
FAIRNESS MUST BE COMBINED WITH ECONOMIC GROWTH

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ABSTRACT

In this paper I follow the main lines of argument that Arnold Toynbee developed in his “Study of History” in explaining the growth and destinies of societies and civilizations. He documents how the absolute rulers of every age have had recourse to force as the most reliable tool for the consolidation of power. But this paper wishes to show that **enforced changes** have no future. Innovations, on the other hand, that are introduced through creative individuals or communities and are true engines of economic growth. In hope that the negative experiences of the past may not be continually repeated, this paper is an **appeal to wisdom, sobriety** and far-sightedness, in order to secure a peaceful future.

Greatness Emerges When Collective Energies Harmonized

A society grows in greatness in proportion to the harmony it maintains between its components: the economic, political, and ‘cultural’. And if it does manage true greatness, then this greatness radiates in all directions. A disintegrating society manifests opposite traits (Toynbee II, 140).

As societies emerge from their relative isolation and interact with other societies and civilizations, new psychic energies are generated; the **synergy** thus created makes amazing things happen. That is why it is good for us to reflect how societies and civilizations arise, what attitudes favour their growth, how they enter into relationships with others and promote the common good, and what can bring about their decline and even demise.

Civilizations Grow Responding to Challenges

*“A principle of a great civilization ought to be that it focuses intensely on how to **develop the capability latent in everybody**. The more that is done, the more we all benefit from one another” (Martin 386).*

One of Toynbee’s central arguments is that **great civilizations rise on hard terrain**, not on easy ground. Earnest and sincere effort is the only way to greatness. The Sumerian civilization for example came up on the jungle-swamps of the Tigris-Euphrates (Toynbee I, 95). The civilization of China rose on the marshy banks of the Yellow River (Hwang Ho) amidst jungles and high water (Toynbee I, 97); a river far more challenging than the navigable Yangtze (Toynbee I, 112-13). The Hellenic civilization was born on the rocky soil of Greece: while in contrast rich Boetia remained rustic, and its people cold and unimaginative, the austere land of Attica favoured the emergence of a creative and enterprising people. When Attica’s pastures dried up and plough-field grew barren, the Athenians

turned from stock-breeding and grain-growing to olive-cultivation; they exchanged the oil so produced for Scythian grain. The energies generated by these endeavours and creativity produced further energies: the Athenians explored the subsoil, developed silver-mines, and introduced currency. They built pottery, ships (Toynbee I, 113-14). The hard nature of their land only added strength to their sturdiness. “If Necessity is the mother of invention, the other parent is **Obstinacy**, the determination that you will go on living under adverse conditions” (Myres J.L.)

The measure of effort a society puts into its survival provides it with the stamina needed for further achievements. Toynbee asserts that it was the **exertion that the early Romans** put into transforming their barren soil that gave them the energy to build up their vast empire extending from Egypt to Britain (Toynbee I, 108). The neighbouring Capuans, on the contrary, who lived in luxury remained permanently weak, and were conquered repeatedly. In fact, Capuan luxury softened the character of Rome’s arch-rivals, the Carthagenians, during a winter that Hannibal’s soldiers spent in that city amidst plenty. The Carthaginian cause was lost at Capua. Greek epics describe how Odysseus who did not yield to the mighty Cyclops, fell to the charms of Circe and ended up in the pig-sty. The lotus-eaters could not resist the enticing invitation of the Sirens, nor the Israelites shed the memories of the ‘flesh pots of Egypt’.

The hard soil of Tyre and Sidon raised the Phoenicians to greatness. It was they who gave us the alphabet. They dominated the Mediterranean for a long time. Their venturesome spirit led them to found the city of Carthage in Africa and several colonies in Spain. In the same way, it was on the **rocky hills of Judea** that the Hebrews gained their religious insights which gave birth to two religious traditions (Jewish and Christian), and continue to inspire the world to this day (Toynbee I, 117-18). The badlands of eastern Germany produced the resolute Prussians who unified Germany and set a model for Europe in the areas of compulsory education and efficient social security system. The barren soil of Scotland brought up a well-educated people with a strong sense of economy and unlimited stamina; Toynbee could not notice the same grit and

determination in the English. Amazingly the contribution of the Scots to the building the Britishempire was out of proportion to their numbers; they gave the British several outstanding Church leaders and Prime Ministers (Toynbee I, 120).

In our own times, more successful nations make a serious mistake if they decide to settle on a comfortable way of life. For, as William James says, “...a permanently successful peace-economy **cannot be a simple pleasure-economy**. We must make new energies and hardihood continue” in the form of hard work and service, if we wish to survive (Barzun 673). Otherwise, sturdier peoples, working hard, will move ahead, leaving us behind.

Situational Challenges If Accepted, Serve as a Stimulus to a Society

“Soft countries invariably breed soft men”, Cyrus, the Persian Emperor (Herodotus IX, ch. 122)

*“In next two decades, this new international system will be copingwith the issues of **ageing populations** in the developed world; increasing energy, food and **water constraints**; andworries about **climate change** andmigration” (Taroor 21).*

It is not only the challenge of the environment that stirs a society to achievement but also pressure or **competition** from other societies. The value of competition is widely accepted in the commercial world today. In the history of civilizations we notice that it is a society under strong pressure that emerges to greatness; however, it does so only if it finds a way to offer an **adequate response**. Toynbee adduces any number of examples to prove his point. But the most interesting part of Toynbee’s argument is that it was the Persian pressure that awakened the sleeping Greek states and ultimately led to the rise of Alexander; that it was the **Carthaginian aggressiveness that stirred the Roman energies** to throw back the invading forces and sent them conquering Gaul, Spain and North

Africa, with the energies so generated; that the Westward expansion of Islam was a belated response to the thrust of Greece and Rome into Asia, and it was this Islamic pressure on the West that provoked the European society to gather strength not only to drive the alien forces out of the Iberian peninsula, but “carried the Spaniards and Portuguese overseas to all the continents of the world” (Toynbee I, 193). Their experience inspired France, Netherlands, England and others to build empires round the globe (Toynbee II, 238). Taking this argument further, we may see in the rise of many nations of Asia and Africa a belated response to the colonial pressure. Recent trends seem to show that the Third World economies are awakening in a big way.

With the rise of new powers, we hope that the negative experiences of the past may not be repeated. This paper is an **appeal to wisdom, sobriety** and far-sightedness in a period of success. The future belongs to those who wisely consider their options.

