

## Alcohol and Alcoholism

The term alcohol is applied to a wide range of organic chemical compounds of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen in different proportions of combination, with varying properties. Of these the most well-known are the two alcohols, namely, the methyl or wood spirit and ethyl or the wine spirits. Methyl alcohol is very much in demand in many industries. It is a deadly poison even in small doses. Blindness is not an infrequent consequence of its consumption in very minute quantities.

Ethyl alcohol is not so swift in its effects, though its slow-poisoning effects are as frightful. For unknown ages it has continued to give rise to moral, social and economic problems. Individuals, families, nations and whole civilisations have succumbed to its invidious influence and gone down to ignominious oblivion.

The saner elements of the whole world and of all ages have consistently condemned its use, yet so deductive are the powers it exercises on a certain build of the mind, that few countries have succeeded in banishing its use as an intoxicant. Ever new labels and Scientific techniques for its manufacture are invented by the votaries of Bacchus to rope in the unwary victims.

The old day's methods of fermenting liquor in the dung heaps as part of the process has given place to the multi-millionaire projects for the manufacture of wine spirits. Vast tracts of fruit growing lands that would support the starving millions are reserved for destroying the healthy stocks of humanity.

What was intended by Benign Providence for the growth and maintenance of life and health has been diverted to channels of self-destruction and disease by the so-called rational man.

Such morally, socially and economically destructive activities are being carried on under the very eyes, nay the active patronage of the states that cry themselves hoarse and champions of the common man's welfare. Intoxicants are of many-fold benefit to the kuarish among the politicians. They bring in revenue. They encourage crime and goondaim, which are important factors in over-adding and corrupting the voters.

A stern warning against the liquor magnates growing political power was issued by the late Theodore

Roosevelt, President of the United States of America, in the following words. "It is now a question whether the liquor interests are to dominate your parties, dominate your public life and dominate your government."

As to how far the liquor interests exert their sinister influence may be gathered from the following statement of a high police officer of Chicago, Mr. J.N. Flynn. He says, "Every time I arrest a man who is running a 'blue pig' (an illicit liquor shop). I find when I go to court, that the representative of the brewery has been there before me. He threatens whatever judge is sitting there with political death if he doesn't listen to reason." Mr. Robert J. Northold, an attorney of the same city stated that the breweries are behind the Chicago 'blue pig' men and fight tooth and nail to have them discharged when we have them arrested.

Lieutenant John McCarthy adds to the above statements the following:—"If it was not for the politicians and the influence of the breweries, I would drive the blind pigs' out of Rogers Park in four weeks." Backed by the great political influence which the big business magnates of the liquor trade have come to possess in the political life of the Western Countries, they violate every instinct of decency and break or evade every law made for their control with the single exception of the law requiring them to pay tax.

## **The Rationales of the Revenues of State from Liquor**

Businessmen in the liquor trade do not grudge the taxes they are called upon to pay, simply because such taxes are shifted on to the pockets of the consumers. A State which proposes to augment its revenues from liquor is in no better position than a grabbing brewery, on a gigantic scale.

By licensing the manufacturing and sale of this universally obnoxious commodity, the state gets committed to a three fold function in the demoralising process of corrupting its people to wit, permission, protection and promotion. In a memorable speech delivered before the British House of Lords on February 21, 1743, during the hey day period of British hegemony Lord Chesterfield assailed the principle of licensing liquor trade.

More than two hundred years back, this broad-minded statesman laid emphasis on the evils that would spring from the licensing system that was then being introduced. Speaking on the legislative measure on the anvil, he thundered, "To pretend, my lords that the design of this bill is to prevent or diminish the use of spirits, is to trample upon common-sense and to violate the rules of decency as well as of reason.

For when did any man ever hear that a commodity was prohibited by licensing its sale, or that to offer and refuse is the same action? Surely it never before was conceded by any man entrusted with the administration of public affairs, to raise taxes by the destruction of the people.

