

6. THE MEANING OF EQUALITY

The case for equality has not before been stated comprehensively. In other words, the complete meaning of equality has not been adequately investigated. Equality is perhaps as high an aim of life as truth or beauty. But this aim has not been investigated in serenity. Its direct and immediate repercussions on day-by-day life, on property and income and the general ordering of society, are deep and many. The din of battle does not quieten nor its dust settle down for a total and serene examination of equality.

Human experience of certain categories has also tended to cast a cloud over the prospects of equality as a high or supreme aim of life. Men have been known to work comparatively well under the temptation of profit, if they are independent, or fear of dismissal, if they are workmen, or under a system which combines temptation and fear. Such systems, which depend on temptation and fear for their dynamism and growth, must inevitably breed inequality. Inequality has thus come to be regarded as a part of human nature. Capitalism, when it is not decaying, glories in what it calls the humanity of inequality. No satisfactory substitutes for fear and greed have yet been found. Moral exhortation or pious hopes of an altruistic revolution in human nature have disfigured the examination of equality as much as irrational, short-sighted, and narrowly selfish abuse heaped upon it. Whether equality corresponds to human nature or not is a secondary question, when primary issues are raised, such as what constitutes a high aim of life and how it is best attained.

In one way or another, all high aims of life have tended to link up with an imagined existence after death. The attainments of the short span of an individual life so

evanescent and the sorrows and tribulations affecting it so troublesome that a state after death give comfort and hope and also purpose. The world's most impressive words are tied up with the pleasures of heaven or the pains of hell, and a high aim of life must in some way be able to awaken similar impressions. No bard has yet sung greater poetry than on the immortality of the soul. A few equally great verses have indeed been composed on the somewhat allied subject of the indestructible unity of the universe. But the possibility of the cheerful existence after death, whether in heaven or as a result of impersonal salvation, has always been mixed up with such verses and philosophy. Impersonal salvation is indeed a more satisfying sequel to death than individualized heaven, but then the question arises as to the need of such supreme aims of life as truth and goodness, when all is a nameless void. To this complex question, some kind of an answer has been made.

The concept of salvation after death has given birth to the complementary notion of salvation in life. Only he shall be saved after death who is already saved in life. On this, everybody, those who affirm as also those who deny existence after death, may be agreed that the highest aim of life is to be able to receive death well when it comes. This preparation for death must necessarily mean the living of life in a unique fashion: on the lowest planes, absence of regret, and on the highest, the undimmed presence of bliss and happiness. Can a life such as this be lived without the supreme principle of equality? When bards sang of the indestructible unity of the universe, they were thrilled with two discoveries: first, that the universe is all of one piece and therefore every part is the equal of another; second, that every part of the universe could sense the joy of being co-extensive with all of it. All men of joy have variously wanted to be the tree whose sap rises with the wind, or the kid that gambols after its mother, or the star whose twinkle reveals as much as it deepens its mystery, not to talk of fellow creatures of the human species. Reason is a potent instrument of understanding but so is the direct and intuitive

feeling of unity and equality. It is true that the desire to be a tree or a star, permanently divorced from reason, may lead to futility, but the effort at exclusive logic, permanently divorced from the poetry of quality, may as well lead to cruelty. To be able to sense the indestructible unity of the universe is perhaps the greatest joy that can be known to man, and equality appears in this connection to be a necessary state of mind.

