

# हिंदू सार

एम के जॉबकार्ड

NAVAJI \$ \ TN PUBLIS1-HNG घर  
अहमदाबाद 380 014

# हिंदूसार

करून  
मनोज जांबकार्ड

मान्य केलेआणिसंपादित  
VB खेर

**NAVAJIVAN पब्लिशिंग हाऊस अहमदाबाद**  
**380 014**  
*पन्नास रुपये*

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## ते द वाचक

मी माझ्या लेखन मेहनती वाचक आणि स्वारस्य आहेत इतरांना सांगू इच्छितो की त्यांना की मी सुसंगत असल्यासारखे दिसत नाही. सत्यानंतरच्या शोधात मी बऱ्याच कल्पना टाकून दिल्या आणि बऱ्याच नवीन गोष्टी शिकल्या. मी वयात म्हातारा झालो आहे, मला असं वाटत नाही की मी अंतर्मुख होण्यास थांबविले आहे किंवा देह विरघळल्यावर माझी वाढ थांबेल. माझ्याशी संबंधित असलेल्या गोष्टी म्हणजे सत्यतेच्या आज्ञेचे पालन करण्याची माझी तत्परता, क्षणोक्षणी आणि म्हणूनच जेव्हा जेव्हा माझ्या माझ्या दोन लेखांमध्ये जर कोणासही विसंगती आढळली, तरीही त्याला माझ्या विवेकबुद्धीवर विश्वास असेल तर तो करेल नंतर त्याच विषयावर दोघांची निवड करणे चांगले.

एमके गांधी

हरिजन, २ -४ -१-१९३३३, पी. २

## संपादकीय टीप

हिंदू धर्म दोन प्रकारे ख्रिश्चन आणि इस्लामसारख्या अन्य धर्मापेक्षा भिन्न आहे. सर्व प्रथम, ते कोणत्याही मतदानावर विश्वास ठेवत नाही आणि सत्याच्या एकाधिकारशाहीकडे अत्यंत विकसित झालेल्या कोणत्याही व्यक्तीच्या विशेष दाव्यास नकार देते. असा विश्वास आहे की ज्ञानअशा अनेक मार्गांद्वारे परमात्म्याशी संपर्क साधला जाऊ शकतो (ज्ञान), भक्ती (भक्ती), कृती (कर्म) आणि योग (मानसिक नियंत्रण). खरं तर, प्रत्यक्ष जीवनात, एखाद्या साधकाद्वारे जाण्याचा मार्ग हा त्याच्या स्वभावाची योग्यता आणि वृत्तीनुसार एखाद्याच्या निवडीनुसार या दोन किंवा त्यापेक्षा जास्त विषयांचा एकत्रित संबंध असू शकतो. हिंदू धर्माची स्थापना कोणत्याही व्यक्तीने केलेली नाही; ते नैसर्गिकरित्या विकसित किंवा उत्क्रांत झाले आहे आणि म्हणूनच वैभवाने अपरिभाषित आहे. खरं तर, इतर कोणत्याही धर्माप्रमाणेच याची स्पष्ट व्याख्या करता येणार नाही. तथापि, परदेशी विचारवंतांचे त्याचे खालील वर्णन इतर कोणत्याही निकषापेक्षा अधिक जवळ आहे: हिंदुत्ववाद हा कल्पनारम्य नाही परंतु अध्यात्मिक विकास आणि जीवनाच्या वेगवेगळ्या परिस्थितींशी जुळवून घेत मानवी आचरणाचे कार्य करणारे गृहितक आहे. या कार्यपद्धतीची सुरुवात करून या विषयाची थोडी अधिक चौकशी करूया.

म्हणजे काय धर्म किंवा धर्म? मोकळेपणाने सांगायचे झाले तर मानवी जीवनातील पवित्र आणि ऐहिक पैलूंचे आधारित सार्वभौमिक नैतिक नियमम्हणून ओळखले जातात धर्म. सार्वभौम नैतिक कायदा कसा चालविला जातो याबद्दल कन्फ्युशियसने अतिशय महत्त्वपूर्ण आणि गहन शब्दांमध्ये वर्णन केले आहे. तो म्हणतो:

“देवाचा नियम हाच आपल्या अस्तित्वाचा नियम आहे. आपल्या अस्तित्वाचा नियम पूर्ण करणे याला आपण नैतिक नियम म्हणतो. व्यवस्था कमी झाल्यावर नैतिक कायदा याला आपण धर्म म्हणतो.

“नैतिक नियम हा एक कायदा आहे ज्याच्या कार्यापासून आपण आपल्या अस्तित्वातील त्वरित सुटू शकत नाही. ज्या कायद्यातून आपण सुटतो तो नैतिक नियम नाही. म्हणूनच, नैतिक मनुष्य परिश्रमपूर्वक पाहतो. . . त्याच्या गुप्त विचारांवर.

“जेव्हा आनंद, क्रोध, दुःख आणि आनंद यासारख्या आवेश जागृत नसतात तेव्हा तेच आपले खरं किंवा नैतिक अस्तित्व असते. जेव्हा या वासना जागृत होतात आणि प्रत्येकजण योग्य प्रमाणात आणि पदवी प्राप्त करतो तेव्हा ती नैतिक व्यवस्था आहे. आपले खरे स्वतःचे किंवा नैतिक अस्तित्व अस्तित्वाचे महान वास्तव आहे आणि नैतिक व्यवस्था ही जगातील सार्वभौम कायदा आहे.

"जेव्हा खरा नैतिक अस्तित्व आणि नैतिक व्यवस्था लक्षात येते तेव्हा विश्वाचा ब्रह्मांड बनतो आणि सर्व गोष्टींचा पूर्ण विकास आणि विकास होतो."<sup>१</sup>

वरील एक प्रश्न नैतिक अस्तित्वाचे आणि नैतिक व्यवस्थेचे एकीकरण विश्वातील स्वर्गातील साम्राज्य कसे निर्माण करू शकते हे संक्षिप्तपणे स्पष्ट करते.

हे निर्विवाद नाही की मानवी इच्छेपेक्षा उंचाचा कायदा इव्हेंट्सचे नियमन करतो. आपल्या सर्वांमध्ये कायद्याची किंवा शक्तीची भिन्न व्याख्या असू शकतात. खरं तर, पुरुष आणि स्त्रियांप्रमाणे कायद्याच्या जितक्या व्याख्या असतील. "पण या सर्व परिभाषा पलीकडे काही विशिष्टता असू शकेल जे निर्विवाद असेल. मूळ एक आहे. " गांधीजी या कायद्याचे वर्णन करतात की "अशी निर्विवाद गोष्ट जी आपल्याला सर्वांना वाटते पण ती आपल्याला माहित नाही." जर एखाद्या भाषेत त्या कायद्याचे किंवा सामर्थ्याचे संपूर्ण वर्णन मानवी भाषेत करणे शक्य झाले असेल तर गांधीजी त्याला सत्य म्हणतील, कारण कोणत्याही टीकाचा निसर्गाने निः निरस्त करण्याचा त्यांचा विचार आहे. आणि सत्य नंतर एक अविरत आणि अविरत शोध, असेल *योग* मानवी जीवनाचा.

चार्ल्स किंगसलीला लिहिलेल्या आपल्या प्रसिद्ध पत्रांमध्ये वैज्ञानिक आदर्श या संकल्पनेविषयी बोलताना टीएच हक्सले यांनी म्हटले आहे की, "लहानपणी खरं तर खाली बसून राहा, प्रत्येक पूर्वकल्पित कल्पना सोडून द्यायला तयार राहा, निसर्गाने जिथे जिथे जाल तिथे आणि विनम्रपणे अनुसरण करा. काहीही शिकणार नाही. " सत्याचा हा प्रयत्नही हिंदू धर्माचा आदर्श आहे, जरी शारीरिक आणि अध्यात्मिक नियम शोधण्याच्या साधनांमध्ये नैसर्गिकरित्या बदल होणे आवश्यक आहे परंतु मूलभूत वैज्ञानिक दृष्टीकोन आणि स्वभाव या दोन्ही बाबतीत एकसारखे आहेत. एक वैज्ञानिक शेवटच्या सत्य गोष्टी चरणांच्या मालिकेद्वारे समजून घेण्याचा प्रयत्न करतो, प्रत्येक चरणांचे सावधपणे विश्लेषण करते. परंतु प्राचीन भारतातील agesणी काही मानसिक दृष्टिकोन (चिंतन सूत्र) च्या मदतीने थेट वास्तवाकडे गेले.<sup>२</sup> पॉल ड्यूसेन म्हणतात, "इतर कोणत्याही देशांपेक्षा भारत प्रतीकांची भूमी आहे, हे भारतीय विचारांच्या स्वभावामुळे घडले आहे. ज्यामुळे दूरदूरपर्यंत त्यांच्याशी बुद्धिमानी वागणूक मिळण्याची स्थिती निर्माण होण्याआधीच सर्वात गर्भाच्या समस्यांस स्वतःलाच लागू केले."<sup>३</sup>

गौतम बुद्ध, हिंदूंच्या महान एक, Kalamas, Kosaldesh एक क्षत्रिय कुळांच्या सल्ला, हे वैज्ञानिक आदर्श ठेवून होता. तो म्हणाला, "मी जे सांगत आहे ते ते स्वीकारू नका

कारण यापूर्वी असे म्हटले गेले आहे; हे स्वीकारू नका कारण ते परंपरेने दिले गेले आहे; तसे असू शकते याचा विचार करून ते स्वीकारू नका; ते पवित्र शास्त्रातही आहे म्हणून ते स्वीकारू नका; ते स्वीकारू नका कारण ते अनुमानाने सिद्ध केले जाऊ शकते; ते शब्दशः शहाणपणाचे आहे असे समजू नका; ते स्वीकारू नका कारण ते योग्य आहे असे दिसते; ते मान्य करू नका कारण हे एखाद्या प्रसिद्ध किंवा पवित्र भिक्षूने म्हटले आहे; परंतु आपण आपल्या फायद्यासाठी आणि आनंदासाठी अनुकूल असलेल्या विवेकबुद्धीच्या आणि आपल्या विवेकबुद्धीला हे आकर्षित करते असे समजल्यास ते स्वीकारा आणि त्यानुसार जगा. "

धर्मत्यागासाठी दगडावर ठेचून ठार मारण्याचा प्रयत्न केला जात होता तेव्हा अनेक इस्लामिक संस्थांच्या प्रमुखांनी कुराणात त्यांचा उल्लेख केला होता तेव्हा गांधीजींनी कोणत्याही परिस्थितीत या पद्धतीच्या नैतिकतेवर प्रश्नचिन्ह उपस्थित केले आणि स्पष्टपणे लिहिले:

“प्रत्येक धर्मातील प्रत्येक सूत्रानुसार, या युगात, युनिव्हर्सल सेंटसिडिट मागितल्यास, कारण आणि सार्वत्रिक न्यायाची justiceसिडिट टेस्ट सादर करणे. जगाच्या शास्त्रवचनांनी पाठिंबा मिळाला असला तरीही त्रुटी कोणत्याही सूटचा दावा करू शकत नाही. ” (यंग इंडिया, २०-२-१९२२, पृ. ७४)

“मी हे सांगू इच्छितो की स्वतः मुसलमानांच्या मुसलमानांच्या मुसलमान शिकवणीवरही टीका होऊ शकत नाही. प्रत्येक खरा शास्त्रवचना केवळ टीकेद्वारे प्राप्त होतो. तथापि, आमच्याकडे दुसरा मार्गदर्शक नाही परंतु काय प्रकट केले आहे आणि काय असू शकत नाही हे आम्हाला सांगण्याचे कारण आहे. मी त्रुटी ही सापेक्ष संज्ञा असल्याचे मौलानाच्या विधानाला पुष्टी देतो. परंतु आम्हाला माहित आहे की काही गोष्टी सार्वभौम चुका म्हणून स्वीकारल्या जातात. यातना देऊन मृत्यू, अशी अपेक्षा आहे. (यंग इंडिया, ५-१९-१९२२, पृ. १११)

“सर्व काही कारणास्तव चाचणीला सादर करावे लागेल. जगात आहेत निःसंशय गोष्टींच्या कारणापेक्षा अधिक आहेत. आम्ही त्यांना कारणास्तव येण्यास नकार देत नाही परंतु ते स्वतः येणार नाहीत. त्यांच्या स्वभावाने ते तर्क नाकारतात. देवतेचे रहस्य असेच आहे. हे कारणास्तव विसंगत नाही, त्यापलीकडे आहे. ” (यंग इंडिया, २-३-३-१-१९२२, पृष्ठ ११०) हिंदूंच्या वृत्तीबद्दल खरोखरच सारांश आहे.

गांधीजींच्या लेखांमधील वरील अर्कांमध्ये सार्वजनिक नैतिकता आणि सर्वसाधारण गोष्टींबद्दल सत्यतेच्या निकषाच्या निर्णयाच्या निर्णयासाठी उद्भवणाऱ्या प्रश्नांशी संबंधित मानवता.

हिंदू शास्त्रीय धार्मिक विचारांचे दोन गटांत वर्गीकरण केले गेले आहे, उदा. *Shrutis* आणि *Smritis* समावेश *धर्मशास्त्रासाठी आहे. श्रुतींमध्ये* वेद आणि उपनिषद अशा वास्तविकता जसे आहे तसे' चे ज्ञान असते जे सत्यापित केले जाऊ शकते आणि ते आपल्या चारित्र्यात वैश्विक आहे.

अशातो तत्त्वज्ञान PERENNIS किंवा बारमाही तत्त्वज्ञान म्हणून दर्शविले जाऊ शकते. “बारमाही तत्त्वज्ञान मुख्यत्वे, गोष्टी आणि जीवन आणि मनाच्या अनेक जगासाठी महत्त्वपूर्ण, दैवी वास्तविकता संबंधित आहे. परंतु या वास्तविकतेचे स्वरूप असे आहे की ज्यांनी स्वतः ला प्रेमळ, अंतःकरणाने शुद्ध आणि आत्म्याने गरीब केले आहे अशा काही शर्ती पूर्ण केल्याशिवाय त्यास थेट आणि ताबडतोब ताब्यात घेतले जाऊ शकत नाही. हे असे का असावे? आम्हाला माहित नाही. आम्हाला त्या स्वीकारल्या पाहिजेत यापैकी फक्त एक तथ्य आहे, आम्हाला ती आवडत असो वा नसो आणि तरी अक्षम्य आणि अशक्य वाटू शकतील. हे केवळ शारिरीक प्रयोग करत आहेत

जे आपल्याला पदार्थांचे अंतरंग स्वरूप आणि त्यातील संभाव्यता शोधू शकतात. आणि केवळ मानसिक आणि नैतिक प्रयोग करूनच आपल्याला मनाचे अंतरंग स्वरूप आणि त्यातील संभाव्यता शोधता येते. सरासरी कामुक जीवनाच्या सामान्य परिस्थितीत मनाची या क्षमता सुप्त आणि अप्रसिद्ध राहतात. जर आम्हाला त्या लक्षात आल्या तर आम्ही काही अटी पूर्ण केल्या पाहिजेत आणि काही नियम पाळले पाहिजेत, जे अनुभव अनुभवांनी वैध असल्याचे दर्शविले आहे.

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चिरंतन सत्य देखील आणखी एक मार्ग स्पष्ट केले जाऊ शकते. “हे महान विश्वाच आत्म्याने व्यापलेले आहे. आत्मा (सेल्फ) एक प्रेम न करणारा आहे; तो (ते) मनापेक्षा वेगवान आहे. इंद्रियां त्याच्यापर्यंत पोहोचू शकत नाहीत (ती). तो (तो) सदैव त्यांच्या पलीकडे आहे. प्रेम नसलेला, तो (तो) इंद्रियानुसार प्रयत्न करण्यापेक्षा मागे पडतो. आत्म्याद्वारे आत्मा (श्वास) येतो जो सर्व गोष्टींचे जीवन आहे. तो (तो) चालतो आणि तो (तो) चालत नाही. तो (तो) दूर आहे, आणि तो (तो) जवळ आहे. तो (तो) सर्वांमध्ये आहे आणि तो (तो) सर्वांच्या बाहेर आहे. ” (इशोपनिषद, and व.). दुस words्या शब्दांत, आत्मा किंवा शक्ती जे विश्वाला टिकवून ठेवते ते अफाट, सार्वत्रिक आणि अतींद्रिय आहे. पण आत्मा जो चैतन्य आहे तो असीममध्ये उठविला गेला आहे आणि म्हणूनच त्याने अदम्य होण्यासाठी, राज्य केले पाहिजे आणि मानवी अंतः करणात परिवर्तन केले पाहिजे. भक्ती, *Nishkama कर्मा* किंवा desireless क्रिया शब्द व एकच मनाचा सत्य साधक मृत्यू मात करू शकता आणि अलौकिक ज्ञान दैवी वास्तव थेट समज आहे आणि अमरत्व प्राप्त करू शकता. (इशोपनिषद, ११ आणि १))

*स्मिरीट्स* त्यांचे मूळ निर्माण करतात आणि वैयक्तिक संस्थापकांकडून अधिकार प्राप्त करतात आणि सामाजिक आणि धार्मिक नियम आणि कायद्यांचा सामना करतात. हे कायदे सुधारले किंवा बदलले जाऊ शकतात, कारण एका युगात समाजाला टिकवणारा कोड दुसऱ्या युगात गुदमरू शकतो. आणि बदलत्या तंत्रज्ञानासह सामाजिक-आर्थिक परिस्थिती बदलत असताना, ज्यामुळे राजकीय संरचना प्रभावित होते, कायद्याचेकरणे आवश्यक आहे आणि पुन्हाकरणे आवश्यक आहे

पुनरुत्थानमिलियूच्या प्रकाशात आणि बदलत्या परिस्थितीच्या संदर्भातव्याख्या. जर बदलत्या परिस्थितीशी संबंधित कायदे पाळत नसाल किंवा त्यांच्याकडे दुर्लक्ष केले गेले तर ते सामाजिक जीव किंवा सामाजिक उलथापालथीचा गळा दाबण्याचे कारण असू शकतात, कधीकधी हिंसक आणि रक्तरंजित. म्हणून कायदे तयार करणे, दुरुस्ती करणे आणि राजकीय घटने आणि सामाजिक विवेकबुद्धीचे पुनर्विभाजन करणे हे सुजपणाचे आणि सामाजिक हिताचे आहे. अशाच प्रकारे भारतीय कायद्याने आधुनिक जीवन, परिस्थिती आणि कल्पना यांच्या अनुरूप होण्यासाठी लोकसभेने हिंदू कायद्याचे कोड केले आहे.

धार्मिक विचारांचे आत्मा किंवा दैवी वास्तविकता आणि धार्मिक व सामाजिक आचारसंहिता यांचे ज्ञान हे विभागणे हिंदू धर्मातील एक वैशिष्ट्यपूर्ण वैशिष्ट्य आहे आणि ते इतर धर्मांमध्ये आढळले नाही असे म्हटले आहे. या क्रियेच्या शहाणपणाचा अभ्यास हिंदू धर्माच्या नोंदीतून केला जाऊ शकतो. इस्लामी आणि ख्रिश्चन सामर्थ्यामधील मध्ययुगीन धार्मिक धर्मयुद्धांप्रमाणे हिंदू धर्माच्या नावाखाली (ज्यात बौद्ध आणि जैन धर्म समाविष्ट आहे) कोणतीही युद्धे लढली गेली नाहीत. किंवा हिंदू धर्मात कोणत्याही धार्मिक श्रद्धावर प्रश्न विचारण्यासाठी कोणतीही चौकशी केलेली नाही. जरी, बौद्ध धर्म हा अशोकाने स्थापलेल्या राज्याचा राज्य धर्म होता, मानव इतिहासातील सर्वात शहाणे आणि महान राजा होता, तो खरोखर दृष्टिकोनातून धर्मनिरपेक्ष होता आणि हिंदूवाद आणि जैन धर्मात भेदभाव केला नाही. गुजरातमधील हिंदू धर्माध लोकांच्या हस्ते धार्मिक छळ होऊ नये म्हणून पारशीतून पळून जाताना ते पुन्हा गुजरातमधील हिंदू राजा होते.

