

Publishers Note

‘Should students take part in politics’, or ‘which politics should they accept’ on such questions **Comrade Provash Ghosh the Advisor of AIDSO discussed in student meetings** on different occasions. Compiling those discussions an article “**Should students join politics in their educational life**” was published in the Chhatra Sanhati, the Bengali organ of AIDSO in its 2nd issue of 34th year. Due to wide demand of that it was published in booklet form in the Special issue of Chhatra Sanhati in September 2004. On the occasion of 50th Anniversary of AIDSO, this booklet was translated into Hindi. Both the Bengali and Hindi booklets have been reprinted number of times due to high demand among the students.

We have observed that when due to the conspiracy of the ruling capitalist class of our country and the media controlled by it, the apolitical attitude and apathy towards any social problem is increasing day by day, in such a situation this discussion in the booklet is inspiring the students to fight that trend and instilling new thinking as regards mission of life. The necessity of translating it into English has been felt since long but could not be completed. We are happy to publish this valuable booklet in English after a long effort. Before the publication of this English booklet Comrade Provas Ghosh himself has done some editing and change in the content. Many comrades helped in the process of translation. We admit that in spite of all our efforts the original flow and appeal of the speech have been lost to some extent due to rendering. Still we hope that this booklet will also help many students to decide their objective of life and choose the right path. If any error has crept in in the process of translation, the responsibility of that lies with us.

Publisher
Sourav Mukherjee
General Secretary
All India DSO

Printed and published by Sourav Mukherjee, General Secretary, All India Democratic Students’
Organisation, from 48, Lenin Sarani, Kolkata-700013.

Should Students Join Politics In Their Educational Life?

Comrades and friends,

Questions covering a wide range have been placed here. Apart from senior activists, there are many new delegates who have come to attend this class. The leadership asked me to address mostly the questions put forth by these new activists. So my effort shall be to concentrate mainly on their questions. The question, which these newcomer comrades have mainly raised, is this: "Whether students should join politics during their educational life." As they put it – "Our teachers in school, parents at home, and all our relatives keep telling us that political involvement in student life hampers studies". So they raise this question – "Should students be involved in politics?" In fact this question has been cropping up for a pretty long time. Now and then it arises and now and again it has to be answered. Similar question arose during the Swadeshi movement also. The leaders of the freedom movement had to answer it in their own way. All of them in fact, including Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, Lala Lajpat Rai, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, who at that time went from one corner of the country to other rousing students and youths against British imperialism, did face this very question. Even today many teachers and professors exhort students that '*Chhatranam adhyayanam tapah*' (study should be the sole devotion of students). Parents and well-wishers do advise them: "You are studying now. Should you entangle yourself in politics during studies? If you do that you will spoil your future. First complete your studies, stand on your own feet, discharge your obligation to family, then do whatever you like." Some others take a more liberal stance, they say 'During student life, you may keep up on political affairs, listen to arguments, read books, but don't directly involve yourself in politics.' Such advice is showered from different quarters. Many good boys and girls argue, 'Our family is burdened with wants. Who will look after the family if we engage in politics?' Some students admit: "Judging by reason, I understand that indeed we should participate in politics, but when I notice tears of my parents I can't keep my mind steady. What could I do in this situation?"

Indeed, I know these questions haunt the minds of general ranks of students. It is natural that they are inclined to think like this. Then there is also a section of people who have for long watched the policies, activities and conducts of different political parties that are devoid of any ideology or any principle whatsoever. The experience of these people with different political parties which indulge and promote petty self interest, sectarian attitude and dirty dealings have pushed them to sheer disgust with politics in general. They are seized by an attitude of extreme apathy, mistrust and disdain for politics. They complain, 'Politics doesn't bother for any principle, ideal, or moral.' They assert, "It can't be the occupation of any gentleman. The good and honest men simply cannot sustain in politics."

In rural areas even in common parlance the most mischievous element in the village, the one who is most cunning, whose business is to make others pauper by cheating and framing false charges against them on any plea whatever, is considered as a good 'politician'. So according to them a politician means a person who is crooked, mischievous and deceitful. But that was not how people reckoned the leaders at the time of freedom struggle. People then cherished not only the leaders but also the ranks of volunteers of freedom struggle, with profound respect and warm feelings. But out of experience of the post-independence politics and due to the conduct of the leaders of the ruling parties, many have now developed a notion that politics means degraded character, having not a whit of sacrifice for others, only running after petty self interest, by deceiving the people. It is natural that such beliefs cast a shadow on students. As a result this question strikes a student's mind whether he should involve in politics at all.

Moreover, questions have been asked here: 'If to participate then which politics should we pursue? Which ideology should we follow? How shall we know which ideology can help resolve the problems in our lives?'

None living in a society can remain above politics

You know, I am a student of Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh's thoughts. I am going to discuss these questions on the basis of what I have learnt from great men of the past and particularly from this great revolutionary ideology of this era. I hope you will ponder over this discussion.

At the outset I like to ask a question, suppose if we want, can we remain without politics? Is it possible to lead a life free from politics? To participate in politics or not – does it depend on one's wishes, on one's liking or disliking? Somebody may believe that he is free from politics. He is not involved in any such complicated affairs. He is neutral. But is it really so? If one wishes to remain aloof from politics, will politics let him be? How one can remain neutral between just and unjust, right and wrong? If one feels what he sees around is all wrong and unjust, then he is bound to have a concept of right and just. Is it possible for anyone – a student, a worker, a peasant, a man or a woman for that matter – to lead life free from politics, or free from being governed by politics? No, it is not possible at all! The reason is, as every student of social science knows, how a society is run that is governed and determined by politics. A society exists, that means it has an economic system, a state and political administration, a government and legal system, certain concepts of morality and obligation, approach to society and family, an educational system along with art, literature, culture, ethics and customs. It also has its industry, agriculture and a spectrum of activities of its people's life. A society embraces all these, nobody is outside it. I belong in some of these or at least one of these spheres, and thereby have inevitably entered into a close relation with the economic system of this country, the administration, the constitution in vogue, the judicial system, education-culture-morals; so also I am closely connected with the country's customs and traditions. There is no scope to go beyond the purview of all these. And each one of these is

governed and controlled by a certain politics. All that we need in our day-to-day life, be it foodstuff, clothing, or medicine, whatever might be – we obtain all these things from the market. This market and the rise and fall of prices of commodities are controlled by the policy of the government or of the state. In other words, all this is determined by politics. If I need a job to maintain my family, this very matter of securing a job or going jobless otherwise, is also linked with politics. I can certainly get a job only when industrial development takes place continuously in the country, new factories, firms, establishments continue to be opened. Otherwise, smashing head against the wall even a thousand times (a Bengali proverb meaning hitting head on the wall of a temple or floor with prayer for wish fulfillment), trying a hundred times with resolve to end woes and sufferings of your parents – all will be in vain. You won't get employment. Whether there will be such industrialisation or not – depends entirely on the character of the economy and the policy of the government and state. Even if one may somehow manage to get a job, its stability, security – whether there will be closure or retrenchment in the concern, whether wages will be raised as per rise of prices – all these things too depend on politics. Even when say a hapless mother offers her blood for her child still, whether she will be able to feed her hungry child and get medicines in times of illness – that too is decided by politics. Consider for instance our educational system. The syllabi of school, college or university level – who decides these? The government decides, and the decision is made as per the policy of the state. What topics will find place in the syllabi, whether English will be taught at the primary level or not, whether the pass-fail system will be withdrawn or continued at the school level, or how will the curricula of medical and engineering courses be framed, whether education will be restricted or expanded, whether fees of students will be increased and policy of privatisation and commercialisation will continue, technical or general education, which will be emphasized, what shall constitute the minimum eligibility criteria of teachers – none of these depend on what a person individually wants or needs. Neither the teachers, nor guardians, but the governments decide all these matters indeed. Could we therefore set education apart from control of politics? Then again, which rights people will be allowed to exercise, which rights will be curtailed, how much of liberty people will enjoy – everything is determined by the legal framework, by the code of law of the state. People are bound to abide by those laws. Any violation of these is construed as illegal and attracts penal action. The judiciary acts in accordance with the acts passed in the legislature. Members of the legislative bodies too are men involved in politics; judges are also appointed by the state. Hence, constitution, laws and judiciary are not above politics. Whether in a locality there will be roads, schools, colleges, hospitals and even arrangement for supply of drinking water that depends upon the government. When a child is born or when a person dies that too is to be registered in the government records. In this manner, from birth to death, everything is interwoven with the politics of the land.

Furthermore, we carry in our mind a host of concepts concerning sense of responsibility, obligation, justice, ethics, good and bad, right and wrong, vice and virtue, so forth gathered from the society. In the eye of the present society one thing is just and another is unjust or this thing is

good and that thing is bad, one act is virtue and another act is a vice – all these concepts we do not inherit by birth, we acquire them from the society itself. Again it is also true that the idea or concept of justice and injustice, right and wrong, good and bad, etc. are not the same in all ages. What had been considered as just in one age turned unjust in a succeeding age. With change of age altogether new concepts of justice and ethics emerge replacing the old. Any kind of social relationship and the corresponding sense of obligation, even that of marital relation, is governed by the laws of the country. Every married couple on their wedding night cherishes the dream of a happy family life – but whether such a peace and happiness will materialize, whether they will be able to properly bring up their children, whatever such question they may ponder over, nothing is beyond politics. Whether the children will have a sense of duty to their old parents, whether in the married life, there will be love and emotion, or life will become most unbearable due to suspicion, distrust and selfishness – these also depend upon conscience and emotional faculty, which also develops on the basis of politics and culture of a given society. A section of people harp: ‘We are ordinary men; we don’t bother for any political party. Why should we worry for high ideals when we deal with trivial things? We are neutrals.’ By thinking in this way these people in reality fatalistically accept the way the country is being ruled and the policies and laws of the state according to which it is governed. They just take it for granted that this is how things are, and this is how things will be forever. ‘What fate has decreed shall inevitably happen. Who can overwrite divinations of fate?’ – viewing in this way they accept everything as *fait accompli*. Dissenting though, they pay increased taxes. They pay enhanced land rents; despite dissatisfaction, despite pent up grievances, they have to pay the extra amounts when taxes are increased. They tacitly obey and pass days reasoning, ‘Price of goods will go up, it is inevitable. So what can be done? There is no way out.’ Common people do not take the trouble to critically analyse that, what they consider as divine ruling is in reality the outcome of political rule of the ruling class. They are not inclined to trouble themselves by standing up against all these and by doing so they obey and help to perpetuate the existing social order and politics of the ruling class. Hence, unknowingly, they support and strengthen the politics of the ruling class. Again those who fight against these, they are also doing politics consciously. So none of us lives outside politics, we cannot live above or beyond politics. Hence the question, i.e., ‘whether to participate in politics or not’ just does not arise at all. The point is that either we consciously, by applying our judgment, decide which politics should we accept or we anyway allow ourselves to be guided by the politics of the ruling party, unknowingly and unconsciously. There is no middle course.

All great men opined in favour of students joining politics

We should approach the question from another angle also. We know great men of all ages called upon people of all walks of life and students and youths in particular, to join social movements. Saratchandra (Great Bengali litterateur Saratchandra Chattopadhyay) while he was addressing a student gathering said: “Age can’t keep anyone away from responding to the call of the country. Not even the youngsters like you. Passing in the examination is a necessity, but far

greater is the necessity of participation in social struggle.” Even Gandhiji, who headed the compromising trend of the freedom struggle, once had urged upon the students to boycott the schools and colleges under the British government. Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose said: “Many try to keep students away from the freedom struggle with the false canon of ‘*Chhatranam Adhyayanam Tapah.*’ I think, study cannot be the ‘*tapasya*’ of a student’s life. Study means reading some books. By this one may fare well in examinations, may get a gold medal and a good job but that alone will not help one to attain humanity.” Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das argued: “Education may wait, but struggle for *Swaraj* cannot.” Masterda Surya Sen, the great leader of the legendary Chittagong armed uprising, who was also a teacher, plunged into the freedom struggle along with his students. Khudiram gave up his studies to join the freedom movement in his school days. Bhagat Singh also plunged into the freedom movement when he was a student. This is the history of the freedom struggle. Recall what Rabindranath Tagore once said: “Let your hatred burn down like blades of grass both those who perpetrate injustice and those who tolerate it.” Deep is the significance, which is attached to these words. In this verse the poet lays bare the truth that though you may not be committing injustice but witnessing and allowing it without protest, then by that you are also committing the same injustice and make yourself a subject of equal hatred. Did Rabindranath say that these words were not applicable for students? Did he want students to learn it by rote and write amplification (a type of question in the examination of Bengali literature where a small portion of a poetry or prose is given and the examinee is asked to explain and elaborate the significance of it) in examinations for getting marks, but not to have any bearing of these words upon their lives? Did he want students to witness injustice perpetrated before their own eyes, yet remain silent only because they are students? The students and youths held aloft the banner of Ram Mohan, Vidyasagar, Deshbandhu, Lajpat Rai, Tilak, and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in the freedom movement of our country. Students carried forward the banner of revolution during French revolution as well as the socialist revolutions in Russia, China and Vietnam. In ancient times all great men like Buddha, Jesus Christ, Mohammed, started their onward march in their youth. Those who carried forward the banner of struggle of these great men in different phases of history were the students and youths.

Did it ever happen in history that a social movement developed, protest was organised against injustice and oppression without participation of students and youths in it? Such a thing has never been witnessed in history. The men who accelerated the pace of history, men who pioneered the progress of civilisation in different ages, never delivered such sermon to students urging them to stay away from social struggle. They knew it was never possible to gain knowledge in the true sense without involving oneself in struggles for social progress. That is why the great leader of the proletariat Comrade Shibdas Ghosh said: “Acquiring knowledge can have a singular purpose, which is to apply it in life. Knowledge is to guide life on to the right track and to mould character – yours, mine, everyone’s.”