Whether the ego is to be expanded so as to become sensitive and related to all the universe or it is to be reduced to a nullity in pursuit of that aim is a secondary question of method. The primary issue is to feel the joy of being one with the universe, of being equal with everything in it. Such a spiritual and emotional kinship appears to be a main quality of equality as a high aim of life. In a family, this kinship obtains. Its foundation is built on an almost total material equality. No matter what the earnings of individual members may be, or if they do not earn anything at all, as in the case of children and old parents, the family is in food and dress a compact unit, and the requirements of its members are equally met. An unblemished kinship must reign in the family. Between parents and children and husband and wife, and also brothers and sisters and such like in an extended family, an almost total unity and total equality amounting to almost total surrender and sacrifice, in most cases un-deliberately and instinctively, must prevail. To the extent that a family loses in this quality of kinship, to that extent it also loses in its quality as a family. A close parallelism of spiritual equality with material equality and the joy based on it is a part of human nature at least in the restricted sphere of the family. But the attempt to spread this kinship to the entire human family has never yet succeeded; it has always floundered on the rock of the self, which, while it is generous within the confines of the individual family, becomes narrow when confronted with the magnitude of the human family.

The fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man are exhortations. They have not yet become part of human nature.

They are at best ethical appeals. They have no foundation in the emotions of man. They can have none in the existing human situation. When material inequality among the nations and within a nation becomes so gross as to be outside the competence of the individual, his conscience becomes so elastic as to suit it. Little do men realize how much their conscience is a matter of habit and routine and also the comforts of the body. An ever-alert conscience would be suicidally generous. In the midst of the widespread poverty and misery of backward countries, it would not know how to survive the strains of universal kinship. Conscience in such a case would either die singly or together with the body. In like manner, disparities between the white peoples and the coloured peoples are so gross that it is ridiculous to talk of human brotherhood. The human mind faces such disparities in its usual style of becoming part luminous and part dark, so as to get attuned to the habitual routines of life. A European would probably be shocked at the idea of another European pulling him in a rickshaw, but he does not think twice of riding in a rickshaw driven by an Asian. Between those whose average per head consumption of milk reaches a daily half kilo and such as have to be content with less than a spoonful, there can be no kinship. Something much more elemental than an ethical appeal will have to be brought into operation, something that churns the individual as well as society.

A glimpse of such a churning is visible in the sphere of national kinship as distinct from that of human kinship. The elements of pride, of honour, and of hurt nationality are brought into play, and these comparatively selfish emotions achieve a kinship within the nation that ethical perceptions are unable to do. The sight of a leper or beggar, an ill-clad or an emaciated man may not move a more fortunate national of the same country to kinship, but it does move him to anger and pride and the desire to do something about it, unless he has become so loathsome and meanly selfish as to feel contempt. This national kinship achieved through the backdoor of selfish

pride or hurt is sometimes to be found as unifying sentiment amongst all coloured peoples and, more rarely, among all the poor or oppressed peoples of earth, white or coloured.

It may also be that the sentiment of human brotherhood has so far rested on the comparatively fragile foundations of ethics and morals. A surer spiritual foundation rooted in the high aims of life might have proved stronger. A high aim of life such as truth or beauty is as personal as it is impersonal. It may drive a man to unsettling deeds. It may also drive him to a complete renovation of himself. In similar manner, the high aim to sense the joy of unity of the universe and equality of all parts in it may become stunted and comparatively futile when it is restricted to the sphere of morals, but it may renovate the individual and explode his society if it is spiritually encompassed. After all, the joy of sensing the unity of the universe is an intimate and a personal joy, the greatest ever likely to man, however much its sequel may be impersonal. Such an intimate joy would impel man to combine with others in the effort to explode current society with its disparities. The moral business of trying to do good is pale by comparison. It is also restrictive.

The moral concept of human brotherhood restricts the individual holding it to the species of man in the universe, not even to all animate beings, not to talk of all that is in the universe. Such a restricting is serial. Once it starts with man, it easily goes up to the national kinsman, and in most cases to the nearer kinsman of the tribe, class, or caste. Restrictive emotions are hostile to the joy that lies in the unity of the universe. A restrictive philosophy of humanism may therefore kill joy as much as it may bog down society in its existing order. On the other hand, it is hard to feel unity and kinship with the bug, the mosquito, the snake and other such life forms, unless it be through hypocritical devices common to certain Hindu and Jain sects, which make them clean their water, and in some cases the air they breathe, of all possible germs, but permit them to drink the unfiltered blood of exploitation. It is also

well to understand that vegetarianism, when it becomes compulsive or a matter of routine, may become exceedingly cruel. For those who propose to sense the unity and equality of the universe, there are many pitfalls of dead routine and aggressive cruelty. But they may also attain the greatest joy possible to man on earth. And they may also become the world's greatest revolutionaries in so far as they introduce the parallelism of spiritual equality and kinship, and the material equality of living standards.

