CHAPTER - IV

THE PRINCIPLES OF CREATIVE RELIGION
A. The concept of God and Its relation to man and the world:

During the course of his life-long quest of Truth, the law of life and human living and action, he found that there were honest and sincere seekers of Truth who could not subscribe to belief in God as understood by religious people; so he came to the conclusion that there would be and there were persons who could honestly deny God, but there could not be any person who could deny Truth to which one, in his own person, is witness with the tools and faculties given to him by nature. He therefore declared that "Truth is God", the highest value and noblest good in life, and thus he was able to universalize his intuitive perception of oneness of being- of existence. His belief in God, developed in his early life, continued to the end of his life and at the same time he could raise the value of Truth of one's own experience to the highest degree. Here is an humble attempt to understand this position of Gandhi in connection with God and Truth, the interpretation of the relation between these two concepts and the implications of it for one's own personal life as well as for human affairs. Gandhi, by believing in both God and Truth equally, not as a blind believer, but as one who always tested even the highest authorities in religion, by the
tools provided by nature, namely, reason, natural morality which seeks the good of all, and experience, has provided a common ground and meeting point for the whole of humanity to think and feel and act for the universal good of mankind. It was natural for Gandhi, who had always the destiny of man on earth as his greatest concern, to try to include and embrace the whole of humanity in his concepts and thinking.

Now with this background, let me see in brief Gandhi’s idea of God. As was always the case with Gandhi, though he had to use the words prevalent in his time when he could not think of coining new ones, he had special and specific meanings for the same. The current meaning of the world ‘God’ in many of the religions of the world is well known. Hindus believe that infinite God has projected himself or manifested himself as millions of universes; some other religions believe that he is the creator of the universe and everything in it, with equal power of maintenance and destruction. He is the law-giver; he is the dispenser of justice, and also the Lord of Mercy. He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. His will prevails everywhere, always and in all matters, And all the time. He is beyond time and space and no laws apply to him. He is of the nature of spirit which is beyond description by words, though words have to be used for communication. There is a versified work called ‘Vishnu-Sahastra-nama’ in Sanskrit which describes
God in one thousand epithets. They may be said to cover exhaustively the attributes of God current in all the different religions. There is also no end to symbolism, either in words or in graphic figures, to indicate God or the Supreme power. The sound ‘OM’ for instance, in Santana Dharma indicates the Supreme Power in the abstract, beyond all attributes, dualities, and all descriptions of any kind whatsoever, Gandhi has described his conception of God in many ways on various occasions. But one thing common to all descriptions is that, not a blade of grass moves except at his command and by His will. This does not however mean mechanistic determinism or capricious adhocism. According to Gandhi, the first and most important basic thing is that God exists. In one of his broadcast talks, he beings and asserts with only two significant monosyllables, ‘God is’. To Gandhi, God is life, God is love, God is law, God is light, and God is liberation or Mukti.

The question often asked is whether Gandhi believed in a personal God. He said that God is not a person. At the same time he also said that God is available as a person if one invokes Him as a person. This means that God is neither personal nor impersonal. He is beyond these man-made dualities. But man, when he invokes God as a person, He makes His presence felt as a person. When Gandhi was asked as to the meaning of prayer, and when
the prayer could be considered as being for a specific purpose under some particular circumstances, Gandhi is said to have replied that prayer is a communion by a devotee with the highest and mightiest power that be, and it is as if there is a dialogue. In the three talks he has long ago on the topic, 'Gandhi the spiritual seeker', we pointed out some significant facts in this connection. Gandhi never was tired of saying that seeing God face to face was his goal in life. When asked if he had seen God, he said: 'not yet'; but he added that he did not remember to have done anything except 'in the presence of God'. Self-realization and God-realization are used as synonyms in the dictionary of spirituality. On the significant occasion of his undertaking a fast in Yeravada jail in 1932, Gandhi described in his own words his experience. He says that his mind and heart were full of excitement and agony about the Communal Award which the British Prime Minister had announced conceding separate electorates to Harijans, that is, the untouchables. This could split the whole Hindu community into two mutually separate groups. At night at about eleven O'clock on that day, he said, he heard 'a voice' as distinct as any voice could be, first as a distant voice, then far nearer, and that voice decided his determination to fast unto death on that issue. Then he says that a kind of infinite clam and peace descended on him and he slept soundly the rest of the night. People are likely to call this a
kind of hallucination, a fantasy, and so on. But to Gandhi it was an unforgettable experience with the totality of his being, in which, it could be said, every single cell of his body was involved. In the common parlance of Yoga and mysticism such an experience is a fact of life and is available to what are called 'audio-mystics', as distinct from 'video-mystics'.

Of the several Gita and Upanishadic texts Gandhi read, he pointed out that *Ishavasyam Idam Sarvam* embodies in concentrated form the very essence of Sanatana Hindu Dharma. He went to the extent of saying that even if all other Hindu scriptures are destroyed, Hinduism would live till this one Mantra is alive- "All this (the universe) is the very abode of the Lord". This too clearly indicates Gandhi's idea about God.

While the above mentioned ideas give us a good view of Gandhi's conception of God, let us not forget that he was quite liberal as regards the conceptions of Viprah of others. His attitude reflected the Vedic approach which says, *Ekam Sat Viprah babudha vadanti* (Reality is one; people call it by different names). He himself, for instance, was fond of 'Ram-nam', the name of Ram, the eighth incarnation of Vishnu. He seldom visited temples though he was particular that Hindu temples ought to be thrown open to every Hindu, be he a Harijan or an 'unnamable'. God appears to
persons in the form in which they invoke him—this is a psychological and psychic truth.