A Growing Civilization is Guided by a Creative Minority

*“Increasing **inter-connectedness** seems to lead to increasing **interdependence**, which in turn demand new, ever wider, ultimately worldwide ‘frameworks’ for action, transcending old nations, blocs and civilizations” (Fernandez-Armesto 560).*

Toynbee believed that it is the **manner in which a society responds** to the challenges from the environment or from other societies that gives rise to a civilization. One can choose to shrink before a challenge and withdraw into an obscure corner merely to survive; one may opt to sink below other dominant societies and lose one’s identity and allow one’s genius to be stifled. Many societies have done this and have disappeared from history. But others may decide to take the challenge head on, plunge themselves into a determined struggle; it is this tenacity and determination that place them definitively on the way of progress.

This determination need not be in the area of military aggressiveness. Progress comes, says Bergson, when a society has “allowed itself to be convinced, or else allowed itself to be shaken; and the shake is always given by somebody” (Bergson H., *Les Deux Sources de la Morale et de Religion*, pp. 333, 373). Toynbee calls them **creative personalities**; they reshape others after their own thinking (Toynbee I, 251). Even if their ideas do not win acceptance immediately, those of a kindred spirit take note of them, understand them, and begin to gradually take after them. New and creative ideas often come into the minds of several persons at the same time quite independently. That is the law of nature. Ordinary people have remained much the same all through history. They need creative personalities who think, reflect, transform themselves and introduce unforeseen changes into their society that lead them to new destinies (Toynbee I, 253-54). That is the mission we assign to **intellectuals** in the context of today’s discussions.

There have been times when changes were introduced into a society by force and maintained through drill or mere mechanical imitation. Absolute rulers of every age have had recourse to force as the most reliable tool. But **enforced changes** have no future. Innovations, on the other hand, that are introduced through the inspiring figure of creative individuals or communities are more enduring (Toynbee I, 255). Toynbee argues that it is an inwardly transformed person that takes up the challenge of assisting his/her fellow beings. The examples he gives are of those who initiated religious and intellectual movements in human history. Plato believed that a nation is best led by a philosopher-king, a truly enlightened person (Toynbee I, 258). In the same way, Pythagoras and Neo-Platonists emphasized the importance of deep reflection and inner pilgrimages for self-transformation and social change. So, whether it be an individual, a team, a community, or a nation, that develops a new conviction through the **power of inspiration** (enlightenment, discovery of a new insight, a new set of ideas), it has something valuable to contribute to the rest of humanity. Such persons and communities alone will be able to offer a helping hand to the human family in its hour of its need.

Force Can neither Create nor Sustain a Civilization

*“The basic rule was always the same. When a State seemed to be too powerful....its neighbours would jointly **tilt the scales** in the opposite direction so as to make it more moderate and better behaved” (Braudel 416).*

During the dynamic period of a civilization, the ideals and values of the creative minority win enthusiastic acceptance among the members of their society, and even among others. As long as the various elements of a culture or civilization are in harmony, it continues to grow (Toynbee I, 327) and win adherents. But at a later period of history some form of imbalance creeps into that society, inequality grows among its members, and the leadership and the upper classes become exploitative in the political and economic fields. Unfairness deepens. The creative minority atrophies into a closed clique of vested interests; it degenerates into a **‘dominant and exploiting minority’** which seeks to maintain itself in power by the use of force. That is what happened to the leadership in Greek society. Its impressive democratic institutions ceased to function, and its energies were lost in internal struggles, and ultimately it had to submit to Macedonian imperialism.

Something similar happens when a society becomes so complacent with its achievement that it begins to rest on its oars. Creativity dies; self-importance increases; idolatry of the self begins. Achievement in certain limited spheres of life, like economy, technology, military expansion is taken as total human achievement. And pride goes before a fall.

In this context, it may be good to point out that expansion of territory is not a sign of the advance of a civilization. During the colonial period European nations cannot be said to have reached the height of civilization just because they held much territory. They were in fact being inexorably driven by values that led them to the two suicidal World Wars and to their decline. Similarly, neither the military showmanship of Superpowers during the Cold War nor the present hegemonic pretensions

of regional powers in Asia or in the rest of the Third World are signs of progress in civilization. For Toynbee, the rise of an empire or of military might is not the high point of a civilization, as it is often thought even today; it is rather the final effort of a society to rescue itself from collapse. Communities reach this position when the **values that gave rise to their civilization have been enfeebled or lost**. *Tao te Ching* “He who stands on tip-toe does not stand firm, He who takes the longest strides does not walk the fastest...He who boasts of what he will do succeeds in nothing. He who is proud of his work does nothing that endures”. Aggressiveness and pretensions to greatness are not useful assets. It is good for the members of a society to ask themselves whether the values that their high performance possible are being forgotten, marginalized, or lost. It is to this exercise that this paper is inviting participants today.

Once a society gets divided into a dominant minority and exploited majority, force begins to play a greater role in its functioning. Compulsion enters into the picture and the ideals and goals that were greatly esteemed and enthusiastically pursued come to be imposed. The leaders cease to be admired or respected and ordinary people sink to the level of the oppressed. There may be a period of suppression, forced conformance, anarchy and uncertainty. Toynbee’s main argument is that anything built on force in this way has no future. Violent solutions to problems only retards progress, does not promote it. **Force does not pay in the long term**, within the country or in the neighbourhood, despite immediate advantages.

The example he gives is the one of Sparta. She was a leading nation in the early period of Greek history. But once the Spartans had conquered the Messinians and subjected them to slavery, they had no option but try to maintain their dominant position by force. That compelled them to impose severe discipline upon themselves. Every Spartan had to keep himself ready for war at any time. This form of **imposed discipline crushed the public spirit** (Toynbee I, 214-15). Thus Sparta fell far behind Athens when the latter was becoming the marvel of the world during the 4th and 5th centuries BC (Toynbee I, 216). The Spartan citizen became no more than a war-robot. A Spartan training can contribute to immediate

effectiveness, but in the longer term it damages the inner being of persons and communities (Toynbee I, 323). Machiavelli may not agree with this statement. He would say, when persuasion fails, use force (Toynbee I, 617). Many dictators and fascist leaders in modern times have admired the Spartan model and used it very successfully for some period of time, only to fail in the end. And their failure had disastrous consequences.

Excessive militarism is a perversion of the human spirit. Neighbouring states gather together in frantic self-defence against an apparent hegemonic threat. What results in the immediate context are tensions, and in the longer term, a fratricidal war. Toynbee's argument is that the art of war is always learned at the expense of the art of peace (Toynbee I, 226). Everyone becomes the loser. In the context of arms race between neighbouring nations in Asia, these reflections gain great importance. **No one wins a war** today except arms-producing corporations. They alone have the last laugh.