हिंदू सभ्यतेची लवचिकता आणि कॅथोलिकता तिला "स्वतःच्या अत्यावश्यक स्वभावाच्या बाबतीत स्वतःचे नूतनीकरण करण्यास आणि स्वतःला बदलण्यास सक्षम करते जेणेकरून आपण ज्या वयात राहत आहोत त्या वयात सुसंगतता आणू शकेल." अगदी सोप्या भाषेत सांगायचे तर, प्राचीन भारतीय आत्मा स्वतःला न थांबता एक नवीन रूप धारण करतो. भारतातील धर्म सर्व नैसर्गिक धर्म आहेत. ते नैसर्गिकरित्या विकसित आणि भरभराट झाले आहेत. ते स्वतः ला जागरूक नव्हते कारण ते वैश्विक वास्तवाचे अभिव्यक्ती होते. त्यांनी स्वतः ची व्याख्या केली नाही. परंतु जेव्हा ख्रिश्चन आव्हान उद्भवले तेव्हा त्यांना स्वतःला परिभाषित करावे लागले. त्यांनी केले. लोकमान्य, गांधीजी आणि गीतेबद्दलच्या अरबिंदो यांचे भाष्य हे स्वतः ची व्याख्या करण्याच्या प्रयत्नांचा एक भाग होते. गीता आणि रामायणही दोन महाकाव्ये

आणि महाभारतआता दरवर्षी लाखो प्रतींमध्ये विकतात. आत्म्याच्या जीवनाचे हे बौद्धिकरण, जर आपण या घटनेचे वर्णन केले तर त्यास त्याच्या नैसर्गिक प्रवाहापासून काही वंचित ठेवले आहे परंतु यामुळे आपल्याला एक सामर्थ्य दिले आहे जे आपल्या दिवसांत मौल्यवान आहे.”<sup>5</sup>

अरब-इस्लाम पश्चिम संस्कृती जगातील प्रतिसाद contrasting, तसेच सर्जनशील होऊ नकार आणि Girilal जैन opines



अर्थ लावणे *कुराण हादिथ* आणि *मेलच नाव होतंलवचिक*, हे फक्त स्वतः एक समान नाकारला आहे फायदा परंतु परिणामी, धक्का आणि निराशेच्या सखोल अवस्थेत खाली पडले. हे निर्विवाद आहे की भारतीय लोकांचा बहुसंख्य लोक हिंदू धर्म आहे असा दावा करतात की लोकशाही भारतात यशस्वी झाली आहे आणि ती तिस *third* या जगातील इतर देशांमध्ये मुळे मिळवण्यात अपयशी ठरली आहे. हिंदू धर्म स्थिर आहे. हिंदू धर्म हा बळकट गंगेसारखा आहे जो त्याच्या प्रवाहामध्ये इतर प्रवाह आणि सहायक नद्यांद्वारे सामील झाला आहे. दुर्दैवाने इस्लाम आणि ख्रिश्चन धर्म जो परदेशी विजेत्यांचा उपक्रम म्हणून भारतात आला होता त्यांनी मुख्य प्रवाहात मिसळले नाही जरी त्यांनी निःसंशयपणे हिंदू धर्मात आंतर-कृती केली आणि एकमेकांवर प्रभाव पाडला.

हिंदू धर्माचे आणखी एक विशिष्ट वैशिष्ट्य म्हणजे शिकवण *कर्म* आणि पुनर्जन्माची. स्थानांतरण हा सिद्धांत नसून वस्तुस्थिती आहे. गांधीजींनी पुढच्या जीवनावर आणि विश्वास ठेवला *कर्माच्या अखडतेवर* सलग जन्माद्वारे. आपण येथे काय पेरतो, येथे आणि इतरत्र कापणी केली पाहिजे - सुटलेला नाही. नियम *कर्माचा* कठोर आहे. तथापि, एखाद्याच्या शेवटल्या क्षणीही पश्चात्ताप केल्यामुळे पाप पाण्यात धुले जाईल आणि परिणामी त्याचे निर्जंतुकीकरण होईल. जगाला हिंदू धर्माच्या योगदानापैकी मुका निर्माण आणि चारमाणासाठी ओळख याविषयी कल्पना आहे *आश्रमांची*. या आणि इतर बऱ्याच कल्पनांचा संदर्भ वाचकाला या पुस्तकाच्या पानांमध्ये मिळेल.

मध्ये ग्रंथ एक *Smritis* शिकलो, चांगल्या त्यानंतर जे काही राग आणि जोड आणि अंतः करणात अनुभव आहे जे मुक्त आहेत जे आहे की *धर्म* किंवा धर्म म्हणते. गांधीजीनसले तरी *आचार्य* किंवा आदिशंकराचार्य यांच्यासारख्या क्रुद्ध विद्वानाधुनिक काळातील हिंदू धर्माचा हा खरा आवाज आहे ज्याने त्याला नवे वळण आणि दिशा दिली आहे. त्यांनी त्यांचे आत्मचरित्र '*स्टोरी ऑफ माय एक्सपेरिमेंट्स विथ ट्रुथ*' म्हटले आहे. सत्याच्या प्रदीर्घ, कठोर आणि अथक शोधानंतर त्याला आढळले की हिंदू धर्माने त्याच्या सर्व उच्च नैतिक आकांक्षा पूर्ण केल्या आणि भगवद्गीतेत त्याला सांत्वन, मित्र, मार्गदर्शक व तत्त्वज्ञानी सापडली. ते म्हणतात, "हे (गीता) सर्व हिंदू पंथांनी अधिकृत म्हणून स्वीकारले आहे. हे कोणत्याही प्रकारच्या धगधग्यातून मुक्त आहे. थोडक्यात होकारात तो संपूर्ण तर्कसंगत नैतिक कोड देतो. हे बुद्धी आणि हृदय दोन्ही संतुष्ट करते. हे तत्त्वज्ञानात्मक आणि भक्ती दोन्ही आहे. त्याचे अपील सार्वत्रिक आहे. भाषा आश्चर्यकारकपणे सोपी आहे."

सर्व गांधीजींनी करण्याची शिफारस केली आहे *नामाची* त्यांच्या मनाची शुध्दीकरण आणि कर्तव्यदक्षतेच्या पलीकडे जाण्यासाठी आणि प्रार्थना. गीतेच्या १२ व्या अध्यायातील प्रवचनाच्या अनुषंगाने गांधीजी साधकांना एक मार्ग किंवा इतर मार्गाने भक्त बनण्याचा सल्ला देतात आणि स्वतःच्या अनुभवाने करण्याची शिफारस करतात *नामा* व प्रार्थना.

हिंदू धर्माचे सार इतके नियोजित आणि व्यवस्थित केले आहे की प्रत्येक विभाग नैसर्गिकरित्या पुढचा भाग घेऊन जातो. पहिला अध्याय हिंदू धर्माच्या

नैतिक आधाराचा अभ्यास करतो. विश्वावर टिकून राहणारे सार्वत्रिक नैतिक कायदा किंवा शक्ती यांचे स्वरूप दुसऱ्या अध्यायात वर्णन केले आहे. विश्वास किंवा प्रशिक्षित कारण किंवा दोघांचे न्याय्य संयोजन यांच्याद्वारे - एखादा साधक परात्पर आत्म्याशी कसा सामना करू शकतो? या कॉन्डुनचे उत्तर तिसऱ्या अध्यायात सापडेल. भगवद्गीता एक उपनिषद्, मजकूर ब्रह्मविद्यावरील आणि योगशास्त्राचा उहापोह आहे धर्मावरील आणि हिंदूकोणतेही पुस्तक याचा उल्लेख केल्याशिवाय पूर्ण होऊ शकत नाही. खरं तर हे असे एकमेव पुस्तक आहे जे सर्वोच्चसमवेत असलेल्या सर्व दृष्टिकोनांना सामंजस्य करते आणि म्हणूनच गांधीजींच्या गीतांविषयीच्या विचारांना या संग्रहात सन्मानाचे स्थान आहे. सर्वासाठी परिचित असलेला बीट ट्रॅक आणि सर्वांना चालणे इतके सोपे आहे, उदा. नामा आणि प्रार्थनेचा शेवटच्या अध्यायात व्यवहार केला आहे.

हे पुस्तक प्रामुख्याने सामान्य वाचकांसाठी आणि इंग्रजी माध्यमाच्या शाळांमध्ये जाणाऱ्या हिंदू मुले आणि मुलींसाठी आहे ज्याची धार्मिक पृष्ठभूमी नसलेल्या कुटुंबात वाढ झाली आहे किंवा ज्या धर्मात कमी प्रभाव आहे. तसे ते हिंदू धर्माची ओळख म्हणून काम करेल. पुढील अभ्यासासाठी, स्वारस्यपूर्ण वाचक्या शीर्षकाच्या तीन खंडांत विस्तृत संग्रहाचा संदर्भ घेऊ शकतात शोधात सर्वोच्च गांधीजींच्या.

## GLOSSARY

आचार्य-Preceptor

अहिंसा-Non-हिंसा;प्रेम; Antyay-an

जातीबाहेर टाकणे

आश्रम-A आध्यात्मिक निवृत्ती ठिकाण एक वारसदार; अभ्यास आणि

अनुशासनात्मक जीवनासाठी

असुरe डेमनman आत्मनः सेल्फ;

आत्मा

अवतार- देवाचा अवतार. हा शब्द सहसा विष्णू, जोपासना आणि दावीदाला  
अन्नधान्य आणि इतरदेव दहा अवतार दर्शवितात Bhagvadgita- (सर्वतोमुखी गीता  
म्हणून ओळखले जाते) महान हिंदुमहाभारतएक भाग  
उच्च ज्यात कृष्णा दैवी नायकआहे

भजन-Hymn भक्त-Devotee

भक्ती-Devotion

Bhattha-दैनिकभक्ता

ब्रह्मचर्या-अखंडता; ब्रह्मचर्य आत्म-नियंत्रण; उच्च धर्मातील हिंदूंचा पहिला टप्पा  
[[सामान्यतःम्हणून ओळखला जातो <को (द्विजधार्मिक ग्रंथांमध्ये)]]  
धार्मिक जीवन

ब्राह्मण- अंतिम सत्य

ब्राह्मण- हिंदू धर्माद्वारे मंजूर चार जातींपैकी पहिले किंवा सर्वोच्चतम (शब्दशः  
एक ब्रह्म कोण जाणतो - अंतिम वास्तव); पाहू क्षत्रिय, वैश्य आणि Shoodra

Chandala-anजातीबाहेर

दल-Corps दल-Pluses

दर्शन-Sightटाकणे;दृष्टी

Deenabandhuगरीब लोकांना-Friend. उशीरा CF अँड्रूज, गांधीजीजवळचा मित्र  
भारतीय प्रदान एक आदरार्थी

देवा-God

धर्म-Religionशीर्षक;कर्तव्य. कायदा, न्याय, कर्तव्य आणि पुण्य या संकल्पनांचा  
स्वीकार करणारा एक व्यापक संस्कृत शब्द.

धरमशाला-A प्रवास किंवा pilgramsमोफत विश्रांती घर

धरणेआपण पळून कर्ज किवात्याच्याएजंटएक कर्जदार दारापाशी संयम बसून

गाथाधार्मिक गीते -Collection

[इलेव्हन]

गायत्रीसूर्य-देवाच्या-Invocation, म्हटलीउच्च जात हिंदू

घाट (जळत)-Place मृतदेहअंत्यसंस्कार आहेत जेथे

गीता-See Bhagvadgita

गोपी-एक कृष्णा, महाभारत दैवी नायक, त्याच्या बालपणखर्च केली आहे नव पुस्तक घेऊन येतो जेथे गोकुळ दूध-दासी

गुण-Quality किंवा गुणधर्मआहे.सर्व अस्तित्वात असलेल्या गोष्टींचा अंदाज येऊ शकतो सत्त्व (चांगुलपणा; सौहार्द; ताल), रजस (उत्कटता; गति; क्रिया) आणि तम(अंधार; जडत्व; आळस)

गुरुpreअ आज्ञापूर्वक. शिक्षक.

हरिजन -खरोखरच, देवाचा माणूस; अस्पृश्य गांधीजींनी अस्पृश्यांसाठी प्रथम वापरलेला शब्द. तसेचसाप्ताहिक 'हरिजन' फेब्रुवारी 1933महात्मार्जीच्या यांनी केली

Hridaya-Heart

Ishwara-Creatorसंदर्भित;सर्वोच्च वैयक्तिक देव

कलियुग- हिंदू पौराणिक कथेनुसारचार युग

काळाच्या सुरुवातीपासूनचआहेत, उदा. s'zzgu (सत्ययुगात), यामध्ये

•टीzgu

(Tretayuga),

कटUμzgu

(द्वापराच्या) आणि एस

<∞zgu (कलियुग),

उपस्थित युगसार्वत्रिक निकृष्टावस्थायुग

Kamadhenुइंद्राचाआपण पळून ज्या प्रत्येक दूध नाही त्याला कशाची इच्छा होती.

म्हणूनच, इच्छित वस्तूंचे

कर्म-क्रिया;अर्थाने (पूर्वीच्या क्रियांचा परिणाम म्हणून साध्य होतो) अर्थाने देखील वापरला जातो.

कर्मयोगीकर्मयोगाचा- जो- जो कर्मयोगम्हणजेच

खादी- हात-कातूर, हाताने विणलेल्या कापडाच्याशिकविणाराप्रायोगिक

किर्पण- शीख आहेत अशा धातूच्या शस्त्रानेठेवण्याचा आदेश

क्षत्रिय- हिंदू धर्माद्वारे मंजूर केलेल्या चार जातींपैकी (योद्धा जातीची) दुसरी;

ब्राह्मण, वैश्य आणि शूद्रपहा, ज्याच्या

कुंडलिनी- शरीरात स्थित असलेल्या सहा नक्षत्रांमधील सर्प सामर्थ्यजागेमुळे

व्यक्तीला अलौकिक तत्त्वकपड्याने ऐक्य प्राप्त होते असे म्हटले जाते

कर्तृ-माणच्या वरच्या; भारतीय शर्ट

लाठी-वुडन स्टाफ

लोटा-ब्रॅस किंवा तांबे कंटेनर (सहसा पाण्यासाठी वापरला जातो)

महाभारत- एक महान हिंदू महाकाव्यांपैकी कृष्ण हा एक दैवी नायक

महात्मा आहेमहान आत्मा

मंत्र आहे- धार्मिक ग्रंथातील; जादू

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मेरीडा—प्रतिबंध; मर्यादा

**संन्यासी-** ज्याने संन्यास घेतला आहे

संस्कार-मूल नाव ठेवणे, प्रथम मुलाला खायला घालणे, धागा-समारंभ इ. सारख्या हिंदूमध्ये आवश्यक आणि शुद्धिकरण संस्कार किंवा संस्कार. ; जागरूक आणि बेशुद्ध, घरगुती, सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक आणि धार्मिक प्रभाव जो एखाद्या व्यक्तीच्या निर्मितीस जातो; वैशिष्ट्ये

संस्थाव्यक्तीमानसिक-Voluntary

सती-A शुद्ध आणि बाई, आध्यात्मिक अत्यंत उत्क्रांत

सत्त्व-See गुणा

सत्य-Truth

सत्याग्रह-Literally, सत्य वर आग्रह असोसिएशन; सत्याला चिकटून राहणे; आत्मा-शक्ती; सत्य-शक्ती

Savarna-Belonging उच्च जातकरणे;

शास्त्र-Hindu पवित्र शास्त्र श्लोक-Verse श्लोक

श्रद्धा-Ceremony पितर उच्च-जात हिंदूकरून सादर;

Shuddhi-Conversion हिंदू शब्दशः

आत्मशुद्धीकरण शूद्र किंवा शूद्र- हिंदू धर्माद्वारे मंजूर चार जातींपैकी (मजुरांची जात) शेटची; ब्राह्मण, क्षत्रिय आणि वैश्य

स्मृती पहा- कायद्याचे मुख्य रूप मनु आणि इतर कायदात्यांच्या संबंधित विद्यार्थ्यांना दिले आणि त्यांच्या स्मरणशक्तीपासून लिहिण्यासाठी त्यांनी वचनबद्ध केले

सुपारी-देणा by-यांनी अरेका नट

स्वामी- पवित्र व्यक्ती. तसेच तुलनेत स्वामीच्या अर्थाने वापरला जातो

स्वराज-सेल्फ-नियमच्या; स्वतः ची सरकार तभारतीय

संगीतमध्ये-Musical वेळ किंवा उपाय तम-See गुणा

तपस्या-Penance

टिळक-Caste चिन्हकपाळवापरले

उपनिषदलवकरात लवकर धार्मिक तत्वज्ञान(जात-Sacred संस्कृत पुस्तके वैश्य आपण पळून व्यापारी आणि शेतक चार जाती तिसरा ) हिंदू धर्माद्वारे मंजूर; ब्राह्मण,

काश्त्रिय आणि शूद्र

वर्ण-व्यवसायावर आधारित कसमट; वर्णाश्रम पहा. तसेच त्वचाप्रणालीरंग

Varnasankaraजाती-Confussion

Varnashramaचार जाती (व्यवसाय आधारित) आणि पहिल्या तीन जाती (ब्राह्मण, क्षत्रिय आणि वैश्य), म्हणजे, जीवन (Ashramas म्हणतात) चार टप्प्यात आपण पळून बैल «jzJ -

[पंधरावा]

ब्रह्मचर्य (विद्यार्थी स्टेज), u ± VMk - Grihastha (घर-धारक स्टेज),  
एचटीTŪxMk - Vanaprastha (वन रहिवासी च्या स्टेज), आणि  
सेझटीच्या - Sannyasa (संन्यासी स्टेज), हिंदू धर्म मंजूर

Vishvavidyalaya-University

यज्ञ-Religious यज्ञ

योगशरीर आणि मन नियंत्रण आपण पळून विज्ञान, कसे एकत्र, एकत्र सहभागी  
होण्यासाठी शिकवते जे विज्ञान, वैयक्तिक स्वतः ची आणि सर्वोच्च स्वतः  
योगीयोगकरतात-One

## सामग्रीटेबल

धडा

पृष्ठावर

द वाचक

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EDITORIAL सुचना

चार

GLOSSARY

इलेव्हन

### विभाग एक: नैतिक आधार

1.	हिंदू मूळहिंदूहिंदु	1
2.	कोण आहे?	2
3.	दोनहिंदू	4
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## एSECTION एकः द नैतिक आधारावर

1

### हिंदू हिंदूORIGIN

("गांधीजींच्या पोस्ट-प्रार्थना भाषणे" पासून)

गांधीजी नंतर प्रेक्षक सदस्य पाठवले आहे, एक प्रश्न संदर्भित: काय हिंदू आहे का? शब्दाचे मूळ काय आहे? हिंदू धर्म आहे का?

