CHAPTER II
CHAPTER II

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND IDEAS

2.1 The Religious Beliefs and Ideas of Tagore and Gandhi

Apparently, the two names Rabindranath Tagore and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi conjure up two different worlds, but to understand them truly, as pointed out by Krishna Kripalani, one has to see them not as mere individuals but as "representative Indians", as instruments of awakened renascent India. That is how they knew each other, that is how history will judge them. Both Rabindranath and Gandhi were akin in their Sadhana and "represent the fundamental harmony in Indian civilisation".

Any study on Rabindranath and Gandhi remains incomplete without an understanding of their religious beliefs and ideals which become the very basis of their socio-political thoughts or philosophies.

2.1.1 God

Both Gandhi and Tagore had an unshakeable faith in the existence of a Super-spirit or 'God' which goes beyond logical propositional ratiocination and conceptual arrangement. Gandhi explained that he could live without air and water but not without God. "You can pluck my ears
but that will not kill me, you may chop my nose that will not kill me, but blast my belief in God, I am dead." Gandhi observed. Rabindranath had an indivisible faith in 'God' and in many of his passages the poet has referred to a formless, speechless, colourless abstract being or 'God'. So far as the ultimate reality is concerned, both Gandhi and Tagore regarded reason as powerless to fathom its depths. To Tagore, "A mind all logic is like a knife all blade. It makes the hand bleed that uses it". Similarly, Gandhi experiences that there is an indefinable mysterious Power that pervades everything. He felt it, though he did not see it. "It is this unseen power which makes itself felt and yet defies all proof, because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses", said Gandhi.

2.1.2 God as Love

In Tagore and Gandhi, as in several other schools of Indian thought of the renaissance period, one finds the simultaneous acceptance of the 'Infinite' or 'God' and the 'finite' or the existing world.

To the thinkers, the cosmic process is permeated with the divine being who is the fulness of love. Gandhi identified God with love and truth. Rabindranath similarly explains that the multiplicity and evergrowing richness of the Universe is testimony to the plethoric creativism
and love of God. Creation, thus, is an expression of God's personality and love. Rabindranath wrote, "Love gives evidence to something which is outside us, but which intensely exists and thus stimulates the sense of our own existence."

Thus both Tagore and Gandhi accepted the philosophy of world-and-life affirmation and believed that love is not antithesis of nor external to cognition. It is the symbol of supreme reality and consciousness. Man can realize 'God' only through love. Like Dante, both Gandhi and Tagore believed that all sin, evil and vice are due to the defect in the recognition of the mystery of divine love. A false egoism, based on pride, envy, greed and lust for material gains, is the very antithesis of divine love and is the cause of sorrows and sufferings on earth. Gandhi identified 'love' as the 'law of life' and like Rabindranath he was lost in the spiritual communion with every object of nature even with those creatures that crawl on the earth. Gandhi explains that though there is repulsion in Nature, she lives by attraction. "Mutual love enables Nature to persist. Man does not live by destruction. Self-love compels regards for others." To Gandhi ahimsa and love are one and the same thing.
2.1.3  **Ideal of self-realization**

Both Gandhi and Tagore thus did not believe in the existence of any God apart from the realities of life and at the same time both of them insisted that the realization of the 'divine' in man should be regarded as the highest ideal of man's life on earth and all his social, political and economic activities should be oriented to that purpose.

2.1.4  **Spiritual unity**

Gandhi explained that by self-realization he meant seeing 'God face to face' or having, "the correspondance between the permanent element in human nature and its Maker". He explained that "to see the universal and all pervading spirit" or 'God', one has to love the meanest of creation as one-self, as all life is essentially one. So love is the only surest means of achieving God. Thus as Gopinath Dhawan rightly commented, "The entire Gandhian philosophy is derived from the principle of spiritual unity". Tagore had an identical ideal of self-realization. In *Gitanjali* and in his innumerable writings, songs and poems, the poet upholds the glory of the 'spiritual unity' and of man's limitless joy and happiness in the realization of the 'Infinite' in him through love. He explained that there is an 'eternal craving' in man for 'divine perfection' and he could attain it only in the realization of the 'spiritual
unity' through love. He wrote, "The personality in me is a self-conscious principle of a living unity."