Ongoing Violence is Suicidal

“German, Japanese, French and British power declined not because of debt but because of wars that devastated those countries’ economies...” (Friedman 17).

“The terrible notion of a ‘clash of civilizations’ has entered our discourse, as the often benign forces of religion, culture and society have become causes of conflict, rather than succour, in many places” (Shashi Taroor quoted in Taroor 17).

Asia can collapse long before it rises, if a suicidal war takes place. So can any other part of the world. Wars or violence, internal or external, leave long term consequences behind. Culture and civilization stand threatened most of all. In the immediate context, technologies related to war may seem to stimulate progress, but it is **humanity that takes the blow** when one community inflicts cruelties on the other. The Hellenic society opted

for a suicidal conflict when it conducted the Peloponnesian war in 431 BC (Toynbee I, 305). Thucydides calls it the “beginning of great evils for Hellas”. It does not matter whether the conflict is between states, classes, ethnic groups, religious groups, or communities within the same society or within the neighbourhood, the damage is in many directions.

The winners become irrationally cruel and the losers build up anger and begin dreaming of retaliation. At the moment of success, the Athenians were cruel to the losing Melians, as the Romans became more and more harsh upon the conquered people in the later period of their history. Ultimately that cruelty itself turned against their best interests. The polarisation between classes, communities and interests in the Roman society led to such tensions and instances of violence that their democratic society had no choice but surrender an absolute ruler. The Roman empire was born over the dead bones of Roman democratic traditions (Toynbee I, 344). The Republic was overwhelmed, and the ambition for money and power **devastated the ‘republican virtues’** that were the greatest pride of Roman citizenship (Friedman 31). Something similar would happen again in France after the cries of “Equality, Fraternity, and Liberty” grew fainter; Napoleon emerged from the ranks with absolute power.

What begins with force returns to force; **violence of every kind is self-destructive** in a society. The consequences of the Assyrian militarism caught up with their empire ultimately even though the Assyrians dominated southwest Asia for two and a half centuries. Their mighty power disappeared and even the name ‘Assyrian’ was forgotten where it had held absolute sway. Xenophon was not even aware of such a name (Toynbee I, 390). No other factor was the direct cause of the breakdown of civilizations than violence: wars between neighbouring states, civil conflicts within the same state, social upheavals of all kinds (Toynbee II, 301). We are living through times when such tensions dominate the world scene at diverse levels. This paper is an invitation to reflect more deeply.

How Winners Turn Losers

*Hellenism withered from within. The free cities were torn asunder by **mutual hatred** and by class wars. “They found no place for the greatest minds of the age” who had to take shelter with tyrants (Dawson 62).*

*“Perhaps we are justly punished. **We were insolent** and unjust in our dealings with foreign nations in our day of power. Now in our adversity you trample us” (Ahmed Vefik, referring to Ottoman humiliation before Western forces, quoted in Mishra 62).*

Those who emerge victorious in a disastrous war are tempted to rejoice at their success. But victory imposes its own type of punishment on the winners. “**Victory**, like revolution, can **devour its own children**, particularly those who expect more from it than what it actually delivers. The idealists who realize too late that violence never achieves their goals are among history’s most common losers in victory” (Schivelbusch 98). Macedonians who went conquering nations right up to India turned against each other in a suicidal conflict (Toynbee I, 395). That is again what happened to European nations which, after reducing the rest of the world to the status of the colonies, turned against each other during the two World Wars. It was a suicide-attempt on the part of mighty Europe. And today, many neighbouring nations in the newly emerging situation in the Third World are busy at the same game, learning little from the experiences of the Western World in the early 20th century.

Exaggerated forms of nationalism are fatal. In the nineteenth century, nationalism rose to have the status of a religion in Europe, and wars became ‘total wars’ involving the entire population. When democratic nations are in conflict every citizen is roused to anger. The negative consequences that such wars leave behind remain for centuries. **Exaggerated forms of political nationalism**, that once led many

Western nations into conflict, are taking many Third World nations in the same direction. And arms producers rejoice.

Great Victories Pose Great Dangers

World War I was represented as a war to ‘save civilization’. But later historians have always wondered whether it was a civilized way of settling differences (Fenandez-Armesto 10).

The winners are tempted to think that once the enemy (another class, caste, ethnic group, economic or political interest or a Nation State) are humbled, their own future is safe. They lose all sense of realism and forget that they have just wounded a tiger; they do not know when it will spring back to life. This can be applied to **inter-class, inter-ethnic, inter-religious, or inter-national conflicts**. We know that to every action there is a reaction.

The humiliation of Athens by the Persians in 480-479 BC inspired her to build up a fleet that led her to the victory of Salamis and to the glory of the Periclean times. Xerxes the successor of Darius took aggression to European Greece provoking a Hellenic counter-attack under Alexander (Toynbee I, 610). The defeat of Germany in 1914-18 and the French occupation of Ruhr Basin in 1923-4 roused the Nazi claim to justice.

Every victory is a judgement, but the process starts again. Winners must be ready to face the contest. This is true not in the sphere of war alone, but today more especially in the area of economy, industry, marketplace, fashion, ideas, sports, competitions, political elections (Schivelbusch 2). But people seem to be slow to learn.

Usually the winners seek to humiliate the vanquished as much as possible in their own eyes with a view to destroying their self-confidence (Schivelbusch 6). They may glorify themselves, but the defeat remains an injustice in the minds of the defeated which, they feel, must be rectified.

A mood is created where all citizens want to fight for the nation (Schivelbusch 11). Curiously, a national defeat is a moment when a nation looks back with pride at its glorious past and revive energies to rebuild a new future (Schivelbusch 31). And the struggle begins all over again. The contestants copy fighting skills from each other seeking to outwit the other. As the art of war develops, the greatest loss of all is the **weakening of culture** especially on the winning side. Nietzsche said in 1871 that “great victories pose great dangers and that the triumph of the German empire would lead to the demise of the German culture” (Schivelbusch 4).

Today’s Victors Are Tomorrow’s Losers

*“...the more effective the terrorist attack is, the more frightened the population is, and the more compelled the government is to respond aggressively and visibly”. In other words, **war against terror produces more terror** (Friedman 77).*

The last shall be the first (The Gospel of St. Matthew 20:16).