It is a matter of great surprise that former ages could think of the indestructible unity of the universe and did not at the same time think of or strive for material equality within the human race. The joy of unity is impossible without the feeling of kinship. The feeling of kinship is impossible without material equality, at least to the fullest possible degree. Disparities of wealth were not so pronounced in those early times when men sang of unity of the universe. Poverty may also not have existed in such gross forms as those of today, perhaps because populations were small and lands were extensive. In any event, emotional kinship with one's fellowmen is impossible unless it is rooted in material equality.

As an abstract concept and generalization, equality can only mean an atmosphere, an emotion, and perhaps also a wish that all arrangements, political, social, or economic, shall be equal as between one individual and another. What equality of arrangement means in such a case is left for the wish and the dream of the person concerned. Dreams have a double-edged quality. They may have no bearing on reality. They may on the other hand make men move and explode their order. The essential point is that equality, unless it is expressed in concrete terms, is an atmosphere, an emotion, a wish, or a dream.

The last 400 years of human history mean European history. There is always such a situation in history that a portion of mankind dominates over the rest and the history of that section becomes the history of all mankind. In the last

400 years, there has been a very clear movement of equality in various spheres of European life, from the legal over the social and the political into the present phase of economic equality.

Legal equality is equality before the law. In a law court, the judge is not expected to recognize differences in social status between one individual and another, and applies a single law irrespective of their social situation. The law of theft, for instance, operates on all men alike. The rich man may in certain situations obtain the benefit of the doubt by employing skilled counsel, although the judge may be highly scrupulous.

Once legal equality was established, the phase of political equality came. Political equality means the equality of the adult vote. Until recently, the vote was tied up with property and educational qualifications, and the women's vote is a comparatively recent acquisition. In a number of what may otherwise be called advanced countries, women do not yet possess the right of voting. However, man in general has moved from legal equality to political equality.

Economic equality in the sense of an increasing standard of living to everybody within national frontiers has become a common element of all ideologies. Every European aspires for a better standard of living. A sample of economic equality as it is currently practised by Europeans and Americans may be drawn from domestic service. A domestic servant is required by the law to possess a room of his or her own. The law in West European countries requires that domestic servant have a right to leisure and privacy. Looking at the clothes and faces of men and women in West European capitals, one would not know to which class a person belongs. A stage has been reached where they all look alike from a distance. From the point of view of basic essentials of life, namely, minimum food, minimum clothes, and in a sense minimum housing, Europeans have thus been provided a basis of equality within the nation.

In the Scandinavian and most European countries, every child is given an annual subsidy of around Rs. 600 from birth

up to 14 years of age. Similarly, every old person, after around 55 years of age, is paid a pension, which varies from one country to another, generally in the neighbourhood of Rs. 1,600 a year. Every unemployed person receives a monthly allowance in most European lands and America which may range between Rs. 100 in some areas of Europe to Rs. 500 in America.

Food subsidies are also granted. Some time back milkmen of Stockholm were not able to sell milk at the prevailing price. The price of milk per kilo was six annas; they desired to sell it at six annas and one pice. Their case was examined by trade unions, government, and other agencies and found to be genuine. The decision was difficult, and it almost caused a crisis of opinion inside the cabinet. Whether the excess price of one pice should be paid by the consumer or the government was the question that engaged them seriously. Ultimately, the government decided to subsidize. Instead of the consumer, the taxpayer and the entire population bore the burden.

