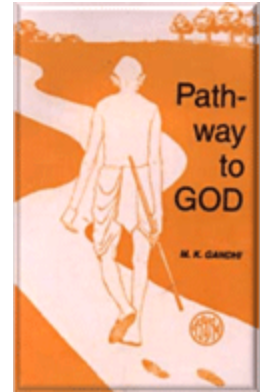


# Pathway to GOD

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## FOREWORD

I deem it a privilege to be asked to contribute a Foreword to this slim volume of extracts from Gandhiji's writings and speeches. It is good to hark back to Gandhiji from time to time and get refreshed by what he had to say on human life and conduct as a Pathway to God, rather than as a selfish satiation of one's egoistic urges and sentiments. How far it will attract the young or influence their everyday life is more than I can say. Quite [frankly I am little sceptical, but that is no reason why an attempt should not be made. Truth is its own justification and sooner or later, it is bound to tell.

Nevertheless, I would like to put in a plea to my young friends to get acquainted with Gandhiji's thoughts on life as a Pathway to God. I know that many young people are allergic to the mention of God. They have seen too many people who talk of God and yet lead lives that find no relation to what they talk about. Nowhere do they find the gap between profession and practice so great as in the lives and the daily conduct of people who claim to be believers in God and would throw His name at the young on the slightest provocation. The young tend to associate mention of God with hypocrisy, bigotry, superstition and irrationality and it is not easy to attract their attention by talking about God. I do not blame the young for their attitude. We of the older generation are more to blame for taking the name of God and then denying Him in practice by the way we live. But Gandhiji was not like that. He was a man who practised what he preached; and acted as he believed. His faith in God was intense and unequivocal; and it was this that gave him the strength to walk alone if necessary in defence of his convictions and face up to the mightiest enemy who stood against what he thought was the right thing to do. Gandhiji was known for his outstanding courage not only in a physical sense but also in moral and social terms and his courage was the result of his belief that his actions were guided by God because they were consistent with the nature of God and the path He wanted His children to follow.

I know it is possible for a human being to delude himself with the belief that he is carrying out God's purpose when what he is doing is only satisfying his ego. But that is possible only when one has a deluded conception of God. This was not so in the case of Gandhiji. He conceived of God as Absolute Truth, Non-violence and Love. With such a conception, belief in God will not lead one astray and life becomes a real Pathway to God when one lives in search of Truth and surrenders to Non-violence and Love. This was the life that Gandhiji led and that is why his life is and will remain a perpetual source of inspiration to all who seek the highest satisfaction from their lives.

The extracts from Gandhiji's speeches and writings that Shri M. S. Deshpande has collected with such diligence and dedication will help young people in India and elsewhere to find the ballast that will give steadiness to their lives and the purpose which will make it a Pathway to God. I have pleasure in commending this Voice of Gandhiji to the youth of India.

V. K. R. V. RAO

New Delhi,

4th August 1971

## PREFACE

Mahatma Gandhiji was primarily a man of God. He was a great devotee of Daridranarayan – an humble and passionate servant of Humanity. Truth was his "End" and Love was his "Means". His ever- expanding love aspired to embrace and serve the whole of humanity – especially the poor and the miserable. This passion for service led him to work in all spheres of life – social, educational, economic and even political. However, God-realization alone was his all-absorbing ideal – the main spring of all his varied activities. He ardently aspired to "see God face to face".

In my earlier work entitled *Light of India* – acclaimed as "original", "unique" and "excellent" by the elite of Bharat, I have tried to give a fairly comprehensive view of almost all the important aspects of Mahatmaji's message to humanity. Since then several monumental works also have been published throwing light on this all-important subject. But unfortunately, the fruit is missed among the rich foliage. The main spring of Mahatmaji's activities has been woefully overlooked as a result of which the present activities have been deprived of their energizing vitality. Hence I have tried to bring the core of his message to the notice of the young aspirants, through this fresh compilation, so that it may serve as a perennial source of inspiration to them in then- budding lives.

Such is the object with which this "Great-Little" book has been designed – great in content, though small in size. A mere glance at the contents of the book would show how very valuable it is for everyday use, like the Gita, to all those who would aspire to make their lives sublime. If the *Light of India* can be regarded as the Bible of Gandhiji, this little volume would be his "Sermon on the Mount". Our Navajivan Trust, which is serving as the Bible Society of modern Bharat, would, it is hoped, bring out cheap and fine editions of such books, in all the languages of Bharat as well as in, at least a few principal languages of the world, and place them in the hands of all aspirants for their daily perusal, reflection and assimilation.

"Never in human history," writes a modern savant, "man experienced so much darkness within him in the midst of all-round enlightenment outside of him, so much inner poverty in the context of measureless enrichment without... The modern crisis is thus essentially a spiritual crisis and modern man is seeking for light to lead him out of the encircling gloom. His heart, today, is crying for truth, for light and for life."

We are also passing through a critical period when enthusiasm for spiritual and moral values, generated by Mahatmaji, has been fast waning and that for material ones has been steadily gaining ground. So to restore genuine love for these high values among the people, we urgently require a band of young aspirants vibrating with zeal for noble life, ready to tread the pathway chalked out by saints like Gandhiji. For achieving this high ideal, their living words of wisdom, "the precious life-blood of Master Spirits," should be placed in the young hands, in an attractive garb, so that they may "read, re-read, chew and digest" this rich, life-giving material and build their model lives for others to emulate. Such living ideals alone are capable of raising the moral and spiritual level of humanity. And it is only when this level is sufficiently raised that the world would have the privilege of enjoying the blessed era of lasting peace and prosperity.

May this *Pathway to God* inspire young men throughout the world to lead the Life of Light practised and preached by Gandhiji, so that our "Light of India" might soon become the "Light of the World".

Finally let me express my deep sense of gratefulness to Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao, for his kindness in blessing this humble attempt with his illuminating Foreword. My sincere thanks are also due to Shri Jitendrabhai Desai, Secretary, Navajivan Trust for bringing out this "Great-Little" book in such an attractive garb in such a short time.

"Shanti Kunja" Vikrampura Extension Athani, Dist. Belgaum

Mysore State M. S. Deshpande

## INTRODUCTION

### Gandhiji's Spiritual Pilgrimage

#### HIS IDEAL

Gandhiji was essentially a man of religion. His eventful life was really a spiritual pilgrimage. The supreme ideal which he tried to pursue, throughout his life, was God-realization. "I want to see God face to face," he used to say very often. He emphatically declares:

"What I want to achieve – what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years – is Self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain *Moksha*. I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal. All that I do by way of speaking and writing, are directed to this same end."

Though Gandhiji started his life with disbelief in God and prayer and continued to maintain the same attitude for a long time, he did feel a void in his life at a later stage, which led him to read the real meaning of Creation. Thereafter he could write with the greatest assurance: "I am surer of His existence than of the fact that you and I are sitting in this room." He felt very miserable to find that he was still far away from God, even though he was conscious that God governed every breath of his life. However, the feeling that he was journeying Godward gave him some solace for he occasionally felt the warmth of the sunshine of His presence.

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#### HIS SADHANA

The *Sadhana* which Gandhiji practised and preached for attaining this ideal has three aspects: (i) Intellectual, (ii) Moral and (iii) Spiritual.

(i) The Intellectual aspect consists in the clear conception regarding the nature of God, Soul and the World, their relation with one another and the primary duty of man. Gandhiji soon realized the futility and impossibility of reasoning out the existence of God. "God exists," says he, "because we exist. Really, we

are not; He alone is. If we will be, we must eternally sing His praise and do His will." This is Gandhiji's first criterion to prove God's existence. The direct testimony of saints who have actually seen God, is his second criterion.

Like all other saints Gandhiji maintained that God is one without a second. He has innumerable names, but he chose to call Him "Truth". Gandhiji's Absolute Truth has a very wide connotation. It not only connotes Eternal Existence, both in time and space, but it also connotes Eternal Knowledge, Power, and Bliss. Gandhiji's Truth is Light, Life, Goodness and Law. It is a mysterious Power that holds together, creates, dissolves and recreates. Infinite is Its love and boundless Its compassion. Such is the Truth he worshipped with perfect devotion.

"Our soul is immortal," says Gandhiji. It is the eternal spark of the Divine Fire. "We may not be God," he avers, "but we are of God, even as a little drop of water is the ocean. Imagine it torn away from the ocean and flung millions of miles away. It becomes helpless, and cannot feel the might and majesty of the ocean. But if someone could point out to it that it is the ocean (and teach it to realize it), its faith would revive, it would dance with joy and the whole might and majesty of the ocean would be reflected in it."

"Our earthly existence is," according to Gandhiji, "so fickle that it can be wiped out in the twinkling of an eye." He also tells us that death is as necessary for man's growth as life itself. Death is inevitable. It is a welcome friend, a deliverer. It is a mere change when we work for God. Hence it is the primary duty of every man, according to Gandhiji, to carefully introspect, realize his nature, fight with the inner foes, develop his Godward faculties to perfection and enjoy the vision and bliss of God.

(ii) The Moral aspect of Gandhiji's *Sadhana* concerns the fight with the inner foes, viz. vices and the acquisition of some cardinal virtues. In fact, our attempt at the cultivation of virtues, would automatically bring about the elimination of vices. The main virtues which Gandhiji tried to develop are truth, love, and self-restraint. These and selfless service along with devotion to God which crowns them all, are the basic virtues which he wants all to

cultivate. Gandhiji's truth as a virtue is nothing but the correspondence between thought, word and deed. Prompting of the inner voice or conscience is the true thought. Its accurate expression in speech and action will invest the words and deeds with the sanctity of truth. Gandhiji wants us to realize such truth.

"True love," says Gandhiji, "is boundless like the ocean and swelling within one, spreads itself out and envelops the whole world." Such is the unselfish love which Gandhiji cultivated. "Love is life," he declares, "and hatred is death. The law of love, call it attraction, affinity, cohesion, if you like, governs the world. Love is the reverse of the coin of which the obverse is truth. Truth ever triumphs over untruth; love conquers hatred. Hatred always tries to kill but love never dies." Non-violence is another name which Gandhiji has given to such a pure love. His love and non-violence are one and the same. They depict the positive and negative aspects of the same attitude of mind. Pure unselfish love is perfectly nonviolent, and perfect non-violence is full of pure love. Thus they are identical.

Self-restraint is the third cardinal virtue which Gandhiji attempted to cultivate and advocate. If truth supports and love unites, Self-restraint gives the necessary strength to the *Sadhaka* and enables him to walk with courage and confidence on the Pathway to God. Self-restraint is the source of all strength, the spring of all power. It is the mother of so many virtues like non-stealing, celibacy, non-taste etc. Voluntary restraint is the privilege of man. Control of palate is the source of perfect health and strength. It will enable him to control all other senses with ease. And he who can conquer the senses can conquer the whole world. Complete control of thought, word and deed alike, will bring a power of the highest potency and purity of the highest type, so very necessary for receiving the grace of the Lord.

