

சாராம்சமும் இந்து மதம்

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இந்துத்துவசாரமே

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த ரீடர்

நான் என் எழுத்துகளில் விடாமுயற்சி வாசகருக்கு ஆர்வம் உள்ளன மற்றவர்களுக்கு சொல்ல விரும்புகிறேன் அவை சீரானதாகத் தோன்றுவதில் எனக்கு எந்த அக்கறையும் இல்லை. சத்தியத்திற்குப் பிறகு நான் தேடியதில் நான் பல யோசனைகளை நிராகரித்தேன், பல புதிய விஷயங்களைக் கற்றுக்கொண்டேன். நான் வயதில் வயதாகிவிட்டதால், நான் உள்நோக்கி வளர்வதை நிறுத்திவிட்டேன் அல்லது சதை கரைந்துபோகும்போது என் வளர்ச்சி நின்றுவிடும் என்ற உணர்வு எனக்கு இல்லை. நான் கவலைப்படுவது என்னவென்றால், என் கடவுளான சத்தியத்தின் அழைப்பிற்கு கணம் கணம் கீழ்ப்படிவதற்கான எனது தயார்நிலை, ஆகவே, என்னுடைய இரண்டு எழுத்துக்களுக்கும் இடையில் யாராவது ஏதேனும் முரண்பாட்டைக் கண்டால், அவர் எனது நல்லறிவில் இன்னும் நம்பிக்கை வைத்திருந்தால், அவர் செய்வார் ஒரே விஷயத்தில் இரண்டின் பிற்பகுதியைத் தேர்ந்தெடுப்பது நல்லது.

எம்.கே. காந்தி

ஹரிஜன், 29-4-1933, பக். 2

ஆசிரியர் குறிப்பு

கிறிஸ்தவம், இஸ்லாம் போன்ற பிற மதங்களிலிருந்து இந்து மதம் இரண்டு வழிகளில் வேறுபடுகிறது. முதலாவதாக, இது எந்தவொரு கோட்பாட்டையும் நம்பவில்லை மற்றும் சத்தியத்தின் ஏகபோகத்திற்கு எந்தவொரு தனிநபரின் பிரத்தியேக கூற்றை நிராகரிக்கிறது. அறிவுபோன்ற பல பாதைகளின் மூலம் அணுகலாம் என்று அது நம்புகிறது (தியானா) உயர்ந்த மனிதனை, பக்தி (பக்தி), செயல் (கர்மா) மற்றும் யோகா (மனக் கட்டுப்பாடு). உண்மையில், உண்மையான வாழ்க்கையில், ஒரு தேடுபவர் பயணிக்கும் பாதை இந்த இரண்டு அல்லது அதற்கு மேற்பட்ட துறைகளின் கலவையாக இருக்கலாம். இது தனிநபரின் மனோபாவம் மற்றும் மனப்பான்மைக்கு இணங்க ஒரு நபரின் தேர்வைப் பொறுத்தது. இந்து மதம் எந்தவொரு தனிநபராலும் நிறுவப்படவில்லை; இது இயற்கையாகவே வளர்ந்துள்ளது அல்லது உருவாகியுள்ளது, எனவே, புகழ்பெற்ற வகையில் வரையறுக்கப்படவில்லை. உண்மையில், வேறு எந்த மதமும் இருக்கக்கூடும் என்பதால் அதை துல்லியமாக வரையறுக்க முடியாது. எவ்வாறாயினும், ஒரு வெளிநாட்டு சிந்தனையாளரின் பின்வரும் விளக்கம் மற்ற எல்லாவற்றையும் விட மிக அருகில் உள்ளது: ஹிந்துயிசம் "ஒரு பிடிவாதம் அல்ல, ஆனால் ஆன்மீக வளர்ச்சியின் வெவ்வேறு கட்டங்களுக்கும், வாழ்க்கையின் வெவ்வேறு நிலைமைகளுக்கும் ஏற்றவாறு மனித நடத்தை பற்றிய ஒரு கருதுகோள்". இந்த செயல்பாட்டு வரையறையிலிருந்து தொடங்கி, இந்த விஷயத்தில் இன்னும் கொஞ்சம் ஆராய்வோம்.

உண்மையில் தர்மம் அல்லது மதம் என்றால் என்ன? பரவலாகப் பார்த்தால், மனித வாழ்க்கையின் புனிதமான மற்றும் தற்காலிக அம்சங்களை நிர்வகிக்கும் உலகளாவிய தார்மீக சட்டம் என்று அழைக்கப்படுகிறது தர்மம். உலகளாவிய தார்மீக சட்டம் எவ்வாறு இயங்குகிறது என்பதை கன்பூசியஸ் மிகவும் குறிப்பிடத்தக்க மற்றும் ஆழமான வார்த்தைகளில் விவரித்தார். அவர் கூறுகிறார்:

“கடவுளின் கட்டளைதான் நாம் இருப்பது என்ற சட்டம் என்று அழைக்கிறோம். நம்முடைய இருப்புச்

சட்டத்தை நிறைவேற்றுவதே நாம் தார்மீகச் சட்டம் என்று அழைக்கிறோம். ஒரு அமைப்பாகக் குறைக்கப்படும்போது தார்மீகச் சட்டத்தை நாம் மதம் என்று அழைக்கிறோம்.

"தார்மீக சட்டம் என்பது ஒரு சட்டமாகும், அதன் செயல்பாட்டில் இருந்து நம் இருப்பு தப்பிக்க முடியாது. நாம் தப்பிக்கும் ஒரு சட்டம் தார்மீக சட்டம் அல்ல. ஆகவே, தார்மீக மனிதன் விடாமுயற்சியுடன் கவனிக்கிறான். . . அவரது ரகசிய எண்ணங்கள் மீது.

"மகிழ்ச்சி, கோபம், துக்கம் மற்றும் இன்பம் போன்ற உணர்வுகள் விழித்துக் கொள்ளாதபோது, அதுவே நம்முடைய உண்மையான சுயநலம் அல்லது தார்மீக ஜீவன். இந்த உணர்வுகள் விழித்து, ஒவ்வொன்றும் சரியான அளவையும் அளவையும் அடையும்போது, அதுதான் தார்மீக ஒழுங்கு. நமது உண்மையான சுய அல்லது தார்மீக இருப்பு என்பது இருப்பின் சிறந்த யதார்த்தம், மற்றும் தார்மீக ஒழுங்கு என்பது உலகில் உள்ள உலகளாவிய சட்டமாகும்.

“உண்மையான தார்மீக நிலை மற்றும் தார்மீக ஒழுங்கு உணரப்படும்போது, பிரபஞ்சம் பின்னர் ஒரு பிரபஞ்சமாக மாறி, அனைத்தும் அவற்றின் முழு வளர்ச்சியையும் வளர்ச்சியையும் அடைகின்றன.”¹

மேற்கண்ட கேள்வி சுருக்கமாக தார்மீக இருப்பு மற்றும் தார்மீக ஒழுங்கின் ஒருங்கிணைப்பு மட்டுமே பிரபஞ்சத்தில் பரலோக ராஜ்யத்தை எவ்வாறு கொண்டு வர முடியும் என்பதை வெளிப்படுத்துகிறது.