ते त्या काळासाठी समर्पक प्रश्न होते. तो कोणताही इतिहासकार नव्हता, असा दावा त्यांनी केला नाही. परंतु त्यांनी हिंदू धर्मातील काही अस्सल पुस्तक वाचले आहे की 'हिंदू' हा शब्द वेदांमध्ये आढळलेला नाही परंतु जेव्हा अलेक्झांडर द ग्रेटने भारतावर आक्रमण केले तेव्हा तेथील रहिवासी सिंधूच्या पूर्वेस, इंग्रजी भाषेद्वारे परिचित होते. सिंधू म्हणून भारतीयांचे वर्णन हिंदू म्हणून केले गेले. ग्रीक भाषेत 'एस' हे अक्षर 'एच' झाले होते. या रहिवाश्यांचा धर्म हिंदू झाला आणि त्यांना हे माहितच होते की हा सर्वात सहनशील धर्म होता. छळातून पळून गेलेल्या सुरुवातीच्या ख्रिश्चनांना, बेनी-इस्त्राईल म्हणून ओळखल्या जाणाऱ्या यहूदी लोकांना तसेच पारशींनाही याने आश्रय दिला. सर्वसमावेशक, आणि सहिष्णुतेसाठी उभे असलेल्या हिंदू धर्माशी संबंधित असल्याचा त्यांना अभिमान होता. आर्य विद्वानांनी त्यांना वैदिक धर्म म्हणून संबोधले आणि हिंदुस्थान आर्यवर्त म्हणून ओळखले जात असे. त्याला अशी कोणतीही आकांक्षा नव्हती. त्याच्या संकल्पनेचे हिंदुस्थान सर्व त्याच्यासाठी पुरेसे होते. यात नक्कीच वेदांचा समावेश होता, परंतु त्यात बरेच काही समाविष्ट होते. त्याला कोणत्याही प्रकारे हिंदू धर्माची प्रतिष्ठा बिघडू न घालता इस्लाम, ख्रिश्चन, झरोस्टेरियन धर्म आणि यहूदी धर्मातील सर्वांना समान आदरांजली वाहू शकते हे घोषित करण्यात काही विसंगती सापडली नाहीत. जोपर्यंत सूर्य प्रकाशेल तोपर्यंत असा हिंदू धर्म जगेल. Tulasidas तो एकमध्ये जातो दोहधर्म मूळ दया एम्बेड केली आहे, तर स्वार्थ शरीराच्या प्रेम उभा आहे ".आहे.तुळशी म्हणतात की शरीर नष्ट झाले तरी दया कधीच सोडू नये. "

## 2 हिंदु कोण आहे?

(गांधीजींच्या पत्रव्यवहाराचे एक प्रश्न व उत्तर, ज्याला “पत्रव्यवहार - एक कॅटेचिसम” या शीर्षकाखाली खाली नमूद केले गेले आहे.)

प्रश्न: तुम्ही नेहमीच स्वतःला हिंदू म्हटले आहे.दुसरीकडे आपण नाही त्यांच्या शास्त्राचे यासंबंधी child- लग्न, विधवा पुनर्विवाह, अस्पृश्यता निवारण, इमध्ये म्हणू हिंदू पंडितांना च्या अंतः प्रेरणा स्वीकारण्यास तयार तरूण भारत विरोधाभास सह Smritis केस ताठ उभे राहणे "दिनांक ऑगस्ट 26आहेत.आत्मसंयम ठेवण्याविषयी प्रेरणादायक श्लोक एकाच वेळी आणि त्याच पेनने लिहिले जाऊ शकत नाहीत ज्याने मनुष्याच्या क्रौर्यास प्रोत्साहित करणारे श्लोक लिहिले. ” The same, I submit, might be said of the many Puranas of the Hindus. Denying the Authority of these books, I do not understand how you can call yourself a “Hindu” (as understood at present) who has an implicit faith in the absurdities and immoralities (derogatory to common sense) preached by some of the Puranas. If you think it is not necessary for a Hindu to believe so, it would be in the service of truth if you were to define the Hindu religion and clear the arguments for your being regarded a Hindu.

You would not say a man is a “Hindu”, if he likes to call himself a Hindu, even though he does not follow the doctrine and Shastric injunction of the latter. Thus if I were to term myself a Christian and say that it is not necessary for a true Christian to have faith in the Bible or even Christ, I could only be termed a pretender.

Besides when you disagree in the matter of Shastras from the Hindus, it requires to be explained why you should prefer to call yourself a Hindu (in spite of the evil associations connected with this word and in spite of the word not being found in any Shashtra of the Hindus even) and not an “Arya” which is a better term even in itself. Besides your teachings as regards the interpretation of the Hindu Shastras have much in common with those of Arya Samaj.

A. : I call myself Sanatani Hindu, because I believe in the Vedas, Upanishads, the Puranas and the writings left by the holy reformers. This belief does not require me to accept as authentic everything that passes as Shastras. I reject everything that contradicts the fundamental principles of morality. I am not required to accept the *ipse dixit* or the interpretations of pundits. Above all I call myself a Sanatani Hindu, so long as the Hindu society in general accepts me as such. In a concrete manner he is a Hindu who believes in God, immortality of the soul, transmigration, the law of Karma and Moksha, and who tries to practise Truth and Ahimsa in daily life, and therefore practises cow-protection in its widest sense and understands and tries to act according to the law of Varnashrama.

*Young India*, 14-10-'26, p. 356

## II

(Originally appeared in "Notes" under the title "Hindu and Hinduism")

A correspondent who is a patient and diligent reader of *Young India* writes:

"Replying to the catechism of 'An Assistant Executive Engineer' in your issue of 14-10-'26 you say : 'In a concrete manner he is a Hindu who believes in God, immortality of the soul', etc.

"On reading this I am tempted to confront you with your own writings of nearly two years ago. In *Young India* of April 24, 1924, p. 136, you wrote, 'If I were asked to define the Hindu creed I should simply say: search after Truth through non-violent means. *A man may not believe in God and still call himself a Hindu.* Hinduism is a relentless pursuit after Truth.' "\*"

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\*The full extract from the article referred to above which appeared originally under the title "What Is Hinduism?" is as follows:

"It is the good fortune or the misfortune of Hinduism that it has no official creed. In order therefore to protect myself against any misunderstanding, I have said truth and non-violence is my creed. If I were asked to define the Hindu creed I should simply say: search after truth through non-violent means. A man may not believe even in God and still

The italics in both quotations are mine.

I am surprised that the correspondent does not see the distinction between the two statements. One refers to a Hindu in a concrete manner. Denial of the existence of God is not a characteristic of Hinduism. Millions of Hindus do believe in God. Therefore one may say 'there are Hindus who believe in God, etc.' But 'a man may not believe in God and still call himself a Hindu'. In the second case I have attempted an exhaustive definition. In the first case, I have given a fairly general illustration. I, therefore, see no conflict between the two positions.

*Young India*, 28-10'26, p. 372

### 3

## TWO ASPECTS OF HINDUISM

(From "The Do or Die Mission" by Pyarelal)

Gandhiji while in detention at Aga Khan Palace once remarked to Shri Pyarelal as under :

"There are two aspects of Hinduism. There is on the one hand the historical Hinduism with its untouchability, superstitious worship of stocks and stones, animal sacrifice and so on. On the other, we have the Hinduism of the Gita, the Upanishads and Patanjali's Yogasutras which is the acme of Ahimsa and oneness of all creation, pure worship of one immanent, formless, imperishable God. Ahimsa which to me is the chief glory of Hinduism has been sought to be explained away by our people as being meant for Sannyasis only. I do not share that view. I have held that it is the way of life and India has to show it to the world."

*Harijan*, 8-12-'46, p. 432

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call himself a Hindu. Hinduism is a relentless pursuit after truth and if today it has become moribund, inactive, irresponsive to growth, it is because we are fatigued and as soon as the fatigue is over, Hinduism will burst forth upon the world with a brilliance perhaps unknown before. Of course, therefore, Hinduism is the most tolerant of all religions. Its creed is all-embracing."

## HINDUISM ABHORS STAGNATION

(Originally appeared under the title "Hinduism of Today")

A correspondent styling himself "Sanatani Hindu" writes :

"Hinduism of today presents many a curious anomaly. No one cares to study it. . . . Those reputed as the most religious do not follow the Shastras in every detail.

"There is no definite body of doctrines or practices which may be called Sanatana and should be respected and observed as such. Every Hindu regards his own provincial usage as the Sanatan usage."

\* \* \*

The letter presents only one side of the case. There is reason for the correspondent's complaint. But Hinduism is a living organism liable to growth and decay, and subject to the laws of Nature. One and indivisible at the root it has grown into a vast tree with innumerable branches. The changes in the seasons affect it. It has its autumn and summer, its winter and spring. The rains nourish and fructify it too. It is and is not based on scriptures. It does not derive its authority from one book. The Gita is universally accepted, but even then it only shows the way. It has hardly any effect on custom. Hinduism is like the Ganges pure and unsullied at its source, but taking in its course the impurities in the way. Even like the Ganges it is beneficent in its total effect. It takes a provincial form in every province, but the inner substance is retained everywhere. Custom is not religion. Custom may change, but religion will remain unaltered.

Purity of Hinduism depends on the self-restraint of its votaries. Wherever their religion has been in danger, the Hindus have undergone rigorous penance, searched the causes of the danger and devised means for combating them. The Shastras are ever growing. The Vedas, Upanishads, Smritis, Puranas and Itihasas did not arise at one and the same time. Each grew out



of the necessities of particular periods, and therefore, they seem to conflict with one another. These books do not enunciate anew the eternal truths but show how these were practised at the time to which the books belong. A practice which was good enough in a particular period would, if blindly repeated in another, land people into the 'slough of despond'. Because the practice of animal sacrifice obtained at one time, shall we revive it today? Because at one time, we used to chop off the hands and feet of thieves, shall we revive that barbarity today? Shall we revive polyandry? Shall we revive child-marriages? Because we discarded a section of humanity one day, shall we brand their descendants today as out-castes?

Hinduism abhors stagnation. Knowledge is limitless and so also the application of truth. Every day we add to our knowledge of the powers of Atman, and we shall keep on doing so. New experience will teach us new duties, but truth shall ever be the same. Who has ever known it in its entirety? The Vedas represent the truth, they are infinite. But who has known them in their entirety? What goes today by the name of Vedas are not even a millionth part of the real Veda — the Book of Knowledge. And who knows the entire meaning of even the few books that we have? Rather than wade through these infinite complications, our sages taught us to learn one thing: 'As with the Self, so with the Universe.' It is not possible to scan the universe, as it is to scan the self. Know the self and you know the universe. But even knowledge of the self within presupposes ceaseless striving — not only ceaseless but pure, and pure striving presupposes a pure heart, which in its turn depends on the practice of Yamas\* and Niyamas — the cardinal and casual virtues.

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\*Yamas, the cardinal virtues according to Yogashastra are *Ahimsa* (Non-violence), *Satya* (Truth), *Asteya* (Non-stealing), *Brahmacharya* (Celibacy), *Aparigraha* (Non-possession); and the *Niyamas* or the casual virtues are, according to the same authority, *Shaucha* (Bodily purity), *Santosha* (Contentment), *Tapas* (Forbearance), *Swadhyaya* (Study of scriptures), *Ishwara Pranidhana* (Resignation to the Will of God). —MD

The practice is not possible without God's grace which presupposes faith and devotion. This is why Tulasidas sang of the glory of Ramanama, that it is why the author of the Bhagavata taught the *Dwadashamantra* (*Om Namo Bhagwate Vasudevaya*). To my mind he is a Sanatani Hindu who can repeat this *mantra* from the heart. All else is a bottomless pit, as the sage Akho\* has said.

*Young India*, 8-4-'26, p. 131

## 5

### WHAT HAS HINDUSTAN DONE FOR US?

(From "Brahmana-Non-Brahmana Question" — by MD)

*Q.*: We see you swear by Hinduism. May we know what Hinduism has done for us? Is it not a legacy of ugly and superstitious practices?

Gandhiji replied to the above question which was put to him after his talk at one of the places during his tour in South India as follows :

"I thought I had made it clear already. Varnashrama- dharma itself is a unique contribution of Hinduism to the world. Hinduism has saved us from *bhaya*, ie peril. If Hinduism had not come to my rescue, the only course for the me would have been suicide. I remain a Hindu because Hinduism is a leaven which makes the world worth living in. From Hinduism was born Buddhism. What we see today is not pure Hinduism, but often a parody of it. Otherwise it would require no pleading from me in its behalf, but would speak for itself, even as if I was absolutely pure I would not need to speak to you. God does not speak with His tongue, and man, in the measure that he comes near God, becomes like God. Hinduism teaches me that my body is a limitation of the power of the soul within.

"Just as in the West they have made wonderful discoveries in things material, similarly Hinduism had made still more marvellous discoveries in things of religion, of the

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\*A poet-seer of Gujarat

spirit, of the soul. But we have no eye for these great and fine discoveries. We are dazzled by the material progress that Western science has made. I am not enamoured of that progress. In fact, it almost seems as though God in His wisdom had prevented India from progressing along those lines so that it might fulfil its special mission of resisting the onrush of materialism. After all, there is something in Hinduism that has kept it alive up till now. It has witnessed the fall of Babylonian, Syrian, Persian and Egyptian civilization. Cast a look round you. Where is Rome and where is Greece? Can you find today anywhere the Italy of Gibbon, or rather the ancient Rome, for Rome was Italy? Go to Greece. Where is the world-famous Attic civilization? Then come to India, let one go through the most ancient records and then look round you and you would be constrained to say, 'Yes, I see here ancient India still living.' True, there are dung-heaps too, here and there, but there are rich treasures buried under them. And the reason why it has survived is that the end which Hinduism set before it was not development along material but spiritual lines.

“Among its many contributions the idea of man's identity with the dumb creation is a unique one. To me cow-worship is a great idea which is capable of expansion. Its freedom from the modern proselytization is also to me a precious thing. It needs no preaching. It says, 'Live the life.' It is my business, it is your business to live the life, and then we will leave its influence on ages. Then take its contribution in men; Ramanuja, Chaitanya, Ramkrishna, not to speak of the more modern names, have left their Impress on Hinduism. Hinduism is by no means a spent force or a dead religion.

“Then there is the contribution of the four Ashramas, again a unique contribution. There is nothing like it in the whole world. The Catholics have the order of celibates corresponding to *Brahmacharis*, but not as an institution, whereas in India every boy had to go through the first Ashrama. What a grand conception it was! Today our eyes are dirty, thoughts dirtier and bodies dirtiest of all, because we are denying Hinduism.

“There is yet another thing I have not mentioned. Max Muller said forty years ago that it was dawning on Europe that transmigration is not a theory, but a fact. Well, it is entirely the contribution of Hinduism.

“Today Varnashramadharma and Hinduism are misinterpreted and denied by its votaries. The remedy is not destruction, but correction. Let us reproduce in ourselves the true Hindu spirit, and then ask whether it satisfies the soul or not.”

*Young India*, 24-11-'27, p. 390 at p. 396

## 6

### WHY SHOULD A HINDU CLING TO HINDUISM ?

(From “True Inwardness”)

*Q.*: What is the speciality of Hinduism for which a Hindu need cling to it?

*A.*: This is an invidious question. Perhaps it is also profitless. But I must answer it, if only to show what I mean by religion. The closest, though very incomplete, analogy for religion I can find is marriage. It is or used to be an indissoluble tie. Much more so is the tie of religion. And just as a husband does not remain faithful to his wife, or wife to her husband, because either is conscious of some exclusive superiority of the other over the rest of his or her sex but because of some indefinable but irresistible attraction, so does one remain irresistibly faithful to one's own religion and find full satisfaction in such adhesion. And just as a faithful husband does not need, in order to sustain his faithfulness, to consider other women as inferior to his wife, so does not a person belonging to one religion need to consider others to be inferior to his own. To pursue the analogy still further, even as faithfulness to one's wife does not presuppose blindness to her shortcomings, so does not faithfulness to one's religion. Indeed faithfulness, not blind adherence, demands a keener perception of shortcomings and therefore a livelier sense of the proper remedy for their removal. Taking the view I do of religion, it

is unnecessary for me, to examine the beauties of Hinduism. The reader may rest assured that I am not likely to remain Hindu, if I was not conscious of its many beauties. Only for my purpose they need not be exclusive. My approach to other religions, therefore, is never as a fault-finding critic but as a devotee hoping to find the like beauties in the other religions and wishing to incorporate in my own the good, I may find in them and miss in mine.

*Harijan*, 12-8-'33, p. 4

## 7

### THE CHIEF VALUE OF HINDUISM

(From "Weekly Letter" by MD)

An American professor in Comparative Theology on a visit to India to study Indian religions intelligently, asked Gandhiji to tell her in a nut-shell the chief value of Hinduism, as she had been told "that Gandhiji was the life and soul of Hinduism". "It is hardly wise," she said, "to rest content to teach what you can out of books. One must meet the true representatives of these living religion."

Replying to her Gandhiji said : "The chief value of Hinduism lies in holding the actual belief that *all* life (not only human beings, but all sentient beings) is one, ie all life coming from the one universal source, call it Allah, God or Parameshwara. There is in Hinduism a scripture called Vishnusahasranama which simply means 'one thousand names of God'. These one thousand names do not mean that God is limited to those names, but that He has as many names as you can possibly give Him. You may give Him as many names as you like, provided it is one God without a second, whose name you are invoking. That also means that He is nameless too.

"The unity of *all* life is a peculiarity of Hinduism which confines salvation not to human beings alone but says that it is possible for all God's creatures. It may be that it is not possible, save through the human form, but that does not make man the lord of creation. It makes him the servant of God's

creation. Now when we talk of brotherhood of man, we stop there, and feel that all other life is there for man to exploit for his own purposes. But Hinduism excludes all exploitation. There is no limit whatsoever to the measure of sacrifice that one may make in order to realize this oneness with all life, but certainly the immensity of the ideal sets a limit to your wants. That you will see, is the antithesis of the position of the modern civilization which says : 'Increase your wants.' Those who hold that belief think that increase of wants means an increase of knowledge whereby you understand the Infinite better. On the contrary Hinduism rules out indulgence and multiplication of wants as these hamper one's growth to the ultimate identity with the Universal Self."

*Harijan*, 26-12-'36, p. 363 at p. 364

## 8

### DR. AMBEDKAR'S INDICTMENT OF HINDUISM

(Originally appeared under the title "Dr. Ambedkar's Indictment - II") (Dr.

Ambedkar was to have presided in May 1936 at the annual conference of the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal of Lahore. But the conference itself was cancelled because Dr. Ambedkar's address was found by the Reception Committee to be unacceptable. The author of the address had indicted Hinduism and quoted chapter and verse in proof of his threefold indictment — inhuman conduct itself, the unabashed justification for it on the part of the perpetrators, and the subsequent discovery that the justification was warranted to their scriptures. The questions that Dr. Ambedkar's indictment suggested were:

1. What are the scriptures?
2. Are all the printed texts to be regarded as an integral part of them or is any part of them to be rejected as unauthorized interpolations?
3. What is the answer of such accepted and expurgated scriptures on the question of untouchability, caste, equality of status, inter-dining and inter-marriages?

This all were ably examined by Dr. Ambedkar in his address but there were manifest flaws in Dr. Ambedkar's thesis. A statement of these flaws and Gandhiji's answer to the said three questions are given in the following article.)

The Vedas, Upanishads, Smritis and Puranas including Ramayana and Mahabharata are the Hindu scriptures. Nor is this a finite list. Every age or even generation has added to the list. It follows, therefore, that everything printed or even found handwritten is not scripture. The Smritis, for instance, contain much that can never be accepted as the word of God. Thus many of the texts that Dr. Ambedkar quotes from the Smritis cannot be accepted as authentic. The scriptures properly so-called can only be concerned with eternal verities and must appeal to any conscience, ie, any heart whose eyes of understanding are opened. Nothing can be accepted as the word of God which cannot be tested by reason or be capable of being spiritually experienced. And even when you have an expurgated edition of the scriptures, you will need their interpretation. Who is the best interpreter? No learned men surely. Learning there must be. But religion does not live by it. It lives in the experiences of its saints and seers, in their lives and sayings. When all the most learned commentators of the scriptures are utterly forgotten, the accumulated experience of the sages and saints will abide and be an inspiration for ages to come.

Caste has nothing to do with religion. It is a custom whose origin I do not know and do not need to know for the satisfaction of my spiritual hunger. But I do know that it is harmful both to spiritual and national growth. Varna and Ashrama are institutions which have nothing to do with castes. The law of Varna teaches us that we have each one of us to earn our bread by following the ancestral calling. It defines not our rights but our duties. It necessarily has reference to callings that are conducive to the welfare of humanity and to no other. It also follows that there is no calling too low and none too high. All are good, lawful and absolutely equal in status. The callings of a Brahmana — spiritual teacher — and a scavenger are equal, and their due performance carries equal

merit before God and at one time seems to have carried identical reward before man. Both were entitled to their livelihood and no more. Indeed one traces even now in the villages the faint lines of this healthy operation of the law. Living in Segaoon with its population of 600, I do not find a great disparity between the earnings of different tradesmen including Brahmanas. I find too that real Brahmanas are to be found even in these degenerate days who are living on alms freely given to them and are giving freely of what they have of spiritual treasures. It would be wrong and improper to judge the law of Varna by its caricature in the lives of men who profess to belong to a Varna whilst they openly commit a breach of its only operative rule. Arrogation of a superior status by any of the Varnas over another is a denial of the law. And there is nothing in the law of Varna to warrant a belief in untouchability. (The essence of Hinduism is contained in its enunciation of one and only God as Truth and its bold acceptance of Ahimsa as the law of the human family.)

