

Editorial:

***HOMO ETHICUS* TOWARDS ETHICAL SOCIETIES**

Ethics is a species-specific variable: All human beings are ethical; only human beings are ethical; and to the extent that human beings are ethical, they are fully human beings. A living human being is not just a bundle of perceptions, thoughts, or judgements but is an individual actively and critically engaging in varying relations with God, community, and world. These relations have a constitutive ethical dimension personally and socially. Human beings do not just seek pleasure, they seek meaning and purpose for life. As human beings we possess a reflective awareness of good and bad, right and wrong, just and unjust, etc. It is nurtured and developed by living in societies. Though we may disagree on what is good and what is bad in different situations, we agree on the first principle of ethics that good is to be done and evil is to be avoided. Being ethical is the categorical imperative.

By nature, human beings are endowed with body and mind, reason and will, feelings and passions. How we develop them and become persons depend on our nature as well as nurture. A living human being is substantially present in the world in collaboration and conversation with fellow human beings. As much as persons are present in the natural world in direct interaction with other objects in the world, they are also present in societies, where being and becoming fully human depend on interaction with fellow human beings. The notion of becoming fully human does not mean that some of the human beings are less than human beings, even if some of the physical or mental faculties are not fully developed. What the notion of 'fully' picks up is that we are not just born; we are not merely finished products but continuous projects. It is through a dynamic and creative process that a person becomes fully human; it is fundamental that in becoming fully human one becomes capable of making ethical decisions, live by ethical principles, and realises the ethical character of human life.

The relations between individuals and societies in which one lives is very complex and complicated. As much as individuals are formed by societies, individuals form societies. Individuals, however, are not merely products of the existing societies; they have creative roles in forming the ethical character of the persons and societies. Ethical persons are nurtured in ethical societies and ethical societies are formed by ethical persons. To be ethical is at the same time a privilege and task for all human beings; to nurture ethical societies is part of the personal task to be ethical.

Individual ethics are guiding principles that help individuals to decide what is right and wrong as persons, while professional ethics refers to the ethics that persons must adhere to in their professional lives. Personal and professional ethics are nurtured by the educational, cultural, political, religious, and other social dimensions of the societies where persons live and make a living. Ethics is integral to all aspects of human lives, and the life of *homo sapiens*, *homo aestheticus*, *homo economicus*, *homo politicus*, *homo religiosus*, etc. are inextricably intertwined with the life of *homo ethicus*. These constitutive dimensions of our forms of life are impoverished conceptually and practically, and are perilous to humanity, if they are separated from Ethics.

Homo Sapiens and Homo Ethicus: Human beings are capable of reflective knowledge, and our decisions are preceded and guided by knowledge. Human development and wellbeing depend on knowledge, personal and that of the knowledge societies. Knowledge Societies that generate, share, and make knowledge available to all members of the society ought to be Ethical Societies, where people contribute to build a just and compassionate societies, where people live and care for each other. Despite the scientific advancements, problems of life continue to haunt people. Personal and social ethics can make positive differences in all fields of human life and society including science, economics, and politics, where ethical education is necessary for all stakeholders - teachers, students, professionals, institutions, etc. To be fully human, one needs to be ethical, and as in all other significant aspects of human life, education is necessary to bring out this goal.

Homo Aestheticus and Homo Ethicus: Ethics is integral to Aesthetics: art, literature, film, theatre, media, etc. have exhibited the ethical dimension throughout human history and they are regularly used for moral instruction. Although they have different methods, strategies, and goals, they are part of human lives. Histories of art, literature, film, theatre, media, etc. also point to ethical codes that are inscribed within wider cultural contexts. The contemporary society though refuses to be told how to live its life, in fact, is guided by more than any previous generation by advertisements, media, markets, and social networking sites. Ethical considerations of art and literature are informed by the society and history in which they were produced, and they, in turn, influence ethical character of the society. Hence, a critical and creative engagement between *homo aestheticus* and *homo ethicus* is necessary and meaningful.

Homo Economicus and Homo Ethicus: Economics and Ethics are intertwined in myriad ways that it becomes impossible to discuss one without some direct or indirect reference to the other. Most significant human practices have both economical and ethical dimensions, and there are many lively interactions between normative economics and moral philosophy. Though ethical concerns may not be the primary focus of economic theories, they are inescapable for economic praxes; on the other hand, in a market driven world, ethics must also pay attention to economics. When the world's economic wealth grows impressively, the scandal of inequalities, corruption, new forms of poverty, and exploitations are on the increase. Human rights are often violated; multinationals pose threats to local industries and initiatives; international aid is used irresponsibly for selfish motives. *Homo ethicus* cannot remain insensitive to the inequalities that persist in the world of *Homo economicus*. We need ethical societies rather than market societies.