மனிதனை விட உயர்ந்த அதிகார விதி நிகழ்வுகளை ஒழுங்குபடுத்தும் என்பது மறுக்க முடியாத உண்மை. நாம் அனைவரும் சட்டம் அல்லது அதிகாரம் குறித்த நமது வெவ்வேறு வரையறைகளைக் கொண்டிருக்கலாம். உண்மையில், ஆண்களும் பெண்களும் இருப்பதால் சட்டத்தின் பல வரையறைகள் இருக்கும். "ஆனால் அந்த பல்வேறு வரையறைகளுக்கு அப்பால் ஒரு குறிப்பிட்ட ஒற்றுமை இருக்கும், அது தெளிவற்றதாக இருக்கும். வேர் ஒன்று." காந்திஜி சட்டத்தை "நாம் அனைவரும் உணரும் ஆனால் நமக்குத் தெரியாத ஒன்று" என்று விவரிக்கிறார். மனித சட்டம் அந்தச் சட்டம் அல்லது அதிகாரத்தைப் பற்றிய முழுமையான விளக்கத்தை ஒரே வார்த்தையில் கொடுக்க முடிந்தால், காந்திஜி அதை உண்மை என்று அழைப்பார், ஏனெனில் அது எந்தவொரு விமர்சனத்தையும் இயற்கையாகவே நிராயுதபாணியாக்குகிறது. தொடர்ச்சியான மற்றும் இடைவிடாத தேடல், சத்தியத்திற்குப் பிறகு *சுருக்கமான போனம்* மனித வாழ்க்கையின்.

சார்லஸ் கிங்ஸ்லிக்கு எழுதிய புகழ்பெற்ற கடிதத்தில் விஞ்ஞான இலட்சியத்தின் இந்த கருத்தாக்கத்தைப் பற்றி பேசுகையில், டி.எச். ஹக்ஸ்லி கவனித்தார், "ஒரு சிறு குழந்தையாக உண்மையை முன் உட்கார்ந்து கொள்ளுங்கள், ஒவ்வொரு முன்கூட்டிய கருத்தையும் விட்டுவிட தயாராக இருங்கள், எங்கு வேண்டுமானாலும் தாழ்மையுடன் பின்பற்றுங்கள். எதுவும் கற்றுக்கொள்ள மாட்டேன்." சத்தியத்தின் இந்த நாட்டம் இந்து மதத்தின் இலட்சியமாகும், இருப்பினும் உடல் மற்றும் ஆன்மீக சட்டங்களை கண்டுபிடிப்பதற்கான வழிமுறைகள் இயற்கையாகவே மாறுபட வேண்டும், ஆனால் அடிப்படை விஞ்ஞான அணுகுமுறை மற்றும் மனோபாவம் இரண்டு நிகழ்வுகளிலும் ஒரே மாதிரியாக இருக்கும். ஒரு விஞ்ஞானி இறுதி படிக்களை தொடர்ச்சியான படிக்கள் மூலம் புரிந்துகொள்ள முயற்சிக்கிறார், ஒவ்வொரு அடியையும் உன்னிப்பாக

பகுப்பாய்வு செய்கிறார். ஆனால் பண்டைய இந்தியாவில் முனிவர்கள் சில மன முன்னுதாரணங்களின் (தியான சூத்திரங்கள்) உதவியுடன் நேராக ரியாலிட்டிக்குச் சென்றனர்.² பால் டியூசென் கூறுகிறார், "இந்தியா வேறு எந்த நாட்டையும் விட அடையாளங்களின் நிலம் என்பது இந்திய சிந்தனையின் தன்மை காரணமாகும், இது புத்திசாலித்தனமாக நடந்துகொள்ளும் நிலையில் கூட தொலைவில் இருப்பதற்கு முன்பே மிகவும் மோசமான பிரச்சினைகளுக்கு தன்னைப் பயன்படுத்திக் கொண்டது."³

Kalamas, Kosaldesh ஒரு சத்ரிய பழங்குடி புத்தர், இந்துக்கள் மிகப் பெரிய தொழிலதிபர்களில் ஒருவரான ஆலோசனை, இந்த அறிவியல் கருத்துக்களுடன் கூடிய வைத்து உடனிருந்தவரும். அவர், "நான் உங்களிடம் சொன்னதை ஏற்காதே

ஏனென்றால் இது கடந்த காலத்தில் கூறப்பட்டது; அதை ஏற்றுக்கொள்ளாதீர்கள், ஏனெனில் அது பாரம்பரியத்தால் ஒப்படைக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது; அது அவ்வாறு இருக்கலாம் என்று நினைத்து ஏற்றுக்கொள்ள வேண்டாம்; அதை ஏற்றுக்கொள்ளாதீர்கள், ஏனென்றால் அது பரிசுத்த வேதாகமத்திலும் உள்ளது; அதை ஏற்றுக்கொள்ள வேண்டாம், ஏனெனில் அது அனுமானத்தால் நிரூபிக்கப்படலாம்; இது வார்த்தை ஞானம் என்று நினைத்து ஏற்றுக்கொள்ளாதீர்கள்; அதை நம்பாததால் அதை ஏற்க வேண்டாம்; அதை ஏற்றுக்கொள்ளாதீர்கள், ஏனெனில் இது ஒரு பிரபலமான அல்லது புனித துறவி சொன்னது; ஆனால் அது உங்கள் நன்மை மற்றும் மகிழ்ச்சிக்கு உகந்ததாக உங்கள் பாகுபாடு மற்றும் மனசாட்சியின் உணர்வை ஈர்க்கிறது என்று நீங்கள் கண்டால், அதை ஏற்றுக்கொண்டு அதற்கேற்ப வாழவும்.”

விசுவாச துரோகத்திற்காக கல்லெறிதல் பல இஸ்லாமிய அமைப்புகளின் தலைவர்களால் குரானில் கட்டளையிடப்பட்டதாகக் காக்க முயன்றபோது, காந்திஜி எந்தவொரு சூழ்நிலையிலும் எந்தவொரு முறையிலும் இந்த முறையின் தார்மீகத்தை கேள்வி எழுப்பினார் மற்றும் நேர்மையான முறையில் எழுதினார்:

“ஒவ்வொரு மதத்தின் ஒவ்வொரு சூத்திரமும் உள்ளது, இந்த நியாயமான வயதில், உலகளாவிய ஒப்புதலைக் கேட்க வேண்டுமென்றால், காரணம் மற்றும் உலகளாவிய நீதிக்கான அமில சோதனைக்கு அடிப்பணிய வேண்டும். உலகின் வேதங்களால் ஆதரிக்கப்படலாம் என்றாலும் பிழை எந்த விலக்கையும் கோர முடியாது.”

(*இளம் இந்தியா*, 20-2-1925, பக். 74)

“குரானின் போதனைகளை கூட விமர்சனத்திலிருந்து விலக்க முடியாது என்று நான் கூற விரும்புகிறேன். ஒவ்வொரு உண்மையான வேதமும் விமர்சனத்தால் மட்டுமே பெறுகிறது. எல்லாவற்றிற்கும் மேலாக எங்களுக்கு வேறு வழிகாட்டி இல்லை, ஆனால் வெளிப்படுத்தப்பட்டதாகக் கருதப்படக்கூடியவை மற்றும் எதுவாக இருக்கக்கூடாது என்பதைக் கூறுவதற்கான காரணம் நான்

பிழை என்பது ஒரு உறவினர் சொல் என்ற ம ula லானாவின் அறிக்கையை முழுமையாக ஒப்புக்கொள்கிறேன். ஆனால் சில விஷயங்கள் உலகளாவிய பிழைகள் என்று ஏற்றுக்கொள்ளப்படுகின்றன என்பதை நாம் அறிவோம். சித்திரவதை மூலம் மரணம் என்பது அத்தகைய பிழை என்று நான் எதிர்பார்க்கிறேன்.”