How the treasure house of knowledge has been created

Through ages man carried on the struggle against nature, by trying to understand nature and its laws and applying them to practice in life. Nature is ever changing so man is obliged to know nature in a new way, again and again. Thus there is no limit to man's ever expanding horizon of knowledge. But one cannot struggle against nature being alone. The necessity to unite in the struggle against nature led primitive men to organise united living, build society. Man did build the society; again society had to be transformed from one stage to another stage, according to the necessity of mankind. A particular economic system and social structure built on it came into being at one stage of social development, which in the course of time exhausted itself to be superseded by a new one. A particular society developed its particular concepts of justice, ethics and values, which in course of history became exhausted, outmoded, giving birth to new concepts. What is true in one age loses its validity in a subsequent age, and gives birth to a new truth. What was defined as just in one epoch, in the course of time becomes unjust, in a new epoch, a new concept of just emerges. As a result of two-pronged struggle, one conducted against nature and the other conducted within the society – the treasurehouse of knowledge has been created, continuously enriched, some becoming obsolete, some newer being added. Life exists in this dual mode of struggle. So goes the saying that life is full of struggle. We cannot exist or live without struggle. So long we live, even if we try to escape struggle, struggle will not let us escape. Thus, while knowledge is a product of struggle, so also we acquire knowledge for further struggle. Again in the course of relentless struggle the treasurehouse of knowledge is more and more enriched. In this way the triumphant onward march of knowledge has been going on. This onward march of humankind through ages, through spans of thousands of years, stage by stage, beginning since the prehistoric days, since time immemorial, knows no respite, no halt, nor an end. What through the struggle of one generation is gathered in the treasurehouse of knowledge that is handed down to the posterior generations who, armed with that knowledge and experience, conduct further struggle and through that enrich the treasure further. This process goes on, will continue to go on forever. Today, when we read a two hundred pages book on science, it may take us just a few hours to go through. But it took humanity perhaps two centuries of struggle to glean this mass of knowledge, maybe even longer – some five hundred years, or a millennium. No few drops of blood were shed; no mean price paid for the accumulation of that amount of knowledge. Those who deny this truth – and appropriating the fruit of all past struggles, who busy themselves only in acquiring university degrees, earning money and living in luxury – they resort to extreme opportunism and selfishness. Knowledge, in its true sense cannot be acquired in this way. Those who are truly engaged in cultivation of knowledge, they must learn from the earlier struggles and apply the knowledge for emancipation of mankind, for progress and development of society. They indeed trace out the real knowledge – knowledge, which creates consciousness, elevates humanity, inculcates sense of dignity and self-respect – which can be acquired by one only if he involves himself in the struggle for transformation of society. In no other way it is ever possible to acquire true knowledge. Remaining aloof from this struggle it may be

possible to memorise pages of books and secure degrees but real knowledge and wisdom can't be attained. Furthermore, what I read whether that is correct, whether my understanding is proper that can be verified only by applying it in practice, i.e. through living struggle. That living struggle is the struggle to change society for the betterment of life. That is nothing but political struggle.

When one decides to be engaged in social struggle, many warn him, "If you involve in these things in your student life you will spoil your future." I ask them, "What is that 'future'? You are in school now, is there any guarantee that you will get admission in college or university afterwards? After passing out will you get employment? And suppose you find one, is there any guarantee that it will sustain? In earlier times at the age of boyhood and youth, there used to be colourful dreams. Where are those dreams now? The future is dark, there is no hope, no certainty in life, only despair – like a vast expanse of a barren desert, where, let alone an oasis, there is not even a trace of mirage that may create a momentary self delusion! This is the only so-called future! In this way a dark shadow of senility has been cast over the youth today. So, not to spoil the future, rather our struggle is to build up a true and bright future indeed.

Denying responsibility to society you cannot pay due respect to parents

The question, which mostly haunts the mind during student life, is who will look after my parents if I involve myself in politics? My parents are going through so much sufferings and pains to get me educated; do I not owe duty and responsibility to them? How many hapless mothers are counting days with how much expectation, nursing hope for the arrival of that day when her young son will complete his studies, get a job and shoulder the family responsibilities? It is quite natural that such question stirs the mind, and it haunts more the minds of those students who are comparatively better elements in today's society. The family problem, question of looking after parents, love relations in youth, meeting the needs of the children, question of managing the home and hearth, these questions existed in every age. Those who fought being inspired by the teachings of Buddha, Jesus Christ, Hazrat Mohammed or Sri Chaitanya, Guru Nanak, did they not face these questions? Who was there to explain all these to them? I am talking about the common followers of those great men, otherwise everyone in one sentence may rule it out arguing that everybody cannot become a Buddha, Chaitanya, or Mohammed, nor everybody could become Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Zedong and Shibdas Ghosh. For this reason I don't refer to their names. What I want to say is that those countless unknown persons who fought, how did they resolve these questions? How did the thousands and hundreds of thousands, who joined the freedom struggle, fight out these problems? Herein lies the question of real emotional faculty, the question of conscience, the question of values.

However, can we really hope to look after our families even if we earnestly wish it? Those who honestly wish to look after their families must ponder over the question whether it is at all possible to do that. I am asking you to consider the matter from another angle. How many people are joining revolutionary politics now? That is a very insignificant figure. Most of the men are

thinking about the welfare of their families and their own well-being. Are they succeeding in doing that? Is that really possible today? Not at all indeed! Why not? Because to look after the family, one at least needs a job, one must have at least the scope to earn a living. In our country agriculture has been ruined. Millions and millions of peasants are being evicted from their land, from their home and hearth; one after another industries are being closed down or locked out. Countless workers are being retrenched, forced to take retirement. The country in which both educated and uneducated unemployed abound – in crores and crores – there, in this situation, can one really look after his own family even if he honestly desires so? Those who beg in the streets, or take shelter on the pavements, have they been in this plight due to being involved in revolutionary politics? If today, a person is somehow managing to maintain his family, tomorrow it will fall apart due to severe economic crisis. The number of beggars in the country is continually increasing; countless families are being ruined daily. Villages after villages are becoming deserted. The village people, being ravaged by flood, haunted by drought, crushed by the pressure of tax and burden or price hike, are turning to be paupers and destitute. Another section of villagers hardly stay at home for more than a month or two. The rest of the year they have got to be away in far off big cities and towns like Bombay or Delhi, merely to earn a living, toiling as porters or road vendors. If they manage to save some amount of money, some of them go back to village home for some days, others can't go at all. Such is the condition in the countryside. Condition of cities is also as bad. On the one hand multistoried buildings are touching the sky, on the other hand slums are wearing down to the level of the pavement. On the one side modern life is dazzling in affluence, homes are overflowing in riches. On the other side, even a few drops of kerosene are not available to light a lamp. One section rides luxury cars to join night long rave, parties in five star or seven star hotels. The other section scrambles for left over crumbs in spilling roadside dustbins. One section laments why winter is yet to set in this year, or is late in arrival. To them winter means comfort, making merriment wearing costly cosy robes, picnics, tours and travels in our country or abroad. On the other hand the approaching steps of winter make the other section shiver. Many die of cold every year during the winters. A section longs for the rains to come, not for agriculture but for enjoying the beauty of nature, the other section wails in fear of the sufferings the excessive rains are likely to cause them. Excessive rain means inundation of their homes, flooding of villages after villages. Arrival of rain makes them panicky of floods. When such is the plight of this land, could anybody hope to save his family, simply by pious wish? Even those who have come to study only to procure a job they too are worried about what they will get after passing out. Is there any scope to look after my parents, my family? Due to extreme crisis of capitalism, factories are being closed, agriculture is ruined, no scope of earning, but I am able to smoothly look after my family – this is never possible, however earnest our attempts might be.

There you come across on the station platform, or in the market corner, a female figure hovering in the darkness of evening, looking for a client. She will sell herself and the human beasts will purchase. Extreme poverty has pulled her down to what? May be she is not there for herself –

maybe she has children and needs to somehow feed them. Nowadays, we even hear that their unemployed husbands are sending them out to earn money in this way. The housewife who is now on the street, to sell herself for feeding the children, the day she saw the first light, her parents blessed her, conch shells were blown in prayer, did it occur to her parents' mind that this terrible plight might befall their beloved daughter in future life? How many such women have their emblems of chastity razed to dust in this way! How many minor girls too are forced into this trade! Pangs of poverty drive how many parents to sell out their daughters in order to save other children!

Again, crisis of values and morality are making life most painful within families that are well off, rich, owning cars, owning luxury apartments – their sobs too are heard in the midnight. The husband may be rich, lavishly attired, driving cars, but is a brute. His wife weeps; she even thinks a beggar on the street is happier than she is. Her husband is a drunkard, a debauched person, who spends nights in hotels, each night in a different hotel. Many such wives turn into psychic patients. In other cases, the mean, ugly, selfish behaviour of the wife makes the husband abhor her. She does not want to shoulder responsibilities of his parents; she wants to shun the responsibilities of her husband's younger brothers and sisters. She only hankers for money. Many such things are cropping up in modern life. The husband is drooping in misery, he has poor income and whatever he is earning is to be spent on the luxuries of his wife. This is destroying the happiness in the family. In early youth, he and she thought of wedding to weave a happy nestling. Now each looks outdoors, seeking respite from constant quarrel at home. So many wives are committing suicide; many husbands are becoming mental patients – these problems are pervading almost every household. This is because all around the society there is an intense crisis of human values.

The son who feels it his bounden duty to look after parents and reasons that 'I have to look after my parents, so I cannot join politics', that very son, cannot maintain this sense of obligation and duty to parents after getting married. He argues then, 'Now I am having my own family, how can I look after my father's family any longer? Thus far I have borne the responsibility to look after them, now let my brothers do that. I have my own career to take care of, my own child to rear up, my car and servants to maintain, also evening parties to attend – after managing all these is it possible to attend to parents?' In some cases the siblings arrange sharing between them the 'burden' of duties to parents, or sharing the 'burden' by rotation. In other instances, some leave their parents forlorn back in the village homes. Many persons even stop visiting parents lest the question of handing out some money to them arises. Ultimately holding back sighs of the melancholic mind, the mother writes to her son: "My child, nothing else we need. Only time to time enquire our whereabouts and by letting us know how you are doing, relieve us." Many village parents get apprehensive when their sons go to cities: 'This fledgling is out there soon to fly away, may be never to come back home'. Sometimes, fond memories of his childhood days haunt their mind when the little boy would frisk about in the kitchen, toddle in the backyard around his mother, insisting on this and that, a hundred things, and promising to do so many things for his parents in future. Looking at the same boy, who is grown up now, they see a different, a completely changed

personality! Even where the son shoulders some responsibility of his parents, there too, if you listen intently, you may hear the old father and mother murmuring a helpless prayer to god: 'Lord, when shall you bless by drawing us close to your feet! We can no more swallow this dole of humiliation.' They think due to what a grave sin they are condemned to be alive still. Like the western countries here also old-age homes are coming up, and are increasing in number, for sending parents to exile in the name of discharging obligation to them. It is just to get rid of the 'burden' of obligation to parents merely by doling out some money to them. Old age home – it rings so nice in the ears – In reality it is nothing but sending the old men to exile segregating them from the family! In certain other cases, cautious parents save some money, in advance, for refuge in the home in their old age. They are well aware of how their children will take care of them in future. And who don't have that financial ability, for those countless deprived and neglected parents, the only option is to take shelter under the open sky, beneath a tree. They have to breathe their last there, in tears and sighs.

Even the children are not spared from this crisis of values within the family. And this crisis is most acute in the land that is the citadel of capitalism, America! Even six/seven year old children are now committing murder out of quarrels among themselves. At this very age the children are suffering from psychic diseases. The psychiatrists in America are very much worried about this trend. They are observing that no principles, no morals operate within the society. Neither the church, nor the schools can give any moral education. The children acquire no morals either from the family or from the leaders of the government. The care, love and affection in the childhood that develop and flourish the emotional faculty in the children, are altogether absent within the society today. As a result, these children are victims of this terrible trend at the very beginning of their lives. Who will take care of them? Their parents, may be the husband is flirting with some woman; the wife is madly involved with some other man. Where is the time to waste for their kids at home? Many couples don't even want children. To them child means nothing but trouble, a disgusting burden. More than one child means a heavier burden. The inevitable outcome of this attitude is what you find happening all around today. This is their concept of 'freedom' of life! Its waves are lashing on the capitalist society of our country too. Here too, among the reckless, indisciplined rich people, neglect of responsibility towards children has developed. Here too juvenile crime is on the increase. Even youngsters in some cases do not hesitate to kill their parents and kins. Thus money, palatial buildings, cars, amenities of luxury and comfort, these do not necessarily ensure peace and happiness in the family life. Capitalism is destroying human feeling, love and affection, peace and family ties, everything. In such a situation, with capitalism existing, crisis of morality, ethics and values persisting, it is inevitable that love, affection, sense of duty and responsibility, nothing can be saved in social and family life. Thus, not only from economic point of view, but also from the angle of ethics and morality, it is not possible to look after the family, the household, the parents if I have lost in me the human values or the mind to look after parents and children.

Why this crisis of ethics in the society?

Just have a look at the society; you will realize the depth of crisis we all are in. At home and outside, in our social life, in the political field, in every sphere a sense of void, a sense of want is existing, pain and agony, wailings of despair are reverberating everywhere. If you keep your eyes open you will see such pain and agony, absence of peace are widespread especially among the aged, who happened to witness the India in thirties and forties of the last century, those who have not yet wholly smothered their conscience. You will find many people around you with a sort of perplexed look and an aimless appearance. Various mental ailments are rapidly increasing within the society. The crisis has become intense in the western capitalist countries. Its pernicious impact is pervading our country too. The crisis is particularly severe in urban life. Gradually the crisis is seizing upon the rural life also. As a result family ties are breaking apart, and relationships are wearing off.