Selfless service is the last aspect of his moral *Sadhana*. "The only way to find God," he says, "is to see Him in His creation, and be one with it." "I am striving for the Kingdom of Heaven, which is spiritual deliverance. For me the road to salvation lies through incessant toil in the service of my country and there



through of humanity." Gandhiji tried to reduce himself to a cipher, identify himself with everything that lives and live at peace with friend and foe alike. Thus did he hope to attain salvation through selfless service. He strongly maintained that loving service, offered in a spirit of humility, will bring about proper self-purification, which in the fullness of time, will lead to God-realization.

(iii) The Spiritual aspect of the *Sadhana* practised and preached by Gandhiji consisted of a living faith in God, heart-felt prayer, meditation on Ramanama, and self-surrender. Gandhiji highly extols "living immovable faith". "Intellect," he says, "takes us along the battle of life to a certain extent, but at critical moments, it fails us. Faith transcends reason. It is when the horizon is the darkest, and human reason is beaten down to the ground, that faith shines the brightest and comes to our rescue." "Faith is not a delicate flower that withers under the slightest stormy weather. It moves mountains and jumps across the ocean. That faith is nothing but the wide-awake consciousness of God within. He who has achieved that faith wants nothing. Bodily diseased, he is spiritually healthy; physically poor, he rolls in spiritual riches."

Prayer is the next spiritual *Sadhana* performed by Gandhiji. He himself was essentially a man of faith and prayer. "Prayer is really," he tells us, "complete meditation and melting into the higher Self-God." "He who hungers for the awakening of the Divine in him, must fall back upon prayer." Real prayer, according to him, prefers heart without words, to words without heart. It needs no speech. It must spring from the heart. Prayer is a call to humility – a call to self-purification, to inward search and peace. "I believe," declares Gandhiji, "that prayer is the very soul and essence of religion and therefore, it must be the very core of the life of man." Along with prayer, Gandhiji tried to enthrone Ramanama in his heart and took God's name with every breath. At the same time he developed the attitude of self-surrender to the Lord. "I have no strength," he says "save what God has given me. I know that I can do nothing, God can do everything. My greatest weapon is mute prayer." "God demands nothing less than complete self-surrender as the price for the only real freedom

that is worth having. And when a man thus loses himself, he immediately finds himself in the service of all that lives. It becomes his delight and recreation. He is a new man, never weary of spending himself in the service of God's Creation."

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### His achievements

Now let us try to understand Gandhiji's conception of God-realization as well as his actual achievement. Says he, "I hold that complete realization of God 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 being." To him, God-realization is a supersensuous experience, consisting in the feeling of His constant presence in the heart. However, he appears to have enjoyed other spiritual experiences as well. Shri Gurudeva Dr. Ranade has told us that Gandhiji was more an audile than a photist or a morphist. Gandhiji speaks about the Inner Voice which may be likened to the *Anahata* sound heard by the mystics. Though small in the beginning, it gradually appears to have assumed greater and greater sonorousness and power. "The Divine Music," he tells us, "is incessantly going on within ourselves. But our loud senses drown the delicate music, which is unlike and infinitely superior to anything we can hear with our senses." Along with this "Still Small Voice" Gandhiji speaks about "the Pillar of Fire" and the "Inner Light". "When this Light corresponds, with the promptings of the Inner Voice," he says, "then that spark has the flash of inspiration." He also speaks about the Lustre of Truth which is "million- times more brilliant than that of the sun." Gandhiji appears to have received messages and heard actual words emerging from the Inner Voice—words from God. About the authenticity of these messages Gandhiji declares: "I can say this that not the unanimous verdict of the whole world against me could shake me from the belief that what I heard was the true Voice of God. . . . For the Voice was. more real than my existence."

## TO THE READER

I would like to say to the diligent reader of my writings and to others who are interested in them that I am not at all concerned with appearing to be consistent. In my search after Truth, I have discarded many ideas and learnt many new things. Old as I am in age, I have no feeling that I have ceased to grow inwardly or that my growth will stop at the dissolution of the flesh. What I am concerned with is my readiness to obey the call of Truth, my God, from moment to moment, and, therefore, when anybody finds any inconsistency between any two writings of mine, if he has still faith in my sanity, he would do well to choose the later of the two on the same subject.

M. K. GANDHI

*Harijan*, 29-4-1933, p. 2

**PART I : INTELLECTUAL SADHANA**

*Om*

*The Supreme Ideal*

Man's Ultimate Aim

is

Realization of God.

*God is*

*Sat-Chit-Ananda*

Existence, Knowledge, Power and Bliss.

He is an

Omnipresent, Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omniblissful

Mysterious Power.

*Our Soul*

is

A Spark of Divine Fire,

A Drop in the Divine Ocean.

*The World*

is

Full of Joy and Misery—

Joy with God and Misery without Him.

*Man's Duty*

is

to realize God, serve Humanity,

and

*Enjoy His Eternal Bliss.*

## CHAPTER ONE

### GOD

#### (1) GOD IS ONE, WITHOUT A SECOND

God is certainly One. He has no second. He is unfathomable, unknowable and unknown to the vast majority of mankind. He is everywhere. He sees without eyes and hears without ears. He is formless and indivisible. He is uncreate, has no father, mother or child; and yet He allows Himself to be worshipped as father, mother, wife and child. He allows Himself even to be worshipped as stock and stone, although He is none of these things. He is the most elusive. He is the nearest to us, if we would but know the fact. But He is farthest from us when we do not want to realize His omnipresence.

I dispute the description that Hindus believe in many Gods and are idolaters. They do say that there are many gods, but they also declare unmistakably that there is one God, the God of gods. It is, not therefore, 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 beast, 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 rendering of the word देव or देवता (*deva* or *devata*) for which you have not found a better term than "god". But God is *Ishwara*, *Devadhideva*, God of gods. So you see it is the word "God" used to describe different divine beings that has given rise to such confusion. I believe that I am a thorough Hindu but I never believe in many gods. Never even in my childhood did I hold that belief and no one ever taught me to do so.

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#### (2) HE IS OMNIPRESENT, OMNISCIENT AND OMNIPOTENT

God is not some person outside ourselves or away from the universe. He pervades everything and is omniscient as well as omnipotent. He does not need any praise or petitions. Being immanent in all beings, He hears everything and

reads our innermost thoughts. He abides in our hearts and is nearer to us than the nails on our fingers.

God is then not a person. He is the all-pervading, all-powerful Spirit. Any one who hears Him in his heart has accession of a marvellous force or energy, comparable in its results to physical forces like steam or electricity but much more subtle.

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### **(3) HE IS A MYSTERIOUS POWER**

There is an indefinable Mysterious Power that pervades everything. I feel it though I don't 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 senses. It transcends the senses.

I do dimly perceive that whilst everything around me is ever changing and ever dying, there is underlying all that change a Living Power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves and recreates. This informing Power or Spirit is God.

The truth is that God is the Force. He is the essence of life. He is pure, 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 a lifeless force. Man can utilize it if he can labour hard enough to acquire the knowledge of its laws. The Living Force which we call God can similarly be followed if we know and follow His law leading to the discovery of Him in us.

God is an Unseen Power residing within us. There are many powers lying hidden within us and we discover them by constant struggle. Even so, we may find this Supreme Power, if we make diligent search with the fixed determination to find Him.

My God does not reside above. He has to be realized on earth. He is here, within you, within me. He is omnipotent and omnipresent. You need not think of the world beyond. If we can do our duty here, the beyond will take care of itself.

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#### **(4) THE SUPREME GOOD**

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.

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 arrogation 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 while 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 try to become good, because we want to reach and realize God. All the dry ethics of the world turns 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.

#### **(5) GOD IS TRUTH AND LOVE**

The Absolute Truth, the Eternal Principle, that is God. There are innumerable definitions of God, because His manifestations are innumerable. They overwhelm me with wonder and awe and for a moment stun me. But I worship God as Truth only.

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 the hearts. He knows us and our hearts better than we do ourselves. ... He is personal God to those who need His personal presence. He is embodied to those who need His touch. He is the purest Essence. He is, to those who have faith. He is all things to all men.

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### **(6) GOD IS SAT-CHIT-ANANDA**

The word *Satya* (Truth) is derived from *Sat* which means "Being". And nothing is or exists in reality except Truth. That is why *Sat* or Truth is perhaps the most important name of God. In fact, it is more correct to say Truth is God than to say God is Truth.

And where there is Truth, there is also Knowledge, which is true. Where there is no Truth, there can be no true knowledge. That is why the word *Chit* or Knowledge is associated with the name of God. And where there is true Knowledge, there is always Bliss (*Ananda*). Sorrow has no place there. And even as Truth is Eternal, so is the Bliss derived from it. Hence we know God as *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, one who combines in Himself, Truth, Knowledge and Bliss.

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### **(7) HE IS LAW ETERNAL**

God is an Idea, Law Himself. ... He and His Law abide everywhere and govern everything. Therefore, though I do not think that He answers in every detail, every request of ours, there is no doubt that He rules our actions and I literally believe that not a blade of grass grows or moves without His will.

I do feel that there is orderliness in the universe, there is an unalterable Law governing everything and every being that lives and moves. It is not a blind law, for no blind law can govern the conduct of living beings. . . . The Law and the Law-giver are one. I may not deny the Law or 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 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 acceptance of earthly rule makes life under it easier.

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### **(8) His INFINITE MERCY**

God is, even though the whole world deny Him. God embraces not only this tiny globe of ours, but millions and billions of such globes. How can we, little crawling creatures so utterly helpless as He has made us, how could we possibly measure His greatness, His boundless love, His infinite compassion? So great is His infinite love and pity that He allows man insolently to deny Him, wrangle about Him, and cut the throats of his fellowmen. How can we measure the greatness of God, who is so forgiving, so divine ?

He allows us freedom and yet His compassion commands obedience to His Will. But if anyone of us disdains 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.

God is the hardest task-master, I have known on earth. He tries you through and through. And when you find your faith is failing, or your body is failing you, and you are sinking, He comes to your assistance somehow or other and proves to you that you must not lose your faith and that He is always at your beck and call, but on His terms. So I have found. I cannot recall a single instance when at the eleventh hour, He has forsaken me.

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### **(9) HE HAS MANY NAMES**

There is only one omnipotent and omnipresent God. He is named variously and we remember Him by the name which is most familiar to us. Each person can choose the name that appeals most to him. Ishwara, Allah, Khuda, God mean the same.

God has a thousand names, or rather, He is nameless. We may worship or pray to Him by whichever name that pleases us. All worship the same Spirit, but as all foods do not agree with all, all names do not appeal to all. Each chooses the name according to His associations and He being the Indweller, All-Powerful and Omniscient, knows our inmost feelings and responds to us according to our deserts.