2.1.5 Truth and God

Tagore observed, "Man is true where he feels his infinity, where he is divine. He is unreal when he is surrounded by the walls of ego. He explained, "Thus to be conscious of being absolutely enveloped by Brahma is not an act of mere concentration of mind. It must be the aim of the whole of our life. . . ." In all our actions let us feel that impetus of the infinite energy and be glad. Similarly, Gandhi explains that 'Truth' or 'Satya' means 'real existent'. Man is true when he realizes within himself 'God' or 'Sat-chit-ananda'. 'Sat' means being, 'Chit' denotes the 'Supreme consciousness' and Ananda means 'Bliss' or 'joy'. To Gandhi, there was no 'Truth' or 'God' apart from the realities of life. He observed, "God is not a power residing in the clouds. God is an unseen power residing within us and nearer to us than finger nails to the flesh. He explained that his God did not live in the caves of the Himalayan mountains. He could not find Him apart from the rest of mankind. Like Rabindranath, Gandhi observed, "Man's ultimate aim is the realization of

*The underline has been given to emphasize the words.
God, and all his activities, social, political, religious, have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God. He added that by serving humanity he was serving God.

Thus Gandhi had no faith in an 'abstract truth' which had no relation with the realities of life. He explained that abstract truth had no value unless it incarnated in human beings. With this emphasis in mind Gandhi shifted his emphasis from 'God' to 'Truth'. Or in other words, as he explained, he preferred to say "Truth is God" instead of saying, "God is Truth". Rabindranath had an identical ideal of truth. He wrote, "In any case if there be any truth absolutely unrelated to humanity then for us it is absolutely non-existing". He explained that his religion was rooted in the ideal of reconciliation of the 'Infinite' or 'God' and the world of nature and man. This had been the subject of his famous Hibbert Lectures, which he called "The Religion of Man". He addressed his 'God' in the poem 'Jivan Devata' as the name signifies, as his 'God of life'. To Rabindranath the greatest truth was the revelation of the Infinite Spirit in humanity. Gandhi similarly explained, "Devotion to this Truth is the sole

*The underline has been given to emphasize the words.*
justification for our existence. Thus to Gandhi and Tagore, there is no contradiction in the simultaneous acceptance of the two aspects of truth - the self-expression of God in multiplicity and the ascension of the finite into the unity and bliss of God.

Thus Gandhi and Tagore were not merely the seekers of abstract truth of the philosopher and metaphysicians but the truth of life, the truth of day-to-day experience, especially of man's life, its meaning and purpose and fulfilment - it may be said that the thinkers had laid down the highest standard of honesty and integrity in private as well as public life. Their philosophy was nurtured on spiritual foundations inculcating the belief that since man was essentially a spiritual being, he could be best interpreted in the perspective of the eternal and the spiritual only.

2.2 No Ascetics

Gandhi explained that he had never described himself as a sanavasi. He observed, "I regard myself as a house-holder . . . . The life I am living is entirely very easy and very comfortable, if ease and comfort are a mental state". He explained that his loin cloth was an organic evolution of his life. It came naturally without effort, without premeditation. He emphasized, "It is wrong to call
me an ascetic*. The ideals that regulate my life are presented for acceptance by mankind in general. Thus to Gandhi 'self-realization' in no way means the renunciation of the existing world. He was a lover of man and of the existing world. Like Gandhi, Rabindranath explained that he did not want 'salvation' in defying the existing world, "[শৈলী অপবিত্ত সত্য শুজিয়া আনন্দ নয়]. Both Gandhi and Tagore, therefore, admitted the world of facts and objects but interpreted them finally in terms of 'Infinite' or in the perspective of spiritual unity, harmony, joy and heavenly bliss.

2.3.1 Truth, Beauty and Art

Rabindranath explained that a really beautiful thing "delights us only because we cannot help admitting a truth in it that is ultimate". To the poet, beauty and truth were identical. He added, "This building of man's true world of truth is the function of art". Or in other words, Rabindranath did not belong to the group who are for the dictum 'art for art's sake' or 'beauty for beauty's sake'. Beauty and art, in order to be true, should reflect the truth which is eternal and ultimate. An object of beauty or art remains incomplete if it fails to reflect the 'highest

*The underline has been given to emphasize the words.
truth'. In the words of Tagore, "Until they have done this (expressed the highest truth) they are, for art, like uncooked vegetables, unfit to be served at a feast".  

Gandhi similarly explained, "I see Beauty in Truth and through Truth . . . Whenever men begin to see Beauty in Truth, then true Art will arise". He added that true art and beauty always express some inner truth of life. He observed, "I would go even further and declare that the man whose life comes nearest to perfection is the greatest artist". On another occasion he commented, "All true Art is thus an expression of the soul. The outward forms have value only in so far as they are the expression of the inner spirit of man".

