

MORAL CRISIS

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A deep and serious subject although I have treated it with levity. Our existence as a civilized society will depend upon how quickly we come to grips with this monster which has reared its ugly and menacing head. The happiness and future of our children and grandchildren depend upon this. That is why I am glad the torch has been handed over to the younger generation on the political scene. It should be followed soon in the corporate world as well. – TSN

Every nation has a culture of its own which is really an indication of the stage of evolution the nation has reached.

Culture really is the combination of innate qualities, tendencies and character of a group whether it is the nation or particular section of society. Moral and ethical values are related directly to culture.

We have today persons in all walks of life who bemoan the fall in India's moral standards – "On evil days fallen, with misery encompassed around" is the burden of a society.

Some of these alarmists who see acts of dishonesty as a symptom of general corruption make the mistake of judging by Utopian standards. There is spark of larceny in every one of us and life would be dull without it.

By and large we keep it under control because of the norms of social behaviour followed by the majority. It is the majority which sets the tone of behaviour of a society.

There have always been two classes in our society, the money hunters or pleasure hunters and those whose principal thoughts in life are duty and the pursuit of moral and spiritual development.

Money has always been believed to be the root of all evil but the love of power is infinitely more evil and dangerous.

It is this factor which has changed the moral scene in India. It is the political system in the country which has opened the floodgates of corruption in India and converted a law-abiding moral majority into a society where it is not a guilt culture that exists in which conscience restrains us, but a shame culture in which the only deterrent is the fear of getting caught.

"Thou shall not get caught" seems to be the eleventh commandment.

As Emile Zola said in his famous "I accuse" document, "We are in an age where the fraudulent glorify fraud and impostors are erecting a monument to imposture."

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India's problem on the moral front is also related to its distorted economic growth and the growing population making demands on scarce goods and services and a revolution among its middle class to improve living standards. Corruption in this context has been referred to as economic rebellion. What is the use of having money if it cannot be spent?

It was in this complex background that a District Magistrate found himself in a dilemma. He was a devout, God-fearing man and his conscience had been bothering him.

He finally decided to seek the guidance of his spiritual Guru.

"Swamiji" he said, "I wish to make a confession to you and I seek your guidance.

"As a government officer I exercise a great deal of authority and power and I have to sit in judgement on disputes every day.

"My salary as a magistrate is meager and totally inadequate. It has remained at the same level as it was 30 years ago and the value of the rupee has been greatly eroded.

"As you know, I have a large family and as I am religious I do not believe in family planning. My expenses have been steadily mounting. I have sons to educate, daughters to marry and so many other social obligations. I just cannot make both ends meet.

"So I accept money to supplement my income. I admit it, but I follow a very strict procedure.

"I take the same amount from both the parties in the dispute.

"I judge the case strictly on merit and application of the law. I then refund to the losing side the money I had earlier taken.

"Swamiji, my conscience is pricking me. Would you call this corruption?"



*The Predator is at large
It is the bounden duty of every
citizen to contain & control this monster*