In my opinion, Rama, Rahaman, Ahurmazda, God or Krishna, are all attempts on the part of man to name that invisible Force. . . . Man can only conceive God within the limitations of his own mind. What matters, then, whether one man worships God as a person and another as Force? Both do right according to their lights. 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.

*Daridranarayan* is one of millions of names by which humanity knows God who is unnameable and unfathomable by human understanding. And it means God of the poor, God appearing in the hearts of the poor.

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### (10) HIS INCARNATIONS

God is not a person. To affirm that He descends to earth every now and again, in the form of 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. Whether they actually lived or not does not affect the picture of them in man's mind.

## CHAPTER TWO

### SOUL

#### (1) SPARK OF DIVINITY

We may not be God, but we are of God—even as a little drop of water is of the ocean. Imagine it torn away from the ocean and flung millions of miles away. It becomes helpless, torn from its surroundings and cannot feel the might and majesty of the ocean. But if some one could point out to it that it is the ocean, its faith would revive, it would dance with joy and the whole of the might and majesty of the ocean would be reflected in it.

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#### (2) MAN IS THE IMAGE OF GOD

Man alone is made in the image of God. That some of us do not recognize that status of ours, makes no difference, except that we do not get the benefit of the status, even as a lion brought up in the company of sheep, may not know his own status and therefore, does not receive its benefits; but it belongs to him, nevertheless, and the moment he realizes it, he begins to exercise his dominion over the sheep. But no sheep masquerading as a lion can ever attain the leonine status. And to prove the proposition, that man is made in the image of God, it is surely unnecessary to show that all men admittedly exhibit that image in their own person. It is enough to show that one man at least has done so. And will it be denied that the great religious teachers of mankind have exhibited the image of God in their persons ?

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#### (3) LIFE IS A MERE BUBBLE

Our existence as embodied beings is purely momentary; what are a hundred years in Eternity? But if we shatter the chains of egotism, and melt into the ocean of humanity, we share its dignity. To feel that we are something, is to set up a barrier between God and ourselves; to cease feeling that we are something is to become one with God. A drop in the ocean partakes of the greatness

of its parent, although it is unconscious of it. But it is dried up as soon as it enters upon an existence independent of the ocean. We do not exaggerate when we say that life is a bubble.

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#### **(4) LIFE AND DEATH**

It is as clear to me as daylight that life and death are but phases of the same thing, the reverse and obverse of the same coin. In fact, tribulation and death, seem to me to present a phase far richer than happiness or life. What is life worth without trials and tribulations, which are the salt of life? ... I want you all to treasure death and suffering more than life and to appreciate their cleansing and purifying character.

The body must suffer for its ill-deeds. We die to live once more, even as we live to die at last. Life, therefore, is not an occasion for joy, nor is death an occasion for sorrow. But there is one thing needful. We must ascertain our duty in life and continue to discharge it till we die.

Death is at any time blessed, but it is twice blessed for a warrior who dies for his cause, i.e. Truth. Death is no fiend, he is the truest of friends. He delivers us from agony. He helps us against ourselves. He ever gives us new chances, new hopes. He is like a sleep, a sweet restorer. Yet it is customary to mourn when a friend dies. The custom has no operation when the death is that of a martyr.

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#### **(5) FREEDOM OF CHOICE**

Man has reason, discrimination and free-will such as it is. The brute has no such thing. It is not a free agent and knows no distinction between virtue and vice, good and evil. Man being a free agent, knows these distinctions and when he follows his higher nature, shows himself far superior to the brute but when he follows his baser nature, can show himself lower than the brute.

But this free-will we enjoy is less than that of a passenger on a crowded deck... Man is the maker of his own destiny in the sense that he has freedom of choice

as to the manner in which he uses his freedom. But he is no controller of results. The moment he thinks he is, he comes to grief.

It is man's special privilege and pride to be gifted with the faculties of head and heart both, that he is a thinking no less than a feeling animal, as the very derivation of the word shows. ... In man reason quickens and guides the feeling. In brute the soul lies dormant. To awaken the heart is to awaken the dormant soul, to awaken reason is to inculcate discrimination between good and evil.

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### **(6) MAN'S PRIMARY DUTY**

It is the duty of every human being to look carefully within and see himself as he is and spare no pains to improve himself in body, mind and soul. He should realize the mischief wrought by injustice, wickedness, vanity and the like and do his best to fight them.

Man's estate is one of probation. During that period he is played upon by evil forces as well as good. He is ever prey to temptations. He has to prove his manliness by resisting and fighting temptations. He is no warrior who fights outside foes of his imagination and is powerless to lift his little finger against innumerable foes within or what is worse, mistakes them for friends.

It is not man's duty to develop all his faculties to perfection; his duty is to develop all his Godward faculties to perfection and to suppress completely those of contrary tendencies.

It is inherent in man, imperfect though he is, 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.

The goal ever recedes from us. The greater the progress the greater the recognition of our unworthiness. Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment. Full effort is full victory.

## CHAPTER THREE

### WORLD

#### (1) THE WORLD IS ONE BODY

God has so ordered this world that no one can keep his goodness or badness exclusively to himself. The whole world is like the human body with its various members. Pain in one member is felt in the whole body. Rot in one part must inevitably poison the whole system. Let us, therefore, cease to think in terms of the whole country. We must put faith in God and be careful for nothing. We hold our destiny in our own hands and no one but ourselves can make or mar it.

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#### (2) UNIVERSE—A FAMILY OF NATIONS

Nations cohere because there is mutual regard among the individuals composing them. Some day we must extend the nation law to the universe, even as we have extended the family law to form nations—a larger family. God has ordained that India should be such a nation.

Indeed, Hinduism teaches us to regard the whole humanity as one indivisible undivided family.

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#### (3) THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

Why is there evil in the world, is a difficult question to answer. I can only give what I may call a villager's answer. If there is good, there must also be evil, just as where there is light there is also darkness. But it is true only so far as we human mortals are concerned. Before God there is nothing good, nothing evil. We may talk of His dispensation in human terms, but our language is not God's.

I cannot account for the existence of evil by any rational method. To want to do so is to be coequal 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 there is no evil in Him and yet if there is evil, He is the author of it and yet untouched by it.

---

#### **(4) PAIR OF OPPOSITE FORCES**

The distinction between good and evil thoughts is not unimportant. Nor do these thoughts come haphazard. They follow some law, which the scriptures have tried to enunciate. There are certain problems in mathematics, for the solution of which some workable assumptions have to be made. They help the solution of the problem. But they are purely imaginary, and have no other practical use. Similarly, psychologists have proceeded upon the assumption that a pair of opposite forces is warring against each other in the universe, of which one is divine and the other is devilish. The distinction is made by all the scriptures of the world. I say this distinction is imaginary. God is one, without a second. He alone is. He is indefinable. In reality there is no war between God and Satan.

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#### **(5) GOD'S HAND BEHIND GOOD AND EVIL**

In 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 . . . respectively.

God's hand is behind good, but in God's hand it is not mere good. His hand is behind evil also but there it is no longer evil. 'Good' and 'Evil' is our own imperfect language. God is above both good and evil.

It is we who entertain thoughts, and it is we ourselves who repulse them. We have, thus, to strive against ourselves. The scriptures have, therefore, said that there is duel in the world. This duel is imaginary, not real. We can, however, sustain ourselves in the world by assuming the existence of the imaginary duel



to be real.

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### **(6) BLESSINGS OF CALAMITY**

It is the universal experience that every calamity brings a sensible man down on his knees. He thinks that it is God's answer to his sins and that he must henceforth behave better. His sins have left him hopelessly weak, and in his weakness he cried out to God for help. Thus millions of human beings used their personal calamities for self-improvement. Nations too have been known to invoke the assistance of God when calamities have overtaken them. They have abased themselves before God and appointed days of humiliation, prayer and purification.

**PART II : MORAL SADHANA**

*Om*

*Three Great Jewels*

(Cardinal Virtues)

*Truth—Love—Restraint*

Truth supports.

Love unites.

Restraint enlivens.

We can conquer the world

by

*Truth and Love.*

*Control*

of

Thought, Word and Deed

is

*Brahmacharya—*

a

Perennial Spring

of

Eternal Energy.

*Selfless Service*

leads to Salvation.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### TRUTH

#### (1) WHAT IS TRUTH?

What is Truth ? A difficult question, 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?

It is because we have at the present moment everybody claiming the right of conscience without going through any discipline whatsoever, there is so much untruth being delivered in 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 got an abundant sense of humility. If you would swim on the bosom of the ocean of Truth, you must reduce yourself to a zero.

Truth is within ourselves. There is an inmost centre in us all, where Truth abides in fulness. Every wrong-doer knows within himself that he is doing wrong, for untruth cannot be mistaken for Truth. . . . Truth and Righteousness must for ever remain the Law in God's world.

The Law of Truth is merely understood to mean that we must speak the Truth. But we understand the word in a much wider sense. There should be Truth in thought, Truth in speech, and Truth in action.

---

#### (2) TRUTH IS THE SOURCE OF CHARACTER

Character is based on virtuous action, and virtuous action is grounded on Truth. Truth, then, is the source and foundation of all things that are good and great. Hence fearless and unflinching pursuit of the ideal of Truth and Righteousness is the key of true health as of all else.

---

### **(3) How TO REALIZE IT?**

But how is one to realize Truth, which may be likened to the Philosopher's Stone or the Cow of Plenty? By single-minded devotion (*Abhyasa*) and indifference to every other interest (*Vairagya*).

Silence is a great help to a seeker after Truth like myself. In the attitude of silence, the soul finds the path in clearer light and what is elusive and deceptive, resolves itself into crystal clearness. Our life is long arduous quest after Truth, and the Soul requires inward restfulness to attain its full height.

Experience has taught me that silence is a part of the spiritual discipline of a votary of Truth. Proneness to exaggerate, to suppress or to modify Truth, wittingly or unwittingly, is a natural weakness of man, and silence is necessary in order to surmount it. A man of few words will rarely be thoughtless in his speech. He will measure every word.

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### **(4) NEED OF FEARLESS VIGILANCE**

There is so much superstition and hypocrisy around, that one is afraid even to do the right thing. But if one gives way to fear, even Truth will have to be suppressed. The golden rule is to act fearlessly upon what one believes to be right. . . . The danger is that when we are surrounded by falsehood on all sides, we might be caught in it and begin to deceive ourselves. We should be careful not to make a mistake, out of our laziness and ignorance. Constant vigilance under all circumstances is essential.

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### **(5) ITS SUPREME VALUE**

How beautiful it would be if all of us young and old, men and women, devoted ourselves wholly to Truth in all that we might do, in our waking hours, whether working, eating, drinking or playing, till pure dreamless sleep claimed us for her own. God as Truth has been for me a treasure beyond price. May He be so to everyone of us!