Like his poet friend Rabindranath, Gandhi was a great admirer of natural beauties which reflect the limitless grace of the Creator. Gandhi commented, "These beauties (sunset or a crescent moon that shines amid the stars at night) are truthful, inasmuch as they make me think of the Creator at the back of them . . . . When I admire the wonder of a sunset or the beauty of the moon, my soul expands in worship of the Creator".

*The underline has been given to emphasize the words.*
2.3.2 Truth and Religion

Similarly, to Gandhi and Tagore a true religion always reflects the highest 'truth' in life. Gandhi observed, "By religion I do not mean formal religion, or customary religion, but that religion which underlies all religions, which brings us face to face with our Maker". Tagore similarly explained that the word religion or dharma originated from the root 'dhar' or the sustain. A true religion always sustains or nourishes the 'sat' (essence) or the 'highest truth' in man. Rabindranath wrote, "I believe in a spiritual world, not as anything separate from this world, but as innermost truth. With the breath we draw, we must always feel this truth, that we are living in God". He emphasized that we cannot accept our existence "as a momentary outburst of chance drifting on the current of matter towards an eternal nowhere". Life has a purpose to be fulfilled and a 'true religion' helps man to achieve that end. It binds men in a relationship which is "beautiful and not merely utilitarian". Rabindranath wrote, "When this creative ideal which is dharma gives place to some overmastering passion, then this civilization bursts into conflagration like a star that has lighted its own funeral pyre". He explained that in India "dharma has become one with their life. To ask them to sell it, is like asking them to sell their life. They do not claim any personal
merit for possessing it.\textsuperscript{43} Rabindranath identified 'religion' with the 'highest truths' in man's life on earth, which could neither be separated nor viewed independently from man's everyday life and his relationship with others. To Rabindranath, India has 'religion' which pervades every aspect of man's life. We have no separate religion for the 'Church', for 'Sunday', for 'home' and 'outside' as one sees in European countries. In India life and religion are one and the same.\textsuperscript{44}

Similarly, Gandhi explained that a true religion binds one \textit{indissolubly to the truth within}. ... It is the permanent element in human nature.\textsuperscript{45} It helps man to know his Maker, to have \textit{true correspondence} with Him.

Understood thus, a 'true religion', as Gandhi and Tagore understood it, ceased to become a mere 'dogma' or 'creed' but becomes the very essence of life.

2.4 Hindu religion as the thinkers saw it

Hinduism as Gandhi and Tagore viewed it, was not a particular 'dogma' or 'creed' but an evergrowing all embracing living faith, a way of life representing the essential truths underlying in every religion of the world. It is more progressive, humanistic and tolerant than other religions of the world. Gandhi explained, "The beauty of Hinduism lies in its all embracing inclusiveness.\textsuperscript{46} It has
developed into a queer but ever-revolving mixture of beliefs, practices and traditions and represents the highest ideals of all the religions and "what is not contained in it is unsubstantial or unnecessary"\(^47\), emphasized Gandhi. Hinduism is a relentless pursuit after truth\(^48\). Gandhi observed that his Hinduism was not an exclusive religion, "there is in Hinduism room enough for Jesus, there is for Mohamed, Zoraster and Moses\(^49\).

Gandhi repeated the same thing in different words and ways. "My Hinduism is not sectarian. It includes all that I know to be best in Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Zorastrianism\(^50\). The chief value of Hinduism lies in holding the actual belief that all life is one i.e. all life coming from one universal source, call it Allah, God or Parameshwara\(^51\), observed Gandhi.

Rabindranath like Gandhi, in his innumerable writings and addresses, identified Hinduism as an all embracing living faith, a synthesis of different faiths, customs, traditions and cultures which had been brought by various kinds of people during the different stages of her history. Rabindranath's famous poem "Bharat Thirtha" (ଭାରତ ତିରଥ) is based on this ideal. In interpreting India's history\(^52\), Rabindranath pointed out that from ancient time, various peoples with widely divergent cultures met on the soil of India. Hence the great problem which India faced from the
beginning of her history was how to adjust and harmonize these diverse elements into a happy synthesis. To Rabindranath Hinduism being a perpetual process of reconciliation of contradiction, maintains a constant adjustment of opposites in a peaceful harmonious way. Rabindranath wrote, "India tolerated difference of races from the first, and that spirit of toleration has acted all through her history". The poet emphasised, "Her (India's) caste system is the outcome of this spirit of toleration*. For India has all along been trying experiments in evolving a social unity within which all the different peoples could be held together. This has produced something like a United States of a social federation, whose common name is Hinduism". Rabindranath explained that in India 'religion' has never been treated as only an isolated or private affair. It is regarded as social in character, it covers every aspect of an individual's life, being a giant tree 'religion' in India gives shelter to every one, saves him from the evils of separatism and sectarianism and helps achieving his mental and moral illumination.