We have given a bare outline of Gandhi's concept of God and of his belief in God. The concept of God by its very nature is bound to be dynamic as it evolves with the person or the group of persons who hold by the particular concept. It can be partially compared to the ideal of perfection. The nearer we approach the ideal of our perfection, the further it recedes and we are allured to follow it to eternity. Similarly in the case of the concept of God, the more we think and feel that we have a full grasp of the concept of God, new vistas open up, because God is infinity itself and there cannot be an end or a final concept. That is why the purer and deeper is the consciousness of the seeker of God, the mightier and nobler does the concept of God become. In fact, the concept of God in its very nature has to be a personal one and its evolution has to depend on the spiritual evolution of the person concerned. There cannot be any greater violence to the concept of God than institutionalizing it and providing it with a straight jacket without complete freedom for individuals constituting the fraternity. We remember Gandhi having once said that the concept of God and the relationship between man and his Maker be left best to each person, for full and natural growth in the light of his or her reason and inner and intimate experiences, which are holy and sacred by any measure. Being
baffled and amused as well as intrigued at the multiplicity of Hindu Gods, Bernard Shaw, the great British playwright and thinker of eminence, is said to have remarked that the most relieving feature of the wilderness of gods and goddesses in India is that they are all referred to 'One Almighty' God and the consciousness of unity and integrality is never lost.

Some writers and thinkers persuade themselves into believing that Gandhi's life, thinking, and action being oriented in belief in God, are religious in essence and charismatic in their influence over people who have a faith in him. Therefore, there is a lack of rationality and also of universality in Gandhi. Much of what he thought and did, they say, cannot be relevant in the modern world in which such beliefs are not accepted by the bulk of the people and rejected by the intelligentsia. Even some of the sympathetic writers think that the acceptance of Satyagraha as a way of life and as a method of resistance of evil and injustice requires a kind of religious belief in God. They seem to forget that Gandhi went about his business in the spirit of a scientist, believing in Truth and in 'Experiments with Truth' and that he offered Satyagraha not only to 'the believers' in God but to the whole of humanity as 'a panacea for all the ills of man. He did not exclude Buddhists and Jains who do not believe in a creator God. The Buddhists do not believe even in a permanent 'soul' of man.
Nor did he want to deprive the atheists, or radical rationalists, agnostics, skeptics from the use of Satyagraha, which in its utter simplicity means "adherence to and of insistence on Truth" even at the cost of life. What he required in the followers of Truth was Ahimsa and Non-violence- and love even for the opponent.

We have seen that Gandhi believed in the importance and sacredness of truth since his boyhood. As he grew, he began to believe in God and understand the importance of the concept of God in relation to himself as a person and in relation to the world around him. But blind faith in anything was never his weakness. One who loves truth and seeks truth cannot believe in anything blindly much less in God, as he becomes constitutionally habituated to questioning about the truth of things. It is only after such persistent questioning, after applying his mind assiduously to the problem of existence and the roots of being and becoming, and after some experience of the presence of some supreme power behind and beyond the universe of our sense-experience, that he began to assert that God is Truth. It means that this wondrous, beautiful, magnificent world is not merely a fantasy or an imaginative poetic creation but it has orderliness and some law which regulates everything, from the speck of dust under our feet to the starry heavens and galaxies in the heavens and cosmos. God meets us everywhere, in everything and all the time, as
intelligent, blissful Energy; of the nature of consciousness. Spiritually and philosophically speaking, Sat-chit ananda is the usual designation by which the ultimate Reality is known. Sat means that which exists, i.e., self existent being. Chit is supreme self-consciousness. Amanda is supreme delight, joy abounding. These are not three separate existences but one integral existence-supreme self-existent self-conscious, infinite potential, and eternal delight. Creation is self-expression of the potentials, perfect manifestation out of joy and for joy and in joy. Participation in this joyous, sportive self-expression of God without any sense of ego, reducing oneself to a zero, and with a sense of complete non-attachment (anasakta) is the Dharma of each person. This is 'seeing God face to face'. This is self realization and this is the righteous ambition of each human being who is in quest of the truth of being, truth of living, and the law of life.

When Candhi declared that God is Truth, he did not do so out of respect for tradition, or because it is fashionable to declare one's belief in God. The full significance of his declaration lies in the fact that he had not only known and thought of God but had experienced God's omnipresence by his total being, by every cell of his body, by his thinking and reasoning faculty, by his emotional and aesthetic self, by his moral sense, and by his whole spiritual consciousness. His belief was the result of his rational conviction
as well as his experience, not only in moments of prayer and meditation but even as he spun on his Charkha and led vast masses of men and women in the struggle for India's independence. It is somewhat of a superstition to think that God's presence can be experienced only in the sanctity of the caves of the silence and Samadhi of contemplation. What is necessary to have that cosmic experience even in the midst of activity is egoless total dedication-reducing oneself to Zero as Gandhi puts it—and action as an integral part of cosmic divine activity. 'Nimitha matram'. Even God's existence had to satisfy the criteria of Truth, the satisfaction of all the tools of knowledge with which man is endowed. It is only then that the knotty problem of existence is cleared, all doubts are resolved and all the impediments in the way of knowing and realising the reality are removed, (Bhidyate hradaya-granthi chhidyante sarva samshayah) making way for the illumination, enlightenment, or sambodhi as Buddha Bhagwan put it. This shows how meticulous Gandhi was about the value of Truth; God himself had to pass through the test of Truth.