Therefore, the pursuit of Truth is true *Bhakti*. It is the path that leads to God. There is no place in it for cowardice, no place for defeat. It is the talisman by which death itself becomes the portal to Life Eternal.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### LOVE (AHIMSA)

#### (1) TRUTH AND LOVE

Love and Truth are the faces of the same coin, and both very difficult to practise, and the only things worth living for. A person cannot be true, if he does not love all God's creatures. Truth and Love are therefore the complete sacrifice.

Without Truth there is no Love. Without Truth it may be affection, as for one's country, to the injury of others; or infatuation as of a young man for a girl. . . . Love transcends all animality and is never partial.

True Love is boundless like the ocean and swelling within one, spreads itself out and crossing all boundaries and frontiers, envelops the whole world.

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#### (2) LOVE UNITES

Scientists tell us that without the presence of the cohesive force amongst atoms that comprise the globe of ours, it would crumble to pieces and we would cease to exist; and even as there is a cohesive force in the blind matter, so must there be in all things animate and the name for that cohesive force among animate beings is Love. We notice it between father and son, between brother and sister, friend and friend. But we have to learn to use that force among all that lives and in the use of it consists our knowledge of God.

---

#### (3) LOVE IS LIFE

If Love was not the law of life, life would not have persisted in the midst of death. Life is a perpetual triumph over the grave. If there is fundamental distinction between man and beast, it is the former's progressive recognition of the Law and its application in practice to his own personal life. All the saints of the world, ancient and modern, were each according to his light and capacity,

a living illustration of that supreme Law of our being. That the brute in us seems so often to gain easy triumph, is true enough. How should it be otherwise with a Law which is as high as Truth itself? When the practice of the Law becomes universal, God will reign on earth as He does in Heaven. ... I need not be reminded that earth and heaven are within us. We know the earth, we are strangers to heaven within us.

It is my firm belief that it is Love that sustains the earth. There only is life where there is Love. Life without Love is death. Love is the reverse of the coin of which the obverse is Truth.

Hatred ever kills; Love never dies. Such is the vast difference between the two. What is obtained by Love is retained for all time. What is obtained by hatred, proves a burden in reality, for it increases hatred. The duty of a human being is to diminish hatred and to promote Love.

---

#### **(4) THE LAW OF LOVE**

The Law of Love, call it attraction, affinity, cohesion if you like, governs the world. The universe continues in spite of destruction incessantly going on. Truth triumphs over untruth. Love conquers hatred. God eternally triumphs over Satan.

We will have ample cause to congratulate ourselves, if we learn to substitute the Law of Love in society for that of the jungle and instead of harbouring ill will and enmity in our bosoms against those whom we regard as our enemies, we learn to love them, as actual and potential friends.

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#### **(5) THE RELIGION OF AHIMSA**

The world is full of *Himsa*, and Nature does appear to be "red in tooth and claw". But if we bear in mind that the man is higher than the brute, then is man superior to Nature. If man has a divine mission to fulfill, a mission that becomes him, it is that of Ahimsa.



I am not a visionary. I claim to be a practical idealist. The religion of non-violence is not meant merely for Rishis and saints. It is meant for the common people as well. Non-violence is the law of our species, as violence is the law of the brute. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law, to strengthen the spirit.

Man as animal is violent, but as a Spirit is nonviolent. The moment he awakes to the Spirit within, he cannot remain violent. Either he progresses towards Ahimsa or rushes towards his doom. That is why, the Prophets and the Avatars have taught the lesson of truth, harmony, brotherhood, justice etc.— all attributes of Ahimsa.

So let no one doubt that the salvation of all the exploited peoples of the earth and therefore of the world, lies in the strictest reliance on the coin on whose one face is written Truth and on the other Non-violence in large letters. Sixty years of experience has taught me no other method.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SELF-RESTRAINT

#### (1) RESTRAINT SHOULD BE VOLUNTARY

Restraint self-imposed is not compulsion. A man who chooses the path of freedom from restraint, i.e. self-indulgence, will be a bonds slave of passions, whilst a man who binds himself to rules and restraints, releases himself. All things in the universe including the sun and the moon and the stars – obey certain laws. Without the restraining influence of these laws, the world would not go on for a single moment. ... It is discipline and restraint that separates us from the brute. If we would be men walking with our heads erect and not walking on all fours, let us understand and put ourselves under voluntary discipline and restraint.

---

#### (2) CONTROL OF PALATE

True happiness is impossible without true health and true health is impossible without a rigid control of the palate. All the other senses will automatically come under our control when the palate has been brought under control. And he who has conquered his senses has really conquered the whole world.

One should eat not in order to please the palate but just to keep the body going. When each organ of sense subserves the body and through the body the soul, its specific relish disappears and then alone does it begin to function in the way nature intended it to do. Any number of experiments is too small and no sacrifice too great for attaining this symphony with nature.

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#### (3) CONQUEST OF LUST

The conquest of lust is the highest endeavour of man or woman's existence. Without overcoming lust man cannot hope to rule over self. And without rule over self there can be no Swaraj or Ramaraj. Rule of all without rule of oneself

would prove to be as deceptive and disappointing as a painted toy-mango, charming to look at outwardly, but hollow and empty within... Great causes... call for spiritual effort or soul-force. Soul-force comes only through God's grace, and God's grace never descends upon a man who is a slave to lust.

*Brahmacharya* means control of all organs of sense. He who attempts to control only one organ and allows all others free play, is bound to find his effort futile. To hear suggestive stories with ears, to see suggestive sights with the eyes, to taste stimulating food with the tongue, to touch exciting things with the hands and then at the same time, try to control the only remaining organ, is like putting one's hand in fire and then trying to escape being burnt. ... If we practise simultaneous self-control in all directions, the attempt is scientific and easy of success. Perhaps the palate is the chief sinner. Hence we have assigned to its control, a separate place among the observances.

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#### **(4) SUBLIMATION OF VITALITY**

All power comes from the observation and sublimation of the vitality that is responsible for the creation of life. If the vitality is husbanded instead of being dissipated, it is transmuted into creative energy of the highest order. . . . This vitality is . . . dissipated by evil . . . thoughts. And since thought is the root of all speech and action, the quality of the latter corresponds to that of the former. Hence perfectly controlled thought is itself a power, of the highest potency and can become self-acting. . . . Such power is impossible in one who dissipates his energy . . . even as steam kept in a leaking pot yields no power.

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#### **(5) RESTRAINT VS. SUPPRESSION**

It is harmful to suppress the body if the mind at the same time is allowed to go astray. Where the mind wanders, the body must follow sooner or later. It is necessary here to appreciate one distinction. It is one thing to allow the mind to harbour impure thoughts, it is different thing altogether if it strays among them in spite of ourselves. Victory will be ours in the end, if we non-co-operate with the mind in this evil process. . . . Hence the body must be immediately

taken in hand and then we must put forth a constant endeavour to bring the mind under control. We can do nothing more, nothing less.

Restraint never ruins one's health. What ruins one's health is not restraint but outward suppression. A really self-restrained person grows every day from strength to strength and from peace to more peace. The very first step in self-restraint is the restraint of thoughts. Understand your limitations and do only as much as you can. . . . Let not what I have told you alarm you or weaken you. Always aim at complete harmony of thought and word and deed. Always aim at purifying your thoughts and everything will be well. There is nothing potent than thought, deed follows word and word follows thought. The world is the result of a mighty thought, and where the thought is mighty and pure, the result is always mighty and pure.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SELFLESS SERVICE

#### (1) SELFLESS SERVICE A SOURCE OF JOY

The human body is meant solely for service, never for indulgence. The secret of happy life lies in renunciation. Renunciation is life. Indulgence is death. Therefore everyone has a right and should desire to live 125 years while performing service without an eye on result. Such life must be wholly and solely dedicated to service. Renunciation made for the sake of service is an ineffable joy, of which none can deprive one, because that nectar springs from within and sustains life. In this there can be no room for worry or impatience. Without this joy, long life is impossible and would not be worth-while even if possible.

The soul is omnipresent; why should she care to be confined within the cage-like body, or do evil and even kill for the sake of the cage ? We thus arrive at the ideal of total renunciation and learn to use the body for the purpose of service, so long as it exists, so much so, that service and not bread becomes with us, the staff of life. We eat and drink, sleep and awake, for service alone. Such an attitude of mind brings us real happiness and beatific vision in the fullness of time.

---

#### (2) SERVICE MEANT FOR SELF-REALIZATION

I am here to serve no one else but myself, to find my own self-realization through the service of these village folk. Man's ultimate aim is the realization of God, and all his activities – social, political, religious – have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God. The immediate service of human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavour, simply because the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with it. This can only be done through one's country. I am part and parcel of the whole, and I cannot find Him apart from the rest of humanity. My countrymen are my nearest neighbours. They have become so helpless, so resourceless, so inert that I must concentrate

on serving them. If I could persuade myself that I should find Him in a Himalayan cave, I would proceed there immediately. But I know that I cannot find Him apart from humanity.

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### **(3) SERVICE LEADS TO SALVATION**

I am striving for the Kingdom of Heaven, which is spiritual deliverance. For me the road to salvation lies through incessant toil in the service of my country and my humanity. I want to identify myself with everything that lives. In the language of the Gita, I want to live at peace with both friend and foe. My patriotism is for me a stage on my journey to the land of Eternal Freedom and Peace. Thus it will be seen that for me there is no politics devoid of religion. They subserve religion. Politics bereft of religion is a death-trap because they kill the Soul.

---

### **(4) SERVICE SHOULD BE CONSTANT**

A life of service must be one of humility. He, who could sacrifice his life for others, has hardly time to reserve for himself a place in the sun. Inertia must not be mistaken for humility, as it has been in Hinduism. True humility means most strenuous and constant endeavour, entirely directed towards the service of humanity. God is continuously in action without resting for a single moment. If we should serve Him or become one with Him, our activity must be as unwearied as His. There may be momentary rest in store for the drop which is separated from the ocean, but not for the drop in the ocean, which knows no rest. The same is the case with ourselves. As soon as we become one with the ocean in the shape of God, there is no more rest for us, nor indeed do we need rest any, longer. Our very sleep is action. For we sleep with the thought of God in our hearts. This restlessness constitutes true rest. This never-ceasing agitation holds the key to peace ineffable. This supreme state of total surrender is difficult to describe, but not beyond the bounds of human experience. It has been attained by many dedicated souls, and may be attained by ourselves as well.

**PART III : SPIRITUAL SADHANA**

*Om*

*Firm Faith*

strengthens the Will;

*Sincere Prayer*

develops Devotion;

*Soulful Meditation*

awakens Intuition; and

*Perfect Dedication*

attracts Grace !



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### FAITH

#### (1) DISBELIED, A DISEASE

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 a living faith in a living God. I must confess my inability to drive the truth of the law 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 obedience to which the whole universe moves. A man without that faith is like a drop thrown out of the ocean which is bound to perish. Every drop in the ocean shares its majesty, and has the honour of giving us the ozone of life.