For there is no doubt but those on whom the inventors of this tax shall confer authority will be directed to assist their masters in their design to encourage the consumption of that liquor from which such large

revenues are expected, and to multiply without end those licences which are to pay a yearly tribute to the crown.

When I consider, my lords, the tendency of this bill, I find it calculated only for the propagation of disease, the suppression of industry, and the destruction of mankind. I find it the most fatal engine that ever was pointed at a people—an engine by which those that are not killed will be disabled and those who preserve their limbs will be deprived of their senses."

This brilliant indictment of national policies by the saner elements of the British political life, reverberates across the centuries as a warning to the nations of the world. The short-sighted politicians ignored the warning and in the short span of decades, the British Empire has crumbled down to dust more ignominiously than any historically known precedent of yore.

Only two decades back it was a boast that the sun never set in the British Empire. Contrast this boast with the blatant fact that even in the British Isles there is a persistent fog over clouding the sun most of the year. Of the three potent factors responsible for such catastrophic downfall – wine, women and wealth– the first one has certainly been productive of the greatest evil.

Great statesmen like Lord Chesterfield, Edward Burke and Lord Acton failed to convince the British people that this world could not be held as a wine-shop of exploiters. "What is morally wrong cannot be politically right," was the motto with the Saner among the British leadership. The nation as a whole, however, voted Bachus and Macchiavelli, with the inviolable consequence of such option–disgraceful downfall.

Urdu verse: Fitrat afrad se igmaz bhi kar leti hai,  
Naheen karti hai pih ganmon ke gunahon ko mauf.

(The Heavenly Order may connive at individual lapses, but there is no atonement for national transgressions).

## Revenues

Revenues derived from the liquor traffic by a state are altogether illusory. It is an admitted axiom of Economics, that all income is dependent upon the productivity of labour and capital. Anything which impairs that productivity will impair the national income.

A tax comes out of the pockets of the individuals and goes into the common pocket of the nation. "For every million dollars recovered in taxes, the nation pays many millions to the liquor business directly through its constituent citizens, and many millions more in impaired efficiency of its workers and in productivity sacrificed to the parasitic business."

These observations of an astute economist of America, clearly point to the folly of governments which seek to augment their revenues by licensing liquor traffic. Even in budgetary figures, the governments

which opt 'dry', under certain conditions are never at a loss, for the money saved by the consumer from liquor is by him re-routed to the purchasing of usual goods, and the establishment of a healthier and more efficient level of living.

The healthier physical, mental, moral and spiritual standard which springs from a reformed outlook on life on the part of the individuals composing the nation is the real asset of value to the individual no less than to the nation. He would work more efficiently, earn more munificently, spend more judiciously and thereby pay more taxes indirectly, besides contributing solidly to the national fund by his improved efficiency.

With temperance, which has been defined as moderation in the use of every thing good and abstinence from the use of everything bad, in the field of human activities and mutual relationships, a state is a pure gainer on all counts increased efficiency and consequent increased output and decreased waste of human energy.

Accuracy of judgement, avoidance of accidents, tactful handling of colleagues and subordinates, observance of discipline, punctuality, reticence in matters of confidence are all such matters that affect the efficiency of the workers on the one hand and on the other relate to the problems of temperance and drink. To the industrialised set-up, therefore, the question of liquor traffic is even more important in its economic bearing than one of academic morals.

## **Moderate Alcohol and Efficiency**

One of the outstanding figures of the World of science, says, "Work and alcohol do not belong together, especially when work demands wide awakesness attention, exactness and endurance."

Alcohol has been the subject of scientific investigation, as a problem affecting almost every facet of human life—industrial economic, administrative, social, political etc. Over and above its moral and spiritual bearing on the individual as a component unit of the complex human relationships. There is complete unanimity among the experimenters as to the impairment of efficiency of the individual on all planes of activity.