(இளம் இந்தியா, 5-3-1925, பக். 181)

“எல்லாம் நியாயமான சோதனைக்கு அடிபணிய வேண்டும் என்பதில் சந்தேகமில்லை.

காரணம் மீறி உலகின் விஷயங்களை பகுத்தறிவின் பேரில் அவற்றைக் கொண்டுவர நாங்கள் மறுக்கவில்லை, ஆனால் அவர்கள் தங்களைத் தாங்களே வரமாட்டார்கள். அவர்களின் இயல்பால் அவர்கள் காரணத்தை மீறுகிறார்கள். இதுவே தெய்வத்தின் மர்மம். இது காரணத்துடன் பொருந்தாது, அதற்கு அப்பாற்பட்டது. ”

(இளம் இந்தியா, 26-3-1925, பக். 110)

பொது அறநெறி மற்றும் பொது தொடர்பான விஷயங்களுக்கு சத்தியத்தின் அளவுகோலைப் பயன்படுத்துவதில் முடிவெடுப்பதற்காக எழும் கேள்விகளுக்கு காந்திஜியின் கட்டுரைகளிலிருந்து மேற்கண்ட சாறுகள் உண்மையிலேயே இந்து மதத்தின் அணுகுமுறையை சுருக்கமாகக் கூறுகின்றன. மனிதநேயம்.

இந்து கிளாசிக்கல் மத சிந்தனை இரண்டு குழுக்களின் கீழ் வகைப்படுத்தப்பட்டுள்ளது, அதாவது. *ஸ்ருதி மற்றும் ஸ்மிருதி* உட்பட *தர்மசாஸ்திரம்*. *ஸ்ருதிகளில்* வேதங்கள் மற்றும் உபநிடதங்களை உள்ளடக்கிய 'ரியாலிட்டி அஸ் இட்' பற்றிய அறிவு உள்ளது, இது சரிபார்க்கப்படலாம் மற்றும் அதன் தன்மையில் உலகளாவியது. என

இதுபோன்ற அது தத்துவம் PERENNIS அல்லது வற்றாத தத்துவம் போன்ற குணாதிசயங்களுடையது. "வற்றாத தத்துவம் முதன்மையாக ஒன்று, தெய்வீக யதார்த்தமானது விஷயங்கள் மற்றும் வாழ்க்கை மற்றும் மனங்களின் பன்மடங்கு உலகிற்கு கணிசமானதாகும். ஆனால் இந்த ஒரு யதார்த்தத்தின் தன்மை என்னவென்றால், சில நிபந்தனைகளை நிறைவேற்றத் தெரிவுசெய்தவர்களைத் தவிர, நேரடியாகவும் உடனடியாகவும் கைது செய்ய முடியாது, தங்களை அன்பானவர்களாகவும், இதயத்தில் தூய்மையாகவும், ஆவிக்குரியவர்களாகவும் ஆக்குகிறார்கள். இது ஏன் இருக்க வேண்டும்? எங்களுக்குத் தெரியாது. நாம் விரும்பினாலும் விரும்பாவிட்டாலும் நாம் ஏற்றுக்கொள்ள வேண்டிய உண்மைகளில் இது ஒன்றாகும், இருப்பினும் அவை நம்பமுடியாதவை மற்றும் சாத்தியமில்லை. உடல் பரிசோதனைகளை மட்டுமே

பொருளின் நெருக்கமான தன்மையையும் அதன் ஆற்றல்களையும் நாம் கண்டறியக்கூடியசெய்கிறோம். உளவியல் மற்றும் தார்மீக சோதனைகளை மேற்கொள்வதன் மூலம்தான் மனதின் நெருக்கமான தன்மையையும் அதன் ஆற்றல்களையும் நாம் கண்டறிய முடியும். சராசரி சிற்றின்ப வாழ்க்கையின் சாதாரண சூழ்நிலைகளில், மனதின் இந்த சாத்தியங்கள் மறைந்திருக்கும் மற்றும் வெளிப்படுத்தப்படாமல் இருக்கும். நாம் அவற்றை உணர்ந்தால், நாம் சில நிபந்தனைகளை பூர்த்தி செய்ய வேண்டும் மற்றும் சில விதிகளுக்குக் கீழ்ப்படிய வேண்டும், அந்த அனுபவம் அனுபவபூர்வமாக செல்லுபடியாகும் என்பதைக் காட்டுகிறது."⁴

நித்திய சத்தியமும் வேறு வழியில் விளக்கப்படலாம். "இந்த பெரிய பிரபஞ்சம் ஆவியினால் பரவியுள்ளது. ஆவி (சுய) அசைவற்ற ஒன்று; அவர் (அது) மனதை விட வேகமானவர், புலன்களால் அவரை அடைய முடியாது (அது). அவர் (அது) எப்போதும் அவர்களுக்கு அப்பாற்பட்டவர். அசையாமல், அவர் (அது) புலன்களால் பின்தொடர்வதை விட அதிகமாக உள்ளது. ஆவியின் (சுய) எல்லாவற்றிலிருந்தும் உயிர் வரும் சுவாசம் வருகிறது. அவர் (அது) நகர்கிறார், அவர் (அது) நகரவில்லை. அவர் (அது) வெகு தொலைவில் உள்ளது, அவர் (அது) அருகில் இருக்கிறார். அவர் (அது) அனைவருக்கும் உள்ளவர், அவர் (அது) அனைவருக்கும் வெளியே இருக்கிறார். "

(இஷோபனிஷாத், 4 மற்றும் 5). வேறு வார்த்தைகளில் கூறுவதானால், பிரபஞ்சத்தைத் தக்கவைக்கும் ஆவி அல்லது சக்தி அசாத்தியமானது, உலகளாவியது மற்றும் ஆழ்நிலை. ஆனால் அந்த ஆவியானவர் முடிவிலிக்கு எழுப்பப்படுகிறார், அசாத்தியமாக மாற, மனித இதயத்தை ஆள வேண்டும், மாற்ற வேண்டும். உடன், *Nishkama கர்மா* அல்லது desireless நடவடிக்கை தூய அரைமனதுடனே பக்தி உண்மையின் கோருவோர் மரணம் கடக்க முடியும் ஆழ்நிலை அறிவு தெய்வீக ரியாலிட்டி நேரடி உணர்வையே கொண்டுள்ளன மற்றும் மரணமின்மைக்கான அடைய முடியும். (இஷோபனிஷாத், 11 மற்றும் 14)

ஸ்மிரிட்டுகள் அவற்றின் தோற்றத்தையும் அதிகாரத்தையும் ஒரு தனிப்பட்ட நிறுவனரிடமிருந்து பெற்றுக் கொண்டு சமூக மற்றும் மத விதிகள் மற்றும் ஒழுங்குமுறைகளைக் கையாளுகின்றனர். இந்தச் சட்டங்களை மாற்றியமைக்கலாம் அல்லது மாற்றலாம், ஏனெனில் ஒரு வயதில் சமூகத்தைத் தக்கவைக்கும் ஒரு குறியீடு மற்றொரு யுகத்தில் அதைத் திணறடிக்கக்கூடும். அரசியல் கட்டமைப்பை பாதிக்கும் மாறிவரும் தொழில்நுட்பத்துடன் சமூக-பொருளாதார நிலைமைகள் மாறும்போது, சட்டங்கள் மறுசீரமைக்கப்பட வேண்டும் மற்றும்

மாறிவரும் நிலைமைகளின் சூழல் மற்றும் சூழலின் வெளிச்சத்தில் மறுபரிசீலனை செய்யப்பட வேண்டும். சட்டங்கள் வேகமாய் இருக்கவில்லை அல்லது மாறிவரும் நிலைமைகளுடன் வெளியேறவில்லை என்றால், அவை சமூக உயிரினத்தை நெரிக்க அல்லது சமூக எழுச்சிகளுக்கு காரணமாக இருக்கலாம், சில நேரங்களில் வன்முறை மற்றும் இரத்தக்களரி. எனவே சட்டங்களை உருவாக்குதல், திருத்துதல் மற்றும் மறு விளக்கம் ஆகியவற்றை அரசியல் அரசியலமைப்புகளுக்கும் சமூக மனசாட்சிக்கும் விட்டுவிடுவது விவேகமான மற்றும் சமூக நலனில் உள்ளது. நவீன வாழ்க்கை, நிலைமைகள் மற்றும் கருத்துக்களுக்கு ஏற்ப இந்து சட்டம் சுதந்திரம் அடைந்த பின்னர் லோக்சபாவால் குறியிடப்பட்டுள்ளது.