The general concept of equality is an atmosphere, a wish, a dream which is translated into concrete equality of one type or another with definite meaning, like equality before the law, the equality of food subsidy, a servant possessing a house, children's allowance, unemployment allowance, old age pension and the like. These are all concrete ideas of equality, the welfare state in practice. People talking of a welfare state in India just do not know what it means.

A universal experience of all mankind in all ages and climes is to mistake passing objects of history for the enduring. A revolver, for instance, was for a very long period considered a tool of equality. Physical inequality among individuals which resulted in bullying and cringing was removed by the revolver, and, apparently, equality was thus achieved. In this as in every other such argument, we should be warned against the exuberance of temporary effects. The argument of the revolver is patently wrong. There are certain skills, for example, jujitsu or handling of machines, whereby

physical inequality is sought to be removed. Yet, inequality remains, for skills keep on developing in an unequal way. The revolver is developed over numerous stage into the hydrogen bomb. We must be likewise warned against acceptance of journalistic beliefs and scientific fictions such as the impending age of atomic plenty. Exhibitions are run to demonstrate the atomic age. It has always been so whenever a new discovery is made. There is no single scientific invention of steam or of electricity which was not heralded with the trumpet of plenty and prosperity, but which did not settle down into a further deepening of riches on the one hand and misery on the other. The dream of equality which man sees in temporary and passing events is a fancy and chimera.

Let us first examine the relationship between abstract equality as a dream and concrete equality as an existent in an age and country. All talk of equality as a general concept without a concrete meaning that accompanies it is either hypocrisy or lethargy of the mind. Similarly, all talk that restricts itself to just one formula of equality is the establishment of status quo. The Socialist movement in India has for instance fixed that the proportion of lowest and highest incomes should not vary beyond the range of 1 to 10. Without such a fixed ratio, all talk of generalized equality would either be hypocrisy or mental laziness. It would result in man having two compartments, the abstract and the concrete, in his mind, which are barred and bolted against each other. The 1 to 10 concept must not, however, be accepted as a permanent and eternally valid principle. This would open the dreadful possibility of the mind becoming adjusted to superstitious and routine thinking. All great religious sects which began with the struggle for equality got frozen in course of time by customs and manners. That is how a revolutionary becomes a victim of frozen ideas. The mind that has accepted material equality must remain supple enough for increasing approximation, further to reduce the ratio.

The abstract and the concrete should be so understood in

their relationship that connection with reality is not lost, nor are concrete requirements stated in such low terms that the objective ever remains a distant peak. Maximum and immediate attainability relevant to the current situation in relationship to the ideal is the touchstone. To realize the ideal of economic equality, statecraft requires such a concrete concept as is based on maximum, and immediate attainability of the cherished end. If one is overwhelmed by the current situation, one becomes a conservative or reactionary; if one adopts an unrealizable aim, one becomes irrelevant. Idealism borders on insanity, but practicability also verges on reaction; to be idealistic may sometimes mean to be insane, just as to be practical may as well mean to be reactionary.

Conservatives often make use of skilled rhetoric in this connection; they talk of levelling up as the distinct from levelling down. They accuse Socialists of wanting to level down. Actually, however, there must be both levelling up and levelling down in any programme for equality. In fact, the levelling down will take place somewhat earlier than the levelling up, although this unavoidable chronological sequence must not lead to a logical sequence in the mind. All those who talk of one part of the programme without the other are either reactionary, if they talk alone of levelling up, or insane, if they restrict themselves to levelling down.

The European mind suffers from the disease of identifying the abstract and the concrete. European Communists tend to identify the concrete in Russia with their abstract. On the other hand, European democrats tend to identify the current position in America or West Europe with the abstract of their democracy. Communists and democrats accept the concept of progress in history. There is, therefore, always an object which they choose and in which the goal is embodied. Once the identification of the real with the ideal is achieved, one becomes slavishly loyal and the mind refuses to understand. It can either justify or accuse, but cannot understand.