No doubt, economic crisis is most acute today, but this is not the only crisis within the society. Even those among whom the economic crisis has not yet been so acute, the crisis of values is severely affecting their lives. No peace or happiness, no love and affection, attachment or compassion, no one to trust or rely upon – such a situation is prevailing all around. Why such things have happened? Comrade Shibdas Ghosh pointed out that the edifice of values and humanity, which grew within the society in the feudal era on the basis of religion was in force in every sphere of life. Thereafter, in the course of history, as religious values, after passing through early years turned moribund and lost its vitality and impeded human progress. Renaissance, with new values, dawned as a precursor to bourgeois democratic revolution in Europe. It came much later in our country. A new kind of values, based on science and rational bent of mind, emerged. Democratic humanist values, free from the religious tutelage, made appearance in the social life. An all out struggle began, encompassing all spheres of life, for upholding individual liberty, women's freedom, valuing reasoning and truth, knowing the mysteries of nature by applying science, studying the society, understanding the economic system, all round cultivation of science and knowledge, in general. As the great contribution of the western civilisation, this struggle stirred every sphere of social life – literature, art, science, philosophy, music, politics, economics, all. In the western world under the leadership of the bourgeoisie this was the era of industrial revolution – the age of progress and advancement. In this era concept of parliamentary democracy emerged. In our country this period began with Rammohan Roy; poet Nazrul Islam was its last embodiment. Although, in the early stages of renaissance in our country, Rammohan and Vidyasagar, in particular, boldly advanced with the ideas of the early stage of European Renaissance; in the later stage under the influence of the compromising bourgeoisie, renaissance in our country entered into the phase of compromise with religion and traditionalism. In this phase, as far as my knowledge goes, Saratchandra consistently, Premchand in the later part of his life and Nazrul in the early phase, boldly upheld the banner of renaissance. May be some other personalities also did the same thing but they are less known. The first phase of the European Renaissance is known as the age of

bourgeois humanism, the age of democratic values. This humanism, passing through the stages of early days and youth, in the stage of monopoly capitalism has turned into totally reactionary and moribund. In this stage it has become unable to maintain the sense of values and cultural standard of its early stage – there from also has stemmed the crisis of today. It must be remembered, religion was progressive as long as it played a positive role in social advancement, in fostering some sense of duty and obligation in prescripts for social justice and ethics and in preventing some social injustices. Some religions even went so far as to wage struggle against slavery. At this time arose the religious values. History recounts that some religious missionaries laid down their lives, many suffered repression, many starved to death – like the revolutionaries later in history. But in the ultimate analysis all religions turned into instruments to strengthen the hands of the exploiting classes. Whatever is happening in this world, including the class exploitation, religions described that as the manifestation of divine will, and taught the exploited masses to submit to this ‘divine’ rule. The same way at the outset the men who unfurled the banner of humanism had to suffer similar tortures, even to court death. However, in later stage of history, the bourgeois humanism or bourgeois nationalism lost its progressive character, in the reactionary stage of capitalism – itself becoming completely reactionary, compromising with religion and traditionalism – started to obstruct the forces of progress and revolution. Pointing to this Comrade Shibdas Ghosh showed that in the course of history, the religious sense of values have become exhausted, bourgeois humanism too has become moribund, whereas, the higher proletarian culture is yet to develop its influence across society today. This has created the immense void now felt in the spheres of value. And here from arises this all-pervasive crisis of ethics. Under this circumstance unless one involves himself in the progressive movement, revolutionary struggle, he cannot foster and keep alive those human values in himself. He, who has grasped the revolutionary teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh and accordingly has come forward with greater social responsibilities, may not go hunting for a job to finance his family but cannot humiliate his parents. He or she cannot disregard and dispose off his or her parents to please his or her spouse. The more one becomes selfless, free from self centered approach, becomes ethical and broader in mind, whose emotional faculties are deeper and wider, the more deeply he can love others. The broadness, depth, profundity and strength of a loving mind cannot grow without being involved in revolutionary movement and social struggle imbued with higher morality. That constitutes the source of the loving mind. From these sources it accumulates strength. Therefore in order to save and develop the emotional faculty as well as the power of love and affection it is necessary to be involved in the revolutionary struggle.

This is the only way to live with dignity and honour. To emphasise this, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh said in one of his discussions that, could not the great revolutionaries have gone after earning money, acquiring property, had they wanted it? They could have. But they did not do that. Rather they preferred a life that offered arrest, torture, starvation, death without medical treatment. They could not accept the life of slavery simply for their own subsistence. They could not just sell themselves out. The only thing they wanted - not to live anyhow, but to live a humane life, to live

with dignity and honour. The basic question they did raise that what is the use of living without dignity? That is why Comrade Shibdas Ghosh said addressing the youth: 'Don't hanker for anything at the expense of dignity. By doing that you gain nothing but actually you lose. If dignity is lost what is the worth of getting anything?' If you step on this path of struggle maybe there will be conflicts with your parents. Subhas Chandra Bose also said in one occasion: 'In my childhood, I was devoted to my parents, and I could never imagine disobeying them. But as soon as I got closer to a new ideology, my mind changed. I was not the same goodie-goodie boy obedient to parents. I decided to devote myself to the service of the nation.' Parents of Subhas Bose too didn't accept his decision rather they objected strongly. They wanted to see their son become an ICS officer. Subhas Bose trampled the ICS degree underfoot and plunged into the freedom movement. Did this act elevate or belittle Subhas Bose in history? Today, we know the names of his parents only because they were associated with Subhas Bose. Maybe, if asked that time, his mother would have replied with regret, 'My son couldn't become a man of worth. He sailed to England, spending so much money; quite successfully he passed the ICS examination but in the end refused to join the coveted service.' But will history judge him in the same way?

Love and weakness are not the same

Another point I wish to discuss here. That is, when conflict arises with the views of parents on the question of ideology, it is not enough simply to consider the matter in this way that 'If I don't obey them then they are going to be hurt.' It is necessary to consider whether their views are correct or not. We should remember that love and weakness are not the same. Genuine love does not weaken a man but gives him strength. Love, which is based on ideology, truth, reason, and has regard for justness and principles – that kind of love provides strength, courage and spirit. On the contrary, the love that is bereft of ideology, reason, sense of responsibility, which rests on mere personal bondage and blood relations, where there is no consideration of ethics, values and principles, that weakens one. There is nothing good in it. It is not genuine love at all. Often we confuse the two. Some people put it this way: "You know, I have a weakness for my mother, I nurse weakness for home." Here my question is, if I love my family why should that make me weak at all? Rather I feel sorry if my mother does something wrong, if my father speaks something improper. I even protest their acts, if necessary. This I do, not to dishonour them but, in order to save their honour, I try to prevent them from doing wrong. I do not step back from any such considerations that they might mind, might feel hurt, the relation might get bitter, etc. This approach also pertains to the case of emotional relation between man and woman in youth. So, love and weakness are not the same. One makes a person nobler, makes the relation beautiful, while the other leads towards ugliness, degradation. Often we say, 'my mother sheds tears if she does not see me for long.' What is special about it? All mothers do so. But if I do something wrong and my mother sheds tears, then there is some meaning in it. Or say, my mother loves my friend more than she loves me because of his qualities, which are higher than mine. This love has a lofty element in it. Similarly, suppose that I love my friend's mother more than I love my own mother. As a human

being, as a motherly figure, she is nobler than my own mother. My mother's affection is for me alone, but my friend's mother is mother to all of us. This is what draws us towards her. If I have regard for the teachings of great men like Vidyasagar, Vivekananda, Premchand, Saratchandra, Subhas Chandra and Shibdas Ghosh my parents get hurt. That is to say, I follow their teachings; otherwise, my regard to them bears no meaning. Then just in order that my parents don't get hurt, should I deny the teachings of great men? Say, I take to the path of truth and justice in accordance with the teachings of these great men, but that makes my parents feel sorry. Now, to make them happy, should I get divorced from truth? But Vivekananda said: "Everything can be sacrificed for the sake of truth, but truth can be sacrificed for nothing." By my act, do I respect this noble teaching in my life? Definitely I shall obey the words of my parents keeping in view whether what they say is just and right. But if obeying them means forsaking truth and justice should I do that?

Hence, the consideration that my father, my mother, my kin who love me would feel injured, cannot turn me away from a noble ideology; I cannot abandon truth for that. Truth, justice, principles and ideology are higher than parents and kith and kin. If one is distracted from these due to weakness, he cannot even maintain his commitment and responsibility towards parents; as you see it is becoming impossible to maintain that in the present society. We, the revolutionaries, do not intend, nor wish to injure the feelings of our parents, or hurt them anyway; but they get, or may get, hurt because they fail to realise, the significance of this great revolutionary ideology, the importance of our social obligations.

At this point we are to understand one more thing. The ideas and contents of thinking, sense of duty and obligation, desires and interests of our parents also have not been acquired by birth, but in reality have all been acquired by them from the society. The mental makeup of our parents as well as others has developed on the basis of concepts and outlook engendered by capitalism, which governs our society. This has developed in them unknowingly. As in the past, during feudalism, the ruling class of the feudal system determined the thinking, morality, senses of obligations, desires, and concepts of just and unjust in accordance with their necessity. The contradiction between my parents and me on what should I do and what I should not is a reflection of the contradiction between the outlook of my parents, which they have acquired from the existing capitalist order, and my outlook, which I have acquired from the revolutionary struggle. Never should we forget that even the well wishes of our parents, so often manifested in their tears, too bear the mark of outlook of the ruling class of the present capitalist order. So, we cannot sacrifice our ideology for the sake of our parents. There was a time when it was considered that religion could not be abjured even for the sake of one's husband or one's child. Such is also the value of truth. Truth cannot be abandoned for the sake of anything. On this question contradiction is inevitable. All great men had to conduct this struggle in their life. It is rarely known that parents of any of the great men urged him: 'We would rather die of hunger, but we want you to work for the country', and on the strength of this support who could devote himself to the service of the country. Such parents are indeed worthy of adoration, but they are rarely found in history. The mother of the martyr Ramprasad Bismil was one

such character. The day before Bismil was hanged; she went to visit him in the jail. At the time of his mother's departure the son was weeping. She turned around, and thought that fear of approaching death was perhaps making her son weep. With regret she said: 'You are crying for this my son! What a great pride you are for me. You will stand on the gallows smiling and as your mother I shall feel proud.' Bismil replied: 'No mother, my tears are not for fear of death. I was weeping thinking of the grief you would be in after my death.' This mother about whom I just mentioned is a character who indeed deserves our profound respect. Some such rare characters are there who act as source of inspiration for us. But we do not come across them often. It may become a general phenomenon only when the country's situation will take a turn and every family will be in the ranks of mass movement, of revolutionary struggle. Otherwise a resistance is bound to come from the parents and we will have to face this resistance. We have to withstand their tears. We have to decide whether to succumb to their tears or to stand firmly for ethics, principles and ideology.

All kinds of emotions are not beneficial

It is also true that love of every kind is not beneficial to us. Think, when Rammohan Roy fought against the *Sati* ritual, in those days when the widows were burnt alive on the pyres of their deceased husbands, the parents of those daughters would also be present on the spot. While wiping their tears they considered it to be the virtue. If any widow refused to be burnt alive on the pyre of her dead husband, her own grieving parents, would force her to undergo the rite because they thought that not to follow this would be wrong and sinful. That is why they themselves would force their daughter to be burnt alive even while they would shed tears for her. Rammohan said: 'This is a barbaric rite, a bestial custom'. He said so on the basis of another kind of love. Whereas the parents' love, under the influence of dogmatic, superstitious feudal thoughts led them to sacrifice their daughters on the funeral pyres of their husbands. Rammohan's love, born out of democratic sense of values and scientific understanding and knowledge, brought in a new hope of life for them. A three year old girl was married to a seventy year old man! Marriage with a man on his deathbed! Widowed at the age of five! She did not even understand she was married, nor did she understand that she had become a widow. She was forced to accept this cruel widowhood all her life as a religious compulsion. All parents of such girls at that time had accepted this custom. They viewed this as religion, as justice. Vidyasagar fought against this ritual. Were these two types of loves, love of their parents and love of Rammohan and Vidyasagar, the same? Then which love is good? One kind of love pushed them towards death, taught them to accept a morbid life. Another love inspired them to live, and showed the way to lead a humane life. Which love should we value and cherish?

Often the revolutionaries, for the necessity of emancipation struggle, in order to wipe the tears of millions and millions of parents, have to forsake their home leaving behind the tears of their own parents. But this very failure to fulfil obligation to parents would have been very bad had it been done out of petty self-interest. If I am denying my responsibility and pushing my parents to tears for my own pleasure and comfort it would be the most filthy and ugly thing. There are two

different ways of causing pain. One is that I am leaving home for a greater cause. I am leaving my parents behind for the common cause of the country, cause of the vast millions of people. But my parents are unable to understand that due to narrow family interest or weakness, and are feeling pain. The other is that their pain is caused due to my disowning of responsibility towards them out of my selfish interest.

Wherein lies the real self dignity?

We should remember a valuable teaching of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. We know from his teachings that the peace and happiness that a revolutionary derives from the apparently arduous and painful revolutionary life is to be found nowhere else. Starvation, imprisonment, tortures, which revolutionaries face – witnessing all these things from outside ordinary people believe that the revolutionaries have to bear immense sufferings. But in the true sense there is no suffering. On the contrary – there is unbound happiness in these because the revolutionary has not sold himself out of self-interest or greed. For the sake of millions of known and unknown members of the oppressed masses, and for the emancipation of the society, he has dedicated his life without caring for anything. In this self-sacrifice upholding the noble ideology, lies the true self-respect and sense of dignity. That is why Bhagat Singh wrote in his last letter: “I don’t deny that I would quite like to live longer in this beautiful world. But there is a condition. I do not want to lead a bonded, chained life. The revolutionary ideology and my involvement in it have raised me to a height today. Today I am identified with revolution and by that I have attained a height of dignity, which I would perhaps not have achieved by remaining alive. No one will consider me weak today. Had I tried to escape from being hanged I would have been considered a coward. Then I would have denigrated the revolutionary banner. I would have dropped it down. Today I shall cheerfully embrace the gallows with a vision that countless mothers of the country will be saying – may my child too become like Bhagat Singh.” On another occasion he said, “I shall dedicate my youth as a burning incense at the altar of revolution.” And how astounding are the words he uttered at the last moment. He told a British officer, “You are lucky”. The officer was struck by surprise. “You will see”, Bhagat Singh explained, “how Indian youths face the gallows with smiling face.” Does this express Bhagat Singh’s pain or does it express his boundless happiness and limitless satisfaction? It is because he could make such an utterance, Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh is a name engraved in our hearts, a name no one can erase. It is never possible to obliterate. A lad of eighteen, Khudiram, who didn’t have even a school certificate, let alone a college degree, his birth centenary has been observed recently. Not a few men of letters, university professors, intellectuals and writers of renown came and paid homage to him, touching the pedestal of the statue, in profound respect. Khudiram never delivered any speech, he wrote no article, but still Khudiram is alive. For many, many years into the future, whoever will be joining the struggle to save humanity in this country, all of them will have to remember this young boy with deep respect, time and again.

