, hunger, inequality is not lack of resources but lack of ethical concern
- Lack of rationality- in the long term perspective

Indian culture's concern for environment

- Reverence for nature- principle of non-violence extended beyond human beings
- Respect for diversity
- Self-control on want satisfaction
- Free will and acceptance of human responsibility
- Gandhian preference for labour-intensive production, not energy-intensive production
- Durability as a value- not 'use and throw away' habit
- Self-reliance, decentralization, emphasis on village economy, without isolating from world economy

Gandhi's views on religion and modern rationality

- Religion breeding contempt and hatred for others. Inhuman practices like gender discrimination and untouchability allowed
- Science and technology leading to multiplicity of wants no respect for dignity of human labour- centralising production and senseless urbanization
- But he didn't reject either
- For him, tech as a tool or means to spread happiness of every human being. But not when humans became mere tools of industrialisation: no confusion between ends and means here.
- Religion to be accepted in so far as it helped progress mortality. No religion above morality. Didn't consider atheism immoral, but only a desert. Rooted in truth and non-violence

Political participation

Table 2: Top 5 Factors that deter Men and Women from entering Politics

Deterrents for women	Deterrents for men
1. Domestic responsibilities	Lack of support from the electorate
2. Prevailing cultural attitudes regarding the roles of women in society	Lack of Finance
3. Lack of support from family	Lack of support of political parties
4. Lack of confidence	Lack of experience in 'representative functions' public speaking, constituency relations
5. Lack of Finance	Lack of confidence

There are developing countries like Rwanda which has more than 60 per cent women representatives in Parliament in 2017

EMPATHY AND SOCIABILITY IN INDIA:

- Sri Krishna Mutt of Udupi held an Iftar party in its premises in June this year(2018)

- Last year, religious organisations funded the Sikh-run Khalsa Aid to hold langars on the Bangladesh-Myanmar border for Rohingya refugees
- Humanitarian ethics -a deeply compassionate response to extreme human suffering is alive
- Every act of anger and animosity that is reported has its counterpart in an act of care and compassion that goes unreported
- These are not instances of religious tolerance or religious acceptance
- They are symptomatic of a deep respect for humanity
- The magic of empathy
- Deep sociability
- People value good relationships with others not only for instrumental reasons, but also for intrinsic ones

Nature vs nurture/ why we need to fight against socio-economic inequality

- Humans have a nature in excess of given biology: They do not have wings but they can fly.
- Does not mean that biology does not matter: you need a brain to think.
- But the human mind allows for possibilities that the human body does not permit.
- Humans being can therefore imagine justice and equality. It is not there in nature does not mean that we should not think about it. We should think and fight
- If animals cannot imagine them, then too bad. They do not wear clothes or cannot build skyscrapers either.

How to explain corruption in India and poor countries

- **Cultural:** All less-corrupt countries are relatively European in their character
- **Historical:** Top-down power structures of feudal or colonial regimes in India, China, Morocco etc
- **Socio-economic inequality:** If Rs. 10000 is nothing for the rich, it is easy to offer a bribe of that sum. For a very poor man, this bribe is difficult to refuse. Leads to gradual erosion of morality. Poor look at the affluence of the rich as a consequence pf corruption.

Should government interfere in religion ?

- General principle: govts must not interfere in faith
- But as religions become larger and rule-bound, some people or groups gain more power than others. exclusion takes place, highs-lows are created. It is then that the govt should intervene to protect equality and liberty of the weaker groups.
- If it becomes a way of life, as in Hinduism, then state duty-bound to intervene.
- Idea is to maintain a principled distance from all religions: the Indian version of secularism- one that promotes a nuanced and flexible policy of value-based political or legal decision on whether to intervene in any religion

Rising nationalism and majoritarianism

- Diminishing voices of minorities and opprsed communities
- Jingoism of masses labelled as patriotism
- Alliance of corporate power and nation state dubbed as development
- Taking steps towards knowledge economy but ancient civilization seen as perfect
- Alternative liberal or leftist ideas treated as anti-national

Why liberal opposition to veil ban won't work

- Argument of free will can be counter-productive- even reactionary Hindus or Christians can justify women discrimination, like divorce-ban and Sati as practice of free will, the right to carry on their tradition
- Even if an option is freely chosen, it may not be free choice. For a choice to be free, other options have to have equivalent prestige and acceptability, both within and outside the community. This is not so in case of a veil.
- Liberals invoke 'free will' to defend practices that are considered obligatory and pre-ordained by their proponents.
- 2 good reasons not to 'ban' personal matters: **1.** such bans often create a bigger backlash, **2.** Any such ban introduces the public into the private