மத சிந்தனையை ஆவியின் அறிவு அல்லது தெய்வீக யதார்த்தம் மற்றும் மத மற்றும் சமூக நடத்தை நெறிமுறை எனப் பிரிப்பது இந்து மதத்தின் ஒரு தனித்துவமான அம்சமாகும், மேலும் இது 'வெளிப்படுத்தப்பட்டது' என்று கூறப்படும் பிற மதங்களில் காணப்படவில்லை. இந்த நடவடிக்கையின் ஞானத்தை இந்து மதத்தின் பதிவிலிருந்து படிக்கலாம். இஸ்லாமிய மற்றும் கிறிஸ்தவ சக்திவாய்ந்தவர்களுக்கு இடையிலான இடைக்கால மதப் போர்களைப் போலல்லாமல், இந்து மதம் (பு Buddhism த்தம் மற்றும் சமண மதத்தை உள்ளடக்கியது) என்ற பெயரில் எந்தப் போர்களும் நடத்தப்படவில்லை. எந்தவொரு மத நம்பிக்கையையும் கேள்விக்குட்படுத்துவதற்காக இந்து மதத்தில் எந்த விசாரணையும் இல்லை. பு Buddhism த்தம் என்பது மனித வரலாற்றில் புத்திசாலித்தனமான மற்றும் மிகப் பெரிய மன்னரான அசோகாவால் நிறுவப்பட்ட ராஜ்யத்தின் அரசு மதமாக இருந்தபோதிலும், இது உண்மையிலேயே கண்ணோட்டத்தில் மதச்சார்பற்றது மற்றும் இந்துசிம் மற்றும் சமண மதங்களுக்கு எதிராக பாகுபாடு காட்டவில்லை. குஜராத்தில் மீண்டும் ஒரு இந்து மன்னர், முஸ்லீம் ஆர்வலர்களின் கைகளில் மத துன்புறுத்தல்களில் இருந்து தப்பிக்க பார்சியாவிலிருந்து தப்பி ஓடியபோது பார்சிகளுக்கு தங்குமிடம் கொடுத்தார்.

இந்து நாகரிகத்தின் நெகிழ்வுத்தன்மையும் கத்தோலிக்கமும் அவளுக்கு "தன்னுடைய அத்தியாவசியத் தன்மையின் அடிப்படையில் தன்னைப் புதுப்பித்துக் கொள்வதற்கும், நாம் வாழும் வயது வடிவத்துடன் இணக்கமாக தன்னைக்

கொண்டுவருவதற்கும் தன்னை மாற்றிக் கொள்ள உதவுகிறது. தெளிவாகச் சொன்னால், பண்டைய இந்திய ஆவி தன்னைத்தானே நிறுத்தாமல் ஒரு புதிய வடிவத்தை எடுக்கிறது. இந்தியாவின் மதங்கள் அனைத்தும் இயற்கை மதங்களாக இருந்தன. அவை இயற்கையாகவே வளர்ந்து வளர்ந்தன. அவை அண்ட யதார்த்தத்தின் வெளிப்பாடுகள் என்பதால் அவை சுய விழிப்புடன் இருக்கவில்லை. அவர்கள் தங்களை வரையறுக்கவில்லை. ஆனால் கிறிஸ்தவ சவால் எழுந்தபோது, அவர்கள் தங்களை வரையறுக்க வேண்டியிருந்தது. அவர்கள் செய்தது. கீதை குறித்த லோகமண்யா, காந்திஜி மற்றும் அரவிந்தோவின் வர்ணனைகள் சுய வரையறையில் அந்த முயற்சியின் ஒரு பகுதியாகும். கீதை மற்றும் இரண்டு காவியங்களான ராமாயணம்

மற்றும் மகாபாரதம் இப்போது ஆண்டுதோறும் லட்சம் பிரதிகள் விற்கப்படுகின்றன. ஆவியின் வாழ்க்கையின் இந்த அறிவுசார்மயமாக்கல், இந்த நிகழ்வை நாம் விவரித்தால், அதன் இயற்கையான ஓட்டத்தை அது இழந்துவிட்டது, ஆனால் அது நம் நாட்களில் மதிப்புமிக்க ஒரு பலத்தையும் அளித்துள்ளது.”⁵

மேற்கத்திய கலாச்சாரம் அரபு-இஸ்லாமியம் உலகின் பதில் நேர்மாறாக தேசத்தின் Girjal ஜெயின் கருதுவதாகத் மற்றும் இதேபோல் படைப்பு இருப்பதை மறுக்கின்றனர் என்று

விளக்கங் குரான், ஹதீஸ் மற்றும் சுன்னாநெகிழ்வான, அது தன்னை ஒரு ஒத்த மறுத்தார் மட்டுமே உள்ளது நன்மை ஆனால் இதன் விளைவாக, அதிர்ச்சி மற்றும் விரக்தியின் ஆழ்ந்த நிலையில் விழுந்தது. மூன்றாம் உலகின் பிற நாடுகளில் வேர்களை எடுக்கத் தவறிய அதே வேளையில், இந்தியாவில் ஜனநாயகம் வெற்றி பெற்றுள்ளது என்று பெரும்பான்மையான இந்தியர்கள் இந்து மதத்தை அறிவிக்கிறார்கள் என்பது மறுக்க முடியாத உண்மை. இந்து மதம் தேக்கத்தை வெறுக்கிறது. இந்து மதம் என்பது வலிமையான கங்கை போன்றது, இது மற்ற நீரோடைகள் மற்றும் துணை நதிகளால் அதன் தொடர்ச்சியான ஓட்டத்தில் இணைந்துள்ளது. தூரதிர்ஷ்டவசமாக இஸ்லாமும் கிறிஸ்தவமும் வெளிநாட்டு வெற்றியாளர்களின் துணைப் பொருளாக இந்தியாவுக்கு வந்தன, அவை சந்தேகத்திற்கு இடமின்றி இந்து மதத்துடன் இணைந்து செயல்பட்டு ஒருவருக்கொருவர் தாக்கத்தை ஏற்படுத்தினாலும் பிரதான நீரோட்டத்துடன் கலக்கவில்லை.