**B. God through the criterion of Truth:**

Gandhi won his God through the criterion of Truth, and by the evidence of all the tools of knowledge. But how can one expect all people to be so patient, so rational, and painstaking. It is easier
to believe in God as a matter of routine or straightway deny the existence of God. Gandhi came across many persons denying God. He was not necessary for them, nor inevitable. One can do without Him. Some went to the extent of preaching that belief in God was harmful, because it, according to them, came in the way of human effort to change for the better. Many turned fatalists in the name of God. Many others cursed God; wondering, if at all He was there, why this imperfect and miserable world? Some people declared that God was dead by the twentieth century, if at all he was there before. Some high intellectuals believed that if science can explain everything and can solve all problems, why we should owe allegiance to an unknown and unseen God who seems to be absent-minded anyway, in many matters. Nikita Khrushchev, who visited India in 1955, told me when he came to Bihar that he had sent a lady astronaut in the heavens to find out if God was there. She returned and, he said, she reported to him that the 'Father in Heaven' was not to be found there at all. There was Gora, the arch-atheist of Vijayawada who believes in truth and Nonviolence but not in God. The problem which faced Gandhi was how to include every honest human being, even a denier of God, in a solid phalanx of men and women to march towards the great destiny of mankind, a destiny of peace, harmony, and happiness, as is the trend of the urge of the evolution of man on earth. The universal
intense hunger and constant Endeavour of human beings is itself the obvious evidence of the existence of the trend of the urge for peace, harmony, and happiness.

Gandhi found the solution of our problems in the simple formula: 'Many deny God, none can deny Truth to which one is himself witness'. So, he said, 'Truth is God'. As long as Gandhi spoke about God, it was a familiar ground, even though the world 'God' meant different things for different people. One aspect was common and that was that God was the supreme power and the highest reality. But by declaring that 'Truth is God', he lifts us from our ancient moorings, of theism, theology and all that they mean by it, and ranks us afresh with every seeker of Truth, with radical thinkers, with rationalists, and so on. Truth arrived at after observation of facts, after a controlled experiment is the 'god' of modern science. Laboratory is the temple of scientists, and the test-tube is the sanctum sanctorum. Gandhi too had a scientific approach in arriving at 'God'. His laboratory was his consciousness in its widest sense - the power to know; his experiments were with Truth itself; several saints and spiritual seekers were witness to the finding of 'God', the supreme reality. But when he found people denying 'God', he said that we must begin afresh and we are sure to come to the same conclusion, that Truth itself is the highest value in life and pursuit of it is worth one's whole life; and if found
necessary 'one should hold one's life cheap in that pursuit. To seek Truth, to find and see Truth, to declare Truth, to try to live Truth and establish Truth in one's life and daily living was after all Gandhi's passion throughout. He pursued the path of Truth as earnestly and persistently as he pursued his search for God. The terms, 'Truth' and 'God' were synonymous with each other for Gandhi. When Gandhi said, 'Truth is God', some must have exclaimed, Gandhi is bringing back 'God' through the back door. Nothing of the kind was intended nor planned, Truth of one's own total experience, by employing all the tools of knowledge, cannot be denied. To deny it would be to deny one, to deny something to which one was a witness with total awareness. Gandhi has named such Truth, arrived at in this way, as God; that is 'God' immanent, 'God' operating as Law, the process of nature, of cosmos or of cosmic law, the moral order of the universe; one may not call such Truth as 'God' but one cannot object to Gandhi's calling it God. One may simply say such Truth is scientific truth, but it is Truth all right, and is the highest value, as everything exists, lives, moves and has its being in the cosmos as per that Truth, that law, that regulatory orderliness which is its own; it is inherent, it is built in and not imposed from outside. It is the real guide for life and action.
For Gandhi to say that 'Truth is God' was easy, and he gained immensely by putting himself right with those who denied God, and with the scientists who are 'after experimental truth. But that has made a world of difference to all others if one examines the implications. When one is in search of God, one naturally turns to all the sources of knowledge of God, the religious scriptures, the saints, the philosophers, the god-men and so on. But when Gandhi raises the status of Truth both transcendental and immanent and installs Truth on the pedestal of God, every individual seeker of Truth is called upon to fall back on his own resources and be an ardent scientific seeker of the truth of things. As regards 'Truth Transcendental', there need not be much controversy as all will have to agree that it is, in the very nature of things 'indescribable' and beyond normal experience of the present day human being. But about mundane truth, truth of daily life, there would be and are differences, not only between different persons and groups of persons, but even in one individual's mind, there are differences from day to day and from time to time about many a thing that affect our lives. Just as in the case of 'freedom', every one is free, no doubt. But freedom has always to be limited and regulated by equal freedom to the 'other'. Similarly everyone is free to arrive at his own 'truth' by the tools he is invested with by nature and environment, but equal freedom has to be given to the
‘other’. It is in this respect that Gandhi has made the greatest contribution by declaring that Ahimsa-non-violence-Love should be our sole, singular, and unexceptionable guide in asserting one’s own ‘truth’, and in one’s attempt to live and establish one’s own ‘truth’ as the norm for others. One should be willing and ready to suffer oneself for one’s own ‘truth’, lest the ‘truth’ is on the ‘other’ side. To impose by force or fraud or coercion or any other means one’s own ‘truth’ on the ‘other’ is an anathema to the Gandhian conception of ‘truth’, and its votaries. The propagation and establishment of truth has to be through love and what love dictates. The observance of this law of love lifts man from the category of the brute and takes him to the domain of mankind. To Gandhi, observance of the law of nonviolence in the propagation of ‘truth’ of one’s own finding was an important as the finding of ‘truth’ itself. But that is a subject by itself and consideration of it takes us to a vast field of thought on Ahimsa Culture and to the real evolution of man from his present status to what could be called superman hood or the next higher stage towards divinity.