Importance of yoga

- \$40 billion business opportunity
- Holistic development of physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing. Recognises that human beyond is made of mind, body and soul- need to harmonise all of them
- Yoga teaches us to recognise fundamental unity between humans, environment and interconnectedness of everything
- Globalisation based on mechanistic world view attempts to integrate nations through the concept of one market. The market forces, instead of harmonising conflicts, have further deepened the fault lines
- Yoga can help. According to Ban ki Moon, "We should do this before every negotiation so that we can work with a calm mind."
- The holistic approach can be a new way of conducting international relations
- Transform human society into a non-violent, egalitarian society.

A system of Basic Rights

- These should be positive- state needs to provide something
- States legally accountable for their failure to provide them

How they are different from fundamental rights

- Flow from basic needs such as physical security or subsistence
- Needs different from wants
- In the absence of these needs, person can be harmed. eg- food, clothing, shelter, air, water.
- Solid necessity. Cannot live without them
- Basic needs are not what we live for. But anything worth pursuing depends on satisfaction of those basic needs

3 basic rights

- Right to physical security
- Right to minimum economic security and subsistence- water, nutritious food, clean air, shelter. These must be provided by govt increasing social expenditure
- Right to free public expression of helplessness and frustration. Importance of grievance redressal mechanisms.

Gandhi's Satyagraha, and how we need to reclaim the public sphere from violence

philosopher in the struggle against violence that has crushed solidarities:

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become as defenceless as the victim.

Recreating Satyagraha

Some of us protest, write petitions, assemble, record our disgust, abhorrence, and pain. Does the government listen? It is time that we in civil society stand up and recreate Gandhi's notion of Satyagraha. Satyagraha differs from methods of violent action, because it emphasises self-suffering. The eyes of our people might be opened, as Gandhi suggested, by the suffering of the satyagrahi. Gandhi opts for self-suffering rather than make another person suffer, for many reasons. This mode of politics impacts the collective consciousness.

As people begin to reflect on and analyse the injustice to which they and their fellow citizens have been subjected to, an injustice that needs to be battled, they also come to think about the methods that should be used to battle these injustices. In the process, they are politicised and motivated to act. This Gandhi felt was revolutionary because public opinion becomes a vital force, challenges injustice, and challenges the government for its acts of omission.

This course of action demands courage. Distinguishing satyagraha

from passive resistance and other forms of civil disobedience, Gandhi suggested that the philosophy is not a weapon of the weak. It demands tremendous moral strength and fortitude because it commands that we relentlessly battle with injustice with steadfastness, commitment, fearlessness, and willingness to accept punishment.

The philosophy of satyagraha enlightens the mind, but, more importantly, it gives to us a theory of action. In the process, the agent becomes aware of the distinction between what is right and what is wrong, gets sensitised to injustice and the need to fight for justice against the abuse of power. She becomes aware of the virtues of non-violence. She makes the transition from an audience that consumes violence to an agent of change. It is only then that the Indian people will come into their own, and we will recreate the freedom struggle as a second freedom struggle.

For this we must realise that if we wish to lead a good life, we can only do so in a good society, a society that understands the value of the human being irrespective of her religion. But violence diminishes us in many ways; it reduces our humanity. Violence befuddles and reduces us to inaction. Non-violence illumines our minds. It is only then that we the people of India can transit from being spectators to participants in the second freedom struggle.

Gandhi rejects violence for two reasons. Violence stems from the conviction that the perpetrators of violence are right, or that they know the truth. Their truth – whether this truth is what the world is about, or what the position of different individuals in this world should be, or how the world

should be organised, or how relationships in this world should be patterned, or how the world should be perceived – has to be imposed on others. The logical corollary of this premise is that the other appears before them as a lesser human being, or as not fully human.

Search for truth

But we can never know what the truth is. We have to search for the truth, because truth or in Hindi, *sat*, is not an object, it is a state of being. Since none of us know the truth, we have to search together. None of us has the competence to punish other people through violent words, deeds, or even thoughts.

There is a stronger argument that Gandhi makes for negating violence. In the western tradition, we ought to treat others in the same way as we would like to be treated. According to the Hindu doctrine of Advaita or non-dualism, Gandhi argued that those who hurt others assault their own integrity. Others are ourselves in a different form. Let us reflect on this.