I am aware that my interpretation of Hinduism will be disputed by many besides Dr. Ambedkar. That does not affect my position. It is an interpretation by which I have lived nearly half a century and according to which I have endeavoured to the best of my ability to regulate my life.

In my opinion the profound mistake that Dr. Ambedkar has made in his address is to pick out the texts of doubtful authenticity and value and the state of degraded Hindus who are no fit specimens of the faith they so woefully misrepresent. Judged by the standard applied by Dr. Ambedkar, every known living faith will probably fail.

In his able address, the learned Doctor has overproved his case. Can a religion that was professed by Chaitanya, Jnanadeva, Tukaram, Tiruvalluvar, Ramkrishna Paramhansa, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, Vivekananda and a host of others who might be easily mentioned, be so utterly devoid of merit as is made out in Dr. Ambedkar's address? A religion has to be judged not by its worst specimens but by the best it might have produced. For



that and that alone can be used as the standard to aspire to, if not to improve upon.

*Harijan*, 18-7-'36, p. 180

## 9

### AS OTHERS SEE US

Here is a letter which has been lying on my file for some time

:

“Your attitude towards religious conversion and particularly the hope you entertain for the Depressed Classes within the fold of Hinduism overlooks the prevalent practices of Hinduism as it exists in India today. It is impossible not to acknowledge the beauty and the sublimity of Hinduism expounded by Vivekananda and Sir S. Radhakrishnan. But is that the Hinduism that is taught to the masses of India or practised by the heads of Hindu religion? What are the millions of the poor Indian people — starving millions as you call them

— living in seven lakhs of villages seeking? Their first need is proper food, shelter and clothing so that they may be raised above the level of animals. Are the Depressed Classes anxious for temple entry?

Any religion is judged by its fruits. Here is a contrast. Take the case of the Christian religion, whether Roman Catholics or Protestants. The funds that are collected from the rich and poor are carefully accounted for and repaid in the form of medical and educational service. Religious worship is open to all alike. The number of schools, colleges, dispensaries, hospitals and orphanages admirably served by their religious institution bear eloquent testimony to the quality of faith that is in them. It is not a theology and philosophy which they possess but the self-sacrificing service which they render in abundant measure towards all that is contrast to the service rendered by the temples and *maths*. What are the uses of the wealth of temples and *maths*? Are not these weapons of superstition and oppression? The heads of these *maths* live princely lives with vast endowments, and when they care to stir out there is a huge retinue of palanquins, cars, elephants, camels and a host of

disciples descending on unhappy villages and towns, like locusts, for further collections. Their disciples who are priests are spread like spies throughout the districts, to collect money from the followers of various faiths, Madhvas, Lingayats, Shaivaites and so forth, under pain of excommunication or ostracism. I am informed that there are regular lawyers to collect dues and serve the interests of these religious heads, swamis and gurus. This state of affairs is an oppression worse than popery in its worst days. Not merely the accumulated wealth and the annual collections, which in all these *maths* must amount to several crores, are never properly accounted for, but this gigantic system of ghastly exploitation continues to be supported by the most intellectual leaders of the people as if Hindu society will break up by questioning it. This is practical Hinduism. Why should there be any surprise that the Depressed Classes alone should revolt against a system which denies equal rights to worship the Deity but keeps them also in a perpetual social excommunication? Why is it that no one ventures to question the priestly oppression, this draining away annually the wealth of the people without any service whatever? While the millions are hungry, ignorant and illiterate, even a small proportion of wealth of the *maths* and the temples is not turned to relieve human misery. Hinduism is so spiritual that it will not do it. Are the Hindu gods so ravenous that they require such an annual collection with complete indifference to those who give it? I doubt!

While the produce of the land is steadily drained away as land revenue on the one side by the State and religious extortion of the other, is it any wonder millions are underfed and poverty-stricken? Is it any relief to them to be told to work harder and more systematically in their leisure months after the harvest? What is taken in money and in kind should return to them in the form of a service they most need. If the poor unfortunate masses of India are not supported by the wealth of the Hindu *maths* to shake off their illiteracy, ignorance, hook-worm, malaria, leprosy, diarrhoea, dysentery, cholera, and plague — physical ills which they cannot at present get over

without relief — they will never be capable of bringing greater intelligence to bear upon the resources of Nature. It is exploitation by religious heads that has crushed the people, and the money-lender and the State combined have finished the process. It is not mere work and harder work, and the variety of cottage industries that these half-dead, half-living masses require, but more vocational schools and dispensaries, maternity and child-welfare centres and better food. They have paid for it in full and have been cheated out of the services they ought to get from religion and the State. When will the children of the villages have the light of morning in their eyes? In the process of evolution, to think that all that is dross in Hinduism will drop off like surface excrescence is as much as hoping that all that is vile in the present Government will also do the same by just wishing for it. If the State is not moved very easily by your Herculean endeavours, Hinduism requires a far more drastic purge as it has been established some thousands of years longer than this alien Government. I would rather love the State that renders services of all sorts for the revenue collected than this religion which does nothing.

Bishops and priests of the Christian religion, in spite of the fierce criticism levelled against them in this land and every other country, render humanitarian service unequalled by any other class of human beings who follow any other faith or no faith, and are approachable to all people. Christian missions, far from being wealthy, have become poorer and lost all their Western supporters who today acknowledge the greatness of Hinduism and challenge them to go forth and serve their fellowmen with their own money. If the humanitarian service of the Christian heads are acknowledged, it is far better to give to them some of the resources that are now misused so that with their humane service which the masses sorely need. What has Hinduism done for the villages, the most depressing morbid places under the Sun? Nothing ! Absolutely nothing! Government officials require *bhattha* to visit these places, and no wonder. One would welcome cheerfully the mechanical civilization of the West, but even that under Hindu hands becomes as vile as Bombay *chawls*. Anyone

with open unprejudiced eyes can see it. You have no objection to accept missionary humanitarian service, and yet will not consider what form of service Hinduism renders with its accumulated wealth in temples and *maths*. When these religious institutions serve the poor regardless of caste, creed or community, instead of exploiting their abysmal superstition, Hinduism will really begin to live.”

It is good to see ourselves as others see us. Try as we may, we are never able to know ourselves fully as we are, especially the evil side of us. This we can do only if we are not angry with our critics but will take in good part whatever they might have to say. Any way I propose to examine the forgoing criticism as dispassionately as I can. The grave limitations of Hinduism as it is seen today in practice must be admitted. Many *maths* and their administration are undoubtedly a disgrace to Hinduism. The money that is poured into some of them does not return to the worshippers in the form of service. This state of things must be ended or mended.

Humanitarian work done by Christian mission must also be admitted.

But these admissions of mine must not be interpreted to mean endorsement of the deductions of the writer. Economic and educational relief is required by most poor Indians in common with Harijans. But the latter suffer from special disabilities. It is not a question of what disabilities they resent. It is the duty of the so-called superior Hindus to break the chains that bind the Harijans even though they may hug them. The admission by the writer of the sublimity of Hinduism as expounded by Vivekananda and Radhakrishnan should have led to his discovery of its percolation down to the masses. I make bold to say that in spite of the crudeness which one sees among the villagers, class considered, in all that is good in human nature they compare favourable with any villagers in the world. The testimony is borne out by the majority of travellers who from the times of Huen Tsang down to the present times have recorded their impressions. The innate culture that the villages of India show, the art which one sees

in the homes of the poor, the restraint with which the villagers conduct themselves, are surely due to the religion that has bound them together from time immemorial.

In his zeal to belittle Hinduism, the writer ignores the broad fact that Hinduism has produced a race of reformers who have successfully combated prejudice, superstitions and abuses. Without any drum-beating Hinduism has devised a system of relief of the poor which has been the envy of many foreign admirers. I myself feel that it leaves much to be desired. It has its evil side. But from the philanthropic standpoint it has wholly justified itself. It is not the Indian habit to advertize charities through printed reports and the like. But he who runs may see the free kitchens and free medical relief given along indigenous lines. The writer belittles village work.

It betrays gross ignorance. If the *maths* and the revenue offices were extinguished and free schools were opened the people would not be cured of their inertia. *Maths* must be reformed, the revenue system must be overhauled, free primary schools must be established in every village. But starvation will not disappear because people pay no revenue and *maths* are destroyed and schools spring up in every village. The greatest education in the villages consists in the villagers being taught or induced to work methodically and profitably all the year round whether it be on the land or at industries connected with the villages.

Lastly, my correspondent seems to resent acceptance by us of humanitarian services by missionaries. Will he have an agitation led against these missionary institutions? Why should they have non-Christian aid? They are established with the view of weaning Indians from their ancestral faith even as expounded by Vivekananda and Radhakrishnan. Let them isolate the institutions from the double purpose. It will be time enough then to expect non-Christian aid. The critic must be aware of the fact that even as it is, some of these institutions do get non-Christian aid. My point is that there should be no complaint if they do not receive such aid so long as they have an aim which is repugnant to the non-Christian sentiment.

## THE ESSENCE OF HINDUISM

(After the proclamation by the Maharaja of Travancore throwing temples open to Harijans was issued in 1936, Gandhiji went on a tour of Travancore and addressed several public meetings during his tour. At the public meeting in Quilon Gandhiji summed up the credal belief of Hinduism in an Upanishadic *mantra*, and thereafter gave lucid and simple commentaries on the numerous implications of that all comprehensive *mantra*. Accounts of some of these speeches which appeared in “Weekly Letter” by MD are given below.)

## I

(Speech at Quilon)

Let me for a few moments consider what Hinduism consists of, what it is that has fired so many saints about whom we have historical record. Why has it contributed so many philosophers to the world? What it is in Hinduism that has so enthused its devotees for centuries? Did they see untouchability in Hinduism and still enthuse over it? In the midst of my struggle against untouchability, I have been asked by several workers as to the essence of Hinduism. We have no simple *Kalma*, they said, that we find in Islam, nor have we 3-16 John of the Bible. Have we or have we not something that will answer the demands of the most philosophic among the Hindus or the most matter-of-fact among them? Some have said, and not without good reason, the Gayatri answers that purpose. I have perhaps recited the Gayatri *mantra* a thousand times, having understood the meaning of it. But still it seems to me that it did not answer the whole of my aspirations. Then as you are aware, I have, for years past, been swearing by the Bhagavagita, and have said that it answers all my difficulties and has been my *Kamdhenu*, my guide, my open sesame, on hundreds of moments of doubt and difficulty. I cannot recall a single occasion when it has failed me. But it is not a book that I can place before the whole of this audience. It requires a

prayerful study before the *Kamdhenu* yields the rich milk she holds in her udders.

But I have fixed upon one *mantra* that I am going to recite to you, as containing the whole essence of Hinduism. Many of you, I think, know the *Ishopanishad*. I read it years ago, with translation and commentary. I learnt it by heart in Yeravda Jail. But it did not then captivate me, as it has done during the past few months, and I have now come to the final conclusion that if all the *Upanishads* and all the other scriptures happened all of a sudden to be reduced to ashes, and if only the first verse in the *Ishopanishad* were left intact in the memory of Hindus, Hinduism would live for ever.

Now this *mantra* divides itself in four parts. The first part is

ॐ स्वस्त्यस्तु नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

\$ It means, as I would translate, "All this that we see in this great universe is pervaded by God." Then come the second and third parts which read together, as I read them: •NT 'z£•NT »gofkT: \$ I divide these into two and translate them thus: 'Renounce it and enjoy it.' There is another rendering which means the same thing, though: 'Enjoy what He gives you.' Even so you can divide it into two parts. Then

follows the final and most important part ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय \$ which means: 'Do not covet anybody's wealth or possession.' All the other *mantras* of that ancient *Upanishad* are a commentary or an attempt to give us the full meaning of the first *mantra*. As I read the *mantra* in the light of the *Gita* or the *Gita* in the light of the *mantra* I find that the *Gita* is a commentary on this *mantra*. It seems to me to satisfy the cravings of the Socialist and the Communist, of the philosopher and the economist. I venture to suggest to all who do not belong to the Hindu faith that it satisfies their cravings also. And if it is true — and I hold it to be true — you need not take anything in Hinduism which is inconsistent with or contrary to the meaning of this *mantra*. What more can a man in the street want to learn than this that the one God and Creator and Master of all that lives pervades the universe? The three other parts of the *mantra* follow directly from the first. If you believe that God pervades everything that He has created,

you must believe that you cannot enjoy anything that is not given by Him. And seeing that He is the Creator of His numberless children, it follows that you cannot covet anybody's possession. If you think that you are one of His numerous creatures, it behoves you to renounce everything and lay it at His feet. That means that the act of renunciation of everything is not a mere physical renunciation but represents a second or new birth. It is a deliberate act, not done in ignorance. It is, therefore, a regeneration. And then since he who holds the body must eat and drink and clothe himself, he must naturally seek all that he needs from Him. And he gets it as a natural reward of that renunciation. As if this was not enough the *mantra* closes with this magnificent thought : Do not covet anybody's possession. The moment you carry out these precepts you become a wise citizen of the world, living at peace with all that lives. It satisfies one's highest aspirations on this earth and hereafter. No doubt it will not satisfy the aspiration of him who does not believe in God and His undisputed sovereignty. It is not idle thing that the Maharaja of Travancore is called *Padmanabhadras*. It is a great thought, we know that God Himself has taken the title of *Dasanudas* — servant of servants. If all the princes would call themselves servants of God, they would be correctly describing themselves, but they cannot be servants of God unless they are servants of the people. And if zamindars and moneyed men and all who have possessions would treat themselves as trustees and perform the act of renunciation that I have described, this world would indeed be a blessed world to live in.

*Harijan*, 30-1-'37, p. 403 at p. 404

## II

(From the speech at Haripad)

At this meeting I would love to detain you for a few minutes on the message of Hinduism I gave to the meeting in Quilon last night. I ventured at that meeting to say that the whole of Hinduism could be summed up in the first verse of Ishopanishad. I suggested then if all other Hindu scriptures happened to be reduced to ashes and to go out of the memory



of men and if only that one verse to abide with us, the destruction would be no loss. Hinduism would even then remain with us. The original Sanskrit of the *mantra* is perhaps as easy as anybody learning Sanskrit could possibly wish. This Upanishad enjoys the reputation of being part of the original Vedas. It is the shortest Upanishad known to us. But as I have said if we had only the first verse of that Upanishad remaining with us, it would be enough to supply all our wants. Let me repeat that *mantra* in my faulty

Sanskrit pronunciation:

Om vṛtṛtṛmāzāṁ śhāzā'ṣ\* j ou'zṛ ou•- \$  
 •NT 'zē•NT »gofkṛ: ॥ t uḥh: ṣ MzāMHytṛ-  
 \$\$

Those who know a little bit of Sanskrit will find that there is nothing abstruse there that you find in other Vedic *mantras*, and its meaning is simply this : All that there is in this universe, great or small, including the tiniest atom, is pervaded by God, known as Creator or Lord. Isha means the Ruler, and He who is the Creator naturally by very right becomes the Ruler too. And here in this verse the seer has chosen no other epithet for the Deity but that of the Ruler, and he has excepted nothing from His jurisdiction. He says, everything that we see is pervaded by the Deity, and from that naturally the other parts of the *mantra* follow. Thus he says, renounce everything, ie everything that is on this universe, the whole of the universe and not only this tiny globe of ours, renounce it. He asks us to renounce it as we are such insignificant atoms that if we had any idea of possession it would seem ludicrous. And then, says the Rishi, the reward of renunciation is »gofkṛ: ie enjoyment of all you need. But there is a meaning about the word 'enjoy' — you might as well say use, eat, etc. — but it means that you may not take more than is necessary for your growth. Therefore, this enjoyment or use is limited by two conditions. One is the act of renunciation or, as the author of the Bhagavat would say, enjoy in the spirit of ṣāṁ rdṛṣṭdṛṣṭM•g śhṛṣṭ- \$ And every day in the morning everyone who believes in Bhagavatdharma has to dedicate his thoughts, words and deeds to Krishna, and not until he has performed that daily act of renunciation or dedication has he the right of

touching anything or drinking even a cup of water. And when a man has performed that act of renunciation and dedication, he derives from that act the right of eating, drinking, clothing and housing himself to the extent necessary for his daily life. Therefore, take it as you like, either in the sense that the enjoyment or use is the reward of renunciation, or that the renunciation is the condition of enjoyment, renunciation is essential for our very existence, for our soul. And as if that condition given in the *mantra* was incomplete, the Rishi hastened to complete it by adding : 'Do not covet what belongs to another.' Now I suggest to you that the whole of the philosophy or religion found in any part of the world is contained in this *mantra*, and it excludes everything contrary to it. According to the canons of interpretation, anything that is inconsistent with Shruti — and the Ishopanishad is a Shruti — is to be rejected altogether.

*Harijan*, 30-1-37, p. 407

### III

(From the speech at Kottayam)

Latterly I have been endeavouring to describe to vast assemblages of men and women I have addresssed what I regard as the essence of Hinduism, and I have been suggesting to them one incredibly simple *mantra* of the Ishopanishad, and as you know it is one of the Upanishads that enjoy the sanctity of the Vedas. The very first verse of the Ishopanishad means simply this : God pervades everything that is to be found in this universe down to the tiniest atom. The *mantra* describes God as the Creator, the Ruler, and the Lord. The seer to whom this *mantra* or verse was revealed was not satisfied with the magnificent statement that God was to be found everywhere. But he went further and said : 'Since God pervades everything nothing belongs to you, not even your own body. God is the undisputed, unchallengeable Master of everything you possess.' And so when a person who calls himself a Hindu goes through the process of regeneration or a second birth, as Christians would call it, he has to perform a dedication or renunciation of

all that he has in ignorance called his own property. And then when he has performed this act of dedication or renunciation, he is told that he will win a reward in the shape of God taking good care of what he will require for food, clothing or housing. Therefore, the condition of enjoyment or use of the necessities of life is their dedication or renunciation. And that dedication or renunciation has got to be done from day to day, lest we may in this busy world forget the central fact of life. And to crown all, the seer says : 'Covet not anybody's riches.' I suggest to you that the truth that is embedded in this very short *mantra* is calculated to satisfy the highest cravings of every human being — whether they have reference to this world or to the next. I have in my search of the scriptures of the world found nothing to add to this *mantra*. Looking back upon all the little I have read of the scriptures — it is precious little I confess — I feel that everything good in all the scriptures is derived from this *mantra*. If it is universal brotherhood — not only brotherhood of all human beings, but of all living beings — I find it in this *mantra*. If it is the unshakable faith in the Lord and Master — and all the adjectives you can think of — I find it in this *mantra*. If it is the idea of complete surrender to God and of the faith that He will supply all that I need, then again I say I find it in this *mantra*. Since He pervades every fibre of my being and of all of you, I derive from it the doctrine of equality of all creatures on earth and it should satisfy the cravings of all philosophical communists. This *mantra* tells me that I cannot hold as mine anything that belongs to God, and if my life and that of all who believe in this *mantra* has to be a life of perfect dedication, it follows that it will have to be a life of continual service of our fellow creatures. This, I say, is my faith and should be the faith of all who call themselves Hindus.

*Harijan*, 30-1-37, p. 409

11  
MUCH IN LITTLE

“In Mr. Mahadev Desai's book on the Travancore Temple Entry Proclamation, I find your speeches made in several places in Travancore. You have spoken of the Ishopanishad and said that if the first verse alone survived and all the rest of the Hindu scriptures were destroyed, it would alone save religion from extinction. Perhaps, you know that that verse was a turning point in the life of Devendranath Tagore, the Poet's father. Young Devandranath was in a mood of great depression when his father died leaving the family estate highly encumbered. One day while in this mood a piece of printed paper was wafted by a passing breeze to where he was sitting. He picked it up. It was in Sanskrit which he had not learnt then. He took it to the family pandit who read it out. It was the first verse of the Ishopanishad. 'Nectar poured into my soul', says the Maharshi in his autobiography.