India suffer from the disease of total separation of the

abstract and the concrete. Elements of religion also come into the picture and cause the divorce between the abstract and the concrete to become complete. The mind continually practices dishonesty by separating the abstract and the concrete. All debates become futile when concrete items of fundamental import are dismissed as programmatic details and abstractions are discussed in a vacuum. That is not only so amongst the parties but also within the parties. Ideologies and principles are in fact programmes in the long run, just as programmes are principles and ideologies in the short run. A programme of action is a concretized principle, and a programme of principle is a generalized action or detail. In India, especially, this disease of divorce of abstract from the concrete is almost universal. The abstract and the concrete must stay as two distinct compartments in the mind. But there must be continual back and forth between the two, almost like the ceaseless ticking of the heart. Europe has demolished the walls between the two compartments, and the mind is just one open field, where the abstract and the concrete are identical. India has sealed the two compartments off against each other, and the mind has split into two parts, so that the abstract and the concrete are totally separated. Mankind has now reached the stage when its mind must naturally recognize as separate the two identities of the abstract and the concrete but must constantly enact their interaction and interplay.

One must think of equality both in the background of historical equality and in the background of the relationship between abstract and concrete equalities. Lipstick and the revolver may be considered as equalizers, but neither adequate nor undiluted. They represent a search for equality. But such searches also realize unexpected and contrary aims. The art of being able to trace a concept and statement to its more general as well as to its more particular form is indispensable for an examination of the meaning of equality. Every concept and statement has its more general and its more particular forms; tools of thought should be so designed as to aid us to trace it

back and forth in either form.

The achievement of equality is difficult not only because of the current existence of inequality but also because of certain errors of thought. Equality, for instance, is not equality in food, which is difficult and unwholesome. An equal portion of food means the equality of prison, a fixed ration. This example should have no meaning beyond showing that the concept of equality must be well understood to bear fruit. In the Israeli Kibbutz, explorations into equality, both sensible and comic, have been made. Everybody eats food in these settlements not equally, but according to his hunger. But clothes are provided equally, say two or three shirts each. Housing is equal. Very curious intellectual debates sometimes take place in these settlements. One such curious debate took place concerning whether children should be allowed to live with their mothers or be brought up in a separate nursery, as was the practice until then. The younger generation and the newer entrants, who had no tradition of suffering behind them, wanted children to be allowed to live with their mothers. The purer variety of collectivists and those who had suffered for their beliefs thought that individualism would creep in as a seed of inequality of children were not brought up in a common nursery. The newer entrants won.

Communist countries in the first five years of their rule tried to make university education free. Then they reintroduced the fee. They found it impossible to continue the system of free education at the university level. Education in Oxford and Cambridge University is eminently aristocratic to an Indian, but, actually, about 80 per cent of the students at these universities are sons and daughters of ordinary men, who pass out high and are given municipal and other scholarships. There may be no single way to achieve an aim, but a combination of several ways.

Equality has various aspects. Soviet Russia, for instance, appears to have attained the best yet recorded in providing mass medicine and primary education to the population as a

whole. In specialized instruction and medicine, Germany or America still hold the field, and all West Europe and America still constitute the top in the matter of minimum food and clothes so pleasing to the soul.

Certain inequalities are stubborn. The most comfortable place of today easily becomes the slum of tomorrow, and ordinary middle-class homes are superior to it for having more modern equipments of comfort. One may make housing sites equal; but a locality may still remain more important or healthy than others. General awareness of such problem must grow.

While we are generally aware of the inequalities of birth and wealth, we should also be warned against those caused by eloquence and talent. In the Socialist movement in India, the greatest single quality of a leader appears to be his capacity to make speeches; there are occasions when a single excellent speech, ensure its maker election to executive positions. He becomes the conference hero, though he may be lazy, otherwise indisciplined, or utterly rotten. A political party must also think of remedies to this unequal talent of speech-making which is socially useless unless supported by courage and wisdom. The capacities to espouse unpopular causes and act against the government and face suffering are all important qualities, socially more useful than speech-making. Wisdom is not necessarily eloquence. Courage acquires in course of time an unmatched eloquence. Gandhiji had no eloquence, and yet his audience hung on every word he said because of his constant practice of saying only that which he felt and did.