To revert to the theme of ‘Truth is God’, we should say that today, as we look around us, we find that spirituality; religious sanctions, moral considerations, altruistic approaches and attitudes are at a discount. An aggressive type of materialistic hedonism in the name of science and technology has taken hold of
the industrially developed as well as developing countries. It is not science and technology which are at fault. They are a moral and neutral, morally speaking. It is the human psyche which is off its balance and has lost its heart to sense-urges, to narrow selfishness and inordinate love-lust of power over property, possessions, and persons. The well-known sociologist of the century, Pit rim Sorokin in his Reconstruction of Humanity which he has dedicated to the Immortal Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi' has exclaimed in anguish that humanity has a future, only if man becomes more altruistic, and cares more for the 'other' than for oneself what we call in India, Parartha as different and opposite to Swartha. Even science today is pointing in that direction as the great physicist Fritjof Capra has declared in his great book Tao of Physics. He says that the 'truth' of the oneness and organic integrality of the universe as realized by the spiritualists and mystics of the east is attested to by the latest findings of quantum physics. He calls upon the scientists to apply our lives this realization of the organic 'oneness of the universe which includes not only our natural environment but also our follow human being'. He also believes that a radically different social and economic structure is necessary for a dynamic balance, and a harmonious interrelatedness is observable in nature and is reflected in our lives and systems of organization. The survival of our whole civilization
may depend, according to him, upon what we can do to be in tune with the Truth of spirituality and the Truth of science.

Let us now examine the interrelationship as well as the interaction of these two concepts, namely 'God is Truth' and 'Truth is God'. It is obvious that one who believes in 'God is Truth' is not absolved from his duty to be in quest of Truth, both transcendent and immanent, because, Truth, which means the Law of Life, of living and of Action, and its quest is not merely restricted to the world of thought and theory but is a compulsion for daily living and acting. Just as 'action' is a compulsion and there is no option or choice in the matter, so too in the matter of the Law of Life one has to know it and act accordingly if one is to live meaningfully and purposefully. In this context, Truth, that is, the Law of Life, assumes two aspects: one is to know the Law of Life, Living, and Action generally; and the other is to find the details about the day-to-day problems as one encounters them. So, God or no God, belief or no belief in God, the pursuit of the Truth of Life, both in its general aspects and in its almost moment to moment aspects has to be the very breath of one's life. If one is not alert and aware of this Truth of Life, he would be living without understanding it. In fact, it would be a life in ignorance. Moreover, when one is in search for the law of living from day to day, he may one day stumble on the basic law of life and have illumination. Thus
between the two 'God is Truth', 'Truth is God', the latter assumes primary importance, while the former may be derived in the course of finding the Truth of Life itself. From a general point of view, belief in God is usually traditional, while search for truth of daily life is a personal responsibility which one would avoid at his own risk and would live an irresponsible life and betray the trust of nature which has given man the tools for finding the truth.

As one contemplates, one finds the very profound implications of the statement 'Truth is God'. By raising the status of Truth to godhood, Gandhi has called upon each individual to assume the responsibility of finding the Truth himself with the help of the tools of knowledge which nature has given to man. He can no longer depend upon tradition or hearsay, or things handed down as 'truths'. He has to adopt the role of a scientist and not be satisfied with being a camp-follower. He has to be alive, alert, aware, and awakened. In fact, he has to participate in the evolution of man towards a truth-conscious life by playing a responsible role. It is as great a call as 'Uddharet atmanatmanam', ('seek and find your own salvation') of the Gita. It may also be likened to Buddha's exhortation atmadeepo bhava (be a light unto yourself, 'Seek and ye shall find', 'Knock and it shall be opened'). These were also words with similar impact. When Gandhi said, 'Truth is God', it might have seemingly been for those who deny
God. But it equally applies to those who believe in God. Believers in God do not automatically know the Truth, either the Transcendent Truth or the Immanent Truth. Truth is a more difficult God to propitiate than God himself. In this cruel world of today truth-seekers, and more than those truth-speakers, and even more than that, those who attempt to establish truth in life and daily living have to face martyrdom. But that is the price of Truth. It has been so all the time and will continue to be so till man evolves to a higher level.

About two thousand years ago there was in Israel a man called Jesus. He preached the Truth of his finding, with love in his heart and in his whole being and demeanor. He was betrayed by his own men as a seditionist in religion and handed over to the Roman rulers, Pontius Pilate; the Roman authority asked him what it that he was preaching was. Jesus replied: 'The Truth'. 'What is Truth?' Queried jesting Pilate and stopped not for an answer. He crucified Jesus, the Christ. Pilate as well as humanity had to wait all these centuries till another man of the same type gave the answer to the question what is Truth, saying 'Truth is God'. He too sealed his answer by another bleeding martyrdom. It is now for humanity to watch its steps.
C. Religion to Pervade All Spheres Of Life:

The whole gamut of man's activities today constitutes an indivisible whole. We cannot divide social, economic, political and purely religious work into watertight compartments. For Gandhiji, he did not know any religion apart from human activity. It provides a moral basis to all other activities which they would otherwise lack, reducing life to a maze of 'sound and fury signifying nothing'.