The exact amount of damage which a person suffers as a result of consumption of even moderate quantities of alcohol, however, varies from individual to individual according to each one's bodily and mental blindness. A very considerable factor in laboratory experiments, however, is that the person under observation is, so to say, in a resisting mood, endeavouring to act as sober as possible. This naturally affects the results. His efficiency does not sink to the level of a relaxing, bragging drinker.

Another important factor which prevents the correct appraisal of the depreciation in efficiency is the measured quantity, which is allowed in the atmosphere of the laboratory, as a dose by itself. In actual life, on the other hand, the same quantity is yet another dose piled upon the leg-over effects of the

previous doses. In the laboratory the person is challenged to fight the effects, with all the success he can command, while in actual life he endeavours to intensify the effect psychologically.

The results of laboratory experiments, as such, fall very much below those that accrue in actual life, Even with such conditions favouring the alcohol in the laboratory, the state of affairs disclosed thereby is a staggering revelation of the loss of efficiency suffered by a worker even as the result of 'moderate' drink.

## **Alcohol Produces Paralysis of Judgement**

It is admitted by the research scholars and experimenters in the field that there can be no such thing as a moderate use of a poison. As Sir Victor Horsely, M.D. the distinguished British Surgeon puts it, "In reality we have no proof that a minimum and a permissible dose of alcohol exists at all". Other eminent authorities agree with this verdict of the British Surgeon, among them Sir Londer Brunton M.D. says: "Alcohol produces progressive paralysis of judgement and this begins with the first dose."

Dr. Mc Adam Eccles gives his considered opinion as follows, "A daily moderate dose of alcohol taken in the form of alcoholic drink has a tendency, quietly but surely to destroy the tissues of the body."

The world renowned physician Dr. Quensel of Leipzig says, "Even small quantities of alcoholic drink may result in pronounced changes, especially of the cystic functions, in a decrease in the clearness of sensory perceptions, in the impairment of thought and judgement, in a dulling of the finer emotions and in the inhibition and disturbance of the coordination of movements "

Dr. Irwin H. Neil, superintendent of the Norfolk, State Hospital for Inebriates (drunkards) at Norfolk Massachusetts, asserts that the moderate drinker is even more liable to suffer from organic diseases than the man who occasionally becomes drunk.

"The small dose is particularly dangerous in jobs where alertness of mind and body in the interests of the safety of the worker and his charge, becomes essential for his efficiency. as in driving for example. The heavily drunk driver is easily detected, in fact mostly in-capacitated for any mischief.

The moderate dose, however, deludes him into the belief that he is in possession of his faculties, while as a matter of fact, his driving judgement as also his muscular coordination is badly impaired. Such a person is naturally a menace to public safety as also to his own life on the highway.

A slight swerve in the wrong direction, an inadvertent disregard of a road signal. a small miscalculation in judgement may result fatally by colliding with any of the millions of vehicles on the national<sup>1</sup> highways or by over whelming some un-wary pedestrian, or even by dashing against electric poles, trees and walls.

Dr. Benedict, director of the Nutrition laboratory of the Carnegie Institute of Washington sums up the situation when he says that after very moderate doses of alcohol, virtually all individuals are effected with

general depression of nerves and muscles, lessened sharpness of vision, and lessened eye-hand motor co-ordination.

"The driver of an automobile in the traffic of a modern American city has no business to undertake his task after drinking even these so-called permissible amounts of alcohol, clearly diluted even to 2.75 per cent, cannot solve the alcohol problem, nor can it alter our estimate of the effect of alcohol upon human efficiency. Inflexible science say: Moderate user, keep off. For at least four hours after a dose of alcohol formerly considered 'permissible' for you as a motor vehicle operator, may well be considered a menace to Society."

## **Drinks are not to be Classed**

This is not an individual doctor's personal opinion. But the verdict of exhaustive vested interests of the manufacturers of all liquor products are shrewdly trying to delude the gullible populace to believe that beer and other so-called light drinks are not to be classed under alcoholic drinks beverages. These drinks also have been subjected to searching laboratory investigations, which have totally discredited the claims of the brewers that they are in any way less poisonous.