The victorious Romans used to cry, “Woe to the defeated”, until they began to lose battles themselves. After every victory, there is a tomorrow: whether it is for a nation, community, class, caste, business interest, or political alliance. Fortune is a wheel that revolves. There is a central Christian teaching, “The last shall be the first”. The great historian Renan used to say, “Today’s victors are tomorrow’s losers”. **Defeat comes from an earlier victory** and prepares the ground for another one (Schivelbusch 126). The tables are turned, and victory comes in the opposite direction. The relationship between Germany and France from the time of Napoleon till World War II can provide abundant example of this, a drama that could be avoided in many parts of the World if there is sufficient good will.

The psychology of victory is more damaging than that of defeat: it brings to birth an aggressive generation. *Destructive heroism* becomes seductive on both sides. When the anger is high, all public statements are couched in aggressive terms. The ‘enemy’ is always “barbaric, violent, predatory, uncultured, without spirit, disloyal, assimilative, imitative, servile, lacking in character” (Schivelbusch 159). Even well-meaning men take pride in making themselves the heirs and prisoners of a heroic past, but at the same time become victims of their own high rhetoric, unrealistic propaganda, and symbolic gestures. Today several situations in the Developing World remind us of this condition; people are made victims of political propaganda and commercial deception, the contestants adopting aggressive postures against each other within the country or beyond borders. Such anger may be expressed in contexts of polarizations between classes, castes, ethnic groups, political parties or alliances, or regional interests. Le Bon wrote “Among the masses, ideas, emotions, passions, and systems of belief are transmitted with the same infectious capacity as microbes” (Schivelbusch 213).

Encounter of the Best, not the Worst

“Asia is one. The Himalayas divide, only to accentuate, two mighty civilizations, the Chinese with its communism of Confucius, and the Indian with its individualism of the Vedas...Arab chivalry, Persian poetry, Chinese ethics and Indian thought, all speak of a single Asiatic peace...”, (Kakuzo Okakura quoted in Mishra 230).

*“Today, whether you are a resident of Delhi or Dili, Durban or Darwin, whether you are from Noida or New York, it is simply not realistic to think only in terms of your own country. **Global forces press in from every conceivable direction**” (Taroor 3).*

When there is a conflict between nations, it is the weaker communities on both sides that are the greatest sufferers. In earlier times, conquered people were reduced to slavery. After the Hannibalic wars, whole hordes of slaves from the East were brought to work in the plantations of Southern Italy. They formed the working class from 2nd cent. BC to 6th cent. AD. (Toynbee I, 155). Unexplainably, a spiritual force can come into the picture to strengthen the weakest in their condition of helplessness. For example, during the interactions between the upper classes in Rome and their helpless slaves, the **religious perceptions of the slaves won out in the end**; their gods survived not the gods or the philosophies of the masters (Toynbee I, 156). The philosophies of the dominant classes were too abstract and too impersonal to appeal to the masses, and ultimately they yielded to the spiritual insights and divinities of the lower classes.

There were encounters of cultures not only in Rome, but also on the borders where the Romans interacted with barbarians creating veritable ‘melting-pots’ of cultures. There was mutual assimilation, both sides picking up bits and pieces of each other’s culture. But often these were the less worthy elements. It is not the noblest qualities that communicate fastest, but the art of war or skills of exploitative trade (Toynbee II, 142). In the process of this mutual sharing, some representatives of the Roman elite sank to the level of the people they had subjugated (Toynbee II, 41). Similarly, in this globalized world an erosion of cultures and values is continuously taking place, every community picking up the **less noble elements** from the other. There is no criterion for selection, there is no integrating principle. There is a danger that the worthless elements gradually will constitute the ‘common ground’.

On the other hand, a meeting of cultures can be stimulating when the best elements are shared. In order that this may happen, there should be an appreciation of one community for the other. Pretensions to cultural or civilizational superiority on the side of those who are technologically or economically advanced is unrealistic. We need to give **equal respect to the many streams of culture** and civilizations that contribute to the ultimate destiny of the human race. The great works of Greek thinkers and

writers were introduced to the Western world by Arabic scholars (Toynbee I, 193). It was a great contribution of the East to the West. Modern society ought to be grateful to the wisdom and knowledge of ancient civilizations like those of Egypt, Greece, India and China which have gone into shaping the modern world today. Civilizations progress through mutual borrowing. The Arabic numerals, for example, are of Indian origin; the printed word of Chinese. Similar Asian contribution in the past has been great (Mishra 299). Today, more of this is possible, and it will be all the greater when our debt to the West is also equally recognized.

Technology and Economy Alone Do Not Constitute Civilization

*Unfortunately in our times, "...mass education, cheap consumer goods, the popular press and mass entertainment are combined with deeply felt **rootlessness**, confusion and anomie" (Mishra 302).*

*'Dharma' is rooted in **culture** rather than politics (Das 60).*

Unfortunately, today we judge a society's stature by its technological advances. Toynbee considers it exalting the *Homo Faber* above *Homo Sapiens*, placing the technician above the philosopher. He contends that a civilization has often declined while technique moved ahead. For example, *Homo Pictor* has declined while *Homo Faber* has flourished; art has suffered while industry has bloomed (Toynbee I, 230). He says, it was precisely when the Athenian economy expanded with plantation-farming for export that they introduced slavery into the colonies of Agrigentum and Sicily. This was not a step forward for the Athenian civilization (Toynbee I, 232).

Something similar would happen again during the post-Hannibalic period in Roman history when oriental slaves were brought on a large scale to work in the estates owned by the Roman elite. While it brought increased productivity and profits, it drove the pauperized peasants into

the cities creating a parasitic urban proletariat. It was the beginning of the collapse of the Roman system which was to reach its climax in the 4th century (Toynbee I, 233). The mass production-centres in our times give a similar impression. Unless there is intelligent evaluation of the newly emerging situation in the new **urban agglomerations** in the Developing World, especially in Asia, major difficulties can arise in the days to come. The saving factor remains that “family customs have been among the slowest of all Asian Institutions to change” (Jacques 158).

We do not deny that technological skills and economic assets are of enormous importance; however, what is even more important are the less visible assets like the **values** that a society lives by, **relationships** that hold it together, **ideals** it places before its members, spiritual dreams it assiduously pursues. These make *Homo* truly *Sapiens*. In the East, the wise man is held in high esteem. We need to affirm this, because in today’s globalized society the invisible values that gave birth to different cultures and civilizations are getting marginalized and forgotten. The manager or the technocrat of our days stands for impersonal technology, not for the community or its interests (Schivelbush 256); his task is to rationalize processes, which means increased production and greater competitiveness. It is true, rationalization helps to reduce prices and ensure easier availability of the goods produced; and the improvement in the quality of consumer goods adds to their competitiveness (Schivelbusch 279).