Hindu religion as interpreted by Gandhi and Tagore being free and pure, finds its spiritual kin in all faiths and creeds. Thus Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists

*The underline has been given to emphasize the words.
who have contributed to the growth of India's great civilization may be called Hindus. Or in other words, both Gandhi and Tagore regarded all Indians as Hindus. Rabindranath wrote, "India stands before the civilized world as an embodiment of the ideal of 'unity through diversity'. To see the One in the world and within oneself, to instal the One in the midst of the many, to discover It by knowledge, to establish It by action, to realize It in love and to proclaim It in life - this is what India has been doing through the centuries in the face of danger and difficulty and in times of good or bad". The poet appealed to Indians to live according to the great spirit of their civilization and work for the ideal. Rabindranath dreamt of a day when Hindus, Muslims, Christians and people of different faiths would not fight against each other but would seek and attain a synthesis. He emphasized that this synthesis would not be 'un-Hindu' but would be peculiarly 'Hindu'. Similarly, Gandhi explained that Hinduism was 'a living organism liable to growth and decay'. It is like river "Ganges, pure and unsullied at its source, but taking in its course the impurities on the way. Even like the Ganges it is beneficient in its total effect". In short, both the thinkers identified Hindu religion with Indian civilization and culture as a whole and found therein an unending source of vitality and growth. To both Gandhi and Tagore, religion was not a matter of outward observances and formalities but a
relentless pursuit after truth, harmony and unity. Gandhi observed that a man who pursues truth but "may not believe even in God . . . may call himself a Hindu". There is no religion higher than truth and when religion has to make way for religious organization, customs, outward observances and others, it is, in the words of Rabindranath, "like a river dominated by its sand-bed, the current stagnates and its aspects become desert like". Gandhi in the same way explained, "Custom is not religion. Customs may change but religion will remain unaltered."

Both Gandhi and Tagore had an immense conviction about the power of human heart to transcend all limitations of space and time as well as of caste, race, and nationality. Rabindranath wrote that 'humanity is the religion of man'. His famous Hibert Lectures for 1930 at Oxford, the Kamala Lectures at Calcutta University in 1933 sounded the grand note of large humanism. Gandhi similarly explained that by serving humanity he was serving God. Both the thinkers drew attention to the world of human values and pleaded for a creative approach to life and human relationship. Indian people by their tradition never failed to acknowledge and appreciate this supreme ideal of life and conferred

*The Religion of Man, p.15.
the highest honour of Guru on the prophets like Kabir, Nanak, Chaitainya and others who in the words of Rabindranath, "came to bridge over the differences of colours and scriptures and to recognize all that is highest and best as the common heritage of humanity".

2.5.1 *Varnashrama doctrine* based on law of equality

Both to Gandhi and Tagore, the hierarchy of values incorporated in Varnashrama doctrine (the four divisions of society) was right as the scale of values in the society depended not upon the amount of wealth but on the development of soul. The Brahmins, with the ideal of right heart and saintly character, were the trustees of our great tradition and conservers of the religious spirit. The social organisation of India in the words of Tagore, "largely contributed to the freedom from narrowness and intolerance which distinguishes the Hindu religion", a phenomenon which astonished the Europeans who "with less jarring elements, have struggles for ages to establish peace and harmony among themselves". Gandhi explained, "In the purest type of Hinduism there is no difference between a Brahmin and a dog eater (Swapacha)". Varnashrama doctrine was based on the ideals of equality and dignity of labour. Each division, as Gandhi explained, "was complementary of other and none inferior or superior to any other, each was as necessary for the whole body of Hinduism as any other".
Rabindranath similarly explained that foreign critics often misread the conservative spirit of India as "the trade artifice of an interested priest-craft". But the critics forget that "there was no racial difference between Brahmin or Kshatriya. They merely represented two natural functions of the body politic* which though from the outside presenting the appearance of antagonism in real practice "co-operated in the evolution of Indian history"*66.