They have been found to contain no food value. As a matter of fact, they show the way to stronger and more persistent habits for drink. Dr. Charles Gilbert Davis of Chicago arraigns beer in no un-equivocal terms. Says he, "Beer produces disease of the stomach, kidneys, heart and blood-vessels.

Owing to its diuretic affect, the alcohol in the beer is diverted to the kidneys, which probably accounts for its destructive action on those organs. It causes a deposit of morbid fat in the body especially around the heart, enlarges that organ, and increases the work of the heart and the blood vessels, manifested by the fatigue and shortness of breath of all beer drinkers

## **Beer Deposits Fat Around the Heart**

Beer deposits fat around the heart, weakens its muscular walls, thickens and enlarges the ventricles and if continued, ultimately cuts short the life of the individual. All of this has been proven time and again by the post mortems of Bloinger, who has examined and weighed the hearts of many beer drinkers. This is a terrible scientific arraignment of beer, but it is true."

Dr. Struempell, the eminent German physiologist regards beer as no less an enemy of Society than any other alcoholic drink. His verdict is expressed in the following dear terms: Nothing is more erroneous from the physicians' standpoint than to think of diminishing the destructive effects of alcoholism by substituting beer for other alcoholic drinks.

The Scientific American, in describing the intellectual desolation and brutalization resulting from the beer habit, has the following unflattering remarks thereon: The most dangerous class of ruffians in our large

cities are beer drinkers.

Intellectually a Stupor amounting almost to paralysis arrests the reason, changing all higher faculties into a mere animalism, sensual selfish, sluggish, varied only by paroxysms of anger senseless and brutal. In appearance the beer drinkers may be the picture of health, but in reality he is most incapable of resisting disease.

A slight injury, a severe cold or a shock in the body or mind will provoke acute disease ending fatally. Beer drinking in this country produces the very lowest kind inebriety, closely allied to criminal insanity.

## **Beer Makes People Ferocious and Beastly**

"Beer makes people ferocious and beastly," is the testimony of the French doctor, Fiessinger, to which may be added the remarks of the Pacific Medical Journal which declares that beer is most animalizing, inciting the user to deliberate and unprovoked crime. The following words of a suffering house-wife are also note-worthy in this context. "When my husband drinks whisky, he soon gets stupid; but when he drinks beer, he runs after me with a knife."

These observations of the same elements of all lands and of all ages, can be multiplied and infinitum. They are, however, quite enough to discredit the claims of vested interests in behalf of beer and other forms of the so-called "light sort of drinks."

There is no sort of alcoholic beverage and no minimum dose which can be called safe for human consumption – in fact for any living organism. The very living organisms of yeast which convert fruits and grains into alcohol die when only thirteen and a half percent of the raw materials have passed into.

## **Do not Indulge in Drink and Gambling**

The ill effects of alcohol are many while its advantages are few indeed. Firstly, the alcoholics gradually lose the power of working with their own strength and gradually slip into a condition where they cannot go on with the artificial and borrowed stimulation from drinks; secondly, the will power of the alcoholic almost completely disappears in time, and they are thus made the victims of various moral and physical weaknesses which only degrade them.

There are also some people of a balanced temperament who keep their drinking within limits. But it has been observed that even in such cases, both, physical and moral damage undoubtedly takes place and had they not taken even that limited quantity of alcohol, they would have been better people in every respect.

In his book "Applied Pharmacy" Dr. A. J. Clark has listed the findings of many experiments about the effects of alcohol consumption. Some experts would convey an idea of the conclusions reached by scientists.

In 1920 Smith and McDougal demonstrated experimentally that in the first stage of intoxication when the proportion in blood is less than 2 milligram per on cubic centimetre, apparently there is no effect on the system of the drunkard. But detailed experiments show that the speed of all activities and the general health are deleteriously affected. The inhibiting force of the emotions weakens and the centres exercising control over the emotion get so vitiated that every impulse of the drunkard gets immediately manifested.

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