“The phrase about enjoying by renunciation puzzled me for long. One day (or night to be correct) it flashed on me that the phrase but expressed a daily experience. What greater enjoyment is there than renouncing something one values to one — person or cause — which one holds dear?”

The above letter from Shri K. Natarajan was received by me about three months ago. I had hoped to deal with it in these columns much earlier but could not. Nothing, however, is lost for the subject-matter of the letter is an evergreen. I try to the utmost of my ability to live the meaning that, in my ungrammatical way, I have ascribed to the *shloka*. Not being a reader of books, I never knew the instance that Shri Natarajan quotes from Maharshi Devendra's life. It fortifies my belief that the first *mantra* of Ishopanishad is all that undiluted Hinduism — in other words, for me, religion — can have to give. The recitation of the eighteen chapters of the Gita is finished in one week at the morning prayer and so it has gone

on now for some years from week to week. The Gita is a commentary on the first verse of the Ishopanishad. And I feel, not without diffidence, that the interpretation that flashed on Shri Natarajan's mind reveals but the partial truth. As I understand it, his interpretation is only the well-known doctrine of self-sacrifice which is undoubtedly a common enough experience. Take only one instance. Many a mother sacrifices all for her children. But the *mantra* referred to here was not revealed to confirm the truth of that practice, well known even during the remote times when it is said to have been given. To live up to that verse means the new birth enunciated in the New Testament or *Brahmasamarpana* (dedication to God) as taught in Hinduism. The verse, therefore, seems to me to mean only one thing. Recognize that everything you fancy you have is God's and from God and take only what you really need for life. In other words, in the language of the Gita it teaches the doctrine of uttermost detachment. Then only is life worth living.

*Harijan*, 23-6-'46, p. 189

## 12

### MY CLAIM

(From "Friendly Discussion Always Welcome" which appeared in "Notes")

I am no Sanskrit scholar, but I know sufficient to detect errors in translations that may be given to me. I claim to have read the Shastras to my satisfaction, and I claim to have endeavoured from my youth upwards to put into practice the fundamental precepts of the Shastras. Thus I have no hesitation in putting before the public, with the utmost confidence, the conclusions I have reached regarding certain fundamentals of Hinduism.

*Harijan*, 12-1-'34, p. 3

## WHY I AM A HINDU

An American friend who subscribes herself as a life-long friend of India writes:

“As Hinduism is one of the prominent religions of the East, and as you have made a study of Christianity and Hinduism, and on the basis of that study, have announced that you are a Hindu, I beg leave to ask of you if you will do me the favour to give me your reasons for that choice. Hindus and Christians alike realize that man's chief need is to know God and to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Believing that Christ was a revelation of God, Christians of America have sent to India thousands of their sons and daughters to tell the people of India about Christ. Will you in return kindly give us your interpretation of Hinduism and make a comparison of Hinduism with the teaching of Christ? I will be deeply grateful for this favour.”

I have ventured at several missionary meetings to tell English and American missionaries that if they could have refrained from 'telling' India about Christ and had merely lived the life enjoined upon them by the Sermon on the Mount, India, instead of suspecting them, would have appreciated their living in the midst of her children and directly profited by their presence. Holding this view, I can 'tell' American friends nothing about 'Hinduism' by way of 'return'. I do not believe in telling others of their faith, especially with a view to conversion. Faith does not admit of telling. It has to be lived and then it becomes self-propagating.

Nor do I consider myself fit to interpret Hinduism except through my own life. And If I may not interpret Hinduism through my written word, I may not compare it with Christianity. The only thing it is possible for me therefore to do is say as briefly as I can, why I am a Hindu.

Believing as I do in the influence of heredity, being born in a Hindu family, I have remained a Hindu. I should reject it,

if I found it inconsistent with my moral sense or my spiritual growth. On examination I have found it to be the most tolerant of all religions known to me. Its freedom from dogma makes a forcible appeal to me in as much it gives the votary the largest scope for self-expression. Not being an exclusive religion, it enables the followers of that faith not merely to respect all the other religions, but it also enables them to admire and assimilate whatever may be good in the other faiths. Non-violence is common to all religions, but it has found the highest expression and application in Hinduism. (I do not regard Jainism or Buddhism as separate from Hinduism.) Hinduism believes in the oneness not of merely all human life but in the oneness of all that lives. Its worship of the cow is, in my opinion, its unique contribution to the evolution of humanitarianism. It is a practical application of the belief in the oneness and, therefore, sacredness, of all life. The great belief in transmigration is a direct consequence of that belief. Finally the discovery of the law of Varnashrama is a magnificent result of the ceaseless search for truth. I must not burden this article with definitions of the essentials sketched here, except to say that the present ideas of cow-worship and Varnashrama are a caricature of what, in my opinion, the originals are. The curious may see the definitions of cow-worship and Varnashrama in the previous numbers of *Young India*. I hope to have to say on Varnashrama in the near future. In this all too brief a sketch I have mentioned what occur to me to be the outstanding features of Hinduism that keep me in its fold.

*Young India*, 20-10-'27, p. 352

## HINDUISM AS I UNDERSTAND

(Extract from "Cow Protection")

I claim to be a Sanatani Hindu. People may laugh and say that to call myself a Sanatani Hindu when I eat and drink from the hands of Musalmans and Christians, keep an untouchable girl in my house as my daughter and do not hesitate to quote the Bible, is nothing short of doing violence to language. But I would still adhere to my claim, for I have faith in me which tells me that a day would come — may be most probably after I am dead and no longer present in this world in the flesh to bear witness — when my critics would recognize their error and admit the justness of my claim. Pretty long while ago, I once wrote in *Young India* an article on Hinduism, which I consider to be one of my most thoughtful writings on the subject. The definition of Hinduism which I gave in it is probably the clearest that I have ever given. After defining a Hindu as one who believed in the Vedas and Upanishads, recited the Gayatri and subscribed to the doctrine of rebirth and transmigration etc., I added that so far as the popular notion of Hinduism was concerned, its distinguishing feature was belief in cow-protection and reverence for the cow. I do not want to be told as to what Hindus ten thousand years ago did. I know there are scholars who tell us that cow-sacrifice is mentioned in the Vedas. I remember when I was a high school student we read a sentence in our Sanskrit text-book to the effect that the Brahmanas of old used to eat beef. That exercised my mind greatly and I used to wonder and ask myself whether what was written could be after all true. But as I grew up the conviction slowly forced itself upon me that even if the text on which these statements were based was actually part of the Vedas, the interpretation put upon it could not be correct. I had conceived of another way out of the difficulty. This was purely for personal satisfaction. 'If the Vedic text under reference was incapable of bearing any other



interpretation than the literal,' I said to myself, 'the Brahmanas who were alleged to be eating beef had the power to bring the slaughtered animals back to life again.' But that is neither here nor there. The speculation does not concern the general mass of the Hindus. I do not claim to be a Vedic scholar. I have read Sanskrit scriptures largely in translation. A layman like myself, therefore, can hardly have any *locus standi* in a controversy like this. But I have confidence in myself. Therefore I do not hesitate to freely express to others my opinions based on my inner experience. It may be that we may not be all able to agree as to the exact meaning and significance of cow protection. For Hinduism does not rest on the authority of one book or one prophet; nor does it possess a common creed — like the Kalma of Islam — acceptable to all. That renders a common definition of Hinduism a bit difficult, but therein lies its strength also. For, it is this special feature that has given to Hinduism its inclusive and assimilative character and made its gradual, silent evolution possible. Go to any Hindu child and he would tell you that cow protection is the supreme duty of every Hindu and that any one who does not believe in it hardly deserves the name of a Hindu.

*Young India*, 29-1-'25. पृ. 37

## 15

### MY MEANING OF SANATANA HINDUISM

(Originally appeared under the title "Hinduism")

In dealing with the problem of untouchability during the Madras tour, I have asserted my claim to being a Sanatani Hindu with greater emphasis than hitherto, and yet there are things which are commonly done in the name of Hinduism, which I disregard. I have no desire to be called a Sanatani Hindu or any other if I am not such. And I have certainly no desire to steal in a reform or an abuse under cover of a great faith.

It is, therefore, necessary for me once for all distinctly to give my meaning of Sanatana Hinduism. The word 'Sanatana' I use in its natural sense.

I call myself a Sanatani Hindu because,

- (1) I believe in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas and all that goes by the name of Hindu scriptures, and therefore in *avatars* and rebirth,
- (2) I believe in the Varnashramadharma in a sense in my opinion strictly Vedic but not in its present popular and crude sense,
- (3) I believe in the protection of the cow in its much larger sense than the popular,
- (4) I do not disbelieve in idol-worship.

The reader will note that I have purposely refrained from using the word 'divine origin' in reference to the Vedas or any other scriptures. For I do not believe in the exclusive divinity of the Vedas. I believe the Bible, the Koran, and the Zend- Avesta to be as much divinely inspired as the Vedas. My belief in the Hindu scriptures does not require me to accept every word and every verse as divinely inspired. Nor do I claim to have any first-hand knowledge of these wonderful books. But I do not claim to know and feel the truths of the essential teaching of the scriptures. I decline to be bound by any interpretation, however learned it may be, if it is repugnant to reason or moral sense. I do not most emphatically repudiate the claim (if they advance any such) of the present Shankaracharyas and Shastris to give a correct interpretation of the Hindu scriptures. On the contrary, I believe that our present knowledge of these books is in a most chaotic state. I believe implicitly in the Hindu aphorism, that no one truly knows the Shastras who has not attained perfection in Innocence (*Ahimsa*), Truth (*satya*) and Self-control (*brahmacharya*) and who has not renounced all acquisition or possession of wealth. I believe in the institution of gurus, but in this age millions must go without a guru, because it is a rare thing to find a combination of perfect purity and perfect learning. But one need not despair of ever knowing the truth of one's religion, because the fundamentals of Hinduism as of every great religion are unchangeable, and easily understood. Every Hindu believes in God and His oneness; in rebirth and salvation. But

that which distinguishes Hinduism from every other religion is its cow protection, more than its Varnashrama.

Varnashrama is in my opinion inherent in human nature, and Hinduism has simply reduced it to a science. It does attach to birth. A man cannot change his Varna by choice. Not to abide by one's Varna is to disregard the law of heredity. The division, however, into innumerable castes is an unwarranted liberty taken with the doctrine. The four divisions are all- sufficing.

I do not believe that inter-dining or even inter-marriage necessarily deprives a man of his status that his birth has given him. The four divisions define a man's calling, they do not restrict or regulate social intercourse. The divisions define duties, they confer no privileges. It is, I hold, against the genius of Hinduism to arrogate to oneself a higher status or assign to another a lower. All are born to serve God's creation, a Brahmana with his knowledge, a Kshatriya with his power of protection, a Vaishya with his commercial ability and a Shudra with his bodily labour. This however does not mean that a Brahmana, for instance, is absolved from bodily labour, or the duty of protecting himself and others. His birth makes a Brahmana predominantly a man of knowledge, the fittest by heredity and training to impart it to others. There is nothing, again, to prevent the Shudra from acquiring all the knowledge he wishes. Only, he will best serve with his body and need not envy others their special qualities for service. But a Brahmana who claims superiority by right of knowledge falls and has no knowledge. And so with the others who pride themselves upon their special qualities. Varnashrama is self-restraint and conservation and economy of energy.

\* \* \*

Unfortunately today Hinduism seems to consist merely in eating and not eating. Once I horrified a pious Hindu by taking toast at a Musalman's house. I saw that he was pained to see me pouring milk into a cup handed by a Musalman friend, but his anguish knew no bounds when he saw me taking toast at the Musalman's hands. Hinduism is in danger of losing its

substance if it resolves itself into a matter of elaborate rules as to what and with whom to eat. Abstemiousness from intoxicating drinks and drugs, and from all kinds of foods, especially meat, is undoubtedly a great aid to the evolution of the spirit, but it is by no means an end in itself. Many a man eating meat and with everybody, but living in the fear of God is nearer his freedom than a man religiously abstaining from meat and many other things but blaspheming God in every one of his acts.

The central fact of Hinduism is however cow protection. Cow protection to me is one of the most wonderful phenomena in human evolution. It takes the human being beyond his species. The cow to me means the entire sub-human world. Man through the cow is enjoined to realize his identity with all that lives. Why the cow was selected for apotheosis is obvious to me. The cow was in India the best companion. She was the giver of plenty. Not only did she give milk, but she also made agriculture possible. The cow is a poem of pity. One reads pity in the gentle animal. She is the mother to millions of Indian mankind. Protection of the cow means protection of the whole dumb creation of God. The ancient seer, whoever he was, began with the cow. The appeal of the lower order of creation is all the more forcible because it is speechless. Cow protection is the gift of Hinduism to the world, And Hinduism will live so long as there are Hindus to protect the cow.

The way to protect is to die for her. It is a denial of Hinduism and Ahimsa to kill a human being to protect a cow. Hindus are enjoined to protect the cow by their *tapasya*, by self-purification, by self-sacrifice. The present day cow protection has degenerated into a perpetual feud with the Musalmans, whereas cow protection means conquering the Musalmans by our love. A Musalman friend sent me sometime ago a book detailing the inhumanities practised by us on the cow and her progeny. How we bleed her to take the last drop of milk from her, how we starve her to emaciation, how we ill-treat the calves, how we deprive them of their portion of milk, how cruelly we treat the oxen, how we castrate them, how we

beat them, how we overload them. If they had speech they would bear witness to our crimes against them which would stagger the world. By every act of cruelty to our cattle, we disown God and Hinduism. I do not know that the condition of the cattle in any other part of the world is so bad as in unhappy India. We may not blame the Englishman for this. We may not plead poverty in our defence. Criminal negligence is the only cause of the miserable condition of our cattle. Our *panjarapols* though they are an answer to our instinct of mercy, are a clumsy demonstration of its execution. Instead of being model dairy farms and great profitable national institutions, they are merely depots for receiving decrepit cattle.

Hindus will not be judged by their *tilaks*, not by the correct chanting of *mantras*, not by their pilgrimages, not by their most punctilious observance of caste rules but by their ability to protect the cow. Whilst professing the religion of cow protection, we have enslaved the cow and her progeny, and have become slaves ourselves.

It will now be understood why I consider myself a Sanatani Hindu....

I can no more describe my feeling for Hinduism than for my own wife. She moves me as no other woman in the world can. Not that she has no faults. I dare say she has many more than I see myself. But the feeling of an indissoluble bond is there. Even so I feel for and about Hinduism with all its faults and limitations. Nothing elates me so much as the music of the Gita or the Ramayana by Tulasidas, the only two books in Hinduism I may be said to know. When I fancied I was taking my last breath, the Gita was my solace. I know the vice that is going on today in all the great Hindu shrines, but I love them in spite of their unspeakable failings. There is an interest which I take in them and which I take in no other. I am a reformer through and through. But my zeal never takes me to the rejection of any of the essential things of Hinduism. I have said I do not disbelieve in idol-worship. An idol does not excite any feeling of veneration in me. But I think that idol- worship is part of human nature. We hanker after symbolism.

Why should one be more composed in a church than elsewhere? Images are an aid to worship. No Hindu considers an image to be God. I do not consider idol-worship a sin.

It is clear from the foregoing, that Hinduism is not an exclusive religion. In it there is room for worship of all the prophets of the world. It is not a missionary religion in the ordinary sense of the term. It has no doubt absorbed many tribes in its fold, but this absorption has been of an evolutionary, imperceptible character. Hinduism tells every one to worship God according to his own faith or Dharma, and so it lives at peace with all religions.

That being my conception of Hinduism, I have never been able to reconcile myself to untouchability. I have always regarded it as an excrescence. It is true that it has been handed down to us from generations but so are many evil practices even to this day. I should be ashamed to think, that dedication of girls to virtual prostitution was a part of Hinduism. Yet it is practised by Hindus in many parts of India. I consider it positive irreligion to sacrifice goats to Kali and do not consider it a part of Hinduism. Hinduism is a growth of ages. The very name, Hinduism, was given to the religion of the people of Hindusthan by foreigners. There was, no doubt, at one time sacrifice of animals offered in the name of religion. But it is not religion, much less is it Hindu religion. And so also it seems to me, that when cow protection became an article of faith with our ancestors, those persisted in eating beef were excommunicated. The civil strife must have been fierce. Social boycott was applied not only to recalcitrants, but their sins were visited upon their children also. The practice which had probably its origin in good intentions hardened into usage, and even verses crept into our sacred books giving the practice a permanence wholly undeserved and still less justified. Whether my theory is correct or not, untouchability is repugnant to reason and to the instinct of mercy, pity or love. A religion that establishes the worship of the cow cannot possibly countenance or warrant a cruel and inhuman boycott of human beings. And I should be content to be torn to pieces rather than disown the

suppressed classes. Hindus will certainly never deserve freedom nor get it if they allow their noble religion to be disgraced by the retention of the taint of untouchability. And as I love Hinduism dearer than life itself, the taint has become for me an intolerable burden. Let us not deny God by denying to a fifth of our race the right of association on an equal footing.

*Young India*, 6-10-'21, p. 317

## 16

### IS THERE SATAN IN HINDUISM ?

A correspondent writes :

“A few months back under a heading not quite justified by its contents you published a letter of mine concerning certain religious systems and the belief in God. (See *Young India*, 1925, p. 155.) Now I am tempted to put you a question concerning His adversary (according to Semitic beliefs), whose name you are so often using in your writings and speeches; — not of course without effect, as witness the article 'Snares of Satan' in your issue of 6-8-'25. If it was only rhetorical effect that was intended thereby, because you were writing or speaking in the language of a people who have been taught to believe in Satan's existence through the Semitic creed of Christianity, then I would have nothing to say. But the article cited, among other things, does seem to point to a belief on your part in Satan's existence, — a belief, in my humble opinion, quite un-Hindu. Asked by Arjuna what was the cause of man's continual fall, Shri Krishana said : '*Kama esha Krodha esha*'. etc. (It is lust, it is anger). According to Hindu belief, it would seem, the Tempter is no person outside of us, — nor indeed is it *one*; for there are 'the six enemies' of man enumerated in the Shastras: *Kama* or lust, *krodha* or anger, *lobha* or greed, *moha* or infatuation, *mada* or pride, and *matsara*, ie envy or jealousy. So it is clear, Hinduism has no place for Satan, the Fallen Angel, the Tempter, or as he has been called by a French writer (Anatole France), 'God's man-of- affairs! How is it then that you who are a Hindu speak and write as if you believed in the real existence of the old one?'”

This correspondent is well known to the readers of *Young India*. He is too wide-awake not to know the sense in which I could use the word Satan. But I have observed in him a disposition to draw me out on many matters about which there is a likelihood of the slightest misunderstanding or about which a greater elucidation may be considered necessary. In my opinion the beauty of Hinduism lies in its all-embracing inclusiveness. What the divine author of the Mahabharata said of his great creation is equally true of Hinduism. What of substance is contained in any other religion is always to be found in Hinduism. And what is not contained in it is insubstantial or unnecessary. I do believe that there is room for Satan in Hinduism. The Biblical conception is neither new nor original. Satan is not a personality even in the Bible. Or he is as much a personality in the Bible as Ravana or the whole brood of the *asuras* is in Hinduism. I no more believe in a historical Ravana with ten heads and twenty arms than in a historical Satan. And even as Satan and his companions are fallen angels, so are Ravana and his companions fallen angels, or call them gods, if you will. If it be a crime to clothe evil passions and ennobling thoughts in personalities, it is a crime for which perhaps Hinduism is the most responsible. For are not the six passions referred to by my correspondent, and nameless others, embodied in Hinduism? Who or what is Dhritarashtra and his hundred sons? To the end of time imagination, that is, poetry, will play a useful and necessary part in the human evolution. We shall continue to talk of passions as if they were persons. Do they not torment us as much as evil persons? Therefore, as in innumerable other things in the matter under notice the letter killeth, the spirit giveth life.