Rabindranath added, "The Brahmins were the guardians of the seed of culture in ancient India and Kshatriya strove to put into wide use the harvest of wisdom"67. Gandhi expressed the same opinion in different words. He explained that the 'Varnashrama' doctrine avoided all unworthy competition in the society, while recognizing limitations, it admitted no high and low, at the same time. It guaranteed to each the fruits of his labours and on the other hand, it prevented him from pressing upon his neighbours68. Both Gandhi and Rabindranath insisted that the 'four divisions' system was based on the ideal of 'unity in diversity', and by prescribing different functions for different groups of people it discouraged artificial competition, mutual jealousy and feeling of disharmony among the people. Although Tagore belonged to Brahma Swamaj, he had his own peculiar religious

*The underline has been made to emphasize the words.
ideals which were very close to that of Gandhi. Like Gandhi he believed that true 'Varnashrama doctrine' was based on the ideals of equality and dignity of labour.

2.5.2 Degeneration of religion resulting in the growth of caste and untouchability

The four divisions of society aimed at universal brotherhood and tolerance. The rise in social scale was determined by the value of soul. Both the thinkers were of the opinion that it was the sacrifice of the old ideals of 'Varnashrama doctrine' in favour of useless rites and observances and resultant growth of a perverted caste which had undermined the liberal spirit of Hinduism making all men 'Shudras' at heart. Tagore regretted that the Brahmanas, "teachers of the four castes had madly rejected intellect, strayed far from Right Conduct, abandoned their Teacherhood, and became their pupil's pupil".69

Gandhi similarly lamented, "It was the Brahmanas who taught that the prostitutes and Chandalas could attain Moksha (salvation) if she or he only purifies his or her heart. But unfortunately, for the human race the Brahmanas shares with mankind the frailties of all. In common with others, he has neglected his duty of giving knowledge to mankind, of guiding them in the right and truest path (of life)".70
2.5.3 **Untouchability, a social evil**

Both the thinkers idealized the Hindu ideal of *advaita* or unity without difference and so regarded all men, without distinction of race, caste or creed, as one. Gandhi said, "I have never been able to reconcile myself to untouchability. I have always regarded it as an excrescence in Hinduism". He added, "It (untouchability) is a weedy growth fit only to be weeded out . . . . in this conception of varna, there is absolutely no idea of superiority and inferiority". Similarly Rabindranath explained that he regarded untouchability as an un-Hindu practice. He also explained that inter-caste marriage was known in old Hindu society and could be introduced in near future in Hindu society. This ideal of marriage is in no way un-Hindu but essentially Hindu. Rabindranath like Gandhi had deep compassion for the untouchables and his criticism of the vice of untouchability has found a living form in his famous poem "Oh my unfortunate country" and as well as in his well known dance drama "Chandalika" (The Scavenger Girl, August 1933). In his innumerable writings, essays and addresses, Rabindranath like Gandhi, warned the caste Hindus of the far reaching effects caused by the practice of untouchability. He observed, "The dumb fury of the down trodden" had created an explosive situation which unless cured by sympathy and
love would result in a furious revolution in support of "the Universal law of moral balance". On the historic occasion of Gandhi's Poona fast in 1932, the poet made a fervent appeal to his countrymen to join Gandhi in his noble task of removing the burden of ages and "to fulfil his vow of fighting to the finish the evils of untouchability". It was slavery in all forms, Gandhi and Rabindranath regarded as the main evil in India's present social system.

2.6 Remedies for social evils lie in progressive Spirit of Hinduism itself

Both the thinkers believed that Hinduism possessed a dynamic vitality to grow, assimilate and change according to the needs of the time and people. Like most of the renaissance thinkers, both Gandhi and Rabindranath wanted reforms within the traditional Hindu order and appealed their countrymen to live according to the best teachings of their own religion i.e. Hindu religion. Rabindranath explained that the Brahma Samaj movement was in no way anti-Hindu in spirit, nor a deviation from the old Hindu ideals, rather it insisted on reforms within Hindu fold. Rabindranath regarded Rammohun Roy as a great Hindu reformer. Gandhi, like Rabindranath, described 'Brahmo Samaj' as a Hindu reform movement as he regarded Buddhism, Jainism and other reform movements as Hindu in character. Both Gandhi and Rabindranath insisted that people did not need to abandon
their age old Hinduism but should seek reforms and improvements within its established system and according to the great spirit of their own heritage. Like Rabindranath, Gandhi insisted that interdining and intermarriage and other means of social intercourse were never discouraged by Hinduism. Gandhi observed, "Hinduism does not most emphatically discourage interdining and intermarriage between divisions". He explained that the four fold divisions "define a man's calling, they do not restrict or regulate social intercourse".