It is easy enough to say, "I do not believe in God" for God permits all things to be said of Him with impunity. He looks at our acts. And any breach of His Law brings with it not its vindictive but its purifying, compelling punishment. God's existence cannot be, does not need to be proved. God is. If He is not felt, so much the worse for us. The absence of feeling is a disease which we shall someday throw off, *nolens volens*.

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#### (2) NEED OF A LIVING FAITH

No search is possible without some working assumptions. If we grant nothing we find nothing. Ever since its commencement, the world, the wise and foolish included, has proceeded on 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 human-kind, 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 solace in death.

---

### **(3) TESTIMONY OF SAINTS**

True faith is appropriation of the reasoned experience of people whom we believe to have lived a life purified by prayer and penance. Belief, therefore, in Prophets and Incarnations who have lived in remote ages, is not an idle superstition but a satisfaction of an inmost spiritual want.

They say that anybody following the path they have trodden, can realize 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.

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### **(4) FAITH AND REASON**

There are subjects where reason cannot take us far and we have to accept things on faith. Faith, then, does not contradict reason but transcends it. Faith is a kind of sixth sense which works in cases which are without the perview of reason.

Faith only begins where reason stops. But there are very few actions in the world for which reasonable justification cannot be found.

Experience has humbled me enough to let me realize the specific limitations of reason. Just as matter misplaced becomes dirt, reason misused becomes lunacy. If we but render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's all would be well.

---

### **(5) LIMITATIONS OF INTELLECT**

There is something infinitely higher than intellect that rules us as even the sceptics. Their scepticism and philosophy do not help them in the critical period of their lives. They need something better, something outside them. And so if someone puts a conundrum before me, I say to him: "You are not going to know the meaning of God or prayer unless you reduce yourself to a cipher. You must be humble enough to see that in spite of your greatness and gigantic

intellect you are but a speck in the universe. A merely intellectual conception of things of life is not enough. It is the spiritual conception which eludes the intellect, and which alone can give one satisfaction. Even moneyed men have critical periods in their lives. Though they are surrounded by everything that money can buy and affection can give, they find at certain moments in their lives utterly distracted. It is in these moments that we have a glimpse of God, a vision of Him who is guiding everyone of our steps.

Intellect takes along, in the battle of life, to a certain extent, but at the crucial moment fails us. Faith transcends reason. It is when the horizon is the darkest and our human reason is beaten down to the ground, that faith shines the brightest and comes to our rescue. It is such faith that our youth requires and this comes when one has shed all pride of intellect and surrendered oneself entirely to His will.

---

### **(6) HAVE CHILDLIKE FAITH**

I would have brushed aside all rational explanations and begin with a simple childlike faith in God. If I exist God exists. With me it is a necessity of my being as it is with millions. They may not be able to talk about it but from their lives you can see that it is a part of their life. I am only asking you to restore the belief that has been undermined. In order to do so you have to unlearn a lot of literature that dazzles your intelligence and throws you off your feet. Start with the faith which is also a token of humility and an admission that we know nothing, that we are less than atoms in this universe. We are less than atoms, I say, because the atom obeys the law of its being, whereas, we, in the insolence of our ignorance deny the law of nature. But I have no argument to address to those who have no faith.

I claim to be a man of faith and prayer and even if I were to be cut to pieces, I trust God would give me the strength not to deny Him, but to assert that He is. ... I am surer of His existence than of the fact that you and I are sitting in this room. Then I can also testify that I may live without air and water but not without Him. You may pluck out my eyes, but that cannot kill me. You may

chop off my nose, but that will not kill me. But blast my faith in God, and I am dead. You may call this a superstition, but I confess it is a superstition that I hug, even as I used to hug the name of Rama in my childhood when there was any cause of danger or alarm.

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### **(7) POWER OF LIVING FAITH**

We want the steady light, the infallible light of religious Faith; not Faith which merely appeals to the intelligence but a Faith which is indelibly inscribed on the heart. First we want to realize our religious consciousness, and immediately we have done that, the whole department of life is open to us; and it should then be a sacred privilege of all, so that when young men grow to manhood they may do so properly equipped to battle with life.

It is Faith that steers us through stormy seas; Faith that moves mountains, and Faith that jumps across the ocean. That Faith is nothing but a living and wide-awake consciousness of God within. He who has achieved that Faith, wants nothing. Bodily diseased, he is spiritually healthy; physically poor, he rolls in spiritual riches.

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### **(8) HOW TO ACQUIRE FAITH?**

But Faith cannot be acquired by force of intellect. It comes but slowly after deep meditation and continuous practice. We pray, sing hymns, read books, seek the association of men of God, and perform the spinning sacrifice in order to attain that Faith.

## CHAPTER NINE

### PRAYER

#### (1) NATURE OF PRAYER

The Divine Mind is unchangeable, but that Divinity is in everyone and everything – animate and inanimate. The meaning of prayer is that I want to invoke that Divinity in me. ... I beg it of myself, of my Higher Self, the Real Self, with which I have not yet achieved complete identification. You may, therefore, describe it as a continual longing to lose myself in the Divinity which comprises all.

Prayer really is complete meditation and melting into the Higher Self, though one occasionally does lapse into imploration like that of a child to his father. I would not call it lapse. It is more in the fitness of things to say that I pray to God who exists somewhere in the clouds and the more distant He is, the greater is my longing for Him and I find myself in His presence in thought. And thought, you know, has a greater velocity than light. Therefore, the distance between me and Him though so incalculably great, is obliterated. He is so far and yet so near.

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#### (2) SOURCE OF PEACE AND LIGHT

There is an eternal struggle raging in man's breast between the powers of Darkness and Light, and he who has the sheet-anchor of prayer to rely upon, will not be a victim to powers of Darkness. The man of prayer will be at peace with himself and with the whole world and the man who goes about the affairs of world without a prayerful heart will be miserable and will also make the world miserable.

It is a universal experience that every calamity brings a sensible man down on his knees. He thinks that it is God's answer to his sins and he must henceforth behave better. His sins have left him hopelessly weak and in his weakness he

cries out God for help. Thus millions of human beings used their personal calamities for self-improvement.

Prayer is the only means of bringing about orderliness and peace and repose in our daily acts.

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### **(3) THE ESSENCE AND POWER OF PRAYER**

He who hungers for the awakening of the Divine in him, must fall back on prayer. . . . But it is not a repetition of an empty formula. ... It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without heart. It must be in clear response to the spirit which hungers for it. And even as a hungry man relishes a hearty meal, a hungry Soul will relish a heartfelt prayer. And I am giving you a bit of my experience and that of my companions when I say that he who has experienced the magic of prayer, may do without food for days together but not a single moment without prayer. For without prayer there is no peace.

Prayer is no flight of eloquence. It is no lip-homage. It springs from the heart. If, therefore, we achieve that purity of the heart, when it is emptied of all but love, if we keep all the chords in proper tune, they "trembling pass in music out of sight". Prayer needs no speech. I have not the slightest doubt that prayer is an unfailing means of cleansing the heart of passions. But it must be combined with utmost humility.

Our prayer is a heart-search. It is a reminder to ourselves that we are helpless without His support. No effort is complete without prayer, without a definite recognition that the best human endeavour is of no effect if it has not God's blessings behind it. Prayer is a call to humility. It is a call to self-purification.

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### **(4) PATIENCE NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS**

Real prayer is an absolute shield and protection against . . . evils. Success does not always attend the very first effort at such a living prayer. We have to strive against ourselves, we have to believe in spite of ourselves, because months are

as our years. We have, therefore, to cultivate illimitable patience if we will realize the efficacy of prayer. There will be darkness, disappointment and even worse; but we must have courage enough to battle against all these and not succumb to cowardice. There is no such thing as retreat for a man of prayer.

It may take time for the recitation to come from the heart, even as a seed sown has to be nurtured and bears fruit only in due season. If the desire to have God within us is there, progress, however slow, is bound to be. Man cannot be transformed from bad to good, overnight. God does not exercise magic. He too is within His own Law. His Law, however, is different from the law of the State. There may be mistakes in the latter but God cannot err. If He were to go beyond the limits of His Law, the world would be lost. He is changeless, unchanging, unequalled, the same yesterday, today and forever. His Law is written on the tablets of their hearts. They could become changed men and women, only if they had the desire of reform and if they were prepared for ceaseless endeavour.

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#### **(5) PERIOD OF PRAYER**

There can be no fixed rule laid down as to the time these devotional acts should take place. It depends upon individual temperaments. There are precious moments in one's daily life. The exercises are intended to sober and humble us and enable us to realize that nothing happens without His will and that we are but "clay in the hands of the Potter". These are moments when one reviews one's immediate past, confesses one's weaknesses, asks for forgiveness and strength to be and to do better. One minute may be enough for some, twenty-four hours would be too little for others. For those who are filled with the presence of God in them, to labour is to pray. The life is one continuous prayer or act of worship. For those who act only to sin, to indulge themselves and to live for self, no time is too much. If they had patience and faith and the will to be pure, they would pray till they feel the definite purifying presence of God within them. For us ordinary mortals there must be a middle path between these two extremes. We are not so exalted as to be able to say that all our acts

are a dedication, nor perhaps are we so far gone, as to living purely for self. Hence have all religions set apart times for general devotion.

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**(6) BEGIN AND CLOSE THE DAY WITH PRAYER**

I believe that prayer is the very soul and essence of religion and therefore prayer must be the very core of the life of man. . . .

Begin, therefore, your day with prayer and make it so soulful that it may remain with you until evening. Close the day with prayer so that you may have a peaceful night free from dreams and nightmares. Do not worry about the forms. Let it be any form; it should be such as can put us in communion with the Divine. Only let not the spirit wander while the words of prayer run on out of your mouth.



## CHAPTER TEN

### MEDITATION (RAMANAMA)

#### (1) The Virtue of Silence

Experience has taught me that silence is part of Spiritual Discipline of a votary of Truth. . . . When one comes to think of it, one cannot help feeling that nearly half the misery of the world would disappear if we, fretting mortals, knew the virtue of silence. Before modern civilization came upon us, at least six to eight hours of silence out of twenty-four were vouchsafed to us. Modern civilization has taught us to convert night into day and golden silence into brazen din and noise. What a great thing it would be if we in our busy lives, could retire into ourselves each day, for at least a couple of hours and prepare our minds to listen to the voice of the great Silence. The Divine Radio is always singing if we could only make ourselves ready to listen to it, but it is impossible to listen without silence. St. Theresa has used a charming image to sum up the sweet result of silence:

"You will at once feel your senses gather themselves together, they seem like bees which return to the hive and they shut themselves up from work without effort or care on your part. God thus rewards the violence which your soul has been doing to itself; and gives to it such a domination over the senses that a sign is enough when it desires to recollect itself, for them to obey and so gather themselves together. At the first call of the will, they come back more and more quickly. At last after many and many exercises of this kind, God disposes them to a state of absolute repose and of perfect contemplation."