This boy once told his elder sister, who reared him with motherly care since he was an orphan. "I shall not study, I will serve my country." The landlord who confiscated Khudiram's father's property, by mistake, later, realising this mistake when he wanted to return the same, Khudiram's reply was, "I am engaged in service to my country. I am in no need of this property. You had better donate it for some good cause" The landlord then proposed, "Then come and stay in our house and continue your studies." Khudiram reiterated the same words in reply as before, "I will serve the country. I shall not study." He made another valuable statement, "If I stay in your house in luxury and comfort, I shall become a 'babu' (i.e. an aristocrat). Once I turn into a babu, I shall not be able to work for my country." In his later life when he was leaving for Muzaffarpur with the specific responsibility, his friends enquired, "Where are you going?" Khudiram replied in jest "I am going to marry". "When are you coming back?" He replied in the same mood of humour, "Never, perhaps. Maybe, I am going to permanently stay in my in-law's house". How easily could he make humour with his impending death! No hesitation, no contradiction in mind, no desire to look back. That's why, when the judge was delivering the death sentence, Khudiram was all smiles. The judge thought that he had not followed the judgment in English, so he rendered that in Bengali. Still Khudiram was smiling. On the gallows too he was all smiles. As he walked up speedily to the steps of the gallows, it seemed as if Khudiram was dragging along the police contingent, who were trailing behind. The revolutionary artist Tapas Dutta in his immortal creation, the statue of Khudiram embodied this very character in unparalleled artistry. Even in the last moments he did not spare taunting the British imperialists through a simple question, "Why do you put wax on the hanging noose?" That is as the rope was meant for killing the revolutionaries, then why was this pretence of civility by softening it with wax? How could prison walls or the gallows ever subdue this revolutionary character?

These are the marvelous expressions of peace and happiness that a revolutionary derives from an apparently arduous and painful life. So, 'what shall be our approach to life' it is a very important question. I want to live anyhow or I want to live like a man holding my head high. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh said – Animals too live. In order to live, animals too have to look for food and they wriggle, driven by instincts. Should man also be engrossed in these, then what is the difference between a man and an animal? Does the difference consist only in the fact that animals don't own houses or cars, or bank balances, they don't have lavish dresses to wear, or that they cannot go about in masks of gentility? That is why in human society some men die but continue to live on in the memory of thousands through ages; while some others live but like a dead person, unremembered even by their closest neighbours. Even in their own family after their death nobody feels like remembering them or making a reference to them after passage of a few years. I do not know who my ancestor was only a hundred years ago, but we cannot but recall the eighteen-year-old boy Khudiram who died more than a hundred years ago. Think of them who sang glory to life on the gallows, how they continue to live on holding high the banner of humanity.

Love for the oppressed humanity – the source of revolutionary politics

Comrade Shibdas Ghosh taught us another valuable lesson, “Politics calls for noble feelings of heart. Nobler still is the feeling that spurs on to revolutionary politics.” By politics, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh did not mean what is going on today in the name of politics, as the noble feeling of heart. He meant the politics which inspires concern for the country and which creates agony and much pain in the heart for the oppressed people, at least urges one to do something for them without self-interest, and to become honest, dedicated and sacrificing in politics. Without a higher emotional faculty there cannot be the pursuit of revolutionary politics. This is observed in the lives of all great men. Recall here those historic words of Vidyasagar – “I can’t chant the name of God while the people continue to be ravaged in famines and epidemics, I have no faith in such a God... I don’t long for the heaven, for salvation, I wish to be born again and again on this land ...” Even today if you talk of widow marriage, there will be a riot in the Hindu society. Imagine how many years back, in spite of being alone and companionless, Vidyasagar waged the struggle to establish the right for it. What a great adherence to truth, scientific bent of mind and logical thought process he had that enabled him to speak that in those days! Just in contrast, in today’s India, we witness communal riots for erection of Rama temple by pulling down a historic monument, the famous mosque. But what a great and relentless struggle did Vidyasagar carry on to free India from its age old feudal mindset, medieval religious dogmatism, bigotry, spiritualistic blindness and inculcate in their place democratic ideas, scientific and rational bent of mind. When the son of Vidyasagar decided to marry a widow his entire family was up against him. His younger brother wrote: “Brother don’t allow this to happen. Rarely do our relatives visit us these days for what you have already done. The few who still come will stop visiting after this.” Vidyasagar replied, “The introduction of widow marriage is the greatest and noblest work of my life. For this I have sacrificed a lot and I am ready to sacrifice everything, even my life. Had my son decided not to marry a widow I would have felt sorry, but I would not have compelled him. I am proud that he is doing so. If all the relatives desert us let them do that. I am not a slave of social customs.” Here is a real savant of truth. Again when the same son had misbehaved with his wife insulting her, Vidyasagar disowned him through an open declaration in the newspapers. With what a profound sense of respect for women’s honour and dignity, what a depth of feeling for women in entirety could make this response possible. To understand Vidyasagar one must understand these aspects of noble feelings of heart. Saratchandra, in a felicitation ceremony in the last days of his life, said, “For my humble literary creation I have received outstanding reward from my countrymen. And today I wonder how much of it I do deserve, and how much I owe to them. Am I indebted to my revered literary predecessors alone?” That is, was he indebted only to Bankimchandra and Rabindranath? And he continued, “Do I owe any the less to those who by their toil have only given to serve the society, but got nothing in return, who are weak, oppressed, who are humans and yet whose fellowmen have never taken account of their tears; and in their helpless miserable lives, who ever failed to figure out why, with all blooms of life around, they are denied rights in every sphere?”

It is the agonies of these people, which made me articulate. It is they who have sent me to complain about their sufferings before humanity. So my entire activities are for them alone.”(Translation ours, Publisher). So he was indebted to this deprived and oppressed humanity. Herein is the source of the wonderful and great literary creation of Saratchandra. In order to protest against injustice, Vidyasagar had to endure so many slanders, false propaganda and humiliations. The same had been with Saratchandra. If we recount the lives of Vidyasagar and Saratchandra, we will see that they were almost outcasts in the so-called gentlemen's society of their times. And they too disliked the social high-ups. Whenever they found an opportunity, they rushed to these people who live in utter privation, who are oppressed and downtrodden. Often they lived among them. Those people were their real kin. Tears of innumerable oppressed, humiliated and tormented women moved them to deep agony. How much tears they shed for these women. This very emotion inspired them in their noble struggles. The great scientist Albert Einstein also, explicitly put down, “A hundred times everyday I remind myself that my inner and outer life are based on the labours of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the same measure as I have received and am still receiving.” That is what he meant that ‘the food I take, the clothes I wear, the medicine I use, the language that I have learnt, the mathematics that I have acquired – none of this has been created by me; these have been created by millions of men, known and unknown, some of whom are living, and others dead. I have taken all these from them. But what am I giving to them in return? When I am taking the food maybe the farmer who produced it is begging in the street. The worker, who makes medicines in the factory, may be his son is dying at this moment for want of medicines. So the question arises – should I only take from them? Should I not give anything back to them?’ This question became the stirring inquiry of the conscience of every great man of all ages. From here began the pursuit of their great struggles in life. The same we find had happened in the life of Netaji Subhash Chandra. He said, “I could never forget the face of the starving, ragged old woman whom I had seen during my childhood and student life, who lived on the footpath in front of our three storeyed house. As often as I happened to see her, a feeling of guilt arose in my mind. For I lived in comfort in a three-storeyed building, while this old beggar woman suffered so much. From here was born in me an urge to revolt against the society.” The same articulation was made by poet Nazrul in his poem Aamar Qaifiyat (My reply), “Who snatch away the food from the mouths of crores of hungry children, let their doom be written in the letters of my blood.” Thus as there is the higher emotional faculty, the pain and agony of the society, the crisis of values and civilization makes one so restless, that he can conceive nothing to choose but a revolutionary life and devote himself in the struggle to change the society. Also on the other, it is neither possible to acquire and protect, nor to keep alive these feelings and emotions except through struggle in this revolutionary politics.

Here, I would also ask you to pay attention to another point. Where from really did we get this concept of duty and responsibility to our parents? There was a time when this particular sense – sense of ‘my father’, ‘my mother’ – was absent in the society, not to speak of the sense of ‘duty’

and 'responsibility' towards parents. I am talking of the primitive clan society when the children were born in the natural process but the sense of motherhood, or fatherhood, and of filial duty and responsibility had not been generated. These things came into being much later. Not by any particular parents, but in the course of social development these concepts of motherhood, fatherhood or parental love had been created by the society itself. When agricultural production began, man giving up his savage nomadic life settled for a stable social life; when private ownership of land emerged, a question occurred in man's consciousness whatever properties had been owned, wealth had been created, whatever experience had been gathered and discoveries had been made through the struggles of the living, who would inherit and preserve those after their death? Who would carry forward the production? Because, most of the infants, in those days, would die due to neglect and lack of care, like in the animal world. This gave birth to the sense of necessity to take care of and protect the children, so that those children, by growing up and acquiring experience, could be discharging duties in subsequent days. For this reason the sense of motherhood and fatherhood was fostered. With the emergence of religion, this became a religious duty. The idea grew that children were the gifts of god – so to take care of them was considered a virtue, while to leave them uncared was a sin. Thus these sense of responsibilities found place in the religious scriptures as moral teachings. The emotional faculties like love; affection and tenderness, which developed in the course of social progress, became linked up with these senses of obligation and responsibility. Similarly, the senses of values like paying respect to the contributions of the parents, learning from the experience of the elders, respecting the seniors, taking care of the aged and so on, all these developed. These all were created by the society to fulfil the social necessity. Which, at one stage of social development, had been created among the ancient people through rigorous rules, practices and prescripts, had been transformed into natural human qualities, later. The conscience of a man, which bears these human feelings, gathers its ingredients from social conscience, from social values. Hence, remaining isolated from society these human feelings cannot survive or develop. Like a tree which is in bloom with flowers, leaves and fruits, wilts and decays when uprooted from soil by cutting off its embedded roots, similarly human love, affection, attachment and compassion wither out once the individual is severed from social obligations and moral values. In order to keep these senses and feelings alive one must constantly gather the ingredients from society, from social movements. Therefore, those senses of obligation and human values, which were created by society for its advancement, by denying the responsibilities towards the very society can we properly fulfil those obligations? Even can we preserve those values?

There is yet another ethical side of it. We all must think – whether it is my own particular mother whom should I regard, or the motherhood itself. Concepts of motherhood and fatherhood are wealths of the society. I feel indebted to my parents for all that they have done for me. And for this the sense of duty, responsibility, love and compassion for them, has been induced in me. But then in society, there are countless other old parents who too discharged duty to their children; don't I owe responsibility to them too? I must consider, if really it is motherhood and fatherhood that I

value, then when an old starving woman is begging under a tree or the helpless old man is breathing his last on the station platform – don't I have obligation to them also as a son or daughter in this society? These old men and women also did discharge their duty as father or mother for someone or other within the society. On the basis of that within their heart also once blossomed the love, affection, and tender feelings with all the charm, splendour and sweetness, like a fragrant flower. But then extreme poverty, exploitation and oppression forced them to take shelter under a tree. Now as they breathe their last, nobody is by their side to pour even two drops of water in their mouth. Don't I owe a whit of obligation to them? If I don't feel this obligation, then do I properly acknowledge the value of motherhood or fatherhood? In the same way, if I should confine my responsibility to my own children alone on the basis of blood relation, then the countless children who are born and are dying on the pavement, ignorant of their family identity, never knowing their mothers and fathers, never coming to know the warmth of parental love and affection in their lives, if I don't have any sense of responsibility towards them, then the parental love, which this society has created, do I value that? Or do I value merely the blood relation by fulfilling the commitment to my own children only?

The same approach should be adopted in the sphere of relation between man and woman in their youth. My love and affection towards my wife should be based on my respectful emotion towards entire womankind. On the other hand respect and feeling towards the entire menfolk should be the basis of my love and emotion towards my husband. If divorced from this broader perspective then the relationship reduces to a sense of duty and responsibility merely on the basis of pragmatic necessities. If it is so, then in the personal and family life there is no real significance of social necessity, ideology and ethics. As a result genuine love, compassion and tender human feelings cease to exist. The family relations and married life, segregated from social responsibilities and devoid of ethics, virtually reduce to lifeless burden, without any charm, beauty or flavor. Such qualities like broad mindedness, selflessness, dutifulness, a mind to make others happy, even bearing sufferings, which real love generates, will not develop in absence of the source of the ingredients. Today, this crisis has pervaded most of the families.

Remember, whether to look after family or society this very question did strike in the minds of all great men of even the distant past. For the sake of social welfare and progress, they smilingly sacrificed all comforts and enjoyments of their personal and family lives. That made them great. They could become so great only because they could free themselves from family bondages by waging struggles. Remember one cannot become great without great sacrifice. Even today, we, who do not believe in religion, shed tears when we listen to Kirtans (devotional songs) depicting Sri Chaitanya's mother's wailings after he deserted his home. Since innumerable mothers, many people made Sri Chaitanya shed tears for them, he could desert home leaving his own mother and wife behind, in tears. For this, however, Chaitanya is not known in history as a heartless son. Rather Sri Chaitanya ushered in a tide of humanitarian love with his Vaishnava cult of religion in those days. Many others from Buddha to Vivekananda and Subhash Chandra, left home, leaving

behind parents in tears. Has history held them guilty? Thus a nobler love, greater emotional faculty, surpassing the narrow family bondage, draws a man to this path. This we must realize. When our great leader Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, in spite of being the eldest son of a poverty stricken lower middle class family left home, he too had behind the tears of his parents, miserable family with none to look after. But that could not bind him. He left with these words, "So many parents are in tears in countless homes. The beggars on the streets – they are also my parents. I am son of all of them. To wipe off tears from all eyes is my mission". What a noble emotional feeling can make a man think in this way! The fact is that we are still continuing our struggle, we are trying to do a bit of the immense revolutionary activities, only being inspired by the examples of these great men and more particularly by the life and teachings of the great leader Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. Otherwise we too would have been swept away today.