*Young India*, 17-9-'25, p. 324



## SECTION TWO : THE FORCE THAT SUSTAINS THE UNIVERSE

17

### A HIGHER LAW

(Originally appeared in “Notes”)

Having read the article “God is” in *Young India* (11-10- 1928) a reader sends the following bracing quotations from Emerson :

“A little consideration of what takes place around us everyday would show us, that a higher law than that of our will regulate events; that our painful labours are unnecessary and fruitless; that only in our easy, simple, spontaneous action are we strong and by contenting ourselves with obedience we become divine. Belief and love — a believing love will relieve us of a vast load of care. O my brothers, God exists. There is a soul at the centre of Nature, and over the will of every man, so that none of us can wrong the universe.

“The lesson is forcibly taught that our life might be much easier and simpler than we make it, that the world might be a happier place than it is; that there is no need of struggles, convulsions, and despairs, of the wringing of the hands and the gnashing of teeth; that we miscreate our own evils. We interfere with the optimism of nature.”

If we would but have a little faith we would see God and His love everywhere about us.

*Young India*, 15-11-'28, p. 380.

18  
GOD IS

Correspondents often invite me to answer in these pages questions about God. That is the penalty I have to pay for what an English friend calls the God stunt in *Young India*. Whilst I am unable to notice all such questions in these columns, the following compels an answer:

“I read your *Young India* of 12-5-1927, p. 149, where you write, 'I think it is wrong to expect certainties in this world where all else but God that is Truth is an uncertainty.'

*“Young India*, p. 152 : 'God is long-suffering and patient. He lets the tyrant dig his own grave only issuing grave warnings at stated intervals.'

“I humbly beg to say that God is not a certainty. His goal ought to be to spread truth all round. Why does He allow the world to be populated by bad people of various shades? Bad people with their unscrupulousness flourish all round and they spread contagion and thus transmit immorality and dishonesty to posterity.

“Should not God, omniscient and omnipotent as He is, know where wickedness is by His omniscience and kill wickedness by His omnipotence there and then and nip all rascality in the bud and not allow wicked people to flourish?

“Why should God be long-suffering and be patient? What influence can He wield if He be so? The world goes on with all its rascality and dishonesty and tyranny.

“If God allows a tyrant to dig his own grave, why should He not weed out a tyrant before his tyranny oppresses the poor? Why allow full play to tyranny and then allow a tyrant, after his tyranny has ruined and demoralized thousands of people, to go to his grave?

“The world continues to be as bad as it ever was. Why have faith in that God who does not use His powers to change the world and make it a world of good and righteous men?

“I know vicious men with their vices living long and healthy lives. Why should not vicious men die early as a result of their vices.

“I wish to believe in God but there is no foundation for my faith. Kindly enlighten me through *Young India* and change my disbelief into belief.”

The argument is as old as Adam. I have no original answer to it. But I permit myself to state why I believe. I am prompted to do so because of the knowledge that there are young men who are interested in my views and doings.

There is an indefinable mysterious Power that pervades everything. I feel it, though I do not see it. It is this unseen Power which makes itself felt and yet defies all proof, because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my sense. It transcends the senses.

But it is possible to reason out the existence of God to a limited extent. Even in ordinary affairs we know that people do not know who rules or why and how he rules. And yet they know that there is a power that certainly rules. In my tour last year in Mysore, I met many poor villagers and I found upon inquiry that they did not know who ruled Mysore. They simply said some god ruled it. If the knowledge of these poor people was so limited about their ruler, I, who am infinitely lesser than God than they than their ruler, need not be surprised if I do not realize the presence of God, the King of kings. Nevertheless I do feel as the poor villagers felt about Mysore that there is orderliness in the Universe, there is an unalterable Law governing everything and every being that exists or lives. It is not a blind law, for no blind law can govern the conduct of living beings and thanks to the marvellous researches of Sir

JC Bose, it can now be proved that even matter is life. That Law then which governs all life is God. Law and the Law-giver are one. I may not deny the Law or the Law-giver, because I know so little about It or Him. Even as my denial or ignorance of the existence of an earthly power will avail me nothing, so will not my denial of God and His Law liberate me from its operation; whereas humble and mute acceptance of divine authority makes life's journey easier even as the acceptance of earthly rule makes life under it easier.

I do dimly perceive that whilst everything around me is

ever changing, ever dying, there is underlying all that change a living power that is changeless, that holds together, that creates, dissolves and recreates. That informing power or spirit is God. And since nothing else I see merely through the senses can or will persist, He alone is.

And is this power benevolent or malevolent? I see it as purely benevolent. For I can see that in the midst of death life persists, in the midst of untruth truth persists, in the midst of darkness light persists. Hence I gather that God is Life, Truth, Light. He is Love. He is the supreme Good.

But He is no God who merely satisfies the intellect, if He ever does. God to be God must rule the heart and transform it. He must express Himself in every the smallest act of His votary. This can only be done through a definite realization more real than the five senses can ever produce. Sense perceptions can be, often are, false and deceptive, however real they may appear to us. Where there is realization outside the senses it is infallible. It is proved not by extraneous evidence but in the transformed conduct and character of those who have felt the real presence of God within.

Such testimony is to be found in the experiences of an unbroken line of prophets and sages in all countries and climes. To reject this evidence is to deny oneself.

This realization is preceded by an immovable faith. He who would in his own person test the fact of God's presence can do so by a living faith. And since faith itself cannot be proved by extraneous evidence, the safest course is to believe in the moral government of the world and therefore in the supremacy of the moral law, the law of truth and love. Exercise of faith will be the safest where there is a clear determination summarily to reject all that is contray to Truth and Love.

But the foregoing does not answer the correspondent's argument. I confess to him that I have no argument to convince him through reason. Faith transcends reason. All I can advise him to do is not to attempt the impossible. I cannot account for the existence of evil by any rational method. To want to do so is to be co-equal with God. I am therefore humble enough to

recognize evil as such. And I call God long suffering and patient precisely because He permits evil in the world. I know that He has no evil in Him, and yet if there is evil, He is the author of it and yet untouched by it. I know too that I shall never know God if I do not wrestle with and against evil even at the cost of life itself. I am fortified in the belief by my own humble and limited experience. The purer I try to become, the nearer I feel to be to God. How much more should I be, when my faith is not a mere apology as it is today but has become immovable as the Himalayas and as white and bright as snows on their peaks? Meanwhile I invite the correspondent to pray with Newman who sang from experience:

Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,

Lead Thou me on;

The night is dark and I am far from home,

Lead Thou me on;

Keep Thou my feet, I do not ask to see The  
distant scene; one step enough for me.

*Young India*, 11-10-'28, p. 340

## 19

### DEFINITIONS OF GOD

To,

(Originally appeared  
under the title "Is there  
God?")

Sir,

The Editor,  
*Young India*

With reference to your article  
"God and Congress", I beg

to say that while the Charvak school was materialistic out and out, Buddhism is silent on and Jainism doubts the existence of Ishwara or any supernatural Entity that may be said to correspond to God, although both faiths believe in the transmission of the soul and the Law of Karma, in common with Hinduism. (Your friend Prof. Dharmanand Kosambi whom I mentioned may be consulted on this point.) Buddha with Karma, and Jina with Karma respectively may

be said to take the place of God in the ritual practice of those two religions.

Of modern religious movements, the Deva Samaj of the Punjab which is mostly a humanitarian and social-service body and lays great store by Ahimsa is (I believe) frankly atheistic in its creed, but *not* materialistic. I have read that it believes neither in God nor gods. In the light of this, its name of Deva Samaj appears rather paradoxical *Lucus a non lucendo!*

Of Bradlaugh you say that his denial of God was a denial of Him as He was known to Bradlaugh to have been described. Was this denial inclusive, or was it exclusive, of that 'certain unmistakable sameness' behind all that variety of definitions which there would be if we could all give our own definitions of God, as you say? I presume, it cannot be the latter, for Bradlaugh was learned and observant enough. If the former is the case, what made Bradlaugh deny the existence of God even in the aspect of that 'unmistakable sameness'?

I doubt not but that the following excerpt will be of some interest to you in this connection:

“The very idea of a god, as creating or in any way ruling the world, is utterly absent in the Buddhist system. God is not so much as denied; he is simply not known. Contrary to the opinion once confidently and generally held, that a nation of atheists never existed, it is no longer to be disputed that the numerous Buddhist nations are essentially atheist; for they know no beings with greater supermatural power than any man is supposed capable of attaining to by virtue, austerity, and science; and a remarkable indication of this startling face is to be seen in the circumstances, that some at least of the Buddhist nations — the Chinese, Mongols and Tibetans — have no word in their language to express the notion of God. The future condition of the Buddhist, then, is not assigned him by the Ruler of the universe; the 'Karma' of his actions determines it by a sort of virtue inherent in the nature of things — by the blind and unconscious concatenation of cause and effect.”

— Chamber's *Encyclopaedia*  
Sub. Buddhism

Let me conclude with a *shloka*:

T¶MzT¶T N jNH7T~ TTg V•<HhM•N&<Û HVut: \$

<H<hHJĚ : sTN&<Û Ūx<•<Tz•ß ¶Njß { ∞j: \$\$

᳚ ∞ □ ᳚ ᳚᳚zZ □ L᳚ ᳚᳚μudX: L᳚\* o <H<hT᳚ \$  
 T᳚M•'᳚ ᳚᳚Öz᳚ <H<jμ<Ū T zNÖz: Ūx»H<• \$\$  
 — »•gfVLμ, Tf<•v•᳚N \$

To the gods or angels we our homage pay; But to  
 sorry Fate subject e'en them we find; Then is our  
 worship due to Fate ?

Sure *he* yields but the fruit our actions rate. And  
 the fruit on actions of our own depends;

—Hence small account of gods or angels or of Fate.

Then hail, our actions small or great!

Over whom not even Fate prevails!

—My own attempt at a free rendering of the above from  
 Bhartrihari — Nitishataka.

Karwar (N. Kanara)  
 March, 1925

I am & c., 10th  
 SD Nadakarni

I cannot refuse space to Mr. Nadkarni's clever letter. I must, however, adhere to my opinion that neither Jainism nor Buddhism are Atheistic. I present Mr. Nadkarni with these definitions of God : The sum total of Karma is God. That which impels man to do the right is God. The sum total of all that lives is God. That which makes man the mere plaything of fate is God. That which sustained Bradlaugh throughout all his trials was God. He is the Denial of the atheist.

*Young India*, 30-4-'25, p. 155



## WHAT IS GOD ?

(The following paragraphs are reproduced from a speech of Gandhiji before a gathering of Conscientious Objectors in Villeneuve in Swizerland which appeared in *Letter from Europe* by MD)

The Cinscientious Objections' meeting was in a church where Ceresole\* and his friends had prepared a wonderful welcome for Gandhiji. All sang in chorus standing hand in hand, the Swiss fellowship song, and the President of the meeting read a touching address: 'We are afraid of the unknown, prison, responsibility, death. You know no fear. We have got the Sermon on the Mount on our lips. You have got it in your heart and are living it. Welcome in our midst and teach us to live more dedicated lives.' And so on and so forth. The questions asked touched subjects like God and truth and non- resistance. Mr. Privat who translated at one stage, found some of the answers beyond him and Prof. Bovet, the Swish philosopher, took his place. In this letter I shall take up only one question: 'Why do you regard God as Truth?'

"You have asked me why I consider that God is Truth. In my early youth I was taught to repeat what in Hindu scriptures are known as one thousand names of God. But these one thousand names of God were by no means exhaustive. We believe — and I think it is the truth — that God has as many names as there are creatures and, therefore, we also say that God is nameless and since God has many forms we also consider Him formless, and since He speaks to us through many tongues we consider Him to be speechless and so on. And so when I came to study Islam I found that Islam too had many names for God. I would say with those who say God is Love, God is Love. But deep down in me I used to say that though God may be Love, God is Truth, above all. If it is

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\*Pierre Ceresole, Swiss engineer and mathematician was the founder of an organization called "International Service Civile" or "International Voluntary Service for Peace".

possible for the human tongue to give the fullest description of God, I have come to the conclusion that for myself, God is Truth. But two years ago I went a step further and said that Truth is God. You will see the fine distinction between the two statements, viz. that God is Truth and Truth is God. And I came to the conclusion after a continuous and relentless search after Truth which began nearly fifty years ago. I then found that the nearest approach to Truth was through love. But I also found that love has many meanings in the English language at least and that human love in the sense of passion could become a degrading thing also. I found too that love in the sense of Ahimsa had a limited number of votaries in the world. But I never found a double meaning in connection with truth and not even atheists had demurred to the necessity or power of truth. But in their passion for discovering truth the atheists have not hesitated to deny the very existence of God — from their own point of view rightly. And it was because of this reasoning that I saw that rather than say that God is Truth I should say that Truth is God. I recall the name of Charles Bradlaugh who delighted to call himself an atheist, but knowing as I do something of him, I would never regard him as an atheist. I would call him a God-fearing man, though I know he would reject the claim. His face would redden if I would say that 'Mr. Bradlaugh, you are a truth-fearing man, and not a God-fearing man.' I would automatically disarm his criticism by saying that Truth is God, as I have disarmed criticisms of many a young man. Add to this the great difficulty that millions have taken the name of God and in His name committed nameless atrocities. Not that scientists very often do not commit cruelties in the name of truth. I know how in the name of truth and science inhuman cruelties are perpetrated on animals when men perform vivisection. There are thus a number of difficulties in the way, no matter how you describe God. But the human mind is a limited thing, and you have to labour under limitations when you think of a being or entity who is beyond the power of man to grasp. And then we have another thing in Hindu philosophy, viz., God alone is and

nothing else exists, and the same truth you find emphasized and exemplified in the Kalma of Islam. There you find it clearly stated — that God alone is and nothing else exists. In fact the Sanskrit word for Truth is a word which literally means that which exists — *Sat*. For these and several other reasons that I can give you I have come to the conclusion that the definition — Truth is God — gives me the greatest satisfaction. And when you want to find Truth as God the only inevitable means is Love, ie non-violence, and since I believe that ultimately the means and end are convertible terms, I should not hesitate to say that God is Love.

“What then is Truth?

"A difficult question," said Gandhiji, "but I have solved it for myself by saying that it is what the voice within tells you. How, then, you ask different people think of different and contrary truths? Well, seeing that the human mind works through innumerable media and that the evolution of the human mind is not the same for all, it follows that what may be truth for one may be untruth for another, and hence those who have made these experiments have come to the conclusion that there are certain conditions to be observed in making those experiments. Just as for conducting scientific experiments there is an indispensable scientific course of instruction, in the same way strict preliminary discipline is necessary to qualify a person to make experiments in the spiritual realm. Everyone should, therefore, realize his limitations before he speaks of his inner voice. Therefore we have the belief based upon experience, that those who would make individual search after truth as God, must go through several vows, as for instance the vow of truth, the vow of Brahmacharya (purity) for you cannot possibly divide your love for Truth and God with anything else

— the vow of non-violence, of poverty and non-possession. Unless you impose on yourselves the five vows you may not embark on the experiment at all. There are several other conditions prescribed, but I must not take you through all of them. Suffice it to say that those who have made these experiments know that it is not proper for everyone to claim to

hear the voice of conscience and it is because we have at the present moment everybody claiming the right of conscience without going through any discipline whatsoever and there is so much untruth being delivered to a bewildered world, all that I can in true humility present to you is that truth is not to be found by anybody who has not an abundant sense of humility. If you would swim on the bosom of the ocean of Truth you must reduce yourself to a zero. Further than this I cannot go along this fascinating path."

*Young India*, 31-12-'31, p. 424 at p. 427

## 21

### TRUTH IS GOD

#### I

(The following letter by Gandhiji to the children in the Ashram is included as letter No. XXXII dated 21-3-1932 in the publication *Selected Letters I*. The letters were chosen and translated from Gujarati into English by Valji Govindji Desai.)

Do you remember my definition of God? Instead of saying that God is Truth, I say that Truth is God. This was not always clear to me. I realized it only four years ago, but my conduct has been unconsciously based on that realization. I have known God only as Truth. There was a time when I had doubt about the existence of God, but I never doubted the existence of Truth. This Truth is not something material but pure intelligence. It rules over the universe; therefore it is Ishvara (the Lord). ... This is for one almost a matter of experience. I say almost, because I have not seen Truth face to face. I have had only glimpses of it. But my faith is indomitable.

#### II

(From letter No. XXXVIII in *Selected Letters I*)

In the phrase 'Seeing God face to face' 'face to face' is not to be taken literally. It is a matter of decided feeling. God is formless. He can therefore only be seen by spiritual sight.

## THAT INDEFINABLE SOMETHING

(Originally appeared under the title “God and Congress”)

A friend writes :

“There is one matter on which I have been longing to approaching you for an explanation. It is about the term 'God'. As a national worker I would not have anything to say against such a passage as occurring in a recent number of *Young India* : 'I present it (Ramanama) to the reader whose vision is not blurred and whose faith is not damped by over much learning. Learning takes us through many stages in life, but it fails us utterly in the hour of danger and temptation. Then faith alone saves.' (*Young India*, 22-1-'25, p. 27). For it is a confession of your individual faith; and I know also that you have not failed on occasions to put in a word of praise about conscientious atheists where it was deserved. As witness the following sentences in your *Nitidharma*: 'We come across many wicked men, priding themselves on their religiosity, while doing the most immoral deeds. On the other hand, there are also men like the late Mr. Bradlaugh who, while being extremely virtuous and moral, take pride in calling themselves atheists.' As for the faith in Ramanama which 'alone saves us in the hour of danger and temptation', I may mention the martyrdom of the rationalist Francisco Ferrer in 1909 at Barcelona in Spain at the hands of men who believed in Jesus' name, their Ramanama. I shall not dwell on the Holy War, the burnings and mutilations of heretics, and the torture and slaughter of animal and sometimes of men in sacrifice — all of which have been carried out 'for the greater glory of God and in His name'. This is by the bye.

“As a national worker, however, I feel I must draw your attention to the objection which Mr. — raised (on behalf of a rationalist friend of his) to your saying that only 'God-fearing' men can become true NCOs, and remind you of the assurance you then gave to all to the effect that the programme of national work does not require a man to declare his religious

faith. (Vide *Young India*, May 4, 1921, pp. 138-39.) That objection applies with greater force now than it did at that time, because 'God' has now a place on pledges and vows such as that administered to Congress Volunteers, which begins with 'With God as witness, I. ' Now you must be knowing that the

Buddhists (like the Burmese — now an 'Indian' people and your friend Prof. Dharmanand Kosambi) and the Jains, as well as many Indians who do not belong to these ancient recognized sects are agnostic in faith. Is it possible to these, if they wish, to enrol as Congress Volunteers conscientiously and with full understanding of a pledge which begins in the name of any Entity they ignore? If not, is it proper to exclude from Congress service any such merely because of their religious faith? May I suggest that a conscience clause be added to accommodate all such cases allowing of solemn affirmation in place of the oath in the name of God (to which even some believers in a personal God object, as the Quakers), or else a substitution of 'Conscience' in place of 'God' by all conscientious objectors to the use of the latter, or — best of all — that a solemn affirmation without reference to God and with or without 'Conscience' be required of *all* comers without distinction? I approach you as you are the author of that pledge and now the President of the Congress. I did so once before, but am afraid not in time for you to be able to attend to it before your historic arrest at Sabarmati in 1922."