Let no one corrupt or degrade his endeavour by trying to become the equal of another in the sense of arrogating equality without having the right to it. Each of us can excel in one department of life or another. But we should not ape our neighbour. Our capacities and personalities may lie in a department separate from his. One may to some extent correctly interpret equality to mean the desire to possess a motor car because someone else possess it. The question may

arise, why only one car and not two, and why not a better car. The desire for equality in the modern world has become the desire for being similar and not equal. The effort to be equal both in collective and individual spheres will be corrupted if it simply becomes the desire to be alike.

Material equality among nations appears more difficult to achieve than material equality within the nation. It is true that the one is dependent on the other. No nation can long remain equal within its frontiers if it is unequal against those outside. As water finds its level, so human society tends to approximate to its lowest levels, unless these levels are otherwise raised. The yearly income of the average American has reached up to around Rs. 5,500. The yearly income of the average Indian lags behind at around Rs. 200. Capital per head in America has gone well beyond Rs. 15,000. Capital per head in India is probably nearer Rs. 200 than Rs. 300. These distances relate to averages of the two lands, and the distance between the minimum in India and the maximum in America would be immeasurably larger. There can be no such aim as a one-to-ten ratio in relation to averages which must necessarily be equal or almost equal. These are the rock-bottom facts of the human universe as it exists today. They are more or less applicable to all the prosperous nations on the one hand and the poverty-stricken peoples on the other. All contemplation of equality is meaningless unless these facts are ever there at the back of the mind.

Pathetic belief in an age of plenty consequent upon scientific inventions amounts to surrender of reason. A political and economic structure will have to be consciously designed such as would close the gap within the nation and among nations. It is extremely doubtful if existing industrial technology can achieve such an aim. This technology began amongst a certain set of conditions: one, scarcer populations and larger lands; two, handsome capital and machines per head of the population; three, industrial production for all the world carried out in a few West European lands. These were

unique historical conditions. They cannot be duplicated. It is somewhat incomprehensible how the technology attendant on those conditions can be reproduced without them. Much human thought is waste, largely because such abstractions as capitalism, industrialization, socialism, and the like are made to do for various sets of unique and irreproducible conditions of history. But this is only an incidental argument. Whether current patterns of science and technology can achieve an age of plenty for all the world or whether new patterns will have to be devised may be left to history to decide. What is already decided is that the human race must make strenuous efforts of thought and action to devise an economic and political structure that will embody the revolution of equality.

Men who have tasted of the joy of equality and unity within the universe can never stay content until the fullest possible material equality is realized. Such complete equality may never be attained; at least, it may be ages away. But the end of equality must live in the mind more poignantly than the current experience of inequality. Such a mind would be lit up with the passion for increasing approximation both within the nation and among nations. Gaps would be closed. Disparities would be removed. Political and economic structures would be sought to be realized such as would embody in a revolutionary way the increasing material approximation of one man to another irrespective of any frontiers whatever.

One may note in passing that such a passion in equality would co-exist with a sharp introspection. Two evils are manifesting themselves in the current Indian situation, and they are probably universal to the human race. Equality as against those placed above one's own station in life is easy to practice, for in certain situations, jealousy and bitterness come easiest to man. Equality as against those placed below one's own station in life is comparatively hard of practice, for sympathy is consuming both materially and spiritually, although a source of great joy after one has experienced it. A passion for equality would not restrict itself to the practice of

sympathy; it would also practice anger, though not jealousy.