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#### (2) SILENCE FACILITATES COMMUNION WITH GOD

Silence has now become both a physical and spiritual necessity for me. Originally it was taken to relieve the sense of pressure. Then I wanted time for writing. After, however, I had practised it for sometime, I saw the spiritual value of it. It suddenly flashed across my mind that that was the time when I

could best hold communion with God. And now I feel as though I was naturally built for silence.

Silence is a great help to a seeker after Truth like myself. In the attitude of silence the soul finds the path in a clearer light, and what is elusive and deceptive resolves itself into crystal clearness. Our life is long and arduous quest after Truth and the soul requires inward restfulness to attain its full height.

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### **(3) TRUE MEDITATION**

True meditation consists in closing the eyes and ears of the mind to all else except the object of one's devotion. Hence, the closing of the eyes during prayers is an aid to such concentration. Man's conception of God is naturally limited. Each one has, therefore, to think of Him as best appears to him, provided that the conception is pure and uplifting.

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### **(4) POWER OF GOD'S NAME**

Rama is the strength of the weak. This strength is not to be obtained by taking up arms or by similar means. It is to be had by throwing oneself on His name. Rama is but a synonym of God. You may say God or Allah or whatever other name you like, but the moment you trust naught but Him, you are strong. All disappointment disappears.

Ramanama is an alchemy such as can transform the body. The conservation of vital energy has been likened to accumulated wealth but it is in the power of Ramanama alone to make it a running stream of ever-increasing spiritual strength, ultimately making a fall impossible.

Just as the body cannot exist without blood, so the soul needs the matchless and pure strength of faith. This strength can renovate the weakness of all man's physical organs. That is why it is said that when Ramanama is enshrined in the heart, it means the rebirth of man. This law applies to the young, old, man and

woman alike.

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### **(5) TAKE THE NAME WITH EVERY BREATH**

Though my reason and heart long ago realized the highest attribute and name of God as Truth, I recognize Truth by the name of Rama. In the darkest hour of my trial, that one name has saved me and is still saving me.

When a child my nurse taught me to repeat Ramanama whenever I felt afraid or miserable, and it has been second nature with me, with growing knowledge and advancing years. I may even say that, the word is in my heart, if not actually on my lips, all the twenty-four hours. It has been my saviour and I am ever stayed on it.

What is the mark of a man who has Rama enshrined in his heart? Such a man will take God's name with every breath. His Rama will be awake even whilst the body is asleep. Rama will be always with him in whatever he does. The real death for such a devoted man will be loss of this sacred companionship.

A devotee of Rama may be said to be the same as the steadfast one—*Sthitaprajna* – of the Gita. He will live in the consciousness of the soul and look to the care, first and last of the Indweller. Such a man will take God's name with every breath.

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### **(6) BLESSINGS OF RAMANAMA**

My Rama ... is not the historical Rama. . . . He is the eternal, the unborn, the one without a second. Him alone I worship.

A Christian may find the same solace from the repetition of the name of Jesus and a Muslim from the name of Allah. All these things have the same implications and they produce identical results. Only the repetition must not be a lip-expression, but part of your very being.

I have said that to take Ramanama from the heart means deriving help from an incomparable Power. The atom bomb is as nothing compared with it. This power is capable of removing all pain.

There is no doubt whatsoever that Ramanama contains all the power that is attributed to it. No one can by mere wishing enshrine Ramanama in his heart. Untiring effort is required as also patience. What an amount of labour and patience have been lavished by men to acquire non-existent philosopher's stone? Surely, God's name is of infinitely richer value.

With my hand on my breast, I can say that not a minute in my life am I forgetful of God.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### DEDICATION (SELF-SURRENDER)

#### (1) SURRENDER BRINGS JOY

Who am I? I have no strength save what God gives me. I have no authority over my countrymen save the purely moral. If He holds me to be a pure instrument for the spread of non-violence, He will give me the strength and show me the way. My greatest weapon is mute prayer. The cause of peace is, therefore, in God's good hands. Nothing can happen but by His will expressed in His eternal, changeless Law which is He. We neither know Him nor His Law, save through the glass darkly. But the faint glimpse of the Law is sufficient to fill me with joy, hope and faith in the future.

I must go with God as my only guide. He is a jealous Lord. He will allow no one to share His authority. One has, therefore to appear before Him in all one's meekness, empty-handed and in a spirit of full surrender, and He enables you to stand before the whole world and protects you from all harm.

I have been a willing slave to this most exacting Master for more than half a century. His voice has been increasingly audible as years have rolled by. He has never forsaken me in my darkest hour. He has saved me often against myself and left me not a vestige of independence. The greater the surrender to Him the greater has been my joy.

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#### (2) GOD MOVES AND PROTECTS ALL

We are but straws in the hands of God. He alone can blow us where He pleases. We cannot oppose His wish.

If we can but throw ourselves into His lap as our only Help, we shall come out scatheless through every ordeal. If nothing happens without His permission, where is the difficulty in believing that he is trying us. I would take our

complaints to Him for so cruelly trying us. And He will soothe us and forgive us if we will but trust Him.

We must learn, each one of us, to stand alone. God only is our infallible and eternal guide. . . .God helps the helpless not those who believe they can do something. . . . Those who put their implicit faith in Him cannot but reach their aims.

No one can see God face to face who has aught of an "I" in him. He must become a cipher if he would see God. Who shall dare say in this storm-tossed universe: "I have won" ? God triumphs in us, never we.

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### (3) DEDICATE ALL TO GOD

In a moment of introspection, the poet asks himself:

"O man, why have you left off taking God's name ?

You have not given up anger or lust or greed, But you have forgotten Truth.

What a tragedy to save worthless pennies,

And to let go the priceless gem of God's love

O Fool, renounce all vanities,

And throw yourself on the grace of God alone."

This does not mean that if one has wealth, it should be thrown away, and wife and children should be turned out of doors. It simply means that one must give up attachment to these things and dedicate one's all to God and make use of His gifts to serve Him only. It also means that if we take His name with all our being, we are automatically weaned from all lust, untruth and baser passions.

We must eternally sing His praise and do His will. Let us dance to the tune of His *bansi* (flute) and all would be well.

**PART IV : SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE**

*God*  
reveals Himself everyday  
to  
All Human Beings.  
*But*  
Unfortunately  
We shut our minds  
to  
*The Feeling of His Presence;*  
We shut our eyes  
to  
*His Inner Light;*  
and  
We shut our ears  
to  
*His Inner Voice.*



## CHAPTER TWELVE

### SOME ASPECTS OF EXPERIENCE

#### (1) BLESSED FEELINGS OF GOD'S PRESENCE

I believe it to be possible for every human being to attain that blessed and indescribable state in which he feels within himself the presence of God to the exclusion of everything else.

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 the earthly case of ours. Therefore exterior proof is not of much avail if 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.

Seeing God face to face is to feel that He is enthroned in our hearts, even as a child feels a mother's affection without needing any demonstration. Does a child reason out the existence of a mother's love? Can he prove it to others? He triumphantly declares "It is". So must it be with the existence of God. He defies reason. But He is experienced. Let us not reject the experience of Tulsidas, Chaitanya, Ramdas and a host of other spiritual teachers, even as we do not reject that of mundane teachers.

There is not a moment when I do not feel the presence of a Witness, whose eye misses nothing and with whom I strive to keep in tune.

If I did not feel the presence of God within me, I see so much of misery and disappointment every day that I would be a raving maniac and my destination would be the Hoogli.

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#### (2) VISION OF GOD

What is the vision of God? It does not mean seeing something with the physical eye or witnessing a miracle. Seeing God means realization of the fact that God

abides in our hearts. The yearning must persist until one has attained this realization, and will vanish upon realization. Realization is the final fruit of constant effort. God is there in the tabernacle of the heart.

We cannot see God with these eyes. God is spirit without body and is, therefore, visible only to the eye of faith. If there are no evil thoughts troubling our mind and no fears but constant cheerfulness in our heart, that is an indication of God's presence in ourselves. Indeed He is there at all times but we fail to notice His presence as we have no faith, and thus undergo much suffering. When once we have cultivated real faith, calamities cease to upset us.

One who looks upon the universe as various facets of God, will certainly have the beatific vision. All our knowledge and spiritual exercises are fruitless, so long as we have not had this vision.

When I admire the wonder of a sunset or the beauty of the moon, my soul expands in worship of the Creator, I try to see Him and His mercies in all these creations.

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### (3) HIS LIGHT AND MUSIC

The fleeting glimpses that I have been able to have of Truth can hardly convey an idea of the indescribable Lustre of Truth, a million times more intense than that of the sun, we daily see with our eyes. In fact, what I have caught is only the faintest glimmer of that Mighty Effulgence. I feel the warmth and sunshine of His Presence.

The sun in heavens fills the whole universe with its life-giving warmth. But if one went too near it, it would consume him to ashes. Even so, it is with Godhead. We become Godlike to the extent we realize non-violence; but we never become wholly God.

My firm belief is that He reveals Himself daily to every human being but we shut our ears to the "still small voice". We shut our eyes to the Pillar of Fire in front of us. I realize His omnipresence.

The Divine! Music is incessantly going on within ourselves; but the loud senses drown the Delicate Music which is unlike and infinitely superior to any we can perceive or hear with our senses.

When this Inner Light corresponds with the promptings of the smaller Inner Voice, then that flash has a mark of inspiration.

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#### **(4) THE INNER VOICE**

The Inner Voice defies description. But sometimes we do feel that we receive an inspiration from within. The time when I learnt to recognize it may be called my prayer time, say about 1906. I recollect it. For the rest, never did I feel at any time in my life that I had some new experience. My spiritual growth has been unnoticed like the growth of hair on our heads.

Nobody has to my knowledge questioned the possibility of the Inner Voice speaking to some and it is a gain to the world even if one person's claim to speak under the authority of the Inner Voice can be really sustained. Many may make the claim but not all will be able to substantiate it. But it cannot and ought not to be suppressed for the sake of preventing false claimants. There is no danger whatsoever, if many people could truthfully represent the Inner Voice. But unfortunately there is no remedy against hypocrisy. Virtue must not be suppressed because many will feign it. Men have always been found throughout the world claiming to speak for the Inner Voice. But no harm has yet overtaken the world through their short-lived activities. Before one is able to listen to that Voice, one has to go through a long and severe course of training, and when it is the Inner Voice that speaks, it is unmistakable. The world cannot successfully be fooled for all time. There is, therefore, no danger of anarchy setting in, because an humble man like me, will not be suppressed and will dare to claim the authority of the Inner Voice, when he believes that he has heard it.

Man is a fallible being. He can never be sure of his steps. What he may regard as an answer to prayer may be an echo of his pride. For infallible guidance man has to have a perfectly innocent heart incapable of evil. I can lay no such

claim. Mine is a struggling, striving, erring, imperfect soul.