So far as the conscientious objection is concerned, the mention of God may be removed if required from the Congress pledge of which I am proud to think I was the author. Had such an objection been raised at the time, I would have yielded at once. I was unprepared for the objection in a place like India. Though there is officially the Charvak School, I do not know that it has any votaries. I deny that Buddhists and Jains are atheists or agnostics. The latter they cannot be. Those who believe in the soul as apart from and capable of life independent of and after the dissolution of the body cannot be called atheists. We may all have different definitions for 'God'. If we could all give our own definitions of God, there would be

as many definitions as there are men and women. But behind all that variety of definitions there would also be a certain sameness which would be unmistakable. For the root is one. God is that indefinable something which we all feel but which we do not know. Charles Bradlaugh described himself as an atheist no doubt, but many a Christian declined to regard him as such. He recognized in Bradlaugh a greater kinship with himself than many a lip Christian. I had the privilege of attending the funeral of that good friend of India. I noticed several clergymen at the function. There were certainly several Mussalmans and many Hindus in the procession. They all believed in God. Bradlaugh's denial of God was a denial of Him as He was known to Bradlaugh to have been described. His was an eloquent and indignant protest against the then current theology and the terrible contract between precept and practice. To me God is Truth and Love; God is ethics and morality; God is fearlessness. God is the source of Light and Life and yet He is above and beyond all these. God is conscience. He is even the atheism of the atheist. For in His boundless love God permits the atheist to live. He is the searcher of hearts. He transcends speech and reason. He knows us and our hearts better than we do ourselves. He does not take us at our word for He knows that we often do not mean it, some knowingly and others unknowingly. He is a personal God to those who need His personal presence. He is embodied to those who need his touch. He is the purest essence. He simply is to those who have faith. He is all things to all men. He is in us and yet above and beyond us. One may banish the word 'God' from the Congress but one has no power to banish the Thing Itself. What is a solemn affirmation if it is not the same thing as in the name of God. And surely conscience is but a poor and laborious paraphrase of the simple combination of three letters called God. He cannot cease to be because hideous immoralities or inhuman brutalities are committed in His name. He is long suffering. He is patient but He is also terrible. He is the most exacting personage in the world and the world to come. He metes out the same measure to us that we mete

out to our neighbours — men and brutes. With Him ignorance is no excuse. And withal He is every forgiving for He always gives us the chance to repent. He is the greatest democrat the world knows, for He leaves us 'unfettered' to make our own choice between evil and good. He is the greatest tyrant ever known, for He often dashes the cup from our lips and under cover of free will leaves us a margin so wholly inadequate as to provide only mirth for Himself at our expense. Therefore it is that Hinduism calls it all His sport — *Lila*, or calls it all an illusion — *Maya*. We are *not*, He alone *is*. And if we will be, we must eternally sing His praise and do His will. Let us dance to the tune of His *bansi* — lute, and all would be well.

*Young India*, 5-3-'25, p. 80

## 23

### WHO AND WHERE IS GOD ?

(From the original in Gujarati)

I have defined *brahmacharya* as that correct way of life which leads to Brahma, ie God, Straightaway the question arises : "What or who is God?" If man knew the answer, it would enable him to find the path that leads to Him.

God is not a person. To affirm that He descends to earth every now and again in the form of a human being is a partial truth which merely signifies that such a person lives near to God. Inasmuch as God is omnipresent, He dwells within every human being and all may, therefore, be said to be incarnations of Him. But this leads us nowhere, Rama, Krishna, etc. are called incarnations of God because we attribute divine qualities to them. In truth they are creations of man's imagination. Whether they actually lived or not does not affect the picture of them in men's minds. The Rama and Krishna of history often present difficulties which have to be overcome by all manner of arguments.

The truth is that God is the force. He is the essence of life. He is pure and undefiled consciousness. He is eternal. And yet, strangely enough, all are not able to derive either



benefit from or shelter in the all-pervading living presence.

Electricity is a powerful force. Not all can benefit from it. It can only be produced by following certain laws. It is lifeless force. Man can utilize it if he labours hard enough to acquire the knowledge of its laws.

The living force which we call God can similarly be found if we know and follow His law leading to the discovery of Him in us. But it is self-evident that to find out God's law requires far harder labour. The law may, in one word, be termed *brahmcharaya*. The straight way to cultivate *brahmcharya* is Ramanama. I can say this from experience. Devotees and sages like Tulasidas have shown us this royal path. No one need give undue importance to my own experience. Perhaps I am right in saying that the potency of Ramanama was brought vividly home to me in Uruli-Kanchan. It was there that I assured that the surest remedy for all our ills was Ramanama. He who can make full use of it can show powerful results with very little outside effort.

Following this line of thought I can say with conviction that the orthodox aids to *brahmcharya* pale into insignificance before Ramanama, when this name is enthroned in the heart. Then and then only do we realize its transcendent beauty and power. In the vigilant search for this matchless beauty and unfailing weapon we find that it is hard to differentiate between ends and means. Thus, the eleven rules of conduct are the means to enable us to reach God. Of the eleven rules Truth is the means and God called Rama is the end. Is it not equally true that Ramanama is the means and Truth is the end?

But let me revert to the original point. The accepted meaning of *brahmcharya* is the attainment by man of complete control over the sex organ. The golden means to attain that end is Ramanama. For proving the efficacy of Ramanama there are undoubted rules. I dwelt on them up to a point some months ago, but it will be worthwhile to recount them.

*Harijan*, 22-6-'47, p. 200

## IS GOD A PERSON OR FORCE ?

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

A friend from Baroda writes in English :

“You ask us to pray to God to give light to the whites in South Africa and strength and courage to the Indians there to remain steadfast to the end. A prayer of this nature can only be addressed to a person. If God is an all-pervading and all- powerful force, what is the point of praying to Him? He goes on with his work whatever happens.”

I have written on this topic before. But as it is a question that crops up again and again in different languages, further elucidation is likely to help someone or the other. In my opinion, Rama, Rahaman, Ahurmazd, God or Krishna are all attempts on the part of man to name that invincible force which is the greatest of all forces. It is inherent in man, imperfect he though be, ceaselessly to strive after perfection. In the attempt he falls into reverie. And, just as a child tries to stand, falls down again and again and ultimately learns how to walk, even so man, with all his intelligence is a mere infant as compared to the infinite and ageless God. This may appear to be an exaggeration but is not. Man can only describe God in his own poor language. The power we call God defies description. Nor does that power stand in need of any human effort to describe Him. It is man who requires the means whereby he can describe that Power which is vaster than the ocean. If this premise is accepted, there is no need to ask why we pray. Man can only conceive God within the limitations of his own mind. If God is vast and boundless as the ocean, how can a tiny drop like man imagine what He is? He can only experience what the ocean is like, if he falls into and is merged in it. This realization is beyond description. In Madame Blavatsky's language man, in praying, worships his own glorified self. He can truly pray, who has the conviction that God is within him. He who has not, need not pray. God will not be offended, but I can say from experience that he who

does not pray is certainly a loser. What matters then whether one man worships God as Person and another as Force? Both do right according to their lights. None knows and perhaps never will know what is the absolutely proper way to pray. The ideal must always remain the ideal. One need only remember that God is the Force among all the forces. All other forces are material. But God is the vital force or spirit which is all- pervading, all-embracing and therefore beyond human ken.

*Harijan*, 18-8-'46, p. 267

## 25

### THE MYSTERY OF MYSTERIES

(From "Weekly Letter No. 20" by Pyarelal)

At Saharsa,\* where Gandhiji halted for his Monday silence a crowd of fifty to sixty thousand people literally laid siege to the bungalow, where Gandhiji was staying, from 8 o'clock in the morning. The whole day they sat round the outside of the compound fence, without food or water, in the midst of choking heat and dust. Towards the evening, their number swelled to over a lakh. Gandhiji addressed them in an open air meeting. The speech turned on the theme, "Is the God who sent the earthquake a heartless and revengeful deity?" "No", replied Gandhiji, "He is neither. Only His ways are not our ways." He elaborated the argument further in a letter to a friend, which he wrote about this time, "When we know that God Himself is the mystery of mysteries, why should anything that He does perplex us? If he acted as we would have Him do, we would not be His creatures and He our creator. The impenetrable darkness that surrounds us is not a curse but a blessing. He has given us powers to see only the step in front of us and it should be enough if Heavenly light reveals that step to us. We can then sing with Newman, 'One step enough for me.' And we may be sure from our past experience that the next step will always be in view. In other words, the

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\*A place in the State of Bihar.

impenetrable darkness is nothing so impenetrable as we may imagine. But it seems impenetrable when, in our impatience, we want to look beyond that one step. And since God is love, we can say definitely that even the physical catastrophes that He sends now and then must be a blessing in disguise. But they can be so only to those who regard them as a warning for introspection and self-purification.”

*Harijan*, 20-4-'34, p. 73 at p. 78

## 26

### UNDERSTANDING THE MYSTRY OF GOD

(From “Two Requests”)

No man has ever been able to describe God fully. . . .  
God alone is omniscient. Man in the flesh is essentially imperfect. He may be described as being made in the image of God but he is far from being God. God is invisible, beyond the reach of the human eye. All that we can do, therefore, is to try to understand the words and actions of those whom we regard as men of God. Let them soak into our being and let us endeavour to translate them into action but only so far as they appeal to the heart.

*Harijan*, 3-3-'46 p. 28 at p. 29

## THE SEEMING PARADOX OF GOD

(Appeared originally under the heading “Meaning of God”)

A correspondent writes :

“I am reading your *Gita*bodh these days and trying to understand it. I am puzzled by what Lord Krishna says in the 10th discourse. 'In dicer's play I am the conquering double eight. Nothing, either good or evil, can take place in this world without my will.' Does God then permit evil? If so, how can He punish the evil-doer? Has God created the world for this purpose? Is it impossible then for mankind to live in peace?”

To say that God permits evil in this world may not be pleasing to the ear. But if He is held responsible for the good, it follows that He has to be responsible for the evil too. Did not God permit Ravana to exhibit unparalleled strength? Perhaps, the root cause of the perplexity arises from a lack of the real understanding of what God is. God is not a person. He transcends description. He is the Law-maker, the Law and the Executor. No human being can well arrogate these powers to himself. If he did, he would be looked upon as an unadulterated dictator. They become only Him whom we worship as God. This is the reality, a clear understanding of which will answer the question raised by the correspondent.

The question whether it is impossible for mankind ever to be at peace with one another does not arise from the verse quoted. The world will live in peace only when the individuals composing it make up their minds to do so. No one can deny the possibility nor say when that will come to pass. Such questions are idle waste of time. To a good man, the whole world is good. By following this golden rule the correspondent can live in peace under all circumstances, believing that what is possible for him to be is also possible for others. To believe the contrary connotes pride and arrogance.

*Harijan*, 24-2-'46, p. 24

## IS GOD A CREATION OF MAN'S IMAGINATION ?

(From "Question Box")

*Q.:* God is a creation of man's imagination. It is not God who has created man but man who has created God. Is this not true?

*A.:* I have taken this from a correspondent's letter. There is a semblance of truth in what he say. The writer has, however unwittingly, created the illusion by a play upon the two words 'creation' and "God".

God Himself is both the Law and the Law-giver. The question of anyone creating Him, therefore, does not arise, least of all by an insignificant creature such as man. Man can build a dam, but he cannot create a river. He can manufacture a chair, but it is beyond him to make the wood. He can, however, picture God in his mind in many ways. But how can man who is unable to create even a river or wood create God? That God has created man is, therefore, the pure truth. The contrary is an illusion. However, anyone may, if he likes, say that God is neither the doer nor the cause. Either is predicable of Him.

*Harijan*, 14-4-'46. पृ. 80

## THAT WHICH GIVES THE GREATEST SOLACE

(From a letter written by Gandhiji to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru)

My Dear Jawaharlal,

I am in Tithal, a place somewhat like Juhu, resting for four days to fit myself for the Bengal ordeal. I am trying here to overtake my correspondence in which I find your letter referring to the article "God and Congress". I sympathize with you in your difficulties. True religion being the greatest thing in life and in the world, it has been exploited the most. And those who have seen the exploiters and the exploitation and missed the reality naturally get disgusted with the thing itself. But religion is after all a matter for each individual and then too a matter of the heart, call it then by whatever name you like, that which gives the greatest solace in the midst of the severest fire

is God. Any way you are on the right track. I do not mind reason being the sole test even though it often bewilders one and lands one in errors that border on superstition. . . .

Yours,  
Bapu

April 25, 1925

*A Bunch of Letters* by Jawaharlal Nehru, p. 42

### 30

#### LET THE IGNORANT DISPUTE HIS EXISTENCE

(A question and the answers thereto from an article entitled "Three Vital Questions" are reproduced below.)

*Q.*: You have often said that God is an Impersonal, Absolute Being, free from passions or attributes, which means that He is not the author of the Universe nor does He sit in judgment over man's virtue and vice. And you talk of the will of God every now and then. How can a God without any attribute have a will and how can you conform your will to His? Your *Atman* is free to do whatever he likes. If he does not succeed in doing it, it is the result of his past doings, God has nothing to do with it. And yet *you* cannot be talking of the will of God to beguile the common folk, for you are a Satyagrahi. Why then this fatalism?

*A.*: I talk of God exactly as I believe Him to be. Why should I beguile people into error and work my own perdition? I seek no reward from them. I believe God to be creative as well as non-creative. This too is the result of my acceptance of the doctrine of manyness of reality. From the platform of the Jains I prove the non-creative aspect of God and from that of Ramanuja the creative aspect. As a matter of fact we are all thinking of the Unthinkable, describing the Indescribable, seeking to know the Unknown, and that is why our speech falters, is inadequate and even often contradictory. That is why the Vedas describe Brahman as 'not this', 'not this'. But if He or It is not this, He or It is. If we exist, if our parents and their parents have existed, then it is proper to believe in the Parent of the whole creation. If He is not, we are nowhere. And that is why all of us with one voice call *one* God differently as

Paramatma, Ishwara, Shiva, Vishnu, Rama, Allah, Khuda, Dada Hormuzda, Jehova, God and an infinite variety of names. He is *one* and yet many. He is smaller than an atom, and bigger than the Himalayas. He is contained even in a drop of the ocean, and yet not even the seven seas can compass Him. Reason is powerless to know Him. He is beyond the reach or grasp of reason. But I need not labour the point. Faith is essential in this matter. My logic can make and unmake innumerable hypotheses. An atheist might floor me in a debate. But my faith runs so very much faster than my reason that I can challenge the whole world and say: "God is, was and ever shall be."

But those who want to deny His existence are at liberty to do so. He is merciful, and compassionate. He is not an earthly king needing an army to make us accept His sway. He allows us freedom, and yet His compassion commands obedience to His will. But if any one of us disdain to bow to His will, He says: 'So be it. My sun will shine no less for thee, my clouds will rain no less for thee. I need not force thee to accept my sway.' Of such a God let the ignorant dispute the existence. I am one of the millions of wise men who believe in Him and am never tired of bowing to Him and singing His Glory.

*Young India*, 21-1-'21, p. 80

### 31

#### GOD OR NO GOD

During my visit to the South I met Harijans and others who pretended not to believe in God. At one place where a conference of Harijans was being held, the Chairman delivered a harangue on atheism under the very shadow of a temple which Harijans had built for themselves with their own money. But out of the bitterness of his heart for the treatment meted out to fellow Harijans, he had begun to doubt the very existence of a Benevolent Power that had allowed such cruelty to flourish. There was, perhaps, some excuse for this disbelief.

But here is specimen of disbelief of another type from another source :



“Don't you think that a preconceived idea of a God, Truth or Reality might colour the whole trend of our search and hence be a great impediment and may defeat the very purpose of our life? For example, you take certain moral truths as fundamental. But we are in search and, as long as we have not found the reality, how can we boast or assert that a certain rule of morality is the truth or it alone is going to help us in our search?”

No search is possible without some workable assumptions. If we grant nothing, we find nothing. Ever since its commencement, the world, the wise and the foolish included, has proceeded upon the assumption that if we are, God is and that, if God is not, we are not. And since belief in God is co-existent with the humankind, existence of God is treated as a fact more definite than the fact that the Sun is. This living faith has solved the largest number of puzzles of life. It has alleviated our misery. It sustains us in life, it is our one solace in death. The very search for Truth becomes interesting, worth while, because of this belief. But search for Truth is search for God. Truth is God. God is, because Truth is. We embark upon the search because we believe that there is Truth and that It can be found by diligent search and meticulous observance of the well-known and well-tried rules of the search. There is no record in history of the failure of such search. Even the atheists who have pretended to disbelieve in God have believed in Truth. The trick they have performed is that of giving God another, not a new, name. His names are legion. Truth is the crown of them all.

What is true of God is true, though in a less degree, of the 'assumption of the truth of some fundamental moralities'. As a matter of fact, they are implied in the belief in God or Truth. Departure from these has landed the truants in endless misery. Difficulty of practice should not be confused with disbelief. A Himalayan expedition has its prescribed conditions of success. Difficulty of fulfilling the conditions does not make the expedition impossible. It only adds interest and zest to the search. Well, this expedition in search of God or Truth is infinitely more than numberless Himalayan

expeditions and, therefore, much more interesting. If we have no zest for it, it is because of the weakness of our faith. What we see with our physical eyes is more real to us than the only Reality. We know that appearances are deceptive. And yet we treat trivialities as realities. To see the trivialities as such is half the battle won. It constitutes more than half the search after Truth or God. Unless we discharge ourselves from trivialities, we have not even the leisure for the great search, or is to be reserved for our leisure hours?

*Harijan*, 21-9-'34, p. 252

## 32

### HOW TO CONVERT ATHEISTS

(From "Question Box", translated from Hindustani)

*Q.*: How can one convert atheists to belief in God and religion?

*A.*: There is only one way. The true servant of God can convert the atheist by means of his own purity and good conduct. It can never be done by argument. Innumerable books have been written to prove the existence of God, and if argument could have prevailed, there would not be a single atheist in the world today. But the opposite is the case. In spite of all the literature on the subject, atheism is on the increase. Often, however, the man who calls himself an atheist is not one in reality; and the converse also is equally true. Atheists sometimes say, "If you are believers, then we are unbelievers." And they have a right to say so, for self-styled believers are often not so in reality. Many worship God because it is the fashion to do so or in order to deceive the world. How can such persons have any influence on atheists? Therefore let the believer realize and have the faith that, if he is true to God, his neighbours will instinctively not be atheists. Do not let him be troubled about the whole world. Let us remember that atheists exist by the sufferance of God. How truly has it been said that those who worship God in name only are not believers but those who do His will!

*Harijan*, 1-9-'40, p. 268 at p. 269

## GOD AND GODS

(From "Weekly Letter" by MD)

A Roman Catholic Father who saw Gandhiji suggested, "If Hinduism became mono-theistic, Christianity and Hinduism can serve India in co-operation."

"I would love to see the co-operation happen," said Gandhiji, "but it cannot if the present-day Christian missions persist in holding up Hinduism to ridicule and saying that no one can go to Heaven unless he renounces and denounces Hinduism. But I can conceive a good Christian, silently working away, and shedding the sweet aroma of his life on Hindu communities, like the rose which does not need any speech to spread its fragrance but spreads it because it must. Even so a truly spiritual life. Then surely there would be peace on earth and goodwill among men. But not so long as there is militant or 'muscular' Christianity. This is not to be found in the Bible, but you find it in Germany and other countries."

"But if Indians begin to believe in one God and give up idolatry, don't you think the whole difficulty will be solved?"

"Will the Christians be satisfied with it? Are they all united?"

"Of course all the Christian sects are not united," said the Catholic Father.

"Then you are asking only a theoretical question. And may I ask you is there any amalgamation between Islam and Christianity, though both are said to believe in one God? If these two have not amalgamated there is less hope of amalgamation of Christians and Hindus along the lines you suggest. I have my own solution, but in the first instance I dispute the description that Hindus believe in many gods and are idolaters. They do say there are many gods, but they also declare unmistakably that there is ONE GOD, GOD of gods. It is, therefore, not proper to suggest that Hindus believe in many gods. They certainly believe in many worlds. Just as there is a world inhabited by men, and another by beasts so also is there one inhabited by superior beings called gods, whom we do not

see but who nevertheless exist. The whole mischief is created

by the English                      ऽNH•T                      (*deva* or  
rendering of the word  
ऽNH or

*devata*) for which you have found a better term than 'god'. But God is Ishwara, Devadhideva, God of gods. So you see it is the word 'god' used to describe different divine beings that has given rise to such confusion. I believe that I am a thorough Hindu but I never believe in many gods. Never even in my childhood did I hold that belief, and no one ever taught me to do so."