However, we cannot afford to forget the human person and his/her individuality, communities and their values, human society and civilizational heritages. There is an abundance of moral rhetoric in today’s political statements, but there is no seriousness. “None of the mission statements I have come across says anything worth saying, unless you are a fan of badly written platitudes” (Hobsbawm 2).

Economic Progress Must be Guided

“The things we admire in men, kindness and generosity, openness, honesty, understanding and feeling, are the concomitants of failure in our system. And those traits we detest, sharpness, greed, acquisitiveness, meanness, egotism and self-interest, are the traits of success. And while men admire the quality of the first they love the produce of the second” (John Steinbeck quoted in Das 182).

Schools of Economy today forget that even an economic world order could not be built on economic foundations alone (Toynbee I, 337). Universal values of fairness cannot be sacrificed to the self-interest of a few who control affairs. While it is true that the market is productive and raises living standards, it tends to concentrate wealth in the hands of a few, pass on environmental costs to society and to abuse workers and consumers. “**Markets must be tamed** and tempered” (Stiglitz xiii). Big corporations and bankers should not be allowed to have recourse to fraudulent and unethical ways (Stiglitz xxiii) nor take advantage of the weak. Democracy cannot be limited to a ritual of periodic elections, it must listen to people’s voices. Poor governance in many countries is due to too cosy relationships among business houses, civil servants, and politicians. Large business houses have excessive power (Das 158).

The Government should play a regulating role, when, for example, producers seek to make profit by making their products more addictive or are indifferent to the damage they inflict on the environment (Stiglitz xviii), or consumer interests are ignored. The ethical consciousness in society has to be kept alive and the Market too must be given a ‘moral character’. The movers of the economy seem to have lost their ‘moral compass’ (Stiglitz xvii). The consequence is the **constant restlessness** we notice in society. Anger is intensifying. The Spanish Youth, marginalized by their economy, called themselves ‘los indignados’ (the angry) (Stiglitz x). When genuine grievance gets mixed up with anger engineered by people

with political interests, matters become more complicated. In many places we faced with such situations. Our options become limited.

Certainly street revolutions are not always the right answer to social problems. However, we have yet to find other effective alternatives. People do not have sufficient confidence in the ideas or in the sincerity of the leadership. Today, it is not only the anger of the working class that is growing, but that of the 'middle class' as well. Moises Naim says that the middle class is the fastest growing segment in the world, "and it will be the main cause of coming conflicts. They have anger from unfulfilled expectation. The middle class is shifting from rich countries to the poor countries" (Das 179). This is what makes it difficult to say whether street demonstrations are signs of regeneration and self-confidence or of anarchy (Das 19), or plain political irresponsibility. If the prompters of protests inspire violence, the scenario changes dramatically. There are enough instances of violent citizens making themselves stronger than the state, joining politics and becoming lawmakers. **Criminality in politics** is in the ascendant (Das 200-03).

In any case, if our political structures only reinforce the unfair systems rather than correct it, hard days are ahead. The anxiety is that the rewards of the new economy are not always going to the most deserving. "Much of this vast rise in private wealth has gone to a small segment of the ultra-rich..." (Hobsbawm 50). Ram Charan says, "Some who are in the know tell me that the key decisions in the global financial system are made by a cozy group of fifty or fewer people from these firms. They move frequently from one company to another" (Charan 42). Even considering this statement an exaggeration, there seems to be some truth in it. The 1% that are earning most are not great thinkers or innovators (Stiglitz 27), they are **self-rewarding executives**. They are people, it is alleged, who know how to manage the Government machinery for their own interests. They know how to skirt the law, shape it in their favour, take advantage of the poor (Stiglitz 37); who know how to win monopolies, get control over natural resources (Stiglitz 49), sell to the Government above market prices (Stiglitz 40), get taxes and wages lowered (Stiglitz

63), silence unions (Stiglitz 64), fire workers (Stiglitz 67), marginalize minority groups (Stiglitz 68); push austerity programmes to the areas of medical care, health, education in aid of the poor (Stiglitz 230-31). For them even unemployment serves a useful purpose, since it will create a climate that favours the lowering of wages (Stiglitz 263).

“**Inequality and unemployment** grow as highly mobile corporations continually move around the world in search of cheap labour and high profits, evading taxation and therefore draining much-needed investment in welfare systems for ageing populations” (Mishra 296). Monopolists in general are not good innovators (Stiglitz 46). The mighty task they seem to perform may be described as macro-mismanagement. And ultimately the bubble bursts (Stiglitz 82). Looking more closely at the Third World, we notice that “Much of the ‘emerging’ world now stands to repeat, on an ominously large scale, the West’s tortured and often tragic experience of modern ‘development’. In India and China, the pursuit of economic growth at all costs has created a gaudy elite, but it has also widened already alarming social and economic disparities” (Mishra 307). Uneven distribution prompts people to join populist movements, or follow ethnocratic politicians, or fundamentalist radicals, nationalistic fanatics (Mishra 308). This is the context in which inter-national rivalries get accentuated (Mishra 309). The tragedy is that the privileged Third World minority aspire for nothing higher than the conveniences and **gadgets of their Western consumer counterparts** (Mishra 308).

Values must be Given a Place in the Economy

“Companies are competing against countries--not just other companies” (Charan 7).

*“One might describe history as a dialogue between societies, in which those with **grave internal contradictions** fail and are succeeded by others that manage to overcome those contradictions” (Fukuyama 61).*

Growing inequality in the economy can spell doom for the economy itself, because it impairs efficiency by weakening the motivation of the workers and undermines growth by distorting market mechanisms or introducing asymmetries and unfair competition (Stiglitz 6). If you create wealth, society is enriched. If you take it from others through dishonesty or raising prices or adulterating goods, it is impoverished (Stiglitz 32). Unequal societies create continuous political instability; here Stiglitz quotes the example of Latin America (Stiglitz 83-84). On the contrary, in more **egalitarian societies people work hard** and seek to preserve social cohesion (Stiglitz 77). It is in such societies that high levels of social responsibility are achieved and rules for environment protection respected (Stiglitz 100). There, people see the need to invest in infrastructure, education, health and research (Stiglitz 93). Mutual trust is generated. Business leadership with high sense of *dharma* will be trusted (Das 160). It is such a society that creates a climate for good economy. Mutual trust is an invaluable social capital (Stiglitz 121).