இந்து மதத்தின் மற்றொரு தனித்துவமான அம்சம்கோட்பாடு ஆகும் கர்மா மற்றும் மறுபிறப்புக். டிரான்ஸ்மிஷன் என்பது ஒரு கோட்பாடு அல்ல, ஆனால் ஒரு உண்மை. காந்திஜி மேலும் வாழ்க்கையிலும், நம்பிக்கை கொண்டிருந்தார் கர்மாவின் தொடர்ச்சியான பிறப்புகளின் மூலம்தொடர்ச்சியிலும். நாம் இங்கே விதைப்பது, இங்கும் அறுவடை செய்ய வேண்டும்

அங்கும்- தப்பிக்க முடியாது, விதி கர்மாவின் இடைவிடாமல் உள்ளது. இருப்பினும், ஒருவரின் கடைசி தருணங்களில் கூட மனந்திரும்புதல் பாவத்தைக் கழிவி, அதன் விளைவுகளை கருத்தடை செய்யும். உலகிற்கு இந்து மதம் அளித்த பங்களிப்புகளில் ஊமை உருவாக்கம் மற்றும் நான்குமனிதனின் அடையாளத்தின் கருத்துக்கள் உள்ளன ஆசிரமங்களுடன். இந்த புத்தகங்களின் பக்கங்களில் வாசகர் இவற்றையும் பல யோசனைகளையும் குறிப்பார்.

உள்ள ஒரு ஸ்மிருதிஸில்நூல் , கற்றவர்கள், நல்லவர்கள் மற்றும் கோபம் மற்றும் இணைப்பிலிருந்து விடுபட்டவர்கள் மற்றும் இதயத்தில் அனுபவித்தவை எதுவாக இருந்தாலும் தர்மம் அல்லது மதம் என்று கூறுகிறது. காந்திஜி அல்ல என்றாலும் ஆச்சார்யா அல்லது ஆதி சங்கராச்சாரியார் போன்ற ஒரு கசப்பான அறிஞர், நவீன காலங்களில் வயதான இந்து மதத்தின்

உண்மையான குரல், அதற்கு ஒரு புதிய திருப்பத்தையும் வழிநடத்துதலையும் அளித்துள்ளது. அவர் தனது சுயசரிதைஎன்று அழைத்தார் *தி ஸ்டோரி ஆஃப் மை எக்ஸ்பரிமென்ட்ஸ் வித் ட்ரூத்*. சத்தியத்திற்கான நீண்ட, கடினமான மற்றும் இடைவிடாத தேடலுக்குப் பிறகு அவர் கண்டார், இந்து மதம் தனது உயர்ந்த தார்மீக அபிலாஷைகளை பூர்த்திசெய்தது, மேலும் அவர் ஆறுதலையும் பகவத் கீதையில் ஒரு நண்பர், வழிகாட்டி மற்றும் தத்துவஞானியையும் கண்டார். அவர் கூறுகிறார், “இது (கீதை) அனைத்து இந்து மதத்தினராலும் அதிகாரப்பூர்வமாக ஏற்றுக்கொள்ளப்படுகிறது. இது எந்த விதமான கோட்பாடுகளிலிருந்தும் இலவசம். ஒரு குறுகிய திசைகாட்டி இது ஒரு முழுமையான நியாயமான தார்மீக நெறிமுறையை அளிக்கிறது. இது புத்தி மற்றும் இதயம் இரண்டையும் திருப்திப்படுத்துகிறது. இது தத்துவ மற்றும் பக்தி. அதன் வேண்டுகோள் உலகளாவியது. மொழி நம்பமுடியாத எளிமையானது.”

அனைவருக்கும் காந்திஜி எந்தவித தயக்கமும் இன்றிமனசாட்சியைக் *கடக்கவும்* அவர்களின் மனதைத் தூய்மைப்படுத்தவும்பிரார்த்தனை செய்கிறார். கீதையின் 12 ஆம் அத்தியாயத்தில் உள்ள சொற்பொழிவுக்கு இணங்க, காந்திஜி ஒரு தேடுபவருக்கு ஒரு வழியில் அல்லது வேறு வழியில் பக்தராக மாற அறிவுறுத்துகிறார், மேலும் தனது சொந்த அனுபவத்திலிருந்துபரிந்துரைக்கிறார் *நாமாவையும்* ஜெபத்தையும்.

இந்து மதத்தின் சாராம்சம் மிகவும் திட்டமிடப்பட்டு ஏற்பாடு செய்யப்பட்டுள்ளது, ஒவ்வொரு பகுதியும் இயற்கையாகவே அடுத்த பகுதிக்கு இட்டுச் செல்கிறது. முதல் அத்தியாயம் இந்து மதத்தின் தார்மீக அடிப்படையை ஆராய்கிறது. பிரபஞ்சத்தைத் தக்கவைக்கும் உலகளாவிய ஒழுக்க விதி அல்லது சக்தியின் தன்மை இரண்டாவது அத்தியாயத்தில் விவரிக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது. விசுவாசம் அல்லது பயிற்சியளிக்கப்பட்ட காரணம் அல்லது இரண்டின் நியாயமான கலவையின் மூலம் - ஒரு தேடுபவர் எவ்வாறு உச்ச ஆவியுடன் நேருக்கு நேர் வர முடியும்? இந்த குழப்பத்திற்கான பதில் மூன்றாவது அத்தியாயத்தில் காணப்படுகிறது. பகவத் கீதை ஒரு *உபநிஷத்*, பற்றிய உரை *பிரம்மவித்யா*

மற்றும் வெளிப்பாடு யோகா சாஸ்திரத்தின் மற்றும் இந்து மதம் குறித்த எந்த புத்தகமும் அதைக் குறிப்பிடாமல் முழுமையானது என்று கூற முடியாது. உண்மையில் இது உச்சத்திற்கான அனைத்து அணுகுமுறைகளையும் ஒத்திசைக்கும் ஒரே புத்தகம் என்று கூறலாம். எனவே கீதை பற்றிய காந்திஜியின் கருத்துக்கள் இந்த தொகுப்பில் மரியாதைக்குரிய இடத்தைக் காண்கின்றன. தாக்கப்பட்ட பாதை அனைவருக்கும் மிகவும் பரிச்சயமானது மற்றும் அனைவருக்கும் மிதிப்பது மிகவும் எளிதானது. அதாவது, *நாமா* மற்றும் பிரார்த்தனை கடைசி அத்தியாயத்தில் கையாளப்பட்டுள்ளது.

இந்த புத்தகம் முதன்மையாக சாதாரண வாசகர்கள் மற்றும் இந்து சிறுவர் சிறுமிகள் ஆங்கில நடுத்தர பள்ளிகளில் பயின்று எந்த மத பின்னணியும் இல்லாத குடும்பங்களில் வளர்க்கப்படுகிறது. அல்லது எந்த மதத்தில் குறைந்த செல்வாக்கு உள்ளது. இது, இந்து மதத்தின் அறிமுகமாக செயல்படும். மேலதிக ஆய்வுக்காக, ஆர்வமுள்ள வாசகர்மூன்று தொகுதிகளில் முழுமையான தொகுப்பைக் குறிப்பிடலாம் *உச்சநீதிமன்றத்தின் தேடலில்* காந்திஜி எழுதிய.