We have to make truth and non-violence, not matters for mere individual practice but for practice by groups and communities and nations. That at any rate is my dream. I shall live and die in trying to realize it. My faith helps me to discover new truths every day. Ahimsa is the attribute of the soul, and therefore, to be practiced by everybody in all the affairs of life. If it cannot be practiced in all departments, it has no practical value. In his opinion there is no such thing as inherited or acquired superiority. He believes in the rock bottom doctrine of advaita (non-duality or oneness) and his interpretation of advaita excludes totally any idea of superiority at any stage whatsoever. He believes implicitly that all men are born equal. All whether born in India or in England or America or in any circumstances whatsoever, have the same soul as any other. And it is because he believes in this

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inherent equality of all men that he fights the doctrine of superiority which many of our rulers arrogate to themselves. He has fought this doctrine of superiority in South Africa inch by inch, and it is because of that inherent belief, that he delights in calling himself a scavenger, a spinner, a weaver, a farmer and a laborer. And he has fought against the Brahmins themselves wherever they have claimed any superiority for themselves either by reason of their birth, or by reason of their subsequently acquired knowledge. He considers that it is unmanly for any person to claim superiority over a fellow-being. He who claims superiority at once forfeits his claims to be called a man. That is his opinion\(^3\).

The forms are many, but the informing spirit is one. How can there be room for distinctions of high and low where there is this all embracing fundamental unity underlying the outward diversity? For that is a fact meeting you at every step in daily life. The final goal of all religions is to realize this essential oneness\(^4\).

He was sure of His existence than of the fact that we are sitting in this room. Then he also testifies that we may live without air and water but not without Him. We may pluck out his eyes, but that cannot kill him. We may chop off his nose, but that will not kill him. But blast his belief in God, and he was dead. We may

\(^3\) Young India, 29.09.1927, P.329.
\(^4\) Hartran, 15.12.33, P.3
call this a superstition, but he confesses it is a superstition that he
hugs, even as he used to do the name of Rama in his childhood
when there was any cause of danger or alarm. He had learnt to rely
consciously upon God before he was fifteen years old. When he
admires the wonder of a sunset or the beauty of the moon, his soul
expands in worship of the creator. He tries to see Him and His
mercies in all these creations.

What he wants to achieve, - what he have been striving and
pining to achieve over years, - is self-realization, to see God face to
face, to attain Moksha. He lives and moves and has his being in
pursuit of this goal. All that he did by way of speaking and writing,
and all his ventures in the political field, are directed to this same
end.

It is an unbroken torture to him that he was still so far from
Him, who, as he fully knows, governs every breath of his life, and
whose offspring he was. He knows that it is the evil passions
within that keep him so far from Him, and yet he cannot get away
from them.

He must go with God as his 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 weakness, empty-handed and in a

5 Harlan, 14.05.38 P.109.
6 Harlan, 11.03.39 p.46.
7 Young India, 13.11.24 P.378.
8 From Introduction to Autobiography, PP.4-5.
9 From Introduction To Autobiography.
spirit of full surrender, and then He enables us to stand before a whole world and protects us from all harm. He does not want to foresee the future. He was concerned with taking care of the present. God has given him no control over the moment following. Do not seek to protect him. The Most High is always there to protect us all. We may be sure that when his time was up, no one, not even the most renowned in the world, can stand between God and him. God saves him so long as He wants his in this body. The moment His wants are satisfied, no precautions on his part will save him. God is the hardest taskmaster he has known on earth, and He tries us through and through. And when we find that our faith is failing or our body is failing us, and we are sinking, He comes to our assistance somehow or other, and proves to us that we must not lose our faith and that He is always at our beck and call, but on His terms, not on our terms.

He (a votary of the Gita) takes note of things as they happen and reacts naturally to them, fulfilling his part as if propelled by the great Mechanic, even as a piece of machine in good order responds automatically to the call of the machinist. It is the most difficult thing for an intelligent being to be like a machine. And yet, if one is to become a zero that is precisely what one desires.

10 Young India, 03.09.31 P.247.
12 Young India, 02.04.31 P.54.
13 Bapu’s Letters to Mira, 1949,P.91.
14 Speeches and writings of Mahatma Gandhi, 4th ed., P.1069.
perfection has to become. The vital difference between the machine and the man is that the machine is inert, the man is all life and consciously becomes like a machine in the hands of the Master Mechanic. Krishna says is so many words that God moves all beings as if they were parts of a machine.\textsuperscript{15}

He has 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 him even in his darkest hour. He has saved him often against himself and left him not a vestige of independence. The greater the surrender to Him, the greater has been his joy.\textsuperscript{16}

God is with us and looks after us as if He had no other care besides. How this happens he does not know. That it does happen he does know. Those who have faith have all their cares lifted from off their shoulders.\textsuperscript{17} Defeat cannot dishearten him. It can only chasten him. He knows that God will guide him.\textsuperscript{18} There is not a moment when he does not feel that presence of a witness whose eye misses nothing and with whom he strives to keep in tune. He cannot recall a moment in his life when he had a sense of desertion by God.\textsuperscript{19} If he did not feel the presence of God within him, he sees

\textsuperscript{15} Bapu's Letters to Mira, 1949, PP.230-39.
\textsuperscript{16} Harijan, 06.05.'33, P.267.
\textsuperscript{17} Bapu's Letters to Mira, 1949, P.267.
\textsuperscript{18} Young India, 03.07.'24,P.218.
\textsuperscript{19} Harijan,24.12.'38, P.395.
so much of misery and disappointment every day that he would be a raving maniac and his destination would be the Hooghli.

As days pass he feels this Living Presence in every fiber of his veins. Without that feeling he could be demented. There are so many things that are calculated to disturb his peace of mind. So many events happen that would, without the realization of that Presence, shake him to the very foundation. But they pass him by leaving him practically untouched. He believes it to be possible for every human being to attain that blessed and indescribable sinless state in which he feels within himself the presence of God to the exclusion of everything else.