Another accompanying evil is the effort of broad sections to lift themselves up with the lever of bitterness and jealousy rather than the development of their talents. This is particularly the case in a situation where tens of centuries have specialized some classes into mental pursuits and most other into manual work. These oppressed castes tend to throw up a leadership which specializes in the demagogy of jealousy in order to attain equality with the classes of power and wealth. Men of real ability even within these oppressed castes are left behind and get no chance to develop themselves, for those more adept at the strident voice of jealousy easily outrun them. Mankind loses. Egalitarians must be ever aware of the need to develop the outlook and talents of all men, particularly of those oppressed, as much as to fight for equality against the unwilling usurpers of inequality. The usurpers of inequality possess certain virtues, particularly of efficiency and manners, and the crusaders of equality must ever breed their virtues in their own ranks.

We must beware of how we seek to realize equality in different spheres. For each aspect of material equality, a method should be sought that corresponds to its nature. Otherwise, unexpected and contrary results may follow. Compulsion, persuasion, and example are the three time-honoured modes of change. Any other mode of change is not possible in theory, at least has not been so in history hitherto. But the proper limits of these various modes of change have not yet been drawn. Example, persuasion, and compulsion each have their limits. In the absence of a proper study of these limits, ignorance or fanaticism may yield results contrary to those aimed for.

To give an instance, vegetarianism, non-smoking, and non-drinking are variously regarded as virtues and desirable conduct. Vegetarianism has in fact an indirect bearing on the problem of equality, and in poorer lands smoking and drinking might also be however remotely connected. But a grave error

of judgment would arise if those who uphold vegetarianism, non-smoking, and non-drinking were to practice helter-skelter all the three modes of change. Vegetarianism, for instance, must under no circumstances go beyond the mode of personal example. Non-smoking may, together with personal example, sometimes bring to its aid the mode to persuasion. Stoppage of alcohol may perhaps in certain circumstances and over temporary periods be furthered by a ban alongside of persuasion and example. Even in the case of non-drinking, one need not be too dogmatic of the virtues of total compulsion. In any event, the barriers are clear.

While the mode of personal example appears to be universal in application, persuasion has a comparatively smaller scope but, even so, extends over a much larger area than that of compulsion. There should be no need to add that compulsion must alone mean that of the law or of civil disobedience. A government practices compulsion through the law, and an opposition practices compulsion through civil disobedience. No other form of compulsion need be entertained, for equality can never be achieved through spilling of blood. But there is need to clarify further the mode of personal example and fix its meaning. A situation has currently arisen in India, and is probably universal to man, in which personal example is more an affair of advising the other fellow what he would do rather than that of precept and practice in one's own life. Such a situation arises in egalitarian movements particularly.

A first error arises when it is expected that a person carry out at once in his life a desired change that he and his party may be advocating. Advocacy of a ceiling on land or income is thus supposed to require immediate execution, even before it is law, by the advocate, at least for himself. Nothing would be better than if the advocate did it. His personal example would be infectious, but to require him to do it shows a complete error of thought. Men bear the law willingly because it is universally applied. If it were to be applied to one class of

persons and not to another, particularly when the law mean deprivation of some kind, it would not be fair or wise to expect advocates of equality to live on an island of total virtue. Such advocates of equality must undoubtedly ever reform themselves, should they happen to be beneficiaries of inequality either through birth or skill. If they are genuine they will unstintingly place their resources in the service of their ideal. They will also continually change their lives so as to approximate increasingly to their ideal.

Increasing approximation within the nation and also among nations seems most difficult to obtain. It appears even more difficult to maintain, should it somehow be realized at any time. Unless all mankind is spiritually seized by the high aim of equality and increasing approximation, usurping nations and classes which have built themselves on inequality and armed power will intervene and suppress efforts towards total equality. There is only one way to escape this predicament. Exceptional men have exceptionally emerged in all human history who have practised this way, from Prahlad over Socrates to Gandhi. The 20th century has for the first time in human history seen how ordinary men can practise the way of exceptional men, perhaps as yet more often collectively than individually.