12-10-1986

பேசிக் கெர்

விசுவல்

GLOSSARY என

ஆச்சார்யா-Preceptor

அவறிம்சா-அல்லாத-வ

ன்முறை; அன்பு; *Antyaj-an*

பிற்படுத்தப்பட்டோர்

ஆசிரமம்-ஒரு ஆன்மீக ஓய்வு இடத்தில் ஒரு துறவி;

வாழ்க்கையைப் படிப்பதற்கும்

ஒழுங்குபடுத்துவதற்கும் ஒரு இடம்

அசுர-அரக்கன்

ஆத்மா-Self சுய;சோல்

அவதார்தேவனுடைய-an அவதாரம்.இந்த வார்த்தை

பொதுவாக விஷ்ணு, பாதுகாப்பதும்

வாழ்வாதாரம்தேவனுடைய பத்து அவதாரங்களில்

குறிக்கிறது *Bhagvadgita*(பிரபலமாக கீதை என

அழைக்கப்படும்) பெரிய இந்து மதம்ஒரு பகுதியாக -

அங்குதான் கிருஷ்ணா இறைத்தன்மை

கதாநாயகன்உள்ளதுஇதிகாசமான மகாபாரதம்

பஜன்-Hymn பக்த-Devotee

பக்தி-Devotion

Bhattha-Dailyகொடுப்பன

வு

பிரம்மச்சாரயாont கண்டம்; பிரம்மச்சரியம்; சுய

கட்டுப்பாடு; ஒரு உயர் சாதி இந்துக்களின்

[பொதுவாககுறிப்பிடப்படுகிறது <கோ (திவிஜா)மத

நூல்களில்) என்று] மத வாழ்க்கை

பிரம்மம்இறுதி யதார்த்த

பிராமண- இந்து மதத்தால் அனுமதிக்கப்பட்ட நான்கு

சாதிகளில் முதல் அல்லது உயர்ந்தது (அதாவது,

ஒன்று யார் பிரம்மத்தை அறிவார் - அல்டிமேட்

ரியாலிட்டி); சத்ரிய, வைசியர் மற்றும் Shoodraபார்க்க;

Chandala-an

பிற்படுத்தப்பட்டோர்

தளம்-Corps

தளம்-Pluses

தர்ஷன்-Sight

பார்வை

தீனபந்துthe பாதிக்கப்பட்டவர்களின் நண்பர்.

காந்திஜிநெருங்கிய நண்பரான மறைந்த சி.எ.:ப்

ஆண்ட்ரூஸுக்கு இந்தியர்கள் வழங்கிய ஒரு

கௌரவமான தலைப்பு
தேவாவின் கடவுள்
தர்மமடல் மதம்; கடமை. சட்டம், நீதி, கடமை மற்றும்
நல்லொழுக்கம் ஆகிய கருத்துக்களைத் தழுவின ஒரு
விரிவான சமஸ்கிருத சொல் ஒன்றாகும்.
தர்மசாலா-ஒரு பயணிகள் அல்லது pilgrams இலவச ஓய்வு
வீடு
தர்ணாமறுப்பாகாது பற்றாளர் அல்லது அவரது
முகவர் ஒரு கடனாளி கதவை மணிக்கு
மனக்கட்டுப்பாட்டின் உட்கார்ந்து
Gatha மத பாடல்களுடனும்-Collection

[என்பது xi]

[பன்னிரெண்டாம்]

காயத்ரிசன் தேவனுடைய-Invocation, ஒதிக்உயர்
சாதியினரால் இந்துக்கள்
காட் (எரியும்)dead இறந்த உடல்கள் தகனம் செய்யப்படும்
இடம்

கீதைபாகவத்கிதாG கோகூலின்

-கோபிபால் பணிப்பெண் மகாபாரதத்தின் தெய்வீக
நாயகனான கிருஷ்ணா தனது குழந்தை
பருவகழித்ததாகக் கருதப்படுகிறது

குணா-தரம் அல்லது பண்புகளை. தற்போதுள்ள எல்லா
விஷயங்களையும்மூன்று பண்புக்கூறுகள் உள்ளன,
அதாவது கணிக்கக்கூடியசத்வா (நன்மை;
நல்லிணக்கம்; தாளம்), ராஜாக்கள் (பேரார்வம்;
இயக்கம்; செயல்), மற்றும் தாமஸ் (இருள்; மந்தநிலை;
சோம்பல்)

குருpre ஒரு முன்னோடி; ஒரு ஆசிரியர்.

ஹரிஜன் -உண்மையில், கடவுளின் மனிதன்;
தீண்டத்தகாதவர். தீண்டத்தகாதவர்களுக்கு முதலில்
காந்திஜி பயன்படுத்திய சொல். மேலும்
வாராந்திரகுறிக்கிறது; ஹரிஜன் பிப்ரவரி 1933காந்திஜி
நிறுவப்பட்டது

அவரின்-Heart

Ishwara-Creator உச்ச தனிப்பட்ட கடவுள்

கலியுகா-இந்து புராணங்களின்படி, காலத்தின்நான்கு
யுகங்கள் உள்ளன

தொடக்கத்திலிருந்து, அதாவது. s'zzgu (சத்யயுகா), IN
ztzgu

(Tretayuga),

சுபுμzgu

(Dwaparyuga)

மற்றும் ३ <∞zgu

(Kaliyuga),

தற்போதைய யுகம், உலகளாவிய சீரழிவின் வயது
காமதேனுeach இந்திரனின் பசு ஒவ்வொன்றும் பால்
கறக்கும் அவர் விரும்பியதை. எனவே, விரும்பிய
பொருள்களை வழங்குபவர்

கர்மாaction செயல்;(கடந்த நடவடிக்கைகளின் விளைவாக
பெருகுவதிலிருந்து) பிரபலமாக விதி பொருளிலேயே
பயன்படுத்தப்படும்

Karmayogiசெய்பவவர்-ஒன்று karmayoga,அதாவது

நடவடிக்கைஉள்ள பற்றின்மை கோட்பாடு

காதி-Hand-இயங்கவைத்துகையால் நெய்த துணி

கிரப்பான்சீக்கியர்கள் இவை-ஒரு உலோக ஆயுதம்சுமக்க

கட்டளையிட்டார்

கூடத்திரியரை^{the} இந்து மதத்தால் அனுமதிக்கப்பட்ட
நான்கு சாதிகளில் (போர்வீரர் சாதி) இரண்டாவது;
பிராமணர், வைஷ்ணவ மற்றும் ஷூத்ரா

குண்டலினியைப்பாருங்கள் body உடலில் அமைந்திருக்க
வேண்டும் என்று கூறப்படும் ஆறு பிளெக்ஸஸில்
உள்ள சர்ப்ப சக்தி, விழிப்புணர்வின் மூலம்
தனிமனிதன்என்ற அமானுஷ்ய கொள்கையுடன்
ஒற்றுமையை உணருவதாகக் கூறப்படுகிறது

குர்தா^{man} மனிதனின் மேல் ஆடை; ஒரு இந்திய சட்டை
Lathi-Wooden ஊழியர்கள்

Lota-Brass அல்லது செம்பு கொள்கலன் (வழக்கமாக நீர்
பயன்படுத்தப்படுகிறது)

மகாபாரதத்தில்பெரிய இந்து மதம் இதிகாசங்களின்-ஒன்று
அங்குதான் கிருஷ்ணாஇறைத்தன்மை
கதாநாயகன்உள்ளது;

மகாத்மாகிரேட் சோல்

மந்திரம்ஒரு மத உரை-ஒரு வசனம் incantation

[xiii]

மரியாட^{rest} கட்டுப்பாடு; வரம்பு

கணிதம்-ஹிந்து மடாலயம்

மாயா-உருவாக்கம்-மாயை; மனிதனின் ஈகோஇருந்து
ரியாலிட்டி மறைத்து முக்காடு

மோக்கூடா-Self-உணர்

ர்தல் முக்தா-ஒரு

ஆன்மாஉணர்ந்து;