So it is evident that **human values** must be given a place in economy for the very success of economy. The Market becomes inefficient if it ignores the human dimension (Stiglitz xi-xii). Freedom for enterprise and venture must combine with responsibility for the common good (Toynbee I, 339). Some cities in the Developing World are growing at a monstrous pace, serving a vigorous economy but not the interests of communities, nor the natural environment. Unskilled workers are reduced to conditions less than human. Meanwhile consumerism keeps sapping physical stamina, **moral energies getting exhausted**, sources of ethical inspiration going dry. Consequences can be summarized in the words of Sebastian Haffner writing about his own country in 1923: It is as though “an entire generation had a spiritual organ removed: an organ that gives human beings constancy, balance, even gravity”. No space is left for “conscience, reason, wisdom of experience, fidelity to principles, morality and piety” (Schivelbusch 270).

The slave-owning states of America and the slave-using plantations of the later Roman period were prosperous. But that prosperity was

built on exploitation. The only difference is that today's 'slaves' are better paid, better fed and better entertained. But we should not forget that the Roman slaves also were provided with 'bread and circus' (food and entertainment). The painful reality was that their destinies were not in their own hands. People in our times little realize how much of their self-determination (freedom) and self-articulation (creativity) is stifled under an oppressive economy. Our society is fast becoming more and more impersonal with scope for human growth narrowing every day. This type of economic success cannot become the measure of civilization. The true measure of civilization according to Toynbee is the ability for self-determination and the art of self-articulation (Toynbee I, 225). The economy of our days needs **values** to give it a direction and a destiny. "When there was neither kingdom, nor king; there was neither governance, nor governor, the people protected themselves by **dharma**" (Mahabharata, XII.59.14).

Dawson says, as life passed out of Hellenic civilization, there was the gradual disappearance of those vital traits in which the spirit of their earlier culture was embodied... and individual native qualities came to be choked within the context of a formless, cosmopolitan society, with no roots in the past and no contact with a particular region. This was the degradation of the Greek type (Dawson 63). Is some form of degradation of our cultures and civilizations taking place at a massive scale today?

Regimentation of Society Invites Resistance

"Rome became more and more a predatory state that lived by war and plunder, and exhausted her own strength with that of her victims" (Dawson 67).

The global crisis is that the publics of the major countries do not trust the political or financial elites...Hence the political elite find it hard to manage affairs. "Without public trust, it is impossible" (Friedman xxi- xxii).

The era of the World Wars introduced many elements of regimentation into social life. The memories of military discipline, straight lines, similar dress for men and women, imposition of ideas from above lingered on even afterwards. The rationalization of the economy and production turned out to be another form of regimentation: rigid schedules, mass assemblies, record performance. Mass-produced goods came in abundance in compensation, but that alone could not satisfy human longing for spontaneity. There was a reaction, more especially in Western society: **rejection of restraints**, chaotic movement of tourists, weird fashions, deafening jazz and rock, irresponsible movies (Schivelbusch 268). The conclusion of the War brought further rejection of restraints: e.g. the rigidities of the military code, the high ideals of nationalism, ideological zeal, and hypocritical moral codes. The external expressions of such reactions were imitated in Asia and other continents with little understanding of the reasons for the trends in the world's leading nations.

Then came the Cold War, each side **over-confident about its ideologies** and theoretical stands. It created a climate of fierce challenging of opponents, denunciation of each other's points of view, and production of abundant propaganda material (anti-communist on the one side and anti-capitalist on the other) with evident exaggerations on both sides. There was diverse reading of history in support of each one's ideology and military strategy. Everyone was too sure of his/her theoretical stand; everyone wanted to play the 'prophet'. The denunciation of what you differ from became close to a moral precept.

Once again there was a reaction to excessive ideological zeal. Recent **postmodernist trends have been to reject all ideologies**, meta-narratives, any pretension to a comprehensive explanation of reality (religious or philosophical), as having no validity. More and more people begin to adopt the attitude that each person is 'thrown into the world' to make meaning and shape codes of conduct in the best way he/she can.

Existentialism arose out of the harsh experiences of the World Wars: a recognition of “man’s incapacity to direct civilization along any precise course” and “the gap between the actions of men and their stubbornly professed ideals” (Barzun 755). For many, this was evidence enough that **humanity has no destiny**. But self-reduction to helplessness is not an intelligent solution to problems. But in this sense of impotence, people began to make some meaning of life, accommodating to the rationalization of the economy, rejoicing in high levels of production and yielding to ardent habits of consumerism. If this path of rationalization is pursued to its furthest possible limits, human beings will be reduced to the status of mere producers and consumers, victims of mind-manipulation by commercial advertisements and political propaganda. Society gradually becomes impersonal and even inhuman.

The War-era also brought defence policies of nations too much under the influence of industrial giants who produced weapons. And the long term disadvantage of it was that **arms-producing companies and nations** developed a **vested interest in keeping international tensions**, insurgencies, and local conflicts, going. Arms control became impossible; arms-race became not the ‘sports of kings’ as in medieval times, but the source of income for arms-producers. Today, people engaged in ethnic wars, ideological dissenters, secessionists... all fall victims to the manipulations of arms-traders, though they little realize this truth. Poor Third world countries are the greatest victims. But they consider themselves heroes when they keep struggling against their neighbours. Toynbee says that the stature of a civilization is to be judged by the progress towards self-determination (Toynbee I, 324), not an abundance of consumer goods. It should stand for freedom of thought, intellectual activities, self-organization and self-expression, with utmost scope for creativity, always with a strong sense of social and cosmic responsibility. This is what is precisely lost in a value-less economy.

Spiritual Search is a Social Capital

*“The central conviction which has dominated my mind ever since I began to write is the conviction that the society or **culture which has lost its spiritual roots** is a dying culture, however prosperous it may appear externally” (Dawson xxxi).*

Under the pressure of circumstances people are compelled to develop new skills. For instance, forbidden to engage themselves in other forms of economic activities in the West, Jews developed the skill for trade and finance; so did the Parsees in India and the Armenians and Georgians under the Ottomans (Toynbee I, 164). The people’s outlook also is conditioned by their historical experiences. The Greeks developed an aesthetic outlook, Indians a religious vision of reality, the West a fascination for machinery and parliamentary system and military mobilization (Toynbee I, 284). This is how cultural/civilizational differentiation takes place between communities. Taking such diversity for granted, today we are in search of a **universally appealing worldview** or perspective, a leading concept or vision, and generally acceptable moral norms which people have called ‘**global ethics**’, which would give even to our material culture a transcending quality.