Thus far I have tried to explain why none of us actually can exist or remain outside the purview of politics; why however hard might we try to discharge our responsibilities towards the family, we cannot fulfil this obligation in today's capitalist system; and how ethics, morality and values are getting destroyed, leading to the erosion of love, affection, human feelings, sense of responsibility everything. All these lead us to conclude that we should consciously and actively join politics, and that too anti-capitalist revolutionary politics.

Politics based on truth and ideology is the only instrument to acquire humanity and values

Now is there any link of character of a man with politics? As the common belief, nowadays, does every kind of politics destroy man's character? During the days of the British rule people did not have the same notion about those 'who sang the song of life on the gallows' (a line of a famous patriotic poem of Nazrul), who rendered 'life and death servants at their feet' (a line from a famous poem by Rabindranath). During those days Saratchandra said, 'Serving the country is not just an ordinary word. It is the greatest service of life. On the one side the country and on the other side the person who serves the country. Nothing remains in between. Not for any personal benefit, name, fame or money; one who is able to give everything without the slightest wince of pain is the true servant of the country.' Seeing such people, the fellow citizens of those days used to call them Swadeshi and used to bow down their heads in respect. However, today seeing the dirty activities of the parties in power people have become frustrated and out of disgust are turning away from politics. But thinking in this manner is not correct. All sorts of politics are bad, they all destroy one's character – such an understanding is incorrect. Actually, one kind of politics destroys character, another kind of politics builds character. The politics that defends exploitation, injustice and oppression, that teaches one to become a slave, teaches one to tell lies, instigates greed for money and power and self, creates the notion that 'power' means only money and muscle power, not the power of ideology, that kind of politics actually kills humanity and character, makes a person a coward. Again, the politics that teaches one to fight against injustice, oppression and

exploitation, inspires to make sacrifices, to shed blood for the sake of truth, to sacrifice life, which shows the path to a noble ideology, which teaches to fight valiantly even with little strength, that politics actually imparts humane values and character, actually makes one bold and brave. From the age old times all the great men cultivated and upheld the ideology conducive to the struggle of their times. This ideology alone has shown the right path to higher character and moral strength.

Which ideology today can show the road to emancipation?

What is that new revolutionary ideology of the new era? This too you must understand very clearly. You must realize that only the great ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Comrade Shibdas Ghosh thoughts can guide you in this struggle. In history every stage of society has its own particular ideology to guide it. For instance, philosophy of humanism or ideology of bourgeois nationalism guided people in the struggle first against feudalism and then against both imperialism and feudalism. All who joined the struggle against feudalism in that era, or against imperialism in our country, fought under this banner of bourgeois humanism or bourgeois nationalism. So long national capitalism was in struggle against either feudalism or imperialism, or against both, for developing national economy and establishing the national state, bourgeois nationalism or humanism remained a weapon for struggle. However, after the bourgeoisie came to power and assumed the role of the main exploiter, today, and its nationalist ideals are no longer the instrument of struggle. On the contrary, today it has been transformed into an instrument to maintain exploitation and destroy the anti-capitalist struggles. In the earlier stage of fight against feudalism and imperialism, national unity of capitalists and the workers, of the rich and the poor – meaning identity of nationalist outlooks of both the classes – was necessary. But in the present stage, with capitalism in state power and when it has turned into the main exploiter, the indispensable task for progress of society is to organise the working class struggle against capitalism for the emancipation from exploitation of all sorts. In this situation, to raise the slogans of nationalism, national interest or national unity means nothing but forsaking the cause of the struggle for the emancipation of the exploited masses by raising a deceptive call for unity of the exploitative bourgeois and the exploited workers, thus motivating the masses for self-sacrifice at the altar of capitalist exploitation. In our country, the ruling bourgeoisie and all its subservient parties running the governments are doing everything on the plea of 'national interest'. On the other hand, the bourgeois humanist ideal places man above class division, denying the fact that men in society are irreconcilably divided in classes of capitalists and workers – the exploiter and the exploited. Thus it advocates the same ideology and ethics for either class, which in reality stems from the bourgeois class interest itself. Explaining this ethical concept, the humanist philosopher Feuerbach said that each one first shall fulfil his own rational necessity and then provide others the rest as love. He stressed, there was no necessity of any religious ethics based on God. This is the ethics for all the ages that is an 'absolute' ethics. He did not believe in class division, class ideology and ethics. But in fact humanist ethics preached by him objectively reduced to a justification for capitalism that 'the profit the capitalists do earn is their rational necessity and what they dispense to workers, as wages is the expression of

love of the capitalists towards the workers'. Gandhiji, a staunch believer in God, too said the same thing in a different language that the capitalists are the intellectual power and the workers are the labour power. Overthrowing capitalism will eliminate the intellectual power of the society, destroying the working class will mean cessation of production. According to Gandhiji the relationship between the two will be like that of father and son. So Gandhiji also preached that capitalists should fulfil their legitimate needs and workers are to be given wages to survive. So it follows that the profit earned by the capitalists exploiting the workers are nothing but 'rational' and 'legitimate'. As bourgeois humanism denied objectively existing class division and considered man as abstract, not belonging to any class and any phase in history, its morality based on bourgeois outlook too has been made absolute.

So the ideology of humanism or nationalism has turned into the ideology of exploitation and oppression. Therefore, in the present stage, you cannot fight against capitalism by arming yourself with the same bourgeois humanist or nationalist ideology, which is the ideology of capitalism itself.

So in order to fight against capitalism it is Marxism-Leninism-Comrade Shibdas Ghosh's thoughts, the only scientific philosophy, which can show the way. This we must understand. On this question, lots of confusion exists, many false propaganda have been going on. As Marxism-Leninism spells danger to capitalism, it imperils the very survival of capitalism; as it awakens the exploited people – such false propaganda is being made. All the triumphs of civilization in the twentieth century, the Russian revolution, the Chinese revolution, the revolutionary struggle of Vietnam and many more of the kind, have been accomplished with the weapon of Marxist-Leninist ideology. This is why the capitalists, imperialists and all reactionary forces have all along been mounting constant false propaganda, spreading lies and confusions through the print and all other media, textbooks, art and such other means. Regarding these also you need some clarity of ideas. Say for instance, an argument is quite often advanced in our country that 'this is a foreign ideology. So why should we accept it?' It has to be pointed out very clearly whether the concepts of parliamentary democracy, which is in force in our country or the constitutional governance, the legal system, the multiparty democracy, had been there in the *Vedas* or in the epics of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. All these ideas and institutions we have got from Europe, from the western world. What is more, many theories of modern science, many discoveries of science, the modern industries, the modern medical science, modern transport, agricultural methods and implements, present day educational system – all these we have taken from the West. Two among the three great men whom Gandhiji acknowledged as his teachers were western. The first organization he built in Africa was named by him as Tolstoy Farm. If Gandhiji could consider himself a disciple of Tolstoy, why can't we call ourselves followers of Lenin? It is to be recalled that a leading figure of freedom struggle of our country, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose said, "Marxism is the greatest contribution of Germany in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, the greatest gift of Russia to the world was the working class revolution, socialism and the working class culture." He was not a Marxist but had a deep respect for Marxism. He was a revolutionary nationalist.

Conscious of it all, he made this emphatic observation. When Bhagat Singh was standing on the gallows, he was told to read the *Gita*. But his reply was “My *Gita* is Lenin’s works. I am reading these.” All these personalities were respectful towards Marxism.

But now many things are being said against Marxism in our country as well as in other countries. We should understand, disregarding Marxism amounts to disregarding science itself. The one and only scientific philosophy we have is Marxism, which has grown and developed out of truths discovered by science. Spiritualism or religious thinking seeks to inculcate the idea that this world is ruled by a divine power, he is the supreme lord of the universe, and everything happens according to his will. He created both the rich and the poor. As he is unchangeable so also the relation between the rich and the poor is unchangeable. So this disparity is permanent. Why do the people become poor? Why do the oppressed have to bear the brunt of oppression? They answer that it is due to the sins committed by themselves in the 'previous' life! Since ages such thoughts and ideas have been at work. But these beliefs are all fanciful and unreal thinking, not tested or verified, nor proved by science. Back in the long past some thousands of years ago, during the period of slavery, under particular conditions and for specific reasons these ideas were born, when modern science did not develop as a weapon for searching truth and unveiling the mysteries of nature. Therefore, the objective condition in those days led the thinkers of that time to think in that way. But in today’s situation however none of these thoughts and ideas are acceptable in the light of scientific logic and scientific analysis of history. But indeed, these are the last props of the capitalists today. In the period of Renaissance and establishment of parliamentary democracy in Europe, capitalism upheld the banner of science, logic and secular humanism, that is humanism free from religious tentacles. At that stage capitalism was progressive and revolutionary. On the contrary, in the present era of acute capitalist crisis, capitalism has become out and out reactionary. In its bid to stave off the proletarian revolution, it is undermining scientific thinking and clinging to religious thinking. Because, as long as these false ideas and thinking will prevail in people’s mind, they will not strive for change of the social system, because according to religion all these things are immutable and eternal. Guided by this thinking man will argue that unemployment, illiteracy, poverty, starvation death, everything happens according to the will and whims of the almighty God. You should not question, judge or argue the justification of those things rather should happily accept these as *fait accompli* then maybe the almighty God will be satisfied and you may get a berth in heaven in the next birth. Naturally the ignorant and helpless people will be more inclined to such thinking.

In its earlier stage, as I have mentioned, the bourgeoisie encouraged scientific thinking against the ‘divine rule’ in view of the necessity of establishing parliamentary democratic system. In its later reactionary stage, the bourgeois class has sought to confine science to only manufacturing machines and developing armaments, instead of using science as the tool for searching truth. In this age the vanguard of the working class, the class conscious proletariat, has wielded science as a stronger, more comprehensive and advanced tool for searching truth. Marxism

has emerged basing on the sciences. Science, through its method of experiment and observation, has established irrefutably that nature is the only reality and there is nothing behind and beyond the nature. The entire universe is made of matter, governed by the definite objective material laws and is ever changing. These laws are knowable, comprehensible, and man can act consciously reckoning with those laws. Starting from the biggest planet to the smallest particle all are governed by certain definite laws. This is tested and verified truth that from inorganic to organic world, then life and animal world with higher and more complex animals and afterwards human being – emerged successively by law governed process. Applying this very scientific tool in case of human society Marxism has shown that similarly following a law governed process the primitive classless society transformed first into the class divided slave system, then feudal system and thereafter capitalism. Again following the same laws socialism will emerge by replacing capitalism and subsequently communism, that is a classless society will evolve. The same law governed process will lead to emergence of still higher forms of society even after communism. So Marxism, by applying science into history, irrefutably proved that classes and class division in society are not external. It appeared at a particular phase of development of society following inexorable laws of social change. Further Marxism has shown that the events of history and even human thinking are governed by certain laws. Any desire, any liking and disliking of human beings or a particular ideology, concept, ethics and customs in a particular stage of social development, come into being on the basis of particular laws, again following the course of those laws it goes out of being paving the way for the new. Even the relationship between man and woman hasn't remained the same forever. In future also it will change and it is ever changing.

Marxism, Dialectical Materialism – is the only scientific philosophy

The great Marxist thinker Comrade Shibdas Ghosh explained that the different particular branches of science like physics, chemistry, zoology, botany, etc. have developed to study the different particular fields of the material world and these branches of science discover the inherent particular laws of motion operating in different domains of matter. By dialectically coordinating, correlating and generalizing the particular concrete laws of the particular disciplines of science Marxism has emerged as a scientific philosophy. These general laws discovered by Marxism operate in all particular laws operating in different particular matters, in a particular way. Hence without Marxism we cannot comprehend the material world as a whole, as a law governed process integrating all particular laws and disciplines. As the laws of science, like the laws of motion, the laws of gravitation, the laws connected with the particle theory, have been in operation all along as the inherent laws of matter before their discovery by the scientists, similarly the general laws of Marxism were operative in nature and society before Marx discovered them. Marx strengthened and helped the conscious role of human being in their struggle to change life and society by discovering those laws. So to accept Marxism means to accept science, accept the inherent laws governing the objective world. Again to deny Marxism means to deny the science, to deny the real laws of change. You should also notice that the exploitative capitalist class is using science as a

tool in agriculture, industry, medical treatment, building machineries and armaments, transport, communication, space research etc., where it serves its class interest. But the capitalist class does not allow application of science for example, in analyzing social problems, for studying the laws of change and motion in history, investigating truth in the epistemological spheres, examining questions of justice, ethics and ideology. They fear, that in that event, their preaching of eternal truth, disposal by fate, dispensation of Providence etc. will not stand the test. People cannot be made to swallow the false preaching that private ownership, class division, disparity between the rich and the poor etc. are eternal and immutable. If it happens so, then it will endanger the very existence of capitalism.

It must be remembered that through correct application of Marxism revolution could be successfully organized in Soviet Russia and for the first time in history socialism could be established ending class exploitation. Great Lenin and Stalin correctly applied the teachings of Marxism and advanced socialism in the face of tremendous attacks by the bourgeoisie at home and outside, foiling all conspiracies hatched by them. Furthermore, under Stalin's leadership, the Soviet Union grew into an enormous power to play the role of the nerve center of the world revolution and anti imperialist freedom struggles. In a span of only a few years, Marxism-Leninism helped a very backward country like Russia to reach lofty heights economically, politically, militarily and in the fields of art, science, literature, culture completely abolishing exploitation, unemployment, poverty, starvation, illiteracy etc. Seeing that even poet Rabindranath Tagore became overwhelmed, and he wrote that his visit to the Soviet Union was the greatest pilgrimage of his life although he had differences with the ideology of communism. However, great humanists like Romaine Rolland, Bernard Shaw wholeheartedly supported communism. During the Second World War, when the world came under the attack of the fascist forces like Germany, Italy and Japan, men of eminence including Rabindranath, Romaine Rolland, Bernard Shaw and Einstein looked up to the Soviet Union as the saviour. The Soviet Russia did rise up to fulfil its historic role. And yet, why did Socialism suffer such a setback there?