The present social unrest would come to an end, as the thinkers believed, if people adopted the right attitude to life, reassured their faith in the teachings of their religion and developed reverence for the 'divine' in man. The question of spiritual fulfilment as Rabindranath explained was not being that which people already were, but in becoming in thought and life. In The Religion of Man, Rabindranath very emphatically pointed out that the ideal of Mukti (salvation) in Hindu religion was based not on the principle of negation of the existing world but by the affirmation of it through selfless service and disinterested love to others. Gandhi's own life was the very symbol of this grand ideal of Mukti. In support of the remarriage of the child widows Gandhi commented, "It is the contemplation of Mukti which has given men a vivid consciousness of the wrong that is being done to these
Understood thus, religion ceases to be mere ritualism or mere observance of formal codes but becomes the highest truth in life. The spirit of Hinduism has this essential meaning in its core and both the thinkers exhorted Indians to re-affirm and re-assure their faith in the true meaning of Hinduism and live up to the best teachings of this religion.

2.7 Truth the only way. Gandhi, Rabindranath and Nehru

Both to Tagore and Gandhi, 'truth' was the only way to attain spiritual and social fulfilment. Tagore wrote, "A religion is a knowledge or learning, a science of what is true". Gandhi commented, "Truth is God". In short, the quantum of untruth is the quantum of one's failure to be true to himself. Tagore described it as the 'spiritual freedom' or 'our freedom in truth' the basis of all kinds of social justice. Both the thinkers advocated the purity not only of ends but also of means. Nehru in the later days of his life, had been reiterating this theme of nobility of means and the operation of the moral laws almost with inexorableness as pointed out by V. P. Varma in his study of Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru himself, in his study on Gandhi, emphasised the fact that he could not always appreciate Gandhi's insistence on religious approach to
politics. Similarly, while Gandhi's and Rabindranath's humanism was based on the philosophical acceptance of the Universal eminence of the Super-spirit, "Nehru's agnosticism made him think only of man as an empirical subject. There was no acceptance in Nehru of any eternal immutable substance giving meaning to man's existence"^{85}, and this differentiated his thought from that of Rabindranath and of Gandhi. Unlike Gandhi and Rabindranath, Nehru wanted to bring a scientific orientation to viewing things social and political. Nehru wrote, "... my preferences are all for science and methods of science"^{86}. He insisted on the necessity of introducing modernism and a quest for scientificity in Indian social and political thinking, and this may be regarded as a contribution of Nehru to India's modern thought.

In short, both to Gandhi and Tagore, scientific enquiries and knowledge were not enough to explain and judge man and his problems on earth as Nehru believed it to be. Rabindranath argued that "when humanity lacks the music of soul", the society becomes a more mechanical arrangement of compartments of political and social classifications for the sake of convenience. "In it the life that grows and feels is hurt, and either crushed into insensibility or breaks out in constant convulsion"^{87}. Rabindranath pointed out that this vital harmony was badly
lacking at the present time as "Science has taken the
office of religion in man's greatest work, his civilization". Gandhi maintained an identical opinion regarding the
incompatibility of science in interpreting man and his
problems. He wrote, "I could not live for a single second
without religion. . . my politics and all other activities
of mine are derived from my religion". He insisted that
"religion should pervades every one of our action". Here
religion as Gandhi explained did not mean sectarianism. "It
means a belief in ordered moral government of the Universe.
It is not less real because it is unseen". Rabindranath
like Gandhi, repeatedly claimed that the spiritual aspect of
man was as real as his material counterpart and the latter
finds its fullest expression only in the perspective of the
former i.e. spiritual. Rabindranath emphatically observed
that he did not belong to the group who say that the
'doctrine of spirit' has been 'in its death-throes for over
a century and is now moribund, that we have nothing to
rely upon but external forces and material foundations".
Instead Rabindranath argued, "I say, on my part, that your
doctrine (reliance upon external forces and material
foundations) was obsolete long ago". In his poetic way

*The underline has been given to emphasize the words.*
Rabindranath observed, "I believe that there is an ideal hovering over and permeating the earth, an ideal of the Paradise which is not the mere outcome of fancy, but the ultimate reality in which all things dwell and move."**

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*The underline has been given to emphasize the words.*
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APPENDIX II

'God, truth, the unity of life and realization of self'

Rabindranath: *God, Truth and Self-realization*

"Man is true, where he feels his infinity, where he is divine and the divine is the Creator in him".


