

THE CIVILIZATION OF TODAY



First and foremost there are order and safety. If today I have a quarrel with another man, I do not get beaten merely because I am physically weaker and he can knock me down. I go to law, and the law will decide as fairly as it can between the two of us. Thus in disputes between man and man right has taken the place of might. Moreover, the law protects me from robbery and violence. Nobody may come and break into my house, steal my goods or run off with my children. Of course there are burglars. But they are very rare, and the law punishes them whenever it catches them.

It is difficult for us to realize how much this safety means. Without safety those higher activities of mankind which make up civilization could not go on. The inventor could not invent, the scientist find out or the artist make beautiful things. Hence order and safety, although they are not themselves civilization, are things without which civilization would be impossible. They are as necessary to our civilization as the air we breathe is to us, and we have grown so used to them that we do not notice them any more than we notice the air.

For all that, they are both new things and rare things. Except for a short period under the Roman Empire, there have been order and safety in Europe only during the last two hundred years and even during that time there have been two revolutions and a great many wars; thus it is a great achievement of our civilization that today civilized men should in their ordinary daily lives be practically free from the fear of violence.

They are also largely free from the fear of pain. They still feel ill. But since the use of anesthetics became common, illness is no longer the terrible thing it used to be. And people are ill much less often. To be healthy is not to be civilized savages are often healthy, although not so often as is usually supposed but unless you have good health, you cannot enjoy anything or achieve anything. There have, it is true, been great men who have been invalids, but their work was

done in spite of their ill-health, and, good as it was, it would have been better had they been well. Not only do men and women enjoy better health; they live longer than they ever did before, and they have a much better chance of growing up.

Thirdly, our civilization is more than any that have gone before it. This is, because it is much more widely spread. Most of the previous civilizations known to history came to an end because vigorous but uncivilized peoples broke in upon them and destroyed them.

Now, whatever the dangers which threaten our civilization, and they are many, it seems likely to escape this one. Previous civilizations were specialized and limited; they were like oases in a surrounding desert of savagery. Sooner or later the desert closed in and the oasis was no more. But today it is the oasis which is spreading over the desert. Modern civilization is a far-flung thing, it spreads over Europe, America and Australia and great parts of Asia and Africa. Practically no part of the world is untouched by it. And, owing to the powers of destruction with which science has armed it, it is exceedingly unlikely that such savages or uncivilized peoples as are left in the world could prevail against it.

Thus the world has now for the first time a chance of becoming a single whole, a unity. So far as buying and selling and the exchange of goods are concerned, it is a unity already. For the first time the world is becoming a single place, instead of a lot of separate places shut off from one another.

One might say that for centuries the nations of mankind lived in a number of separate boxes holding no communication with each other except when the people in one box invaded those in the next and some of the boxes were never opened at all. Today there is constant coming and going between the boxes, so much so that the sides of the boxes are breaking down, and the world is beginning to look more like one enormous box. There is no danger of any unknown people breaking in upon our civilization from outside and destroying it. The danger comes rather from within. It is a danger from among ourselves. This brings me to our defects.

In democratic countries men are equal before the law and have a voice in deciding how and by whom they shall be governed. But the sharing-out of money—which means the sharing-out of food and clothing and houses and books and so on—is still very unfair. While some few people live in luxury, many have not even enough to eat and drink and wear. Even in the finest of the world's cities thousands of people live in dreadful surroundings. There are many families of five or six persons who live in a single room; in this room they sleep and dress and wash and eat their meals; in this same room they are born, and in this same room they die. And they live like this not for fun, but because they are too poor to afford another room.

It is, I think, clear that until everyone gets his proper share of necessary and delightful things, our civilization will be far from perfect.

A still greater danger comes from war. Although, so far as the buying and selling and exchanging of goods are concerned, the world could and should be a single whole, across its surface there still run the frontiers of the different States. Many of these were fixed in the distant past; some even of the most recent go back a couple of hundred years, go back, that is to say, to a period before the train and the motor-car, the steamship and the aeroplane were invented. Yet these inventions, by making the world so small that I today in England am nearer in travelling time to somebody in India than my great-grandfather was to somebody in Scotland, have made nonsense of these national frontiers by which it is still divided. These divisions, the political divisions, which run between mankind, would not matter greatly, if it were not for the fact of war. Twice already in my lifetime, from 1914 to 1918 and again from 1939 to 1945, almost the whole of the world has been torn by war. Moreover, in the conditions of the present day, any war that starts anywhere is more and more likely to spread everywhere. A single match will set a hay-rick ablaze, and with all this war material lying about, the world is again like a hay-rick waiting for that match. As somebody has jokingly remarked, in the next war men will fight with atom bombs and in the war after that with bows and arrows.

Yet another great defect of our civilization is that it does not know what to do with its knowledge. Science has given us powers fit for the gods, yet we use them like small children.