நிர்வாணா-Nothingness மறுபிறப்பு சுழற்சியில் இருந்து
விடுவித்தல்;உச்ச பேரின்பம்

Padmanabhadasவிஷ்ணு,பாதுகாப்பு மற்றும்

வாழ்வாதாரம்இன் இந்து மதம் தேவனுடைய-Servant;

Panchamaஐந்தாவது இனத்தை-Belonging தாழ்ந்த வகை
சாதியினராக

பண்டிட்-Learned மனிதன்

Panjrapol-Institution தன்மை கால்நடை, குறிப்பாக, பழைய
மற்றும் பலவீனமானக்கான

Parayana-Perusal அல்லது ஒரு புனிதமான உரை மூலம்

படித்து, எ.கா.ராமாயணத்தின், Bhagvadgita, முதலியன

பாரியாபிற்படுத்தப்பட்டோர்-an

Phoongyi-Bhuddhistபிக்குவான

Pitrilokaவசித்துமறுப்பாகாது பிராந்தியம்

பிடரிமயிர்களுக்குள் பூர்ணா

ஸ்வராஜ்-Complete அல்லது முழு

சுதந்திரம் பிரார்த்தனா-Prayer

Prayashchitta-Expiation அல்லது பரிகாரமாக

ரஜஸ்-அடிக்குறிப்பைக் குணா

Ramadhuna-Rhythmical ராமர் பெயர் கோஷமிட -

முடிபி <• முடிபிHமுடிஓடிமுடிஈ - (ரகுபதி, ராகவ், ராஜாராம்
முதலியன)

Ramanamaராமாஇன்மறுப்பாகாது புனிதமான

Ramarajyaஅதன் நலன் பயக்கும் மற்றும் ஆட்சி
அறியப்பட்டது ராம -Kingdomபெயர்;இப்போது மக்களின்
நன்மைக்காக உழைக்கும் எந்தவொரு நியாயமான
விதியையும் குறிக்கிறது.

ராமாயணம்- ராமர் தெய்வீக

ரிஷிவீராங்கனையானage

சேஜ்-இந்தருத்ராவைஇணைக்கும்

ருத்ராஸ்இந்து தெய்வங்களின் ஒரு குழு, வேத
நம்பிக்கையில்ஒன்றாகநம்பிக்கை கொண்டவர்

சனாதன்-இந்து வேதங்களில்; ஒரு ஆர்த்தடாக்ஸ் நபரின்
அர்த்தத்தில் பிரபலமாகப் பயன்படுத்தப்படுகிறது

சந்தியா -மரியாதைக்குரிய தியானம் மற்றும்
மந்திரங்களை மீண்டும் மீண்டும் செய்வது
போன்றவை சில சூத்திரங்களுடன் சேர்ந்து தண்ணீர்
பருகுவது போன்றவை; சூரிய உதயம், நண்பகல்
மற்றும் சூரிய அஸ்தமனத்தில் உயர் சாதி
இந்துக்களால் கடைபிடிக்கப்படும் ஒரு சடங்கு

சன்னியாசworld உலக வாழ்க்கையின் மறுப்பு; ஒரு அதிக
சாதி இந்து மதம் மத வாழ்க்கைகடைசி கட்டத்தில்
துறவிக்கு-ஒன்றுசன்யாசாளடுத்துள்ளது

Samskar குழந்தை பெயரிடும் போன்ற
இந்துக்களிடையே-Essential மற்றும் சுத்தப்படுத்தும்
சடங்குகளை அல்லது விழாக்களில்யார், குழந்தையின்
முதல் உணவு, நூல் விழா, முதலியன ; நனவான
மற்றும் மயக்கமுள்ள, உள்நாட்டு, சமூக, கலாச்சார
மற்றும் மத தாக்கங்கள் ஒரு நபரை
உருவாக்குகின்றன; பண்புகள்

சான்ஸ்தாவின நபர்கள்மன-Voluntary
சதி-ஒரு கற்புள்ள மற்றும் குணசாலி, ஆன்மீக மிகவும்
வளர்ச்சியடைந்த

சத்வாவின்-அடி
க்குறிப்பைக்

குணா சத்ய-Truth

சத்தியாக்கிரகம்-Literally,

உண்மை

வலியுறுத்துவதோடுசங்கம்; சத்தியத்தில்

ஒட்டிக்கொள்வது; ஆன்மா- சக்தி; ட்ரூத்-ஃ. போர்ஸ்

Savarna உயர்சாதிசெய்ய

சாஸ்திரம்-Hindu வேத

ஸ்லோகம்-Verse-Belonging; சரணத்தி

ல்

சாரதா பிடரிமயிர்களுக்குள்

செய்ய-Ceremony அதிக-சாதிஇந்துக்களின்மூலம்

Shuddhi இந்து மதம் -Conversion பாடினார்; அதாவது, சுய

சுத்திகரிப்பு

ஷூத்ரா அல்லது *ஷூத்ரா* the இந்து மதத்தால்
அனுமதிக்கப்பட்ட நான்கு சாதிகளில்
(தொழிலாளர்களின் சாதி) கடைசி; பிராமணா
ஶூத்ரியராக வைசியர்பார்க்கிறோம்.

ஸ்மிருதி முதலில் மனு மற்றும் பிற
சட்டம்-அளிப்பவர்கள் மூலம் அந்தந்த மாணவர்களின்
எழுதிநபர், நினைவகத்தில் இருந்து வழங்கப்படும்
அவர்களை இழைக்கப்பட்ட போன்ற,
சட்டத்தின்மறுப்பாகாது உடல்

சுபாரி-Areca நட்டு

சுவாமி-ஒரு பரிசுத்த ஒரு ஊழியர்மாறாக ஒரு
எஜமானரின் அர்த்தத்திலும் பயன்படுத்தப்படுகிறது

ஸ்வராஜ்-சுய-ஆட்சிக்கு; சுய அரசாங்கம்

தால்-Musical நேரம் அல்லது நடவடிக்கை

இந்திய இசைமுந்தைய

தமஸ்-அடிக்குறிப்பைக் *குணா*

தவம்-Penance

திலக்-Caste குறிநெற்றியில்பயன்படுத்தப்படும்

உபநிஷத்சமய தத்துவம்(சாதி-Sacred சமஸ்கிருதம்
புத்தகங்கள் வைசியர்மறுப்பாகாது வர்த்தகர்கள் மற்றும்
விவசாயிகளான நான்கு சாதிகள் மூன்றாவது) இந்து
மதத்தால் அனுமதிக்கப்பட்டது; பிராமணாபார்க்க;

Kashatriya மற்றும்சூத்திரர்
வர்ணஆக்கிரமிப்பு அடிப்படையில்-Caste பார்க்க
வர்ணாசிரமம். சருமத்தின்

நிறமிவர்ணசங்கரா - சாதிகளின் ஒருங்கிணைப்பு
வர்ணாசிரம- முதல் மூன்று சாதிகளுக்கு (பிராமண,
கூத்திரிய மற்றும் வைஷ்ய) நான்கு சாதிகள்
(தொழில்களின் அடிப்படையில்) மற்றும்
வாழ்க்கையின் நான்கு கட்டங்கள் (ஆசிரமங்கள் என்று
அழைக்கப்படுகின்றன), அதாவது ௪x «jzj» -

பிரம்மச்சாரியார் (மாணவர் நிலை), இந்து
 மதத்தால் அனுமதிக்கப்பட்டது ±
 VMkகிரிஹஸ்தா -(வீடு வைத்திருப்பவரின் நிலை),
 HTTMxMk - வனப்பிரஸ்தா (நிலை) மற்றும்நிலை)
 வனவாசிகளின்தமறுசீரமைப்பின்TSS -
 சன்னியாசா (