"We have often heard the Indian mind described by Western critics as metaphysical, because it is ready to soar in the infinite. But it has to be noted that the infinite is not mere a matter of psychological speculation to India, it is as real to her as the Sun light".

*Personality*, p.27.

"Because this world is the world of infinite personality; it is the object of our life to establish a perfect and personal relationship with it, is the teaching of Ishopanishat".


"Therefore, the one cry of the personal man has been to know the Supreme Person. From the beginning of his history, man has been feeling the touch of personality in all creation, and trying to give it names and forms . . . .
through countless forms of ceremonial".

_Ibid._, p. 70.

"This personality, which is the conscious principle of oneness, the centre of relationship, is the reality—therefore the ultimate object of attainment. I must emphasize this fact, that this world is a real world only in its relation to a central personality".

_Personality_, p. 98.

"He is 'Mahantam Purusham', the one Supreme Person, he is 'Satayam', the one Supreme Reality; he is 'Jananam', he is the knowledge in him of all knowers, therefore he knows himself in all knowings; he is 'Sarvanubhuh', he feels in him the feelings of all creatures, therefore he feels himself in all feelings".


_Gandhi: God, Truth and Self-realization_

"I feel the warmth of the sunshine of His presence. My activities, fastings, prayers are, I know, of no value, if I rely upon them for reforming me. But they have an inestimable value, if they represent, as I hope they do, the yearnings of a soul, striving to lay his weary head in the lap of his Maker".
M. K. Gandhi, *All Men are Brothers*, p. 60.

"I can easily put up with the denial of the world, but any denial by me of my God is unthinkable", Gandhi.


"I do dimly perceive that whilst everything around me is ever-changing, ever-dying there is underlying all that change a Living Power, that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves and recreates. That informing Power or Spirit is God. And since nothing else, I see merely through senses can or will persist, He alone is".

_The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi_, p. 48.

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

Gandhi, _Ibid._, p. 54.

"What I want to achieve - what I have been striving and pining to achieve - 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".

_Ibid._
"Dharma for man is the best expression of what he is in truth. He may reject dharma and may choose to be an animal or a machine and thereby may not injure himself, may even gain strength and wealth from an external and material point of view, yet this will be worse than death for him as a man".

Rabindranath's Lectures and Addresses, p.44.

"The specific meaning of Dharma is that principle which holds us firm together and leads us to our best welfare".

Ibid., p.44.

"Humanity is the Dharma of human being".

Rabindranath Tagore, The Religion of Man.

"The prevalent rites and practices of piety according to the poet are like magic spells - they only prove man's desperate endeavour and not their success. He knows that the end we seek has its own direct call to us, its own light to guide us to itself".

Rabindranath Tagore, Creative Unity, p.201.

"The one abiding ideal in the religious life of India has been Mukti, the deliverance of man's soul from
the grip of self, its communion with the Infinite soul".

Rabindranath Tagore, *Creative Unity*, p.201.

Gandhi : Religion

"Indeed religion should pervade every one of our actions. It means a belief in ordered moral governments of the universe. It is not less real because it is unseen. This religion transcends Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc. It does not supersede them. It harmonizes them and gives them reality".

M. K. Gandhi, *All Men are Brothers*, p. 77.

"Divine knowledge is not borrowed from books. It has to be realized in oneself. Books are at best aid, often even a hindrance".


"By religion I do not mean formal religion or customary religion, but the religion which brings us face to face with our Maker."


"Let me explain what I mean by religion. It is not the Hindu religion which I certainly prize above all other religions, but the religion which transcends Hinduism, which
changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and which ever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature . . . which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself, known its Maker and appreciated true correspondence between the Maker and itself".

Rabindranath: Essence of Prayer

"Meditation up this (God) is not taking anything to myself, but renouncing myself, becoming one with all creation".

Rabindranath Tagore, Personality, p.154.

"I am related to the Infinite (through prayer) 'I am' and so my true attitude is not that of pride or self-satisfaction, but of self-surrender".

Ibid., p.160.

"The prayer to our Father is not for our physical immorality. Man has felt in himself instinctively that this life is not final - that he must strive for the higher life. And then he cries to God - Do not leave me in this region of death. It does not satisfy my soul. I eat and sleep, but I am not satisfied. I do not find my good in
Personality, pp.162-63.