Gandhi negated violence, because he saw it as reducing citizens to consumers, because it presupposes a flawed conception of the truth, and because it ultimately harms the perpetrator. Civil society has to reinvent Gandhi, we have to make him relevant not as the Mahatma but as a political philosopher who guides us in our struggle against the senseless violence that has crushed our sentiments and our solidarities. This is the objective of the second freedom struggle.

Neera Chandhoke is a former Professor of Political Science at Delhi University

Why people are involved in mob lynchings: an ethical perspective

- Social learning and tolerance to violence in India has been deep seated among Indian youth
- Individual identities melt down, giving way to a collective identity with its unique ways of expression
- Deindividualisation- individuals no longer guided by a sense of personal moral restraint
- Intolerance of mob members, their ridiculous pride, sense of irresponsibility from being all-powerful
- Greater anonymity gives greater impunity
- De-humanisation of the lynched allows the violence to be perpetuated.

Why teaching Indian culture is important

- Indian culture based on the tradition of debate and discussion
- Natyashastra is one of the first plays to discuss freedom of expression
- Based on liberal values of the West, but traditional values co-exist. So, it helps to avoid conflict
- Current problems of intolerance and superstition stems from ignorance about our culture.
- Our culture is based on multiple truths, and tolerance for diversity. Once this is learnt, all of us can live in harmony
- In a globalised, many cultures that had never interacted with each other are now coming into conflict. Indian culture is based on diversity of conflicting cultures. It can teach the world on how to live in harmony.

Ethics of AI

- Consider facial recognition system. Google found that its AI software identifies whites better than blacks and minorities.
- From teleological perspective, it can be continued if the software is fixed.
- But from deontological perspective, system should be rejected because its intention was probably not to identify all races equally well

Tolerance



Moin Qazi

The virtues of tolerance

“Think for yourself and let others enjoy the privilege of doing so too.”

— Voltaire

We are all human beings. Our human job is to learn to live together honourably and fairly. How do societies resolve conflicts between two opposing moralities? It is tolerance. Discord is the great ill of mankind; and tolerance is the only remedy for it. Tolerating difference should not get in the way. The heart of tolerance is self-control. Tolerance is the greatest of all human virtues and requires deep religious or

edicts of Emperor Asoka are notable for their accommodation of other faiths — proclaiming, for instance, that “all religions should reside everywhere” and that “there should be growth in the essentials of all religions.” Dr S. Radhakrishnan once wrote that “toleration is the homage which the finite mind pays to the inexhaustibility of the infinite.”

The intolerant are those who are so sure they are right that they cannot acknowledge that people on the other side of the debate can also be creatures of conscience. The offense is that they deny the freedom of



moral conviction. Moreover, it is based upon respect for the dignity of the individual and is rooted in a conception of the self that is rich enough to ground respect among diverse people. Tolerance helps us understand humans and build trust with people.

When we tolerate something, we resist our urge to forcefully prohibit the expression of that something even if we find it unpalatable. More abstractly, tolerance can be understood as a practice aiming at neutrality, objectivity or fairness on the part of those who have control over others. It is deliberate restraint of the power that one may have for negating the actions of those with whom one has a conflict or disagreement. Toleration is usually grounded upon an assumption about the importance of the autonomy of individuals. This assumption and the idea of toleration are key hallmarks of a civilised society.

Tolerance has an odour of superiority, and its implication is that one is impacted and bothered about the conduct of others but chooses not to mind. The virtue of tolerance leads to a type of behaviour that is conducive to cohabitation by people with deeply different beliefs and practices from one's own. This disposition requires nurturing through exposure to various scriptures and the teachings of great sages. The



thought promised by our social contract. Not your choice, they tell others. It has to be our choice, they assert. They are annoyed because the other side doesn't think as we do, practice life the way we do and worship

before the same God.

True tolerance leads us to be kind and compassionate, and to understand and not to judge; to "connect" with others, to build bridges across misunderstandings and it recognises the right of every one to live according to his own conscience, to live by his own accepted creeds, to make his own hard decisions and live with, to experiment with his life and furrow his own path.

We are apt to be narrow and fanatical, accepting as right only those standards we believe in, and limiting our vision by our own experiences. We refuse to accept any standards which do not appear to us as the right ones. This séance negates the very concept of the democratic attitude of life.

Aleksandar Solzhenitsyn very rightly advises: "It's a universal law - intolerance is the first sign of an inadequate education. An ill-educated person behaves with arrogant impatience, whereas truly profound education breeds humility."

The writer is a well-known banker, author and Islamic researcher. He can be reached at moinqazi123@gmail.com.