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### **(5) DIVINE MESSAGES**

[There were two occasions when Gandhiji heard Divine- Messages. The first was in 1933 and the second in 1936. Both were connected with the problem of untouchability. Gandhiji tells us:]

The first question that has puzzled many is about the Voice of God. What was it? What did I hear? Was there any person I saw? If not, how was the Voice conveyed to me? These are pertinent questions.

I saw no form. I have never tried for it, for I have always believed God to be without form. But what I did hear was like a Voice from afar and yet quite near. It was as unmistakable as some human voice, definitely speaking to me, and irresistible. I was not dreaming at the time I heard the Voice. The hearing of the Voice was preceded by a terrific struggle within me. Suddenly the Voice came upon me. I listened, made certain that it was the Voice and the struggle ceased. I was calm. The determination was made accordingly, the date and the hour of the fast fixed. Joy came over me. This was between 11 and 12 midnight. I felt refreshed.

Could I give any further evidence that it was truly the Voice I heard and that it was not an echo of my own heated imagination? I have no further evidence to convince the sceptic. He is free to say it was all self-delusion or hallucination. It may well have been so. I can offer no proof to the contrary. But I can say this that not the unanimous verdict of the whole world against me could shake me from the belief that what I heard was the true Voice of God. . . . For me the Voice was more real than my existence. (1933)

One experience stands quite distinctly in my memory. It relates to my twenty-one days' fast for the removal of untouchability. I had gone to sleep the night before without the slightest idea of having to declare a fast the next morning. At about 12 o'clock in the night something wakes me up suddenly and some voice—within or without, I cannot say—whispers, "Thou must go on fast." "How

many days ?" I ask. It says: "Twenty-one days." "When does it begin?" I ask. It says: "You begin tomorrow." I went quietly off to sleep after making the decision. I did not tell anything to my companions until after the morning prayer. I placed into their hands a slip of paper announcing my decision and asking them not to argue with me as the decision was irrevocable. Well, the doctors thought that I would not survive the fast. But something within me said I would and that I must go forward. That kind of experience has never in my life happened before after that date.

This I know that all that glitters is not gold, and also that if a man has really heard the Voice of God, there is no sliding back, just as there is no forgetting it by one who had learnt to swim. The listening in must make people's lives daily richer and richer. (1936),

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### **(6) AN IDEAL SAGE**

That man alone can be called truly religious or moral whose mind is not tainted with hatred or selfishness, and who leads a life of absolute purity and of disinterested service; and that man alone can be called truly wealthy or happy either. Only such man can do good to mankind; for Truth is the foundation of all that is good and great. To a true servant of humanity the question never arises as to the best form of service. When we have realized the majesty of the Moral Law, we shall see how little our happiness or unhappiness depends on health and success and fame and the like. As has been said by Emerson, 'even the pains and griefs of good men contribute to their happiness, while even the wealth and fame of bad men cause misery to themselves as well as to the world'. 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all other things shall be added unto you.'

He is a real devotee who is jealous of none, who is a fount of mercy, who is without egoism, who treats alike cold and heat, happiness and misery, who is ever forgiving, who is always contented, whose resolutions are firm, who has dedicated mind and soul to God, who causes no dread, who is not afraid of others, who is free from exultation, sorrow and fear, who is pure, who is versed

in action and yet remains unaffected by it, who renounces all fruit, good or bad, who treats friend and foe alike, who is untouched by respect or disrespect, who is not puffed up with praise, who does not go under when people speak ill of him, who loves silence and solitude, who has disciplined reason.

The Yogin is therefore one who reflects all these attributes in his life, who, in the midst of raging storm and blinding spray, will keep his vision of the sun undisturbed, who will look difficulties and death in the face, who goes with the same mind to the shambles and the scaffold and whose mind is so serene that thunder rocks him to sleep.

## APPENDIX

### HIS PATH TO PEACE

Gandhiji has been rightly called a "Prophet of Peace". I am a fitting tribute to him, because all his activities had been actuated by, and directed towards the achievement of universal peace. The peace he tried to establish had two aspects: one internal and the other, external. He wanted to bring about internal peace in the lives of individuals and external peace in the affairs of societies and nations.

The lives of individuals are very often disturbed by internal conflicts, just as those of societies and nations are disturbed by external ones. In fact, these internal discords of individuals- are projected outside in societies and bring about external discords. Hence, if the internal ones are satisfactorily resolved the external ones also could be easily lessened.

Each individual has his own internal conflicts – conflicts among his ideals and his thoughts, among his feelings and his tastes, among his thousand and one desires, as well as the numerous demands of his senses. He experiences clashes among them every day, nay, every hour, which undermine his peace of mind and throw him in the cauldron of eternal unrest. The smooth tenor of his life is violently disturbed and it becomes a prey to- terrible storms and whirlwinds.

How to resolve these conflicts and remove these discords is a very important problem. Eminent thinkers, both of the East and the West, after long and deep thinking, have hit upon only one remedy for their successful elimination viz. the integration of personality. People, nowadays, more than ever before, are suffering from divided personality. Their lives have lost old moorings, and have not secured new ones. Hence they are drifting aimlessly – they know not where. They are assailed by doubts at every step, which remain unanswered, as they have not developed any proper philosophy of life which is capable of resolving them. They thus become nervous wrecks, spend sleepless nights, and

allow themselves to be assailed by imaginary nightmares requiring mental treatment.

Integration of personality is, thus, the only remedy to bring peace to our disturbed lives. Such integration required the inculcation of proper philosophy of life. A sound philosophy not only gives a correct view of life, enabling a person to formulate a proper goal for himself, but also shows him the correct way towards the goal. Thus it serves both as a science as well as an art of life, making a person well-versed both in the theory and practice of proper living. The spread of such a philosophy will soon bring about integration and automatically result in the descent of peace.

What was the philosophy of life that Gandhiji practised and preached, for the achievement of integration and peace? His philosophy had given him a clear idea about the nature of God, soul, and the world, as well as their relation with one another. This had enabled him to formulate and fix the goal of his life, together with the pathway leading to it. With the help of this philosophy and his *Sadhana* to reach the goal, he had succeeded in creating a sound integration in his life, which enabled him to enjoy undisturbed peace throughout his eventful life—even during the most critical period\*. Gandhiji could thus leave behind him a well-formulated philosophy of life for the guidance of the future generations.

In our "Introduction" we discussed Gandhiji's path to peace internal—peace in individual life. Let us now turn to an understanding of his path to peace external, viz, peace in the lives of societies, nations, and humanity in general. Societies, like individuals, had also their own conflicts from time immemorial. No period of recorded history throughout the world was entirely free from such conflicts. The peace of every society was endangered and disturbed by a variety of conflicts. There were religious and cultural conflicts, political and economic conflicts; in fact,, there were various kinds of conflicts in all walks of social life. These conflicts were, at times, of a moderate type. At other times, they assumed a terrible shape, so terrible that they resulted in bloody revolutions, shaking the very foundation of the social structure of the nation



where they made their appearance. Such being the case, the imperative need of finding out ways and means for the proper resolution of such conflicts and introduction of peace in society has attracted the attention of all the great savants of all the times and climes.

In the beginning, these conflicts appear to have been resolved on the basis of superior strength—the strong subduing the weak and surviving by suppressing and eliminating his adversary. But as societies evolved culturally, brute strength appears to have given place to moral, intellectual, and spiritual strength. However, the principle that was followed by these enlightened person also was the same, namely, elimination and substitution. In their respective spheres, these leaders tried to eliminate the conflicting factors by substituting a fresh one, which they considered to be all inclusive and capable of removing the conflict on account of its supposed all-inclusiveness. History tells us that such attempts not only did not succeed in eliminating the conflicting factors, but they added one more to the lot.

This unfortunate experience called forth new efforts on the part of leaders of humanity to find out fresh principles that would bring about better results and a lasting peace. The principle that was discovered by our seers, but neglected so far, attracted their attention; and they seriously tried to make use of it, because, after careful investigation, they found it to be scientifically correct and sound. This principle is the principle of harmony, which is nothing but an extension and application of the principle of integration to society. What is integration to an individual, that is harmony to society. Integration is harmony in individual life; while harmony is integration in social life. Though names are different on account of their different spheres of application,, they are one and the same.

This harmony is not uniformity; it is not identity; it is not unity *of* diversity, but unity *in* diversity. It is not oneness without a second, but oneness with the second. It is a fine combination—a sweet intermingling of various things of the same class, without the loss of their special identity. It is well known that the word "harmony" has been imported originally from the province of music. A fine

blending of different notes giving out enchanting music was called harmony in the beginning. Later on, the term was being applied to all delightful combinations. People began to speak about the harmony of colours, harmony of *rasas*, harmony of sentiments, thoughts, and relations. Not only that; they have recently realized the great potential blessing which this principle embodies, and have been trying to make the best use of it in straightening and improving the relation between individuals as well as groups of individuals.

Just as the principle of intergration of personality plays an important part in Gandhiji's pathway to peace in the individual,, this principle of harmony plays a prominent role in his pathway to peace in society. Gandhiji's philosophy of God-realization helps in the integration of personality and consequently brings about internal peace. In the same way, his philosophy of Sarvo- daya or Universal Brotherhood is capable of promoting harmony and peace in society. His Sarvodaya philosophy is mainly derived from the principle of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. Hence we may even call it the philosophy of Universal Brotherhood. Gandhiji believed strongly that "the world is moving towards Universal Brotherhood, when mankind would be one nation". Gandhiji advocated "not the good of the few, not even the good of the many, but the good of all, as we are made in His own image". It is this broad, universal outlook, which Gandhiji had inherited from his philosophy of God- realization and Universal Brotherhood, that enabled him to find out fresh, effective remedies to solve the several problems in the different spheres of social, national, and international life. Let us try to have a glimpse at some of the details of his solutions.

Religion, which first made its appearance in the individual and social life as a messenger of peace and goodwill, later on proved to be, on account of its distortion, a source of eternal conflict, even of bloody wars. The great *avatdras* and prophets, saints and sages, who had given their message of love and peace through religion, must be looking with horror at the abominable use to which their benign blessing has been put by the erring, thoughtless humanity. Religious fanaticism has led men to hate one another, not to love one another.

Love of one's own religion is now expressed in terms of hatred of others' religions. The very instrument meant for the spread of love has become an instrument for the propagation of hatred. Strange indeed are the ways of man!

Gandhiji had all this dire and rich experience to learn from. So he never attempted to introduce a new religion in place of the existing great religions of the world. He believed and declared that all these religions are God-given and necessary for the people for whom they were revealed. He discovered, after prayerful search and deep study, that all religions were true and also that all had some error in them. He found that all worship the same God, that the Spirit is the same, and that names and forms alone are different. "The soul of religion," he says, "is one. It is encased in many forms. The final goal of all religions is the realization of this essential oneness of Spirit." He asked people to follow their own religion—their own *sevadharma*—by understanding its spirit. At the same time, he wanted all to cultivate broad toleration based on the proper understanding of other faiths. "True knowledge of religion," says Gandhiji, "will break down the barriers between faith and faith, and cultivation of tolerance for other faiths will impart to us an understanding of our own. People of different faiths will be better by contact with one another, and the world will be a better place to live than today." Thus, through the spread of mutual understanding, toleration, and respect, Gandhiji hoped to create harmony in the sphere of religion.