On this question an important lesson of history must be recalled. A new ideology or a new system, before achieving its final victory, has to wage a long struggle against adversaries, has to traverse through the process of defeat after defeat, then victory again defeat and then victory, for hundreds of years. Even the religious doctrines, which claimed to be almighty God's own message had to wage struggles for hundreds of years through defeat after defeat, then a victory, yet again defeat and then finally victory in the form of acceptance by the society. Or take the instance of bourgeois parliamentary democracy which replaced the feudal order. With Renaissance as its beginning it took nearly four hundred years of struggle, of bloodshed. Even though the struggles for religion or bourgeois parliamentary democracy were not struggles to put an end to exploitation. These struggles rather replaced one form of exploitation with another form. On the contrary, the struggle for establishment of socialism is a struggle to put an end to all forms of exploitation which went on for thousands of years from slavery to capitalism, a struggle to establish an exploitation

free society permanently in the world. Considering the necessity to carry on all out struggle covering all spheres – economy, politics, culture, ethics – how much really does a span of just 70-80 years measure upto? For how many more years traversing the road through defeat - victory - defeat, ultimately the final victory will have to be achieved. It is to be recalled that Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Xedong, Shibdas Ghosh– all the leaders of the world communist movement repeatedly said that socialism is merely a transitional stage in between capitalism and communism, where struggle between bourgeoisie and working class assume new and acute form and therein lies the danger of restoration of capitalism if the leadership fails to play its real revolutionary role in the newer complex situation. Therefore the present setback of socialist system in no way proves that Marxism has failed, or that Marxism is wrong. Instead it shows even more clearly that the warning sounded by Marxism on possible debacle of socialism has been proved correct, however undesirable and painful that might be. As for example despite the fact that the medical science is correct, yet if in a particular case its application is not correct or is inappropriate, the patient may not survive, the patient may die. Should anyone lose trust in medical science owing to this? Approach should be the same for any of the sciences. Therefore, for the setback of socialism in Russia or China there is no reason to think that Marxism has failed.

The most reactionary bourgeoisie of today is carrying on a hate campaign against socialism daily. A section of confused intellectuals are also carried away by this counter campaign. But can we forget that, in spite of fundamental differences of view with Marxism, the greatest humanist figures of the twentieth century expressed great respect for socialism? Or how they greeted the Soviet socialism as the new civilisation in the history of mankind?

As long as there had been the towering presence of the Soviet Union, the American, British, French and all other imperialist powers trembled in fear. At the same time, men engaged in freedom struggle across the world looked up to it with great confidence. Leaders of the freedom struggle here, in our country, viewed the Soviet Union as a source of inspiration, a most dependable ally, and a close friend. Great litterateurs like Saratchandra, Premchand, Nazrul, Subramanyam Bharathi, all looked up to the Soviet socialism with deep respect. Netaji Subhash Bose went on to declare boldly that ‘amidst the worldwide capitalism-imperialism, Soviet Union stands as the only source of trust and confidence’. The USSR extended her support to the freedom movements in all the colonies. When during the second world war, the fascist army of Hitler was destroying the entire world, it was the Soviet Union under the leadership of Stalin, which saved human civilisation. At that time, Britain, France and America almost took shelter in rat holes. This is history. In 1956, when Britain and France launched an attack on Egypt with the backing of America, a single threat from the Soviet Union made these 'heroes' flee. Think of it, had there been Soviet Union, would America have attacked Iraq? The disaster that has overtaken the Soviet Union today would have surely drawn tears in Rabindranath’s eyes. The setback of the erstwhile Soviet Union would have made Subhas Bose restless. Once Romaine Rolland observed, “If the Soviet Union is destroyed, not only the Soviet people would be enslaved, entire human civilisation would

return by several decades into the darkness of the past." The same exactly happened. You must not therefore lose trust and confidence in Marxism and socialism. You have to carry on the struggle with unflinching confidence in Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh's thoughts.

Another misleading propaganda carried on here is that materialism or Marxism is not suitable on this land. This country is the holy land of spiritualism, Marxism is unfit here. Is it correct? If you go through the history of Indian philosophy, you will find that like Greece or some other countries, here too, many powerful materialist schools of thought emerged and flourished. *Swabhavbada*, *Lokayata Darshan*, *Charvak's* philosophy etc. which are taught today in Indian Philosophy, are all reflections of primitive materialist thinking in this country. An ancient Indian philosopher *Kanad* said, this universe is built up of atoms. The materialist thinkers of ancient India said, the material world is created from Earth, Water, Fire and Air (*Kshiti, Ap, Teza, Marut*) – (*Chaturbhutas*), that is four material elements. All these are materialist thinking or materialist belief. Even the word '*darshan*' i.e. Philosophy in Sanskrit denotes that only what we feel or see with our five sense organs is the truth. So strong was the materialist notion at that time. The *Saasanveda Upanishada* even declared, "There is no God, no hell or heaven, nature is the lone creator and time is the lone destroyer." In *Vrihadaranyak Upanishada*, there is observation of ancient materialism that 'Consciousness comes into being from material particles, it ceases to exist after death and goes out of being into material particles again.' Then again, in *Chhandogya Upanishada* there is mention of a debate between spiritualist sage *Yagnyavalka* and the materialist sage *Uddalaka*. Although all these three *Upanishadas* are basically spiritualistic, still there are some occasional remarks on materialism in course of criticism, scattered here and there. Similar things are found in the two epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. Many of us are not aware that Gautama Buddha, who is known as *Bhagwan* (God) himself, did not believe in God, nor in hell or heaven. And I must add here that all documents containing these ancient materialist thinking and ideas were destroyed. Because those who believed in the theory of almighty *Brahma* were so 'powerful' that they did not dare to allow the existence of the books containing the opposite materialist thinking! These have been recovered much later from the stray and fragmentary references in the religious scriptures of the idealists while assailing the views of the materialists. Even a man like Vivekananda himself stated that, earlier thinking in this land had been materialistic. He said, "The first was a search in external nature for the truths in the universe; it was an attempt to get the solutions to the deep problems of life from the material world."

Many think that those who do not believe in God have no character, morality and ethics. I would ask them, are we to accept then that Vidyasagar, one of the pioneers of renaissance in our country, Saratchandra, the great litterateur, and Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh had no character? Vidyasagar did not believe in God or in worship. He never went to a temple. In those days he boldly proclaimed that truth is not found in the *Veda*, *Vedanta* or *Samkhya*. He had the courage to declare, " That *Vedanta* and *Samkhya* are false systems of philosophy is no more a matter of dispute...whilst teaching these in the Sanskrit course, we should oppose them with sound

philosophy in the English course to counteract their influence." To know the truth, he emphasized on the cultivation of logic and modern science. In spite of that, staunch believers like Gandhiji and Rabindranath bowed their heads in reverence to Vidyasagar. Ramakrishna went to Vidyasagar's residence to pay him respects. Vivekananda held Vidyasagar in great reverence. How is it that a non-believer like Vidyasagar was held in such profound reverence? Saratchandra said in his novel *Pather Dabi*, 'Religion is false, superstition of primitive mind. There is no greater enemy of mankind than religion.' But Saratchandra for all his qualities of character was, and still is, respected by countless people. Also, some of you must have read Bhagat Singh's book, "Why I am an atheist". Therefore, by no means is it true that those who do not believe in religion, or in Bhagawan, Allah or God, are without character. It is no doubt also true that back in the ancient past most of the religions played a significant role in the history of human civilisation. Earlier religions created within the society its sense of values, morals, duty and so forth. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh showed, 'Every ideology or ideal grows and develops in response to the necessity of the objective historic condition. The ideology, which plays a progressive role in a particular age and helps the society to advance that, in the course of time, becomes retrogressive and reactionary.' In the same way religion, which one-day produced noble characters, at the later stage of feudalism turned reactionary and into a privilege. Religion backed monarchy in the name of divine power and gave birth to the concept of 'absolute', thereby hindering the development of all kinds of progressive thinking. Everything of the feudal society, like feudal exploitation and oppression, difference between the rich and the poor, dominance of men over women – all these were described as immutable and as expressions of divine will. Later, breaking the religious shackles scientific thinking, progressive ideas began their onward march. Thus the struggle, which Copernicus, Bruno, Galileo and others began, started unveiling the mysteries of the unknown of nature. All of them incurred the wrath of the religious heads and had to face torture. You know at one stage of history, the bourgeoisie played a revolutionary role against feudalism. At that time they were inspired to hold high secular humanism and scientific thoughts opposing all the canons of religion. Today, capitalism is no longer playing that role which it had in its earlier stage. At the stage of monopoly capitalism today, capitalism has become moribund. In fear of proletarian revolution, and to somehow extend its lease of life, capitalism is directly backing and reviving anti-scientific religious fundamentalist ideas opposed to the secular humanist outlook and ideals. The ruling class today is out to preaching anew that the solution to all our problems of life are contained in the *Vedas*, the Bible, the *Quran*, the *Gita*, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* etc. Is this really true? Can we get answers to our problems of today in religion?

True, in many religious scriptures, there are discussions of some of the problems of social life of that time, also there were some attempts for their solution in religious method. But is there any discussion about the present day problems in the religious scriptures? And is it possible to be there? The present day problems are – acute unemployment, retrenchment, price rise, tax hike, curtailment of education etc. Is there any chapter on these problems in any of the religious

scriptures? Can you expect to find in them any discussion on such issues as parliamentary democracy, socialism, imperialism, capitalism, and colonialism? Do you expect to find in them solution to the wholly new problems appearing in the lives of today's men and women? No, it is not possible, simply because, these problems had not appeared in the society that time. Can we solve these problems following the teachings of *Ramayana*? Suppose the promise of King *Dasaratha* to his second wife bore down upon him forcing him to exile his son *Rama*, to the forest and *Rama* obliged without questioning it. His wife *Sita* and brother *Lakshman* too followed him to the forest. These were the ideal characters of those days. If any such thing happens anywhere today, people will send both the father and his son to a mental asylum. But such was the model of a son's devotion to his father in those days. Again, in the face of allegations regarding the chastity of *Sita*, *Rama* directed her to face the *Agnipariksha* (ordeal by fire) and *Sita* too following the canon 'husband is wife's God' obeying his instruction, plunged into the fire. But think, any such thing happening today, *Rama* would be brought to the court room in handcuffs with charges of attempt to murder his wife and *Sita* too would be charged with attempting suicide. All this will make you laugh. But I should say, the *Ramayana* upheld a definite set of values, which was needed in those days. You know bows and arrows were enough at that time to defeat *Ravana*. Today, however, bows and arrows can be used at best in 'yatra' (open air opera, usually rural) only. None but the insane can conceive of using them in warfare – say in Indo-Pak war or any other war today. Today's warfare demands only sophisticated weapons, something inconceivable in that age, even during brawls among local anti socials, bombs and pistols are used, bows and arrows are out of question. Just like bows and arrows, these ancient scriptures, which were useful in that age, but today they need to be preserved in museums with due regard. In the context of today's thinking, ideas and consciousness we need far more advanced ideological weapons and dialectical materialism alone is that indispensable weapon, the weapon that has emerged, in the course of advancement and qualitative development of the ancient materialism, basing on modern science. And I must also highlight, Marxism never held the religious leaders in disrespect; rather, Marxism is the only philosophy, which made proper evaluation of the role of religion in history. Engels said, "Both Christianity and the workers' socialism preach forthcoming salvation from bondage and misery; Christianity places this salvation in a life beyond, after death, in heavens, socialism places it in this world, in a transformation of society." (On Religion) That is, what he said with reference to Christianity, in fact every religion had contemplated equality based society, that is achievable in the heaven after death – where there would be no class exploitation or oppression, and we are struggling on the basis of scientific socialism to establish that heaven on earth itself, that is to establish communism. We must remember religious missionaries struggled at that time against various social injustices for which many of them even had to court death. Do you find any religious leader today fighting against social injustice or for the exploited masses or standing by oppressed women? You will not find any. Today, when in the society at large, the air is thick with the groans and moans of people in hunger, cries of parentless children, tears of tortured, humiliated, helpless

women, then within the secure shrines of temples, mosques and churches reverberate worship, pompous prayer services in glory of 'generous' God. This grief outside, having no avenue for redressal, wails at the closed doors of the 'sacred' temples, failing to touch its heart. The bourgeoisie have transformed religion into an instrument of privilege. Humanism or bourgeois nationalism once played a progressive role, giving mankind a logical bent of mind, scientific thinking, concept of individual liberty, a new form of humanity. But today, the very same bourgeois civilisation at its last stage is almost a decomposed corpse. It is engendering extreme self-centredness, valuelessness, inhumanity – in a word, dehumanising man. This is what we witness in the entire western world today. The same is observed in our country. So, neither religious outlook nor bourgeois humanist outlook can show us the way in the emancipation struggle today. The dialectical materialism, developed on the basis of science, alone can guide us on the road to total emancipation of mankind, all out progress of human civilisation. Again, we must remember, as science is enriched with ever newer discoveries and inventions, as a scientific philosophy dialectical materialism also by coordinating and correlating these achievements of science, in course of resolving the newer problems constantly facing the revolutionary struggle, and fighting the ever renewing bourgeois ideological onslaughts, is ever growing, developing, and getting more and more enriched. This way great Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Zedong and lastly Shibdas Ghosh, all of them have enriched and advanced this philosophy. In the interest of progress of society and civilisation, in order to solve all the problems of life, for the sake of revolution, all of us must continuously strive to cultivate and equip ourselves with this great revolutionary ideology. We must remember that denial of Marxism means denial of science. To deny Marxism means to accept capitalist exploitation and oppression, extreme poverty, death due to starvation and without medical treatment, the unbearable sufferings of unemployment, humiliation of women and crisis of ethics and humanity – all these as permanent. Is this desirable?