Gandhi: Essence of Prayer

"As food is necessary for the body, prayer is necessary for the soul".

The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi, p.87.

"Prayer is an impossibility without a living faith in the presence of God within".

Ibid., p.86.

"Prayer is a call to humility. It is a call to self-purification, to inward search".

N. K. Bose, Selections from Gandhi, p.12.

"Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul".

Ibid.

Gandhi: Essence of Hindu Religion

"Hinduism is not a codified religion. We have in Hinduism hundreds and thousands of books whose names even we do not know".

"In my opinion the beauty of Hinduism lies in its all embracing inclusiveness".

M. K. Gandhi, Hindu Dharma, p.4.

"Hinduism tells every one to worship God according to his own faith or dharma and so it lives at peace with all religions".

Ibid., p.9.

"Hinduism is not an exclusive religion. In it there is room for the worship of all the prophets in the world. It is not a missionary religion in the ordinary sense of the term. It has no doubt absorbed many tribes in its fold, but this absorption has been of an evolutionary imperceptible character".

The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi, p.72.

"My Hinduism is not sectarian. It includes all that I know to be best in Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism".

M. K. Gandhi, Ibid., p.93.

Gandhi : The Caste System

"Historically speaking, caste may be regarded as man's experiment or social adjustment in the laboratory of
Indian society. If we can prove it to be a success, it can be offered to the world as a leaven and as the best remedy against heartless competition and social disintegration born of avarice and Greed".

"(In Varnashrama doctrine) the four divisions of society was each complementary to other and none inferior or superior to any other, each as necessary for the whole body of Hinduism as any other".


"Varna is determined by birth but can be retained only by observing its obligations. One born of *Brahmana* parents will be called a *Brahmana*, but if his life fails to reveal the attributes of a *Brahmana* when he comes of age, he cannot be called a *Brahmana*. He will have fallen from *Brahmanhood*. On the other hand, one who is born not a *Brahmana* but reveals in his conduct the attributes of a *Brahmana* will be regarded as a *Brahmana*, though he will himself disclaim the label".


"Varna (dictates) the duty one has to perform, it confers no right, and the idea of superiority or inferiority is wholly repugnant to it. All *Varnas* are equal, for the community depends no less on one than another. Today, Varna
means gradations of high and low. It is a hideous travesty of the original".


"Caste has nothing to do with religion. It is harmful both to spiritual and national growth".


Rabindranath: *Caste System*

"Her caste system is the outcome of this spirit of toleration. For India has all along been trying experiments in evolving a social unity within which all the different people could be held together, while fully enjoying the freedom of maintaining their own differences. The tie has been as loose as possible, yet as close to the circumstances permitted. This has permitted something like a United States of a social federation, whose common name is Hinduism".

*Selections from Tagore*, (MacMillan, Indian Edn.), p. 86.

"However, what Western observers fail to discern is that in her caste system India in all seriousness accepted her responsibility to solve the race problems in such a manner as to avoid all friction, and yet to afford each race freedom within its boundaries".

"Foreign critics are too often ready to misread the conservative spirit of India, pulling it down as the trade artifice of an interested priest craft. But they forget that there was no racial difference between Brahmin and Kshatriya. These merely represented two natural functions of the body politic, which though from the outside presenting the appearance of antagonism, have as a matter of fact co-operated in the evolution of Indian history . . . . The Brahmins were the guardians of the seed of culture in ancient India and the Kshatriya strove to put into wide use of harvest of wisdom".


Rabindranath: *Hindu Religion*

(1) The Hindus say that their religion is exclusive - if I embrace other religion, they will call me a non-Hindu. But I have already said that this in no way affects my real identity as a Hindu".


(2) The rise of Brahma Samaj was a part of the history of the growth of Hindu religion - It raised its head above

*Free translation of some passages of Rabindranath's Bengali writings.*
different layers and shades of faiths, but that does not mean it was anti-Hindu in spirit - only He who resides in us knows that it was the outcome of the evolutionary process of Hindu society itself.


"What is the duty of Hinduism? To pursue religion or to perform the duties that ensure common good."


"If I believe that caste-system is an evil then it must be harmful to the whole body of Hinduism and so it is non-Hindu - If I think that caste-system is an evil then I should recognize it as anti-Hindu in spirit and I should fight against it by being a member of Hindu society. I will not hesitate to arrange inter-caste marriages of my children and I for my own part, will not call it un-Hindu because according to my belief, it is the highest ideal of Hindu marriage."