In the matter of culture also, Gandhiji advocated "harmony and not a mere external unity brought by force". He aimed at a fine synthesis of the old and new cultures, both of the East and of the West. "Our new culture should be constructed", he says, "on the foundation of the past, enriched by the experience of the centuries. It should be a synthesis of the different civilizations which have influenced India and have naturalized here." "Wise assimilation and not thoughtless imitation should be our goal." Both the East and the West, he maintained, should mutually exchange what is good in them and reject the evil. Still he wanted all to love other cultures, but live their own. "I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I

refuse to be blown off my feet by any." Thus Gandhiji allowed other cultures to blow, but not to blow ours away.

Gandhiji's politics was entirely different from the politics of the current brand. It was based on truth and love, not on deceit and hatred. He wanted to build political States on the foundation of truth and love. He considered a State or a nation to be a big family, consisting of a number of self-governing villages. "In this structure," he says, "composed of villages, there will be ever-widening, never ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre would be the individual, always ready to perish for the village, the village ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance, but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle, of which they are integral units." At the same time, Gandhiji wanted to extend this "nation-law" to the whole world and consider it as a family of nations, as one indivisible, undivided family. The time is ripe for it, he says, because the wonderful inventions of science have reduced the distance of space and time and brought humanity closer.

Gandhiji advocated a broad nationalism leading to internationalism. His conception of Swaraj was never narrow. It was prepared to undergo any amount of suffering for the benefit of the world. "In the Swaraj based on non-violence," he says, "no one should suffer for want of food and clothing. They should be freely available to all, as God's air and water are. Everyone from the king to the poorest citizen must prosper. Nobody is anybody's enemy. All can read and write, and their knowledge keeps on growing from day to day. Sickness and disease are reduced to the minimum." "I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country, in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which there will be no high class and low class of people; an India in which all communities live in perfect harmony. This is the India of my dreams." Such is the Swaraj which Gandhiji wanted to build for the welfare of the world.

Gandhiji's economy is based on ancient Indian traditions, which, if worked out in details, may give to the world a sound plan of peace, security, and progress. It is built on these four corner-stones: (i) simplicity, (ii) non-violence, (iii) sanctity of labour, and (iv) human values.

Simplicity in life is the first principle which Gandhiji advocates. Modern civilization makes bodily welfare the object of life. It increases animal appetites and goes to the end of the earth in search of their satisfaction. Gandhiji totally detests this mad desire. So he wants to set limits to our indulgence and advises us to lead a life of plain living and high thinking.

Gandhiji does not consider complexity to be the sign of progress. He discourages "wreckless pursuit of wealth", which undermines character and human values. He stresses the need of decentralization and localization of industries.

The second principle of Gandhian economy is non-violence. He wants India to develop along the bloodless non-violent way that comes from simple and godly life. Localization of industry, according to him, is sure to bring about this sort of development, which is at the same time not incompatible with wider nationalism and with still wider internationalism in the sphere of thought and culture.

Bread labour is the third principle which underlies Gandhiji's economy. Labour is the law of Nature. We are expected by Nature to earn our bread with the sweat of our brow. Our real happiness consists in the proper use of our hands and feet. "If all laboured for their food and no more," writes Gandhiji, "there would be enough food and enough leisure for all." Machine has its place in life, but it should not be allowed to kill man. Says Gandhiji with extreme regret> "We are destroying the matchless living machines, i.e. our own bodies, by leaving them to rust and trying to substitute lifeless machinery for them." "By using machines, men go on saving labour, till thousands are without work and thrown on the streets to die of starvation." Gandhiji detests this "lure of leisure". Leisure is good and necessary, according to him, up to a point, beyond

which it becomes a veritable curse by turning the vacant mind into a devil's workshop. Gandhiji advised all to earn by labour and eat with pleasure.

Gandhiji substituted moral and human values in place of money values. He made no distinction between economics and ethics. "The value of an industry should be gauged," he says, "less by the dividend it pays to the sleeping shareholders than by its effects on the bodies, souls, and spirits of the people employed in it." The *khadi*-spirit meant to Gandhiji "a fellow-feeling with every human being on earth". It represented, according to him human values, while mill-cloth represented, metallic values.

Gandhiji advised the capitalists to regard themselves not as owners, but as trustees of their wealth and use it for the service of society. He also asked labour to organize themselves, develop their skill and gift of intelligence, and have confidence in their capacity to secure a fair deal. At the same time, he wanted the rich to learn and teach contentment, as happiness was largely a mental condition. The rich should not try to enrich themselves at the expense of the poor, and the poor should not envy the rich. They should constitute a great family living in unity and harmony and working in loving co-operation for mutual material and moral welfare. This is the ideal which Gandhiji tried to inculcate throughout his life.

In the social sphere, Gandhiji tried to remove caste-prejudices by explaining the correct significance and value of *varnashrama*. "Hinduism startled the world," he says, "by its discovery and application of the law of *varna*. When Hindus were seized with inertia, abuse of *varna* resulted in innumerable castes." So he considered the four divisions alone to be fundamental, natural and essential. However, Gandhiji considered untouchability to be a crime against humanity—a curse eating into the vitals of Hinduism—a sin of which the sooner Hinduism purges itself, the better it is for itself. Thus did Gandhiji want to establish harmony among the social groups of India.

Gandhiji also tried to introduce harmony in human relations, i.e. between man and man, man and woman, by giving them a correct idea about their respective places and duties in social life. The two misconceptions that have poisoned

their harmonious relations are: (i) the conception of superiority and inferiority, on the one hand, and (ii) that of equality, on the other. The second conception was, in fact, introduced and advocated to counteract and remove the evil effects of the first. In God's universe, there is place for everyone and everything; there is none high or low. But narrow arrogance tried to assert its superiority by treating the weak as inferiors and introduced this poison in the body politic. Soon the conception of equality was powerfully inculcated to wipe out the dire effects of the former conception. But, unfortunately, this second principle also lost its proper significance in course of time. It was misunderstood, misinterpreted, and misapplied.

Gandhiji tried to correct both these conceptions. He told that there is both equality and inequality in life. "Equality," he maintains, "is of souls, not of bodies; of opportunities, not of capacity." Really, Nature abhors equality. Its beauty and grandeur consists in rich variety. Therefore Gandhiji wants us "to realize equality in the midst of this apparent inequality" and to feel kinship with everyone in the world and try to promote the happiness even of the humblest of human beings.

Gandhiji considered woman as a companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacities. "Man and woman are equal in status, but not identical. They are a peerless pair complementary to each other. Both are entitled to a supreme place in their own sphere of activities. Man is the bread-winner, woman is the keeper and distributor of bread. Man is active, woman is passive." "The art of bringing up the infants of the race is her special and sole prerogative. Without her care, the race would be extinct." "Woman is an incarnation of Ahimsa— infinite love, which means infinite capacity for suffering." "If nonviolence is the law of our being, the future is with women." Therefore Gandhiji advises women to transfer their love to humanity, consider spiritual union as the ideal of marriage, occupy a proud position by the side of man as mother, and teach the art of peace to the warring world.

To inculcate the above-mentioned principles among the people and to resist and eradicate evil tendencies in them, Gandhiji used two effective means, viz.

education and Satyagraha. "If we are to reach real peace in this world," says Gandhiji, "and if we are to wage real war against war, we shall have to begin with the education of children. We shall then go from love to love and peace to peace until at last all the corners of the world are covered by them." But he says: "Our education must be revolutionized. The brain must be educated through the hands, and the brain should awaken the soul." "Useful labour," according to him, "develops a balanced intellect, which presupposes a harmonious growth of body, mind and soul. Literary education should follow and not precede the education of the hand." The religion of truth and Ahimsa should be imparted along with cultural education, especially through the examples of teachers' lives.

Gandhiji also wanted us to make full use of art, music, and literature for giving man a fine heart-culture. "There is an art that kills," he says, "and an art that gives life. True art must be an expression of the soul and must help the soul to realize its inner Self." "Life is greater than all art," he observed; and he considered the man whose life came nearest to perfection as the greatest artist. Noble life was, according to him, the foundation of art. He advocated the propagation of such art for giving proper culture to the hearts of all.

It is admitted on all hands that evil exists in this world. It is the real cause of so much misery here. To Gandhiji, goodness misplaced is evil, no doubt. Still his soul refused to be satisfied so long as it was a helpless witness of a single wrong. He also thought that he would never know God if he did not wrestle with and against evil, even at the cost of life itself. Hence he found it absolutely necessary to resist and supplant evil for the spread of peace and goodwill on earth. And the weapon he devised for this was 'the matchless weapon of Satyagraha'. Gandhiji called Satyagraha "truth-force, love-force or soul-force". "We may use this weapon," he says, "in any sphere of life and to get rid of any grievance. It purifies one who uses it as one against whom it is used." His Satyagraha presupposes self-discipline, self-control, self-purification, and a recognized status in the person offering it. It requires special training. Any Tom, Dick and Harry cannot and should not use it. "The purer he is and the



more he suffers, the quicker the progress. The purer the suffering, the greater the progress towards freedom, God, and religion." The spirit of non-violence, which is the soul of Satyagraha, ought to take the form of purest love, ever fresh— an ever-gushing spring of life expressing itself in every act. Ill will cannot stand in its presence. "God is the shield of the nonviolent." "Non-violence is the summit of bravery—the greatest spiritual force that mankind has known."

"A *Satyagrahi* must never forget," says Gandhiji, "the distinction between evil and evil doer." He must hate the sin and not the sinner. He must always try to overcome evil by good, anger by love, untruth by truth, *himsa* by Ahimsa. There is no other way of purging the world of evil. "A Satyagrahi has no power he could call his own. All the power he may seem to possess is from and of God." "If I could popularize the use of soul-force," says Gandhiji, "which is but another name of love- force, in place of brute force, I know I could present you with an India that could defy the whole world to do its worst." "India is less in need of steel weapons; it has fought with divine weapons; it can still do so. . . . „ India can win all by soul- force." Such was Gandhiji's firm faith in the supreme efficacy and value of Satyagraha in resisting and overcoming evil in life. This, in short, is the nature of the pathway to peace external chalked out by Gandhiji.

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6. Y. 30-7-'39
7. H. 23-3-'40; Y. 9-3-'22
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### CHAPTER 2

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3. F.Y.M. p. 30
4. Y. 12-3-'20; G. p. 389  
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5. Y. 3-6-'26; H. 23-3-'40; H. 21-11-'36
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5. *H. 20-2-'37; C.G.G.V.L. p. 47; C.G.G.V.L. p. 49*
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