Toynbee argues that progress of a civilization is to be measured by its capacity to move steadily to higher levels of human activity, e.g. from the enhancement of practical efficiency to achievements in aesthetic and intellectual fields, thus moving from lower sphere of action to a higher one. He calls it ‘**etherialization**’. At the earliest stages of the existence of a society, it seeks to defend itself against the harshness of nature or pressure from a neighbouring adversary. If it is successful in this endeavour, it begins to address the challenges it faces in a higher sphere of action, moving on to various forms of self-articulation and self-determination (Toynbee I, 236). Thus a growing civilization moves its concern from its

achievements in the outer sphere to those in the inner, thus enriching the collective personality of the civilization (Toynbee I, 246). This inward journey is nothing unfamiliar to the Asian peoples. Rabindra Nath Tagore, while rejoicing over Japan's victory over Russia in 1905, said "Asia today is set to realizing herself consciously, and thence with vigour. She has understood, **know thyself** - that is the road to freedom. In imitating others is destruction" (Mishra 225). Mahatma Gandhi's understanding of civilization was something similar; he said that "true civilization is about **self-knowledge and spiritual strength**" (Mishra 228).

This movement from the outer to the inner becomes necessary when a society is compelled to pursue certain **basic options**, especially in the **moral sphere** (Toynbee I, 244), e.g. when the latest technical advance a society makes becomes a tool for enslaving its weaker members or is used for the destruction of a sister-society or a sister-civilization. The construction of the pyramids, for example, stood for a great measure of technical advance; but they were built on oppression (Toynbee I, 245). Napoleonic wars carried the liberating ideas of the French Revolution and the advanced technology of the French nation, but these blessings went only to aggravate the horrors of war (Toynbee I, 330).

Toynbee laments that today's mass education does not include what he calls 'etherialization' of interest and motivation (Toynbee I, 339). Nowadays, Gurucharan Das has expressed a similar concern, emphasizing the need of education in citizenship and '**public dharma**' (Das 148). He insists on inculcating moral habits rather than shouting moral slogans (Das 140). The present system of education, Toynbee feels, is defective; it leads to the '**vulgarization**' of tastes in our society, as it happened in the case of the urban masses in Rome who were content with their 'bread and circus'. Ardent consumers in our times little realize how much they are being 'used' by profit-makers, being treated to the trivializing entertainment provided by commercial entrepreneurs and taken advantage of by the propaganda of interested parties like political ideologues or media barons. This is the modern form of slavery to which we already referred. The pity is all the greater when the victims are not aware how they are being 'used' (Toynbee I, 340).

The Meek Shall Inherit the Land

“For nearly all of world history the richest and most developed societies have been in Asia” (Ponting 9).

*“For most people in Europe and America the history of the twentieth century is still largely defined by the two world wars and the long nuclear stand-off with Soviet communism. But it is now clearer that the central event of the last century for the majority of world’s population was the **intellectual and political awakening of Asia** and its emergence from the ruins of both Asian and European empires” (Mishra 8).*

Hobsbawm calls the present period of history an “era...that has lost its bearings and which in the early years of the new millennium looks forward with more troubled perplexity than I recall in a long lifetime, guideless and mapless, to an unrecognizable future” (Hobsbawm ix). However, as Toynbee sees it, there is redemption for all. In the hardest times, destiny unfailingly intervenes in behalf of the weakest. The future belongs to the exploited masses who allow themselves to be led by the enticement of ‘etherilization’. They have aspirations, they have energies. Philosophical theories and ideologies developed by the elite is abstract, cold, distant, impersonal and elusive. But **spiritual insights** entertained by the oppressed masses are dynamic. But they have to make a decisive choice between a **violent approach** or a **peaceful one**: 1) ongoing exploitation can create a sense of helplessness, stir up collective anger and end up with a revolution; that is what happened in France, Russia, China and other places. 2) But it can also lead to the stirrings of the **inner person for a new search for deeper meaning** and fulfilment. The energy so generated can provide new spiritual insights lighting up a new path to unforeseen destinies. Nietzsche said, “One must possess a chaos within to give birth to a star”.

It is with the **breakup of an old order**, that a new one comes into existence. Toynbee sees Abraham emerging at the disintegration of the Sumerian civilization, Moses during the decadence of the ‘New Empire’ in Egypt (Toynbee I, 442). Judaism developed among the Jews who endured hardship during their exile, ‘by the waters of Babylon’. In fact, Toynbee believes that the Babylonian exploitation called into existence two religious movements: Zoroastrianism and Judaism. Christianity rose from among the exploited Roman labour-class. Buddha and Mohammed too appeared when an old order was passing away. A new world can be born only through a “tremendous spiritual travail” (Toynbee I, 443). Possibly, we are beginning to experience similar travails. When people are condemned to live in a society **without really belonging to it** (in it, not of it), it is exploitation; the choice that remains is between a **violent** and a **gentle** way of facing the ordeal.

Marx proposed a violent solution. It has been tried out in different ways and different places, with different results. A milder approach too has been attempted. Buddha had no violent answers, but he changed the world (Toynbee I, 457). The message of Jesus too was one of peace. His inspiration caught the imagination of the oriental slaves in Roman Italy who needed to cling to a spiritual ideology for strength and inner motivation. It was their example that inspired their Roman masters who were living in a spiritual vacuum. And the spiritual spark caught on. Hindu reformers like Chaitanya, Tukaram, Mirabai, Ramakrishna, Aurobindo, Vivekananda, Sankardev, Mahatma Gandhi and others, did not propose violent solutions to the problems of the weaker communities. But they sustained their hopes. In the Western world, groups like the English Quakers, the German Anabaptists in Moravia, the Dutch Mennonites sought to offer a gentle approach to the problems of the **down-trodden people** whom Toynbee calls the “**internal proletariat**” (Toynbee I, 456). Quakers prospered and they ceased to belong to the proletariat, showing the validity of maxims like ‘meek shall inherit the land’, and ‘honesty is the best policy’. Buddhism brought solace to the proletariat in China. The Taoist and Confucian formulae too were peaceful, but world-transformative.

Keeping true to Toynbee’s vocabulary, the “**internal proletariat**” of the globalized world today are seeking a new Inspiration, a Fresh Enlightenment, a relevant spiritual insight, a Peaceful Revolution. Only, it has to be made intelligible by the **creative minority** that proposes it. That is the **mission of intellectuals today**. The proposal should be based on the emerging realities (Toynbee I, 489) and should make an appeal to the subconscious psyche of the communities concerned (Toynbee II, 316). Norms proposed for inter-relationship among people and communities should reflect the infra-personal layers of the subconscious psyche (Toynbee II, 317). They should mirror the internal harmony that the creative leaders has consciously cultivated (Toynbee II, 317-18). For, we know too well “We are betrayed by what is false within” (Meredith, G, *Love’s Grave*).