Homo Politicus and Homo Ethicus: Politics is an essential aspect of human life - essential in building, governing, and developing societies and communities based on rules. Citizens, political leaders, parliamentarians, government executives, the judiciary, the media, business, nongovernmental organisations,

and religious and educational institutions are involved in this complex fact of life, and ethics is fundamental to all stakeholders in politics. Though personal morality may differ from political morality, there cannot be any political decision without morality. People are losing faith in politics, and ethics in politics appears to be a contradiction as more and more people are drawn to politics as an arena of investment to cater to their selfish interests rather than for serving common good. Though there is a profound scepticism regarding ethics in politics, there is a thirst for ethics in politics: ethics can make a difference in politics to move the political societies towards ethical societies.

In this issue of the *Journal of Dharma* on “Towards Ethical Societies: Perspectives and Projects” there are eight articles showing different aspects of being ethical persons and constructing ethical societies. In solidarity with the whole of humankind, these researchers are making their contribution to the perennial goal of humanity: Towards Ethical Societies.

Starting with Plato’s *Republic* and through the works of numerous other thinkers, ‘utopia’ is a recurrent motif in history. Parag Khanna in his book *Technocracy in America: Rise of the Info-State* (2017) offers a sharp critique of contemporary democracy and favours a form of digital technocracy, which he calls ‘Info-State’. In “‘Utopia Revived? Parag Khanna’s *Technocracy in America* and Thomas More’s *Utopia*’, Yevhen Laniuk argues that Khanna’s political model is strikingly similar to the iconic *Utopia* – the treatise of Sir Thomas More (1517). The attempt to resurrect the utopian vision and present it as a viable alternative to liberal democracy poses, however, according to the author, a danger to liberty, in the same fashion as it inspired totalitarianism before.

Michael Allen critically and creatively investigates two societies: *Pax Romana* and *Pax Gandhiana*. The former presents a sophisticated moral-political vision of the interrelationships between cosmology, memory, founding, violence, and freedom; the latter presents an alternative integrative vision that demands forbearing the adverse consequences of repudiating as opposed to embracing the ubiquity of violence in the cosmos. The author in “Gandhi and the Romans: On the Interrelationships of

Cosmos, Memory, Founding Violence, and Freedom in the Pax Gandhiana/ Romana" shows how the Romans provide us with an object lesson in why we should repudiate such violence, as guaranteeing our downfall into misery, chaos, and madness.

The 'just war' doctrine provides conditions that must be satisfied for a war to be justly waged and justly conducted. Since the September 11th attacks, however, there has been a concerted effort among some American policymakers to reinterpret the doctrine to justify the War on Terror. Eric Yong Joong Lee and Soojin Nam expose and critically analyse the revisionist arguments in "American Hegemony and Ethics of War After 9/11: A Critical Approach to Revisionist Views" to show the underlying US-centred unilateralism and exceptionalism, effectively obliterating the rights-based moral constraint that the just war theory intended to provide.

Ethical literary criticism interprets and analyses literary works, writers, and methods of criticism related to literature from an ethical standpoint and proposes that literature is produced from an ethical human need to express moral emotions and ideas. "Ethical Literary Criticism and the Construction of Humanistic Spirit" by Yi Zheng combines related literary works, starting from the four dimensions of the relationship between person and others, person and society, person and nature, and person and self. The authors provide a paradigm to study the connotation of humanistic spirit veined within ethical literary criticism, and its value in the construction of human spirit.

In his essay, "The Sacred, the Profane, and the Messianic: Inclusionary Ethics in Giorgio Agamben's Post-Statist Project," T. J. Abraham argues that the figure of *homo sacer*, employed by Agamben, is a metaphor for the general, insecure humanity to draw one's attention to the fragility of human life in the contemporary world. The political system, instead of ensuring equity, hides the most detestable and unethical of practices and it leaves people without any support. Agamben, according to Abraham, calls for a change of paradigm that can look beyond the nominal democracy of the era so that it would ensure an inclusive ethical framework for the world today.

Building an ethical society involves lifelong learning and training, individually and collectively. On many occasions, crime and offence happen in the life of children. “Factors of Reintegration of Children in Conflict with Law” by Binoy Paul and Victor Paul is an exploratory study conducted in Kerala, India, to find the significant factors that contribute to successful reintegration, making children part of an ethical society.

“Ethical Sensitivity of Aspiring Business Leaders: Indian Context” by Arun Antony Chully investigates the impact of ethics education in the business program as well as role of early education environment in influencing the ethical sensitivity of business students. It was found that both these variables have significant impact in the ethical sensitivity of the participants of the study. The research has implications in revisiting the ethics education in universities and the role of early education environment in developing ethical business leaders for the sustainable future of our country.

By analysing the content of Postmodernist feminism, Liang Wang and Qingpeng Zhang summarizes the theoretical characteristics of postmodern feminism, analyses the rebellious spirit and ethical turn of postmodern feminism, and combs the philosophical theory for the theoretical research of postmodern feminism in “Rebellion and Ethical Turn: A New Theory of Postmodern Feminism.” The paper strengthens the innovation of women’s social management and promotes the development of the theoretical system of philosophy in China, while enriching the country’s research on feminism.

With gratitude to our contributors and in solidarity with all who strive “Towards Ethical Societies” may I have the privilege to present this issue of the *Journal of Dharma*.

Jose Nandhikkara
Editor-in-Chief