Due to lack of spread of the real proletarian culture the crisis of values is all pervasive today

Today a void has been created in the cultural sphere also. A man is strengthened by his conscience, which restrains and dominates over his instincts, for that the conscience of a man also needs strength. Due to this void, the conscience is weakening, waning and everywhere there is shameful and reckless outbreak of instinctive desires. We have now degenerated to such a state that it has even become the subject matter of discussion whether human values and character are necessary, whether culture and sense of just and unjust are necessary at all. Some people these days laugh it off as unnecessary. But this problem the religious missionaries of the past, or the proponents of humanism later, did not have to confront. They simply had to explain that society needed new values for its advancement as old values became its fetters. That the society would run without any values, such thoughts did not exist at that time. Regarding the most critical problem facing us today, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh said, "A nation, people fight in spite of starvation, in spite

of tremendous oppression and torture – they stand up to face all this with firmness and determination, provided they have the moral strength, courage and character. This is exactly what is being attacked in our country today." Decadent capitalism has alienated the individual from the society so much that his exclusive personal needs and personal interests are his only concern and he has to think of nothing else. It has brought the individuals to such a stage that no sense of duty or responsibility even for the family or close kin is left in him, let alone for the country. As an individual, I want something; I try to get something, for which I don't care whatever may happen to other members of my family, to the neighbours, to the country; whether it will be good or bad, I care for nothing! As if there can be no question of matters like morals, principles, justice and values. Sort of reckless – "I will do whatever I like" attitude. This is most ugly and vulgar individualism. In the name of freedom this is a sense of ultra freedom, a vulgar individualism and extreme whimsicality. Dogs, cats, tigers, lions or elephants don't have to think about society – animals don't have to consider whether an act conforms to ideology or to ethics, or whether it is just or unjust. Because, animals are governed by beastly laws, by the natural laws. In this sense should we say that animals or beasts enjoy freedom most, whereas man enjoys least? A man is subjected to so many restrictions, so many canons of the society "this is not fair, that is not proper, you should better dispense with these things, or you shouldn't want these things etc." – can people live through it all? This attitude is sweeping across the western world today.

However, we must remember, the concept of individual freedom was not the product of ancient society. It emerged in fact to fulfil the necessity of emancipation of society at a particular stage of development. It emerged in order to free the individual and the civilisation from the medieval feudal bondage, from the fetters of religious superstitions and the rigid rule of scriptures; so that being free the individual could devote himself to cultivating science, he could submit to reason, to truth and could discharge his social duties and responsibilities properly. The banner of humanism was upheld by Shakespeare, Mill, Burke, Copernicus, Galileo, Bacon, Jefferson, Victor Hugo, Rousseau, Voltaire, Feuerbach, Lincoln, Emile Zola, Dostoyevsky, Chekhov, Turgenev, Tolstoy and so forth – Romaine Roland, Bernard Shaw and Einstein were among its last representatives. In our country too, renaissance took shape in the life and activities of stalwarts beginning from Rammohan, Vidyasagar, Rabindranath, Phule, Subramanya Bharathi, Saratchandra, Premchand to Nazrul. Some among them were totally uncompromising, others were however, compromising. In any case none of these humanist stalwarts had fought to foster anything like an attitude to deny the social responsibilities and obligations. They didn't think, that we would achieve individual freedom without a sense of justice, ethics and human values, etc., that we should do whatever we wish to. The elements ingrained in the concept of freedom were these, "Limit of your freedom is there where it will not curtail others' freedom." There was no concept of freedom of individual without social obligation. It was so because the necessity to liberate the individual arose only to fulfil social responsibility based on achieving the rights of individual to have property instead of absolute ownership. At that time right to own property was a step forward for

advancement of the society. But at the stage of monopoly capitalism, when capitalist individual ownership became reactionary and devoid of all moral values, the progressive character of humanism became exhausted. So today, individualism detaches individuals from social responsibility, engendering self-centredness and individual anarchy. An attitude has gripped the individual to enjoy life anyhow. If some pleasure is found by murdering someone, commit the murder, if some sadistic pleasure is derived by torturing someone or inflicting pain, then do it. This capitalist society is breeding such concept of freedom today.

That is why the edifice of culture, the edifice of emotional faculties, which existed in the days of the freedom movement, has fallen a lot. Hence there is a crisis of values. What is the necessity of values in society? My wishes and my wants, or my desires and aspirations – all these should be determined by my sense of values. It has two aspects. One is that my mental framework is such that it cannot want anything, which is going to deprive others or will cause grief or pain to others. Such a desire, which is irrational, contrary to ethics and dignity, cannot arise in my mind out of personal necessity. If my mind is tuned to the higher pitches of culture in higher notes, I cannot want or accept anything which will dishonor me. The other feature is that in an unconscious moment if such wishes, desires knock on me, even at times make me restless, pushing me to succumb to vile desires; it is my conscience which ultimately restrains. My conscience stands face to face with me, it pricks, restrains, controls my irrational and immoral desires. Maybe on some occasion I tumbled and fell, maybe on some occasion being momentarily self-oblivious I wanted or I did something, which was improper or deplorable, but immediately after that I am tormented with the twinge of conscience. I am ashamed of myself before others may inflict shame on me! This kind of values, such conscience resides within the core of my heart. No, it does not abide by the court of law or by the rule of the guns and batons. This inner strength is the strength of the conscience. If such conscience is absent or if the conscience has not developed, or if it has died, we cannot be free from slavish submission to instincts. We must remember that men are not born with thoughts, conceptions or values. These stem from the society. If the thought of an individual is linked with social necessity, if a man possesses social sense of duty and responsibility, then accordingly he possesses social values too. His conscience gathers strength and vitality from social conscience and the social sense of values. But when the individual is alienated from his social connections, then self centredness overwhelms him and, being uprooted, his conscience becomes lifeless. The present day crisis stems largely from this social alienation of individuals because, the whole society is degenerating and decomposing. My honour cannot be measured by whether I have been offered a high position, a high chair or whether I have received salutes from the people. All the high officials of the government offices receive these. When the Officer in Charge of a police station arrives, all others salute him. That is a salute earned by force, a salute out of fear. On the other hand there are examples of a person with noble ideology, spending his entire life starved and half starved, wandering the roads, taking shelter beneath trees, found a lofty place in history afterwards. Maybe in his lifetime he had to face taunts, slanders, even persecution, but the

subsequent ages paid him honour for thousands of years. Maybe people of his age hurled slanders upon him and put taints of disgrace on his face out of ignorance, but millions of people of the later ages wiped off that taint with profound respect and placed him on the high seat of honour.

Personality of a man develops by accepting truth and ideology

Remember, paying respect to the honourable is a necessity more for one's own sake. It means, by honouring one who deserves the honour, I am attracted to his qualities and virtues. And a possibility develops that being under the influence of those qualities I may assimilate some of them and gain by that. Disrespecting a person, who should have been respected, only brings harm to me. On the other hand, if I pay respect to one who does not deserve the respect, by that too I bring harm to myself. If I pay undue respect to someone, from whom I should have actually turned away, being overwhelmed by his glamour or for the sake of some so-called relationship or formalities, or because he might be offended, by doing that I degrade myself. Only he can possess the real dignity and honour, who in his life has accepted and acknowledged the highest ideology and noblest struggle of his age, who has paid respect to the representatives of this ideology and tried to assimilate and apply that in his own life. He acquires personality whose sense of dignity has developed in this way. One, who is capable of exercising control over himself on the strength of truth and ideology, who is capable of conquering all his weaknesses and temptations for the sake of truth, who can adhere to the right path amidst all twists and turns, only he is a man of personality. Decadent capitalism is wrecking the personality of individuals today, undermining in him the sense of dignity.

Another peculiar trend has developed in social life nowadays, a distasteful attraction for comfort, pleasure and luxury. It is also a crisis of this age. Previously, when someone got acquainted or got in touch or happened to meet some other person, he tried to find out what good qualities the other possessed and what qualities graced his character. Today, a person notices how is the dress of the other person, how are the designs of his or her ornaments or the furniture of his room, what is his social status, etc. Therefore the attention is totally diverted towards the external grandeur and superficial glamour of the person, towards lurid luxury, nobody cares what the inner characteristics of the man are. Maybe, in spite of all the external glamour and glittering, the inner part of the man is totally dark but still we are attracted to him or her. Remember, during the dark days of British rule there were want of many things in our country— this is true. But due to the impact of freedom movement the noble sense of values, the sense of duty and responsibility existed within the society. But those things have continued to rapidly decay nowadays. This is a tragic reality. Life's natural fountain has dried up under burden of artificiality. But in the course of development of civilization the mind, the sense of duty and responsibility was supposed to develop further. What people of those days did not know due to lack of education we now know that. We are now exploring the distant planets with the help of scientific knowledge. Thus it was expected to widen our hearts, broaden our mind, making it nobler and more liberal, whereas, we are moving in

just the opposite direction. What is the result of that? Our mind is dying out. Our mothers of the olden days surely did not know the definition of humanism. But sitting with the plate of food at home, if they came to learn that in nearby household some neighbours were starving due to poverty, they felt it hard to gulp down the food. They thought how they could eat if children of the other household had to go without food? Today, where could you find them, those 'illiterate', 'foolish' mothers, in this 'modern' life? Do you expect to come across any among the 'civilised' mothers of today? In those days, if a man from a village was doing some job in Kolkata – be it in railways, post office, or some other office – that meant, he had been having an accommodation in Kolkata where a few boys or girls, a few poor neighbours, or relatives and even non-relatives could stay for study or other purpose. In those days, a wife could hardly entertain the idea of telling her husband, “Do you think this residence in Kolkata is a hotel where your cousins, their children and others will come and stay?” But today, the responsibility of accommodation of brothers and sisters and even parents cannot be taken – such is the attitude. In other instances, where the wife wants to take the responsibility, the husband prevents. Both are true. It is not so that everyone in the earlier ages participated directly in the struggle for social change. Did everyone leave his or her home and hearth? This question does not really arise. But in those days, most of the people had a minimum level of values at least. It was indeed natural that everyone should be concerned for the pains and pleasures of the people in the neighbourhood, should do something at least for them. People at least used to regret for failure to do so. Only being concerned for my own wants and desires and nothing else – such attitude was not so manifest in those days. A man who took bribes was often condemned by no other than his own wife, his own parents. They would tell him that it was immoral and unjust. Today, on the question of longings and desires of a person there is no link with ethics, morality and ideology. And due to absence of that, limitless personal desires raise their ugly heads in the individual's life.

**True love makes one's mind broad and inspires one
to fulfil his social responsibilities**

Here I shall ask you to ponder over another issue. Among many individual problems, there is also the question of love and affection in youth. Many young people say 'I am in love with this girl or that boy. Therefore, I am unable to undertake any social responsibility.' We shall say that love, which diverts us from duty, which distracts me from social obligations, which fetters me, and does not help me to advance, that can be anything but true love. In fact there is only infatuation in it. This too has become a big problem of modern times. A kind of craze or obsession is gripping the younger generations in the name of love. The relation and attraction between man and woman during the youth has always been there – this is a law of life, this is normal. This relation bases itself on natural laws. Nevertheless, we must remember that the manner in which natural laws work in nature or in the animal world, we have not kept the human relations confined to that stage of natural conditions. Those have been associated with civilisation, ideology, sense of justice-

injustice, sense of duty, values, conscience, sense of beauty, broadness of mind, etc. The beauty and sweetness, happiness and satisfaction are linked with these things. Poetry, songs, literature, stories and novels all have developed basing on these. These constitute the works of Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Rabindranath, Premchand, Saratchandra, Nazrul or others. We don't eat anything, bad or rotten, as because we are hungry. The person with conscience will starve to death but will not sell his conscience for food, will not bend his head down merely to get some food. Again, the natural need of the youth is not that much essential as food and water for subsistence. There is a difference between them. Food, oxygen and water, these are certain things without which life would cease to exist. But the desires that confront the life of the youth are not such that if unfulfilled would endanger lives. Commenting on this Lenin said, "Shall I drink the water infested by worms and insects just because I am very thirsty?" This is an important question, because capitalism is driving man away from ethics and morality, from sense of human values towards unethical life in all spheres. So in the realm of relations between man and woman it is pushing us towards unethical and immoral practices. They are spreading the notion as if this is everything in life. They are trying to convert the entire younger generation into slave of sex. And the more they are converting people into slaves of sex, more the values regarding relations between man and woman are decaying, in that proportion the love and affection are also dying. The love and slavery of sex are not the same, human love and animal physical instinct are not the same. There is another point that all kinds of love are in one sense similar. I love my father, my mother, my brothers and sisters, my friends, means according to me they are good so I love them. However, if they do not have any character worthy of respect, still I love them simply because there is blood relation that is not true love. That is not beautiful, does not make one great rather that undermines the person. Love and weakness are not the same. The love, which values qualities, that strengthens a person and does not make him weak. A person has a good mind, a good character, so I love him. But the expression of love is not the same for everyone. We love children because they are the future of the society. Today they are like tender flowers. There is the necessity to nourish them with love and affection. So love flows towards different persons in different forms. Forms of expression of emotion to mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter, and friend are not one and the same. Similarly, a relationship develops during the youthful days between man and woman. Here, liking the qualities of the person are more important and the question of physical attraction is less important. If I attract anyone with lots of money, I will have to keep the person tied, using lots of money throughout my life. If I attract anyone with physical glamour, I shall have to use physical glamour to keep the person tied to me throughout my entire life. Is this true love? On the other hand there is the beauty of the mind, the sweetness of character – that is the real asset – that is developing into newer and newer forms providing us continuously newer and newer mental satisfaction. This love is so creative, so beautiful, and so sweet that this brings real happiness to all. Qualities of character, respect, trust, selfless affection, broad heartedness – these constitute the living soul, the kernel of true love. Wherever these feelings exist, they fill our hearts with beauty and sweetness, then the excitement of

physical beauty and youth, the tug of war of property and wealth, fade out into oblivion. True love makes one another beautiful and noble. Herein lies its value. It is tested on this very anvil daily. That is why Comrade Shibdas Ghosh said that love is one of the greatest creations of human civilisation. To get that great thing, one has to pay a great price, has to sacrifice a lot, if necessary. We must remember that jumping into something recklessly, without caring for the pros and cons of such an act, does not result in anything good – and it cannot be. Here too, lies the need for dispassionate judgement. That is the judgement by our senses of right and wrong, that is the judgement of human values. In the earlier days those who had Vidyasagar in their hearts, who responded to the call of Subhash Chandra Bose, who understood Deshbandhu, Rabindranath, Saratchandra, Nazrul, Bhagat Singh, Asfaqulla, Masterda Surjya Sen, Pritilata and others, were truly worthy of being loved. Those young men and women who tried to emulate their ideals in their lives were truly worthy of love. Today also, those who will understand them, those who will understand the line of revolutionary movement of this country, who will carry forward the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh in their lives, shall truly be worthy of love. Because the broadness of mind, tolerance, nobility, human values and magnanimity required for love, gets its ingredients from the social movement and revolutionary ideology. There cannot be anything other than this.