D. The Inner Voice Is The Religion Of Love:

Gandhi claims to hear the Voice of God was no new claim. Unfortunately there is no way that he knows of proving the claim except through results. The first question that has puzzled many is about the Voice of God. What was it? What did he hear? Was there any person he saw? If not, how was the voice conveyed to him? These are pertinent questions.

For him the Voice of God, of Conscience, of Truth or the inner voice or 'the still small voice' mean one and the same thing. He saw no form. He has never tried, for he has always believed

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20 Young India, 06.08.25, p.272.
22 Young India, 17.11.21, P.368.
23 Harijan, 06.05.33, P.4.
God to be without form. But what he did hear was like a Voice from a far and yet quite near. It was as unmistakable as some human voice definitely speaking to him, and irresistible. He was not dreaming at the time he heard the Voice. The hearing of the Voice was preceded by a terrific struggle within me. Suddenly the Voice came upon him, he listened, made certain that it was the voice, and the struggle ceased. He was calm. The determination was made accordingly; the date and the hour of the fast were fixed. Joy came over him. This was between 11 and 12 midnight. He felt refreshed and began to write the note about it.

Could Gandhi give any further evidence that it was truly the Voice that he heard and that it was not an echo of his own heated imagination? He has no further evidence to convince the sceptic. He is free to say that it was all self-delusion or hallucination. It may well have been so. He can offer no proof to the contrary. But he can say this that not the unanimous verdict of the whole world against him could shake him from the belief that what he heard was the true Voice of God.

But some think that God Himself is a creation of our own imagination. If that view holds good, then nothing is real, everything is of our own imagination. Even so, whilst his imagination dominates him, he can only act under its spell. Realest things are only relatively so. For him the Voice was more
real than his own existence. It has never failed him, and for that matter, any one else. Any every one who wills can hear the Voice. It is within every one. But like everything else, it requires previous and definite preparation\textsuperscript{24}. He shall lose his usefulness the moment he stifles the 'still small Voice within\textsuperscript{25}.

Nobody has to his knowledge questioned the possibility of the Inner Voice speaking to some, and it is a gain to the world even if one persorsis 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 fairly severe course of training, and when it is the Inner Voice that speaks, it is unmistakable. The world cannot be successfully fooled for all time. There is, therefore, no danger of anarchy setting in because a humble man like him will not be suppressed and will dare to claim

\textsuperscript{24} Harijan, 08.07.33, P.4
\textsuperscript{25} Young India, 03.12.25, P.422.
the authority of the Inner Voice, when he believes that he has heard it.\textsuperscript{26}

Man is a fallible being. He can never be sure of his steps. What he may regard as answer to prayer may be an echo of his pride. For infallible guidance man has to have a perfectly innocent heart incapable of evil. He did lay no such claim. His was a struggling, striving, erring, imperfect soul.\textsuperscript{27} Having made a ceaseless effort to attain self-purification, he has developed some little capacity to hear correctly and clearly the still small Voice within.\textsuperscript{28} His firm belief is that He reveals Himself daily to every human being, but we shut our ears to the 'still small Voice'.\textsuperscript{29}

Where love is, there God is also.\textsuperscript{30} Non-violence is an active force of the highest order. It is soul-force or the power of Godhead within us. We become God like to the extent we realize non-violence.\textsuperscript{31} Scientists tell us that without the presence of the cohesive force amongst the atoms that comprise this globe of ours, it would crumble to pieces and we would cease to exist; and even as there is cohesive force in 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,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{26} Harijan, 18.03.33, p.8.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Young India, 25.09.24, p.313.
\item \textsuperscript{28} The Epic Fast by Pyarelal, 1933, p.34.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Young India, 25.05.21, p.162.
\item \textsuperscript{30} Satyagraha in South Africa, 1950, p.360.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Harijan, 12.11.38, p.326.
\end{itemize}
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.\textsuperscript{32}

Man's highest Endeavour lies in trying to find God, said
Gandhiji. He cannot be found in temples or idols or places of
worship built by man's hands, nor can He be found by
abstinences. God can be found only through love, not earthly, but
divine.\textsuperscript{33} He claims that even now, though the social structure is not
based on a conscious acceptance of non-violence, all the world over
mankind lives and men retain their possessions on the sufferance
of one another. If they had not done so, only the few and the most
ferocious would have survived. But such is not the case. Families
are bound together by ties of love, and so are groups in the so
called civilized society called nations. Only they do not recognize
the supremacy of the law of non-violence. It follows, therefore, that
they have not investigated its vast possibilities. Hitherto out of
sheer inertia, shall I say, we have taken it for granted that complete
non-violence is possible only for the few who take the vow of non-
possession and the allied abstinences. Whilst it is true that the
votaries alone can carry on research work and declare from time to
time the new possibilities of the great eternal law governing man, if

\textsuperscript{32} Young India, 05.05.20, P.7.
\textsuperscript{33} Harfjan, 23.11.47, P.425.
it is the law, it must hold good for all. The many failures we see are not of the law but of the followers, many of whom do not even know that they are under that law Willy nilly. When a mother dies for her child she unknowingly obeys the law. He has been pleading for the past fifty years for a conscious acceptance of the law and its zealous practice even in the face of failures. Fifty years' work has shown marvelous results and strengthened my faith.34

He has suggested in these columns that woman is the incarnation of Ahimsa. Ahimsa means infinite love, which again means infinite capacity for suffering. Who but woman, the mother of man, shows this capacity in the largest measure? She shows it as she carries the infant and feeds it during nine months and derives joy in the suffering involved. What can beat the suffering caused by the pangs of labor? But she forgets them in the joy of creation. Who again suffers daily so that her babe may wax from day to day? Let her transfer that love to the whole of humanity, let her forget that she ever was or can be the object of man's lust. And she will occupy her proud position by the side of man as his mother, maker and silent leader. It is given to her to teach the art of peace to the warring world thirsting for that nectar.35