Vishvavidyalaya-University

யக்ஞம்-Religious தியாகம்

யோகாஉடல் மற்றும் மன கட்டுப்பாடு மறுப்பாகாது
 அறிவியல்;ஒரு ஒன்றுபட எப்படி ஒன்றாக சேர
 கற்றுக்கொடுக்கிறது இது அறிவியல், தனிப்பட்ட சுய
 மற்றும் உச்ச சுய

யோகியோகாசெய்வவர்-ஒன்று

பொருளடக்கம் டேபிள்

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SECTION ONE: HINDUISM இன்HINDUISM

இன்என்பதிலிருந்து தார்மீக அடிப்படை

1

தோற்றம்

(“காந்திஜியின் தொழுகைக்குப் பிந்தைய
உரைகள்”)

காந்திஜி பார்வையாளர்களின் உறுப்பினரால் அனுப்பப்பட்ட ஒரு கேள்வியைக் குறிப்பிட்டார்: என்ன இந்து? இந்த வார்த்தையின் தோற்றம் என்ன? ஏதேனும் இந்து மதம் இருக்கிறதா?

அவை அந்த நேரத்தில் பொருத்தமான கேள்விகள். அவர் எந்த வரலாற்றாசிரியரும் இல்லை, அவர் கற்றல் இல்லை என்று கூறினார். ஆனால் அவர் இந்து மதம் குறித்த சில உண்மையான புத்தகத்தில் வேதங்களில் 'இந்து' என்ற சொல் ஏற்படவில்லை என்று படித்திருந்தார், ஆனால் அலெக்சாண்டர் தி கிரேட் இந்தியா மீது படையெடுத்தபோது, சிந்து கிழக்கிற்கு நாட்டின் மக்கள், ஆங்கிலம் பேசும் மக்களால் அறியப்பட்டவர்கள் சிந்து என இந்தியர்கள், இந்துக்கள் என்று வர்ணிக்கப்பட்டனர். 'எஸ்' என்ற எழுத்து கிரேக்க மொழியில் 'எச்' ஆகிவிட்டது. இந்த குடிமக்களின் மதம் இந்து மதமாக மாறியது, அவர்கள் அறிந்தபடி, இது மிகவும் சகிப்புத்தன்மை கொண்ட மதம். துன்புறுத்தலிலிருந்து தப்பி ஓடிய ஆரம்பகால கிறிஸ்தவர்களுக்கும், பெனி-இஸ்ரேல் என்று அழைக்கப்படும் யூதர்களுக்கும், பார்சிகளுக்கும் இது தங்குமிடம் அளித்தது. அனைத்தையும் உள்ளடக்கிய, சகிப்புத்தன்மைக்காக நின்ற அந்த இந்து மதத்தைச் சேர்ந்தவர் என்பதில் அவர் பெருமிதம் கொண்டார். ஆரிய அறிஞர்கள் அவர்கள் வேத மதம் என்றும், இந்துஸ்தான் ஆரியவர்த்தா என்றும் அழைக்கப்பட்டனர். அவருக்கு அத்தகைய அபிலாஷை இல்லை. அவரது கருத்தாக்கத்தின் இந்துஸ்தான் அனைத்தும்

அவருக்கு போதுமானதாக இருந்தது. இது நிச்சயமாக வேதங்களை உள்ளடக்கியது, ஆனால் இது இன்னும் பலவற்றை உள்ளடக்கியது. இந்து மதத்தின் க ity ரவத்தை எந்த வகையிலும் பாதிக்காமல், இஸ்லாம், கிறித்துவம், ஜோராஸ்ட்ரியனிசம் மற்றும் யூத மதம் ஆகியவற்றில் சிறந்தவர்களுக்கு மரியாதை செலுத்த முடியும் என்று அறிவிப்பதில் எந்த முரண்பாட்டையும் அவரால் கண்டறிய முடியவில்லை. இத்தகைய இந்து மதம் சூரியன் பிரகாசிக்கும் வரை வாழும். துளசிதாஸ் அதை ஒருசுருக்கமாகக் கூறினார் *தோஹாவில்*: “மதத்தின் வேர் கருணையில் பொதிந்துள்ளது, அதேசமயம் அகங்காரம் உடலின் அன்பில் வேருன்றியுள்ளது. உடல் அழிந்தாலும் கருணையை ஒருபோதும் கைவிடக்கூடாது என்று துளசி கூறுகிறார்.”

ஹிந்து யார்?

(காந்திஜியின் கடிதத்திலிருந்து ஒரு கேள்வி மற்றும் பதில், “கடிதத் தொடர்பு - ஒரு கேட்கிசம்” என்ற தலைப்பில் தோன்றியது.)

கே: நீங்கள் எப்போதும் உங்களை ஒரு 'இந்து' என்று அழைத்தீர்கள். மறுபுறம் நீங்கள் கூட தங்கள் சாஸ்திரங்களில் குறித்து சிறுவர் திருமணம், விதவையின் மறுமணத்தை, தீண்டாமை, முதலியன நீங்கள்இல் சொல்ல மீது இந்து மதம் பண்டிதர்கள் கட்டளைகளை ஏற்றுக்கொள்ளுமாறும் தயாராக யங் இந்தியா முரண்பாடுகளை ஸ்ம்ருதிக்கள் முள் மயிர் "தேதியிட்ட ஆகஸ்ட் 26 உள்ளன. சுய கட்டுப்பாடு குறித்த எழுச்சியூட்டும் வசனங்களை ஒரே நேரத்தில் எழுத முடியாது, அதே போலவால் மனிதனில் முரட்டுத்தனத்தை ஊக்குவிக்கும் வசனங்களை எழுதியுள்ளார். ” 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 and in spite of the word not being found in any Shastra 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.' "*

*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

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.

**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 Namō 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

*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 स्वयंभुवः स्वयंभुवः स्वयंभुवः स्वयंभुवः

§ 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 »gofkτ: § 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 u±h: β Mz≠MHcTॐ- § 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 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

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. p. 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 contrary 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<hHJË : sTN&<Û Ûx<•<Tz•ß ¶Nfß { ∞j: \$\$

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

*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

*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 *Gitabodh* 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. p. 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. . . .

April 25, 1925

A Bunch of Letters by Jawaharlal Nehru, p. 42

Yours,
Bapu

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, Devahideva, 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

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

μØgHμ ! •g¶ß τN ¶Nμf ∞τO \$

sIT sIT ¶X* sμT <•Vτμf, •g¶ ø÷N uμfø<THτO \$\$

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

Ū<••-îghµτ <∅} i <•VτµτN Ml∅TT sgTf îHτo \$\$

VτX • τŪ<•• Ūgµτ• β Ūτµ îg•τµτ oVτo
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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.

* 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.

O God, who does help only when man
 feels utterly humble, grant
 that we may not be
 isolated from the people we
 would serve as servants
 and friends.

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

Harijan, 11-9-'49, p. 217

43

MEANING OF 'GOD IS TRUTH'

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

In 'God is Truth', *is* certainly does not mean 'equal to' nor does it merely mean, 'is truthful'. Truth is not a mere attribute of God, but He is That. He is nothing if He is not That. Truth in Sanskrit means *Sat*. *Sat* means Is. Therefore Truth is implied in *Is*. God is, nothing else Is. Therefore the more truthful we are, the nearer we are to God. We *are* only to the extent that we are truthful.

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

44

GOD IS EVER WITH US

(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?