The revolutionary movement originates from love itself. Our movement is also a movement of love. We are fighting for love. We have to set the emotional faculties in a high tune, where capitalism is hitting very hard. In order to protect the emotional faculties, we have to give much emphasis upon our social life. The elderly, the young, those in between, everyone according to his ability must have a social life. In the neighbourhood of my residence, I must have relations with quite a number of families. I must be their companion in pains and pleasures. I must be their own man. In my village, in my neighbourhood, I belong to every household. The mothers of those families wait for me to return and go there, they will want me to eat something, will feel sad if I do not go. Seeing me, mothers would wish to have a son or a daughter like me. Our culture, discipline, politeness, sacrifice, our magnanimity, our love will attract them. They will understand this from our behaviour and acts. Out of that they are attracted to our ideology. The theory or ideology is not merely some printed words written in books, not sterile jugglery of words. Here theory is reflected in real life – it is reflected in our behaviour and actions. Everyone will feel that they can open their heart, their mind to such a person. I have voluntarily taken this responsibility. By taking this responsibility, I know my country, I know its people, I enjoy their love and affection, I learn from them, I feel the joy of doing something noble. I shall go to the masses with love, reason and ideology. On the question of this love, we do not consider who are our supporters or who are supporters of some other organisation. May it be Congress or the CPIM or any other party – we are fighting their ideology just because those are harmful for the country; but I bear no personal animosity or hatred towards them. Even if they have such feelings, we do not. Therefore, I approach them with love. This is the teaching of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. In this manner if we lead

a social life, thoughts and concern for the public occupy my mind from morning to night; their problems, their pain, the tears of so many mothers torment my mind then it becomes impossible for me to separate the tears of my own mother from theirs. Otherwise I feel – ‘No one is as sad as me – no one will be able to understand my sorrow.’ ‘With whom shall I share my pain? Who will understand my problem?’ But when I talk to many people I find that the sorrow, which tormented me, becomes so insignificant compared to the intensity of sorrow and sufferings of others that I feel ashamed for being tormented by my own problems. For this it is necessary to open wide the doors and windows of our minds and look at the outer world. We must remember that capitalism wants us to be unsocial; it wants to make us immoral and individualistic. We have to thwart this conspiracy. For this, we must lead a social life. Powerful movements are to be developed against various problems in social life. There lies the testimony of my human feeling, therein lies the heartbeat of my conscience.

I cannot preserve my values without protesting against injustice

From the teachings of all great men of the past, from the life and teachings of their worthy disciple Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, we have learnt that I am a real man only if I really have human values, if I really have a sense of dignity and sense of responsibility towards human civilisation. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh said, “As an individual, if I do not have the courage to protest against the injustice in the society, then I am not worthy of being called a man.” So in order to save my human values, to uphold my self-dignity, even if there is no one by my side, even if I am alone, I must protest against injustice, I must fight against injustice. I shall not bend my head down. Moreover, that is the reason why all great men of every epoch started their journey alone, by carrying, the pains and tears of crores of people of their time and the yearning for emancipation of that era, in their hearts. Here lies their superiority, their nobility. That is why they have become great. In some cases, even the people for whom they quit their home and hearth, underwent tremendous hardships, faced death – at the initial stage the very oppressed people didn’t recognise or understand them. Rather, at times, instead of providing any support, being confused by the ruling class, they stood up in opposition. In spite of that they did not abandon the path of struggle, nor did they express any frustration or grievance. Herein lies the ‘ethics of movement.’

Maybe today I am protesting alone, thousands of people are watching that as I am fighting injustice, police are beating me; I am shedding blood on the street. Such feelings will invariably strike the people’s minds – ‘He could have remained aloof like us, he could have escaped by shirking the responsibility. However, he did not do that. Instead of that he is facing torture in order to fight injustice. He could have earned for himself a house, a car but instead he is roaming on the streets. What has he got for which he has been doing such sacrifices, facing so much oppression?’ All these questions create waves in their mind. These silently knock at the door of human conscience. All great men in history started alone, had their efforts been fruitless? Struggle of one gradually inspires the spirit of struggle in many. Once Rammohan Roy said, ‘Truth always starts

with minority.’ Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, Rammohan, Vidyasagar, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Xedong, Shibdas Ghosh, every one of them had started their journey in this manner. The dreams of Khudiram still remain unaccomplished. Was his sacrifice fruitless? How many people came forward to protest at the time of Khudiram’s sacrifice? How many processions were taken out or how many protest demonstrations were organised? Was this sacrifice futile? Such great struggles are never futile, can never become futile. Those who don’t come forward, they too develop a respect in their minds for such great deeds. Its influence on family life, social life ushers in a new cultural trend. Just as one life creates many lives, just as a small flame of fire or the ingredients of fire create a large fire, as a lamp lights another lamp, similarly a lone flame of humanity conflagrates flames of humanity in many others. Therefore, I shall have to carry on this struggle, even if I am alone.

Avoiding struggles I cannot attain the standard of character and acquire moral values. Until we plunge into the battle, we may continue to discuss ‘we must fight’, ‘we must not bear injustice’ etc. in study circles, but we know these things only in words. We may speak or write, however, that does not prove that we understand the meaning of those things. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh used to say, “to know and to realise are two different things.’ The first is superficial knowledge; knowledge for delivering speeches, for writing articles; the second is realisation to act. What I know is reflected in my actions. That is what realisation means. I understand, I realise, means I act. This means, ‘I am in action, I am in struggle.’ When I am engaged in struggle an inner contradiction develops in me. The concern for family, the tears of parents, questions of results in examination, job, personal security, love and affection, or worries about health, fears of jail, the oppression of the police, and hesitations due to such questions ‘How can we work alone’, ‘Public are not supporting or listening’ – many such thoughts disturb my mind. On the one hand, my conscience urges – fight, jump into the vortex of the movement – on the other hand hesitations, mental obstacles and various weaknesses pull me back, raising many questions. Now at this moment I feel I should do, then the next moment I hesitate, thinking instead of today I shall start tomorrow. In this way days pass away. Sometimes I put the question to myself – ‘will it be possible for me to do so much?’ This vacillation, this inner contradiction continues in me and I am to fight out the dilemma by applying the revolutionary ideology. When I can apply it in my life properly, my character grows and develops through that struggle. The more I fight against my weakness, fear, cowardice, selfishness, meanness, ignorance and superstitions, more my character develops and flourishes. Therefore, the struggle, which is the need of the hour, which is necessary for the advancement of civilisation, if someone avoids that, when that is absent in his actions, his character cannot develop and advance. Unless we put ourselves again and again to the acid test of struggle, we shall not be able to build up true character. In this manner through continuous struggle, we have to merge the ideology and values with our lifeblood and make those our very inner kernel. This is how character develops. Therefore, for the sake of development of our character, we should be engaged in movement and we must devote ourselves for developing the movements.

In order to acquire humanity we must shoulder some social responsibility

The high cultural tune of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal struggle of bygone days, upheld by Subhash Chandra Bose, Saratchandra, Nazrul, has now been almost destroyed by the ruling class and the ruling parties. If we can assimilate that high cultural tune, then only by exhausting that we can acquire the much higher proletarian culture. When we go to the masses with that cultural tune and carry that within us then a new surge of struggle will be created among the masses for attaining that standard of character and culture. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh said with much agony ‘we have severed the link with the high cultural tune of the age of freedom struggle; as a result we have become uprooted. So we must first establish link with high cultural standard of those days and assimilate the valuable wealth from that. Then only by transcending this stage we can engage ourselves in the struggle for attaining the higher proletarian culture.’ We shall not become great by one stroke, but certainly, we shall be able to advance a bit forward. In the revolutionary movement too there exists first, second, third, fourth, fifth and many such ranks. If I am unable to remain in the first rank then at least I shall be in the last rank and do something, whatever I can. Those who, unhesitatingly and with a smile, leave behind their career, family, job they will do so. Those who cannot do so at present, who are not yet prepared to that extent, should do whatever will be possible for them to do. If I am able to do a little only, at least that much I should do. If not in the entire country, let me do something in my own village, in my own neighbourhood, in my own school-college. I may not be able to convince lakhs, at least I shall convince one or two persons. May be I could not sacrifice my life but I have shed a few drops of blood or a few drops of sweat. I have done at least something. Here is the satisfaction of my conscience. Maybe I am unable to attend a procession, but I have set up clubs and libraries. I have set up free coaching centres and I am teaching some poor students. I am organising science club, debating society, seminars, symposia, music groups, drama groups, sports, looking after the sick, anything, whatever I can. Boys and girls of my neighbourhood are going to video parlours and watching blue films. There I can introduce the cultivation of great men like Khudiram, Bhagat Singh, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Saratchandra, etc. I shall try to inculcate at least some human values. We must remember that to the extent a person gets involved in such activities, to that extent is he able to honour human values. If I think that I have so many problems therefore I am not able to do anything – such thinking is not only self-deception but also turns to self-disrespect. Such works does not obstruct examinations. Nor do they obstruct anyone’s doing jobs. Did everyone jump into the vortex of freedom movement by sacrificing everything? Those who could do, they did so. Those countless ordinary people who could not do so but helped the movement in various ways, their role was also no less important. I have pointed out earlier, doing nothing for social struggle and social progress, developing no resistance or protest against injustice means compromising with this unjust social order.

We must remember that addressing the youths Comrade Shibdas Ghosh used to say, “I call him a true youth only who has sense of dignity, has courage, has human values, can fight against injustice.” If we cannot do this we are not worthy of being called youths. We have to create a new

environment in all the colleges and universities of the country. The rulers want to produce educated slaves only, want to create inhuman beasts. In lieu of that we shall bring new light of human values there. We shall uphold the examples of the lives and the struggles of great men. In this manner again a new surge of human values, based on new concepts, will be created within the society. Along this course there will be the new wave of mass movement. If the youth of today do not pay respect to their real youthfulness, then after twenty to twenty five years when they will be in their middle age, or when they will grow old they will not be able to do anything other than expressing deep sighs looking back to their bygone days. So I shall say – don't waste time, whatever you can do, do that. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh used to say, 'This civilisation is crying, humanity is crying. It is crying for emancipation.' Who will respond to this cry? Who will pay due price of their tears? Only the youth can do that. People are dying on the streets. They do not know why they are dying. They think that it is due to fate or command of God. From history and science we know that this capitalist system is responsible for these deaths. Had we succeeded in transforming the society, their lives could have been saved. For that, we are to fight today, and if we fail to undertake this responsibility then for every death, for every injustice done, we shall be held guilty by our own conscience. Therefore, I cannot remain silent. We know that we will have to confront many problems, many difficulties in this struggle. Even this may happen that the very people for whom we are fighting, at the initial stages they will not trust us and will move away from us. In the novel *Pather Dabi*, Saratchandra said, 'the greatest curse is that, the people for whom you are fighting won't understand you, won't give you shelter. The manner in which they move away on seeing a poisonous snake, just like that they will move away on seeing you. The fact that there is little help, sympathy or affection that will prick you all the while like a needle. Still you will have to go on fighting with a smiling face.' The name of the book (Demand of the Path) too is very meaningful. There are so many defeats and betrayals, difficulties, problems, so many hardships and hurdles, but still you will have to tread this path. Will you be able to respond to this demand of the revolutionary path? When Comrade Shibdas Ghosh started, there had been so many hurdles, so many difficulties. How the other parties laughed at, hurled sarcastic comments from all sides. Never did he pay any heed to these. A totally unknown, unrecognised man, started the struggle in his early youth with what a firm determination. He had no fame, no mass backing, no money, and no media coverage. Nevertheless, nothing could stop him. With what great strength he advanced! In those days in face of the question 'You are alone, what can you do' he boldly said – 'I am living under the tree. If necessity demands I shall die under the tree. I shall die fighting and I will fight even when I shall be dying. I shall at least lay a stone at the foundation of revolution if I can do nothing else. The future generations will do the rest'. In those days he truly had to take shelter under the tree. He spent his days in parks, on the footpath. Today what kind of respect and appreciation we get everywhere. We are the students of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, this identity makes us feel so proud, so dignified. Many people invite us with warmth and cordiality. They feel injured if we don't go. But when our dearest leader, one of the greatest sons of mankind, held high

the banner of struggle for emancipation of the society, then even for days, months and years together, amid innumerable rigors and hurdles, storm and stress, he had to tread through perilous paths, he had to face so many obstacles and oppositions from all directions. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh has taught us that even amidst extreme difficulties a revolutionary carries on his struggle. He goes on working with a smiling face because he hates injustice and oppression. Because the cries of the oppressed humanity make him restless and he cannot remain quiet. He can't forsake duty, making excuse of difficulties. Here lies the sense of human values, the sense of dignity of a revolutionary. For this very reason Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the guide to the emancipation struggle of this era, had appealed to the students and the youths. He said – "Remember, we are all mortal beings. So if to die, don't die begging, don't die humiliating yourself. When to die, die with honour and you have got only one surest way to live and die with honour, that is taking active part in revolutionary struggle of the masses in bringing about a revolutionary transformation of the society."

Long live revolution.

Long live All India DSO.

Red salute to the great leader of the proletariat Comrade Shibdas Ghosh.