34 Haritan, 22.02.42, P. 48.
E. Love Expressing Itself In Self-Sacrificing Service

For him, the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with it. This can only be done by service of all. We were a part and parcel of the whole, and we cannot find Him apart from the rest of humanity. Our countrymen are our nearest neighbors. They have become so helpless, so resource less, and so inert that we must concentrate ourselves on serving them. If we could persuade ourselves that we should find Him in a Himalayan cave we would proceed there immediately. But we know that we cannot find Him apart from humanity. God having cast my lot in midst of the people of India, we should be untrue to our Maker if we failed to serve them. If we do not know how to severe them we shall never know how to serve humanity.

And as we know that God is found more often in the lowliest of His creatures than in the high and mighty, we are struggling to reach the status of these. We cannot do so without their service. Hence, our passion is for the service of the suppressed classes. And as we cannot render this service without entering politics, we find ourselves in them.

If we are to identify myself with the grief of the least in India, aye, if we have the power, the least in the world, let us identify ourselves with the sins of the little ones who are under our care.

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X Harijan, 29.08.36, P226.  
Y Young India, 18.06.25, P.211.  
Z Young India, 11.09.24, P.298.
And so doing in all humility, we hope some day to see God-Truth-face to face\(^{39}\).

He gives us a talisman. Whenever we are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with us, try the following expedient.

Recall the face of the poorest and the most helpless man whom we have seen and ask ourselves, if the step we contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he be able to gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words will it lead to Swaraj or self-rule for the hungry and also spiritually starved millions of our countrymen?

Then we will find your doubts and ourselves melting away\(^{40}\).

While he was engaged with Mahatmaji, a young American missionary asked him what religion he professed and what shape the future religion of India was likely to assume.

His reply was very brief. Pointing to the two sick persons in the room, he said 'To serve is his religion. he do not worry about the future'\(^{41}\).

Religion is service of the helpless. God manifests Himself to us in the form of the helpless and the stricken.

He has certainly regarded spinning superior to the practice of denominational religions. But that does not mean that the latter should be given up. He only mean that a Dharma which has to be

\(^{39}\) Young India,03.12.25, P.422.

\(^{40}\) This was Bapu by R.K.Prabhu,1954,P.48.

\(^{41}\) This was Bapu by R.K.Prabhu,1954,P.48.
observed by the followers of all religions transcends them, and hence He say that a Brahmana is a better Brahmana, a Mussalman a better Mussalman, a Vaishnava a better Vaishnava, if he turns the (spinning) wheel in the spirit of service.

If it was possible for him to turn the wheel in his bed and if he felt that it would help him in concentrating his mind on God, He would certainly leave the rosary aside and turn the wheel. If He was strong enough to turn the wheel, and He have to make a choice between counting beads or turning the wheel, He would certainly decide in favor of the wheel, making it my rosary, so long as He found poverty and starvation stalking the land. He does look forward to a time when even repeating the name of Rama will become a hindrance. When He has realized that Rama transcends even speech, He shall have no need to repeat the name. The spinning wheel, the rosary and the Rama nama are the same to Him. They sub serve the same end, they teach me the religion of service. He cannot practice Ahimsa without practicing the religion of service, and He cannot find the truth without practicing the religion of Ahimsa. And there is no religion other than truth42.

Hand-spinning does not, it is not intended that it should, compete with, in order to displace any existing type of industry; it does not aim at withdrawing a single able-bodied person, who can

42 Young India, 14.08.24, P.267.
otherwise find a remunerative occupation from his work. The sole claim advanced on its behalf is that it alone offers an immediate, practicable, and permanent solution of that problem of problems that confronts India, viz., the enforced idleness for nearly six months in the year of an overwhelming majority of India's population, owing to lack of a suitable supplementary occupation to agriculture and the chronic starvation of the masses that results therefore.\footnote{Young India, 21.10.26, P.368.}

We should be ashamed of resting, or having a square meal, so long as there is one able-bodied man or woman without work or food.\footnote{Young India, 05.02.25, P.48.}

Imagine, therefore, what a calamity it must be to have 300 millions unemployed, several millions becoming degraded every day for want of employment, devoid of self-respect, devoid of faith in God. He may as well place before the dog over there the message of God as before those hungry millions who have no luster in their eyes and whose only God is their bread. He can take before them a message of God only by taking the message of sacred work before them. It is good enough to talk of God whilst we are sitting here after a nice breakfast and looking forward to a nicer luncheon, but how was He to talk of God to the millions who have to go without
two meals a day? To them God can only appear as bread and butter.\textsuperscript{45}

Self realization He holds to be impossible without service of identification with the poorest.\textsuperscript{46}

The human body is meant solely for service, never for indulgence. The secret of happy life lies in renunciation. Renunciation is life, Indulgence spells 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 such 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.\textsuperscript{47}

This body, therefore, has been given us, only in order that we may serve all creation with it.

And even as a bond slave receives food, clothing, and so on from the master whom he serves so should we gratefully accept such gifts as may be assigned to us by the Lord of the universe. What we receive must be called a gift: for as debtors we are entitled to no consideration for the discharge of our obligations. Therefore

\textsuperscript{45} Young India, 15.10.31, P.310.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 21.10.26, P.364.
\textsuperscript{47} Harijan, 24.02.46, P.19.
we may not blame the Master, if we fail to get it. Our body is His to be cherished or cast away according to His will. This is not a matter for complaint or even pity; on the contrary, it is natural and evens a pleasant and desirable state, if only we realize our proper place in God's scheme. We do indeed need strong faith, if we would experience this supreme bliss. "Do not worry in the least about yourself, leave all worry to God,"- this appears to be the commandment in all religions.