*Harijan*, 13-3-'37, p. 37 at p. 39

### 34

#### THE LAW OF GOD

(From "Question Box")

*Q.*: In *Harijanbandhu* of 14-4-1946, you have said, "God is the Law and Law-giver." I do not understand it. Laws are made by man and they keep on changing with time. For instance, Draupadi had five husbands and yet she was considered a *sati*. A woman who does that today will be considered immoral.

*A.*: Law here means the Law of God. Man interprets that Law according to his understanding. For instance, the rotation of earth is a law of nature. We are convinced of its correctness today. Yet before Galileo, astrononers believed differently. As for Draupadi, the Mahabharata in my opinion is an allegory and not history. Draupadi means the soul wedded to the five senses.

*Harijan*, 4-8-'46, p. 249

## THE DEBT TO GOD

(From “Weekly Letter” by Pyarelal being a few cullings from discourses of Gandhiji at prayer meetings at Panchagani.)

“In the song that has been sung, the poet says that God is hidden and yet present everywhere,” remarked Gandhiji. “That is true. He knows our innermost thoughts better than we ourselves can do. One who depends on God will never be afraid of anybody, not even of the most despotic government on earth or its officers. For he will have as his protector the King of knigs from whose eye nothing is hid.”

In another discourse of his he said: “The verse from the *gatha* sung today says: 'Let me remember Thee by making my heart pure by righteous thought, by performing good and wise deeds and by right speech.' Unless all these conditions are fulfilled, one cannot expect to come near God.”

“Then the poet says: 'We bow to Thee and thank Thee for all that Thou hast done for us. We will always remain Thy debtors.' What is this debt towards God and how can one repay it? The answer is, by discharging one's duty completely. And since no mortal can completely discharge his duty in life, he must for ever remain a debtor to God.”

*Harijan*, 28-7-'46, p. 243

## THE GOD I WORSHIP

(From “A Good Ending”)

I claim to know my millions. All the 24 hours of the day I am with them. They are my first care and last, because I recognize no God except the God that is to be found in the hearts of the dumb millions. They do not recognize His presence; I do. And I worship the God that is Truth or Truth which is God through the service of these millions.

*Harijan*, 11-3-'39, p. 44

## MY REFUGE

(On 9th October 1924, the twentieth day of his fast for restoring amity between Hindus and Muslims, Gandhiji wrote as under :)

Today is the twentieth day of my penance and prayer. Presently from the world of peace I shall enter the world of strife. The more I think of it the more helpless I feel. So many look to me to finish the work begun by the Unity Conference. So many expect me to bring together the political parties. I know that I can do nothing. God can do everything. O God, make me Thy fit instrument and use me as Thou wilt.

Man is nothing. Napoleon planned much and found himself a prisoner in St. Helena. The mighty Kaiser aimed at the crown of Europe and is reduced to the status of a private gentleman. God has so willed it. Let us contemplate such examples and be humble.

During these days of grace, privilege and peace, I have hummed to myself a hymn we often sing at the Satyagrahashram. It is so good that I cannot resist the pleasure of sharing a free rendering of it with the reader. The words of the hymn better express my state than anything else I can write.

Here they are:

My honour, O God! is in Thy keeping;  
 Thou art ever my Refuge,  
 For Thou art Protector of the weak.  
 It is Thy promise to listen to the wail of sinners; I am  
 sinner of old, help me  
 Thou to cross this ocean of darkness. It is  
 Thine to remove the sin And the  
 misery of mankind.  
 Be gracious to Tulasidas And  
 make him Thy devotee.\*

*Young India*, 9-10-'24, p. 329

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\*The original Hindi text of the above hymn of Tulasidas is as follows :

म०ग०ह० ! •ग०ब० त० न० न०म० ॐत० \$

सि० सि० न०X\* स०म० <•व०त०म०, •ग० न० ÷N उ०म०ø<त०ह०त० \$\$

## GOD ALONE IS IMPERISHABLE

(From "Weekly Letter" by Pyarelal)

Accidental delay of a few moments at the prayer meeting provided Gandhiji with another theme for his after-prayer discourse on Thursday last. An important visitor had detained him beyond the stipulated time, so that when he reached the prayer-grounds the prayer had already commenced. Apologizing for the delay in his address at the end of the prayer, he told the audience how pleased he was that Shri Kanu Gandhi had started the prayer without waiting for him. "It should be the general rule that prayers must not be delayed for anybody on earth. God's time never stops. From the very beginning the wheel of His time has gone ceaselessly on. As a matter of fact there is no beginning for Him or His time.

"God is not a person. No one can describe Him as no one has seen Him. He is the Law and the Law-giver combined into one. The author of the Vedas, after the profoundest search has described Him as *Neti, Neti* (not this, not this). He moves all and yet no one can move Him. Not a blade of grass moves without His will. For Him there is no beginning and no end.

"Everything that has a beginning must end. The sun, the moon and the earth must all perish one day even though it might be after an incalculable number of years. God alone is immortal, imperishable. How can man find words to describe Him? How can anyone afford to miss the time of offering prayers to Him whose watch never stops?"

*Harijan*, 16-6-'46, p. 182 at p. 183

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## WHERE IS THE LIVING GOD ?

The following is taken from a letter from Bengal :

“I had the privilege to go through your article on birth-control with the heading: 'A Youth's Difficulty'.

“With the original theme of your article, I am in full agreement. But, in that article, you have expressed in a line your sentiment on God. You have said that it is the fashion nowadays for young men to discard the idea of God and they have no living faith in a living God.\*

“But, may I ask what proof (which must be positive and undisputed) can you put forth regarding the existence of a God? Hindu philosophers or ancient Rishis, it seems to me, in their attempt to describe the *Swarupa* or reality of Ishwara have at last come to the conclusion that He is indescribable and veiled in *Maya* and so on. In short, they have enveloped God in an impenetrable mist of obscurity and have further complicated, instead of simplifying, the complicated question of God. I do not dare deny that a true Mahatma like you or Sri Aurobindo, or the Buddha and Sankaracharyas of the past may well conceive and realize the existence of such a God, who is far beyond the reach of ordinary human intellect.

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\* The passage referred to herein is as under:

“It is the fashion nowadays to dismiss God from life altogether and insist on the possibility of reaching the highest kind of life without the necessity of living faith in God. I must confess my inability to drive the truth of the law (of continence) home to those who have no faith in and no need for a Power infinitely higher than themselves. My own experience has led me to the knowledge that fullest life is impossible without an immovable belief in a living Law in obdience to which the whole Universe moves. A man without that faith is like a drop thrown out of the ocean bound to perish. Every drop in the ocean shares its majesty and has the honour of giving us the ozone of life.”

(From “A Youth's Difficulty”)

*Harijan*, 25-4-'36, p. 84

“But, what have we (the general mass), whose coarse intellect can never penetrate into the unfathomable deep, to do with such a God if we do not feel His presence in our midst? If he is the Creator and Father of us all, why do we not feel His presence or existence in every beat of our hearts? If He cannot make His presence felt, He is no God to me. Further, I have the question — If He is the Father of this universe, does He feel the sorrows of His children? If He feels so then why did He work havoc and inflict so much misery on His children by the devastating 'quakes of Bihar and Quetta? Why did He humiliate an innocent nation — the Abyssinians? Are the Abyssinians not His sons? Is He not Almighty? Then why could He not prevent these calamities? You carried on a non-violent truthful campaign for the independence of my poor mother India and you implored the help of God. But, I think, that help has been denied to you and the strong force of materialism, which never depends on the help of God, got the better of you and you were humiliated and you have sunk into the background by forced retirement. If there was a God, He would certainly have helped you, for your cause was indeed a deserving one! I need not multiply such instances.

“So, it is not at all surprising that young men of the present day do not believe in a God, because they do not want to make a *supposition* of God — they want a *real living* God. You have mentioned in your article of a living faith in a living God. I shall feel highly gratified and I think you will be rendering a great benefit to the young world, if you put forth some positive, undeniable proofs of the existence of God. I have the confidence that you will not more mystify the already mystified problem and will throw some definite light on the matter.”

I very much fear that what I am about to write will not remove the mist to which the correspondent alludes.

The writer supposes that I might have realised the existence of a living God. I can lay no such claim. But I do have a living faith in a living God even as I have a living faith in many things that scientists tell me. It may be retorted that what the scientists say can be verified if one followed the

prescription given for realizing the facts which are taken for granted. Precisely in that manner speak the Rishis and the Prophets. They say anybody following the path they have trodden can realise God. The fact is we do not want to follow the path leading to realization and we won't take the testimony of eye-witnesses about the one thing that really matters. Not all the achievements of physical sciences put together can compare with that which gives us a living faith in God. Those who do not want to believe in the existence of God do not believe in the existence of anything apart from the body. Such a belief is held to be unnecessary for the progress of humanity. For such persons the weightiest argument in proof of the existence of soul or God is of no avail. You cannot make a person who has stuffed his ears, listen to, much less appreciate, the finest music. Even so can you not convince those about existence of a living God who do not want the conviction.

Fortunately the vast majority of people do have a living faith in a living God. They cannot, will not, argue about it. For them, "It is". Are all the scriptures of the world old women's tales of superstition? Is the testimony of the Rishis, the Prophets to be rejected? Is the testimony of the Chaitanya, Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Tukaram, Dnyandeva, Ramdas, Nanak, Kabir, Tulasidas of no value? What about Ramamohan Roy, Devendranath Tagore, Vivekanand — all modern men as well educated as the tallest among the living ones? I omit the living witnesses whose evidence would be considered unimpeachable. This belief in God has to be based on faith which transcends reason. Indeed even the so-called realization has at bottom an element of faith without which it cannot be sustained. In the very nature of things it must be so. Who can transgress the limitations of his being? I hold that complete realization is impossible in this embodied life. Nor is it necessary. A living immovable faith is all that is required for reaching the full spiritual height attainable by human beings. God is not outside this earthly case of ours. Therefore exterior proof is not of much avail, if any at all. We must ever fail to perceive Him through the senses, because He is beyond them.

We can feel Him, if we will but withdraw ourselves from the senses. The divine music is incessantly going on within ourselves, but the loud senses drown the delicate music which is unlike and infinitely superior to anything we can perceive or hear with our senses.

The writer wants to know why, if God is a God of mercy and justice, He allows all the miseries and sorrows we see around us. I can give no satisfactory explanation. He imputes to me a sense of defeat and humiliation. I have no such sense of defeat, humiliation or despair. My retirement, such as it is, has nothing to do with any defeat. It is no more and no less than a course of self-purification and self-preparation. I state this to show that things are often not what they seem. It may be that what we mistake as sorrows, injustices and the like are not such in truth. If we could solve all the mysteries of the universe, we would be co-equals with God. Every drop of the ocean shares its glory but is not the ocean. Realizing our littleness during this tiny span of life, we close every morning prayer with the recitation of a verse which means: "Misery so-called is no misery nor riches so-called riches. Forgetting (or denying) God is the true misery, remembering (or faith in) God is true riches."

*Harijan*, 13-6-'36, p. 140

#### 40

### GOD IS NOT, WHERE HARIJANS ARE EXCLUDED

(From "Conundrums" — translated from *Harijanbandhu* dated 24-1-1937 by Pyarelal)

*Q.*: Your statement that God does not reside in temples when Harijans are not admitted seems to me to be a one-sided and therefore misleading statement. In my opinion it is as untrue to say that God is not in temples where Harijans are not admitted as that God is to be found only in temples and not outside. It challenges as it were the omnipresence of God. He is everywhere, there is no place where He is not.

*Gandhiji's answer:*

True, the statement that God does not dwell in temples from which Harijans are excluded is one-sided and therefore

true only in a certain and limited sense only. But does that not apply to human speech itself? But we have not on that account condemned or discarded the use of human speech. With all its imperfections as a vehicle for the expression of truth, we must rely on it for all practical purposes, or it would spell an end of all human intercourse. Tulasidas has made Rama say in his Ramayana that God dwells only in the hearts of the good and the pure, not of those who are wicked or evil-minded. Now this statement, again, is only partly true. But still more untrue and mischievous in its pragmatic sense would be its reverse, viz. that God dwells in the hearts of the wicked and evil-minded too and actuates them in their evil deeds, though as a strictly scientific statement of truth it would be perhaps nearer the mark. In a strictly scientific sense God is at the bottom of both good and evil. He directs the assassin's dagger no less than the surgeon's knife. But for all that, good and evil are, for human purposes, from each other distinct and incompatible, being symbolical of light and darkness, God and Satan, Ahriman and Ormuzd respectively. My statement, therefore, that where Harijans are excluded there God is not, must stand.

*Harijan*, 20-2-'37, p.9

## 41

### GOD IS GOOD

God is good not in the same sense as X is good. X is comparatively good. He is more good than evil, but God is wholly good. There is no evil in Him. God made man in his own image. Unfortunately for us man has fashioned Him in his own. This arrogance has landed mankind in a sea of troubles. God is the Supreme Alchemist. In His presence all iron and dross turn into pure gold. Similarly does all evil turn into good.

Again God lives but not as we. His creatures live but to die. But God is life. Therefore, goodness and all it connotes is not an attribute. Goodness is God. Goodness conceived as apart from Him is a lifeless thing and exists only whilst it is a

paying policy. So are all morals. If they are to live in us they must be considered and cultivated in their relation to God. We must try to become good because we want to reach and realize God. All the dry ethics of the world turn to dust because apart from God they are lifeless. Coming from God, they come with life in them. They become part of us and ennoble us.

Conversely, God conceived without Goodness is without life. We give him life in our vain imaginings.

*Harijan*, 24-8-'47, p. 289

## 42

### LORD OF HUMILITY

[*Bapu* is the title of a small book by Miss F. Marry Barr just published by International Book House Ltd., Bombay - (Price Rs. 2/ 12/-). It contains conversations and correspondence of the writer with Gandhiji along with relevant narrative. Just fifteen years ago she received from Gandhiji a letter in which was enclosed the following prayer composed by Bapu himself for being delivered to Miss Linforth, an English woman who was then working at a Hyderabad Welfare Centre, and who had asked Miss Barr "to get Gandhi to give her a message". Miss Linforth framed and put it up in her centre. To avoid misunderstanding, let it be added that the poem-like form in which it is printed below is the art of the sub-editor and not of Bapu, who wrote it running like simple prose. - Ed.]

Lord of humility, dwelling in the  
     little pariah hut,  
 help us to reach for Thee throughout that  
     fair land  
 watered by Ganges, Brahmaputra  
     and Jamuna.

Give us receptiveness, give us open-heartedness, give  
 us Thy humility, give us  
     the ability and willingness to  
 identify ourselves with the  
     masses of India.

Let us be embodiments of self-sacrifice,  
embodiments of godliness,  
humility personified, that we  
may know the land better and  
love it more.

43

(From a letter of Gandhiji dated 9-7-1932 to Mr. PG Mathew)

*Harijan*, 27-3-'49, p. 26

44

(From “Not Lonely”)

A friend wrote to me the other day how lonely he felt in the midst of company. This remark was prompted by my telling him that I distrusted the word of the official world. He did not, and had thought that I might share his trust. Behold his disappointment when he found me wanting. It may be that was not what he meant by his cryptic letter. Anyway that was

my interpretation and I replied that as a man of God he must never feel lonely. For, God was ever with him. Why should he care even if the whole world deserted him? Let him trust in spite of me, as long as the trust came from his heart and not his head.

I feel differently. Mutual trust and mutual love are no trust and no love. The real love is to love them that hate you, to love your neighbour even though you distrust him. If my love is sincere, I must love the Englishman in spite of my distrust. Of what avail is my love, if it be only so long as I trust my friend? Even thieves do that. They become enemies immediately the trust is gone.

*Harijan*, 3-3-'46, p. 28

## 45

### "SEEING GOD FACE TO FACE"

#### I

A subscriber to the *Harijan* presents as follows what appears to him to be a conundrum to which I have sent the following reply:

#### Conundrum

"The other day you admitted that you had not seen God face to face. In the preface to *My Experiments with Truth* you have stated that you have seen God in the embodiment of Truth from a far distance. The two statements appear to be incompatible. Kindly elucidate for proper understanding."

#### Reply

There is a big gulf between 'seeing God face to face' and 'seeing Him in the embodiment of Truth from a far distance'. In my opinion the two statements are not only not incompatible but each explains the other. We see the Himalayas from a very great distance and when we are on the top we have seen the Himalayas face to face. Millions can see them from hundreds of miles if they are within the range of that seeing distance, but few having arrived at the top after years of travel see them face to face. This does not seem to need elucidation in the



columns of the *Harijan*. Nethertheless, I send your letter and my reply for publication in the *Harijan* lest there may be some like you who think that there is any inconsistency between the two statements quoted by you.

*Harijan*, 23-11-'47, p. 432

## II

(From "Gandhiji's Speeches")

Before the prayers started, some one passed a note to Gandhiji. In it the writer had asked him whether he had seen God face to face. Answering the question after prayers, Gandhiji said that he had not seen God face to face. If he had, he would have no need to be speaking to them. His thought would be potent enough to render speech and action on his part unnecessary. But he had an undying faith in the existence of God. Millions all over the world shared that faith with him. The most learned could not shake the faith of the illiterate millions. The *bhajan* sung during the prayer described the way to see God face to face. The poet asked the aspirant to shed anger and desire and to be indifferent to praise or blame if he expected to reach the blessed state.

*Harijan*, 3-8-'47, p. 258 at p. 262

## III

(From "Notes" — rendered from the original in Hindustani)

A correspondent writes:

"In your article "Action in Inaction" you say that you have not reached that state. The sentence looks simple enough but I would like you to expand the meaning a little."

There is a stage in life when a man does not need even to proclaim his thoughts much less to show them by outward action. Mere thoughts act. They attain that power. Then it can be said of him that his seeming inaction constitutes his action. I must confess that I am far from that state. All I can say is that my striving is in that direction.

*Harijan*, 26-10-47, p. 381

## FINDING GOD

(From “Gandhiji's Post-prayer Speeches”)

The *bhajan* of the evening said that man's highest endeavour lay in trying to find God, said Gandhiji. He could not be found in temples or idols, or places of worship built by man's hands, nor could He be found by abstinences. God could be found only through love, not earthly, but divine. That love was lived by Mirabai who saw God in everything. He was all in all to her.

*Harijan*, 23-11-'47, p. 421 at p. 425

## HOW I ESTABLISH COMMUNION WITH GOD

(From the summary by MD of Gandhiji's concluding discourse at the Gandhi Seva Sangh meeting which appeared under the title “The Concluding Discourse”.)

I do not know whether I am a Karmayogi or any other Yogi. I know that I cannot live without work. I crave to die with my hand at the spinning wheel. If one has to establish communion with God through some means, why not through the spinning wheel? “Him who worships Me,” says the Lord in the Gita, “I guide along the right path and see to his needs.” My God is myriad-formed, and while sometimes I see Him in the spinning wheel, at other times I see Him in communal unity, then again in removal of untouchability; and that is how I establish communion with Him according as the Spirit moves me.

*Harijan*, 8-5-'37, p. 97 at p. 99

## SERVICE OF GOD

(From "Weekly Letter" by MD)

Another Sadhu, a leader of the Harijans, one day came in with a curious poser: "How can we serve God when we do not know God?"

"We may not know God but we know His creation," said Gandhiji. "Service of His creation is the service of God."

"But how can we serve the whole of God's creation?" "We can but serve that part of God's creation which is nearest and best known to us. We can start with next-door neighbour. We should not be content with keeping our countryard clean, we should see that our neighbour's countryard is also clean. We may serve our family, but may not sacrifice the village for the sake of the family. Our own honour lies in the preservation of that of our own village. But we must each of us understand our own limitations. Our capacity for service is automatically limited by our knowledge of the world in which we live. But let me put it in the simplest possible language. Let us think less of ourselves than of our next-door neighbour. Dumping the refuse of our countryard into that of our neighbour is no service of humanity, but disservice. Let us start with the service of our neighbours."

*Harijan*, 22-8-'36, p. 217

## A MATTER OF FAITH AND EXPERIENCE

(From "Question Box")

*Q.* : God cannot be realized through reason. He has to be understood through faith. Do you believe in rebirth or is it that the Hindu seers propounded it, in order to enable people to appreciate the significance of good and evil deeds and derive some satisfaction from the belief ?