Today’s ‘Creative Minority’ Must Help Society to Search for the Common Good

“The growing ties between nations over the last decade have made every one of them less inclined to allow their trade partners to go under” (Sharma 252).

“I used to think that the causes of war were predominantly economic. Then I came to think that they were more psychological. I am now coming to think that they are decisively ‘personal’ arising from the defects and ambitions of those who have the power to influence the currents of nations” (Basil Liddell Hart quoted in Khanna xxiii).

In one respect, the globalized world offers a vast **variety of ideas and choices**. Yet society itself seems to be in the grip of diverse uncertainties. Not every concept generated in one part of the world or by a civilization finds ready acceptance in another. While Western technology was welcomed, social and religious attitudes prevailing in the West have found equal acceptability. While the traditions of Western democracy have

attracted several Asian countries, some regimes have pursued unlimited powers. While Western theories about free enterprise are winning favour day by day, not all feel equally convinced.

Moreover, certain new trends seem to be emerging: “**Wealth is moving from North to South**, and so are jobs. Companies in the South, big and small, have a fierce entrepreneurial drive. Many are enjoying double-digit revenue growth, bringing jobs and prosperity to their home countries” (Charan 5). Further, “Postwar Asian experience demonstrated that later modernizers had an advantage relative to the more established industrial powers, just as earlier liberal trade theories had predicted” (Fukuyama 101). Reflecting carefully over these phenomena, we need to remember that economic breakthroughs are not everything. Many perceptions and hopes are mere bubbles, based on passing trends.

When any country in the World boasts about its economic or military achievements, we need to consider the following: “What is most striking...is the speed of the **Roman Empire’s collapse**. In just **five decades**, the population of Rome itself fell by three-quarters. Archaeological evidence from the fifth century---interior housing, more primitive pottery, fewer coins, small cattle---shows that the benign influence of Rome diminished rapidly in the rest of Western Europe. What one historian has called ‘the end of civilization’ came within the span of a single generation” (Ferguson 292). Ferguson was addressing this message to the leading nations of the world, who often have declining populations.

There may be differences of perceptions among nations about free enterprise or regulated economy, but there will not be much difference about the need for a global ethic, and an **equitable world order**, a **spiritual vision** of the human and cosmic reality. We have no choice but to respond to reality. “This active response is an awakening to a sense of unity which broadens and deepens as the vision expands from the unity of mankind, through the unity of the cosmos...” (Toynbee I, 492). This takes place spontaneously when there is a true encounter of cultures and civilizations. “The great civilizations of the past have often been focused on their own cultures. In the future, they will increasingly

study the greatness of other civilizations” (Martin 388). For example, Toynbee holds that “The spiritual event that had liberated **Gandhi’s ‘soul force’** was an encounter, in the sanctuary of the soul, between the spirit of Hinduism and the spirit of the Christian Gospel embodied in the life of the Society of Friends” (Toynbee II, 251). This is an amazing statement. No matter how alien the spark, a stimulus is welcome when and where it is needed (Toynbee I, 488). Today we long for such stirring stimuli through genuine encounters between the geniuses of different societies/civilizations.

Also in this case, it will not be the philosophy of the elite that will bring salvation, but the spiritual dynamism of the masses. Though Horace said *Odi Profanum Vulgus* (I hate the vulgar crowd), Carl Jung is of the opinion, “Great innovations never come from above; they invariably come from below...(from) the much-derided silent folk of the land--those who are less infected with academic prejudices than great celebrities are wont to be” (Modern Man in Search of a Soul pp 243-4, as quoted at Toynbee I, 549). Elevated discussions are too elitist for the masses. It touches the intellect, not the heart. Its main weakness is a lack of vitality. It fails to attract the masses and motivate its propagators. The **defeat of ideological theories** is a foregone conclusion, unless they link themselves in some manner with the vision of the newly rising generation (Toynbee I, 548). The Possibility is that a stage comes when the **philosophy of the dominant classes meets the popular spirituality** of the proletariat (Toynbee I, 547). When the **heart and the head meet**, human life becomes more complete. Scientifically formulated theology too may prove like a philosophically formulated theology an ephemeral success, it does not satisfy the soul. Diverse forms of achievements are possible. Our greatest achievement would be a deeper insight into human nature.

In spite of the immense importance of science, “The most important questions that Man must answer are questions on which Science has nothing to say”. He/she must look deeper into himself/herself. Toynbee feels that the agonies of the World Wars helped the Western man to attempt searching his **subconscious depths**. At that level the human being discovers

his/her deeper identity with all his/her weaknesses, but also where he may find himself “wiser, more honest, and less prone to error than the conscious self” (Toynbee II, 119). Bergson H. thinks, “The natural man is buried under the acquired characteristic, but he is still there, practically unchanged” (Toynbee II, 123). It is at the deeper level that a person stands face to face with his **true self** and the Ultimate Reality. The global agonies today may be an invitation that we look deeper into ourselves to discover certain hidden strengths that got “buried” under acquired tastes and artificial priorities.

Fully in keeping with his thesis, Toynbee argues that it is precisely because spiritual concerns are under strain in modern society that we can be confident that they have a future. Just as physical challenges stimulated physical achievements, so too spiritual challenges may lead modern society to spiritual achievements. “Physically hard environments are apt to be nurseries of mundane achievements, and, on this analogy, it is to be expected that **spiritually hard environments** will have a stimulating effect on religious endeavour” (Toynbee II, 135). Material prosperity and spiritual poverty will serve as a double-stimulus (Toynbee II, 136). Hobsbawm says that today’s anti-intellectual and crudely materialistic society too “has a greater need of people who have ideas, and of environments in which they can flourish” (Hobsbawm 202). When the intelligence of such great minds meet the spiritual insights of the masses, wonders take place (Hobsbawm 203).

But a **creative minority** must show the way. That remains the mission of the intellectuals who are transformed by such reflections as we hope we do today. They must return to the masses and help them to move in a new direction. Human destinies are interlinked. We are not at the parting of ways, but at the **converging point of human destiny**. A transformed society might open up “some hitherto unknown avenue for an unprecedented spiritual advance” in order to prevent fratricidal wars among aggressively nationalistic states (Toynbee II, 322), classes, castes, ideologies, ethnic groups, economic and political interests. “Confucius’s pious zeal for the revival of the traditional code of conduct and ritual,

and Lao Tse's quietist belief in leaving a free field for the spontaneous operation of the subconscious forces of Wu Wei, had both been inspired by a yearning to draw from springs of feeling that might give rise to the **saving power of spiritual harmony...**" (Toynbee II, 323).

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