This is the simple way of saying no to the tyrant, the usurper, and the exploiter. Mankind must increasingly learn this art of saying no without the aid of weapons. It is an art that invites great and self-imposed suffering. And, on balance, if it is certainly less costly than the art and skill of inflicting suffering on others. Furthermore, it is the only way. The total meaning of equality is interwoven with saying no to the usurper and exploiter without the aid of weapons. Dependence on weapons renders a man helpless, both when he does not have them and when he does not possess enough of them or the more potent ones. The total meaning of equality can never blossom in the midst of such dependence and helplessness. Mankind must increasingly breed the new

man who will individually and collectively learn to say no to the usurpers.

The world will be full of strife and sorrow, but also joy and victory, and, in any case, unending toil for a long time to come, if not forever. Man will run a perilous risk if he models his behaviour on the hope of a golden future. He must currently change his behaviour and free his life of pettiness and fill it with joy, for he has only a short span of life to prepare for a fitting reception to his individual death. Meanwhile, he may continue to hope for a golden future. In all this, he will be tossed between pleasure and pain, heat and cold, victory and defeat, sorrow and joy. His thought and action will be ever contaminated by contrary sets of streams of experience. Pride, greed, jealousy, vanity, fear, domineering, the urge to exploit, and the accompanying artifices of deceit, lies, and murder will beset his path. Neither material equality nor emotional kinship can thrive in such a climate.

The modern mind has forgotten yet another meaning of equality, its inward meaning. Man must strive to feel an inward equality between contrary conditions of pleasure and pain, heat and cold, victory and defeat. The ancients in India seemed to have sensed that inward equanimity and outward equality were two sides of the same coin, for, alone in India's languages, does a single word stand for both meanings. *Samata* or *Samatvam* is the word. It may be easily countered that such a state of tranquillity amidst contrary conditions is not possible. That would not be wholly true to say, for such a tranquillity has ever in the past been possible to those who have prepared themselves for it. Why should it not be possible to all or almost all of mankind?

Undoubtedly, the law of the body must prevail. The body must necessarily experience heat and cold or pleasure and pain varyingly. But the mind that senses these experiences may have at its back another mind that only sees. In such a situation, every experience will be grasped by a knower who will also be its seer. The mind of man will simultaneously

know and see an experience. This happens almost always during minor mishaps. When a man slips, not too badly and without much hurt, on the skin of a banana, he experiences the fall and its displeasure, but is also amused by it and tries to laugh it away. This is perhaps done in order to avoid the embarrassing gaze of one's fellow men, and, in any event, the experience relates to an event of low and uncommon order. But the phenomenon proves that man is capable of being amused at his own experience.

This amusement may come out of spiritual training or refinement of culture, as much as it may be a sequel to embarrassment or similar reactions of a lower order. Through constant training, man may acquire a state in which he will both know and see his experience of victory and defeat or pleasure and pain. He will undoubtedly feel the joy or the sorrow, as it is difficult to see how a person who is aware can make himself insensitive to outward happenings. But he will also be amused at his own sorrow or joy, pleasure or pain, and, while sensing them perhaps even actively, he will be continually restored to equanimity through a background of amusement. It is this amusement which provides an undercurrent of delight in all his experiences to the man who trains himself to equality between varying states of pleasure and pain. Such a man will not practice deceit nor lie nor murder, and his soul shall increasingly free itself of fear or pride or urge to exploit.

Equality is thus found to be inward and outward as well as spiritual and material. Equality must therefore be grasped in all its four meanings. Material equality must mean the outward approximation among nations as well as the inward approximation within the nation. Spiritual equality must mean outward kinship as much as it means inward equanimity. Only an integrated concept of these four meanings of equanimity, kinship, material equality within the nation and among nations is worthy to become a supreme aim of life and its purpose. Men will then wonder how previous generations

violated human nature by confining kinship and material equality within the individual family and refusing to extend it over the entire human family. Truly immortal words will then be sung on the unity of the universe alongside of its economic equality, kinship, and tranquillity.

[1956]