For example, we do not know how to manage our machines. Machines were made to be man's servants; yet he has grown so dependent on them that they are in a fair way to become his masters. Already most men spend most of their lives looking after and waiting upon machines. And the machines are very stern masters. They must be fed with coal, and given petrol to drink, and oil to wash with, and must be kept at the right temperature. And if they do not get their meals when they expect them, they grow sulky and refuse to work, or burst with rage, and blow up, and spread ruin and destruction all round them. So we have to wait upon them very attentively and do all that we can to keep them in a good temper. Already we find it difficult either to work or play without the machines, and a time may come when they will rule us altogether. Just as we rule the animals.

Being civilized means making and liking beautiful things, thinking freely and living rightly and maintaining justice equally between man and man. Man has a better chance today to do these things than he ever had before. He has more time, more energy, less to fear and less to fight against except for the dangers he has himself created. If he will give this time and energy which his machines have

won for him to making more beautiful things, to finding out more and more about the universe, to removing the causes of quarrels between nations, to discovering how to prevent poverty, then I think our civilization would undoubtedly be the greatest, as it would be the most lasting, that there has ever been.

- **C.E.M. Joad**

About the Essay

This lesson deals with the great virtues of present-day civilization. Along with the merits, the writer points out the demerits, which are to be overcome for securing it a perennial existence.

‘The Civilization of today’ is written by C.E.M. Joad, a versatile writer of the modern era. He was the Head, Department of Philosophy of the University of London.

GLOSSARY

Order	: state of law
go to law	: to file a suit in a court of law
might	: strength
burglar	: one who breaks into a house to steal
rare	: seldom (here)
Anesthetics	: matters that produce a state of being unable to feel pain, heat, cold, etc.
savage	: wild, fierce and cruel, uncivilized
invalid	: disabled
vigorous but uncivilized	: strong but barbaric
constant	: never stopping
enormous	: very large
stern	: hard, firm, cruel
sulky	: a person who remains silent because he is displeased.
the most lasting	: likely to last for the longest period of time

Activity 1: COMPREHENSION

A. Tick the correct alternative:

- 1) C.E.M. Joad in 'The Civilization of Today' describes –
 - a) the merits of modern civilization.
 - b) the demerits of modern civilization.
 - c) both the merits and demerits of modern civilization.
 - d) the difference between culture and civilization.

- 2) Safety is _____ for development.
 - a) of greater significance
 - b) of no significance
 - c) of minor significance
 - d) of greater significance

- 3) Science has given us power fit for the gods, yet we use them like –
 - a) demons
 - b) small children
 - c) mature citizens
 - d) mature politicians

B. Answer the following questions in not more than 30-40 words each:

- 1) What does the writer have to say in praise of order and safety?
- 2) How is the world tending to become a unity?
- 3) What are the major defects of our civilization?
- 4) What effect does war have on our civilization?
- 5) How can a person be truly civilized?

C. Answer the following questions in about 60-80 words each:

- 1) Discuss C.E.M. Joad's ideas on Man-Machine relationship.
- 2) "A still greater danger comes from war." What, according to the author, is this great danger?
- 3) What is unfair in the modern democratic countries?

D. Say whether the following are True or False. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false in the bracket:-

- (1) The essay 'The Civilization of Today' is written by C.E.M. Joad. []
- (2) Roman Empire was established by Augustans. []
- (3) The two revolutions in the essay refer to the French Revolution and the Russian revolution. []
- (4) C.E.M. Joad was a great scientist. []

Activity 2: VOCABULARY

A. Match the words given in column ‘A’ with that of column ‘B’

A	B
Synonyms	Antonyms
Physically	Stronger
Weaker	Mentally
Modern	Civilized
Savage	Ancient
Unity	Weakness
Strength	Division

B. Find out one word each for the phrases given below:-

- 1) The external form represented by customs, manners, laws and the general state of variety []
- 2) Matters that produce a state of being unable to feel pain, heat, cold, etc []
- 3) A silent displeased person []
- 4) A fertile place in a desert []

Activity 3: GRAMMAR

Direct and Indirect Narration –

We can report what a person says in two ways. Look at following sentences:

- 1. Mohan said “I want to become a doctor.”
- 2. Mohan said that he wanted to become a doctor.

In the first sentence, we quote the words of Mohan; this is called Direct Speech. In the second sentence we report what Mohan said without quoting his exact/actual words. This is called Indirect or Reported speech. As the name indicates, someone who hears the conversation reports what had been said to someone else who possibly was not present when the speaker spoke. This explains why several changes take place in the transformation of sentences from direct to indirect or Reported speech.

The following changes, as are noticeable from sentence (1) and (2), are made when a sentence from direct speech is changed into that of indirect speech –

The commas after the reporting verb and the quotation marks are removed.

The pronouns are changed.

The tense verb forms are changed.

The verb outside the inverted commas is called the reporting verb and the one inside the inverted commas is called the reported verb.

Rules for changing Tense of the verb –

In the following cases, no changes are made in the tense of reported verb in indirect speech –

- When the reporting verb is in the present or future tense.
- If the reported verb states a universal truth or a scientific fact.

If the reporting verb is in the past tense, changes in the tense of the reported verb are made as given in the box below –

BOX – A

Rules for Changing Tenses

Direct Speech	Indirect Speech
<i>Simple Present</i> “I rarely eat chocolates,” he explained.	<i>Simple Past</i> He explained that he rarely ate chocolates.
<i>Present Continuous</i> “I am waiting for Mohini.” She said.	<i>Past Continuous</i> She said that she was waiting for Mohini.
<i>Present Perfect</i> “I have found a flat.” he said.	<i>Past Perfect</i> He said that he had found a flat.
<i>Present perfect continuous</i> Hari said “I have been waiting for ages,”	<i>Past perfect continuous</i> Hari said that he had been waiting for ages.
<i>Simple Past</i> “I took the puppy home with me.” She said.	<i>Past Perfect</i> She said that she had taken the puppy home with her.
<i>Future</i> He said “I shall be in Delhi tomorrow.”	<i>Conditional</i> He said that he would be in Delhi the next day.
<i>Future Continuous</i> “I shall be using the car myself on the 3 rd October,” she said.	<i>Conditional Continuous</i> She said that she would be using the car herself on the 3 rd October.

BOX – B

Rules for Changing Pronouns

- ‘I’ (represents I person) of the reported verb is changed in accordance with the subject of the reporting verb.
- ‘You’ (represents II person) of the reported verb is changed in accordance with the object of the reporting verb.
- ‘He’ (represents III person) of the reported verb remains unchanged.

BOX – C

Rules for changing words of time and place.

Direct Speech	Indirect Speech
Today	that day
Yesterday	the day before
Tomorrow	the next day
the day after tomorrow	in two days' time
next week/month, etc.	the following week/month, etc.
last week/year, etc.	the previous week/year, etc.
a year, etc, ago	A year before/the previous year

In interrogative sentences, the questions are changed into statements in indirect speech –

He said, “Where are you going?” (Direct Speech)

He asked, “Where I was going?” (Indirect Speech)

In yes-no interrogative sentences, if/whether is used –

She said, “Will you come with me?” (Direct Speech)

She asked me if I would come with her. (Indirect Speech)

In imperative sentences (containing an order, request, warning, advice, etc.) the reporting verb ‘said’ is replaced with verbs like asked, ordered, commanded, requested, advised, etc, followed by an object and ‘to’ as shown below:

“Call the witness,” said the Judge. (Direct Speech)

The Judge ordered them to call the witness. (Indirect Speech)

“Don’t sleep late”, said the teacher. (Direct Speech)

The teacher advised us not to sleep late. (Indirect Speech)

In the case of exclamations and wishes, the reporting verb has to be changed into a verb that expresses an exclamation or a wish, like declared, exclaimed, wished, etc. Interjection such as alas, bravo, etc. and the exclamation marks are omitted in reported speech. Phrases like with delight, with regret, etc. are used wherever appropriate.

He said, “What a fool Sulekha is!” (Direct Speech)

He exclaimed that Sulekha was a fool. (Indirect Speech)

“Hurrah! We have overtaken them” said the girls. (Direct Speech)

The girls exclaimed with delight that they had overtaken them. (Indirect Speech)

Now, read the following excerpt from an interview with Shahrukh Khan, which was telecast on Star.

Anita: "So, Mr. Khan, have you signed any new movies?" Shahrukh Khan: yes, I have signed two new films. One with Karan Johar and another with a very talented new director called Shivkumar, who used to work earlier as a production assistant with Mr. Johar." Anita: "Oh! That's great. Who are your co-stars in Karan Johar's movie?" Shahrukh Khan: "My co-stars in Karan Johar's film are Rani Mukharjee and Amitabh Bachhan. Salman Khan is making a guest appearance as well." Anita: "Thank you. All the best and it was really nice talking to you." Shahrukh Khan: "Thank you. The pleasure is mine."

Now, suppose you heard this interview on television, but your friend Sunita missed it. How would you report it to her?

Complete the format given below –

Last night star channel broadcasted an interview by Shahrukh Khan. He said that he had signed two new films. One with

Activity 4: SPEECH ACTIVITY

A. Organize a symposium on the following:-

"The Demerits of Modern Civilization are to be Overcome for Securing it a Perennial Existence."

Divide the whole class into groups. The group should first discuss the ideas related to the topic amongst itself and then each group present its ideas through its leader.

Activity 5: COMPOSITION

The inventions of Modern civilization have brought both comforts and hazards, they are numerous to enlist. Comforts seem to have transformed the world into a paradise whereas hazards seem to threaten the very existence of the modern civilization. In the light of the aforesaid statement, enlist the merits and demerits of modern civilization and then illustrate each point of merit and demerit through examples.