This need not frighten any one. He who devotes himself to service with a clear conscience will day by day grasp the necessity for it in greater measure, and will continually grow richer in faith. The path of service can hardly be trodden by one, who is not prepared to renounce self-interest, and to recognize the conditions of his birth. Consciously or unconsciously every one of us does render some service or other. If we cultivate the habit of doing this service deliberately, our desire for service will steadily grow stronger, and will make not only for our own happiness, but that of the world at large.

Again, not only the good, but all of us are bound to place our resources at the disposal of humanity. And if such is the law, as evidently it is, indulgence ceases to hold a place in life and gives way to renunciation. The duty of renunciation differentiates mankind from the beast.
Some object that life thus understood becomes dull and devoid of art, and leaves no room for the householder. But renunciation here does not mean abandoning the world and retiring into the forest. The spirit of renunciation should rule all the activities of life. A householder does not cease to be one if he regards life as a duty rather than as an indulgence. A merchant, who operates in the sacrificial spirit, will have crores passing through his hands, but he will therefore not cheat or speculate, will lead a simple life, will not injure a living soul and will lose millions rather than harm anybody. Let no one run away with the idea that this type of merchant exists only in my imagination. Fortunately for the world, it does exist in the West as well as the East. It is true, such merchants may be counted on one's fingers' ends, but the type ceases to be imaginary, as soon as even one living specimen can be found to answer to it. No doubt these sacrifices obtain their livelihood by their work. But livelihood is not their objective, but only a by-product of their vocation. A life of sacrifices is the pinnacle of art, and is full of true joy.

One who would serve will not waste a thought upon his own comforts, which we leaves to be attended to or neglected by our Master on high. We will not therefore encumber ourselves with everything that comes our way; we will take only what we strictly needs and leave the rest. We will be calm, free from anger and
unruffled in mind even if we find ourselves inconveniented. Our service, like virtue, is its own reward, and we will rest content with it.

Voluntary service of others demands the best of which one is capable, and must take precedence over service of self. In fact, the pure devotee consecrates himself to the service of humanity without any reservation whatever.\footnote{From Yeravda Mander, 1945, PP. 54-60.}

Sacrifices may be of many kinds. One of them may well be bread labor. If all labored for their bread and no more, then there would be enough food and enough leisure for all. Then there would be no cry of over-population, no disease and no such misery as we see around. Such labor will be the highest form of sacrifice. Men will no doubt do many other things either through their bodies or through their minds, but all this will be labor of love for the common good. There will then be no rich and no poor, none high and none low, no touchable and no untouchable.

This may be unattainable ideal. But we need not, therefore, cease to strive for it. Even if without fulfilling the whole law of sacrifice, that is, the law of our being, we performed physical labor enough for our daily bread, we should go a long way towards the ideal.
If we did so, our wants would be minimized, our food would be simple. We should then eat to live, not live to eat. Let anyone who doubts the accuracy of this proposition try to sweat for his bread, he will derive the greatest relish from the production of his labor, improve his health and discover that many things he took were superfluities.

May not men earn their bread by intellectual labour? No. The needs of the body must be supplied by the body. 'Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's' perhaps applies here well.

Mere mental, that is, intellectual labor is for the soul and is its own satisfaction. It should never demand payment. In the ideal state, doctors, lawyers and the like will work solely for the benefit of society, not for self. Obedience to law of bread labor will bring about a silent revolution in the structure of society. Men's triumph will consist in substituting the struggle for existence by the struggle for mutual service. The law of the brute will be replaced by the law of man⁴⁹.

In India there is a particular type of man, who delights in having as few needs as possible. He carried with him only a little flour and a pinch of salt and chilies tied in his napkin. He has a lota and a string to draw water from the well. He needs nothing else. He walks on foot covering 10-12 miles a day. He makes the

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⁴⁹ Harfjan, 29.06.'35, P.156.
dough in his napkin, collects a few twigs to make a fire and bakes his dough on the embers. It is called bati. Its relish does not lie in itself but in the appetite that honest toil and contentment of mind give. Such a man has God as his companion and friend and feels richer than any king or emperor. God is not the friend of those who inwardly covert other's riches. Everyone can copy this example and enjoy ineffable peace and happiness himself and radiate it to others. On the other hand, if one hankers after riches, one has to resort to exploitation, by whatever name it may be called. Even then the crores cannot become millionaires. True happiness lies in contentment and companionship with God only50.

The true connotation of humility is self-effacement. Self-effacement is moksha (salvation). Service without humility is selfishness and egotism51. When self-satisfaction creeps over a man, he has ceased to grow and therefore has become unfit for freedom. He who offers a little sacrifice from a lowly and religious spirit quickly realizes the littleness of it. Once on the path of sacrifice, we find out the measure of our selfishness and must continually wish to give more and not be satisfied till there is a complete self-surrender52. Not until we have reduced ourselves to nothingness can we conquer the evil in us. God demands nothing less than complete self-surrender as the price for the only real freedom that

50 Harijan, 21.07.46, P.232.
52 Young India, 29.09.21, P.306.
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 his recreation. He is a new man, never weary of spending himself in the service of God's creation.

Having flung aside the sword, there is nothing except the cup of love which He can offer to those who oppose him. It is by offering that cup that He expects to draw them close to him. It is easy enough to be friendly to one's friends. But to be friend, the one who regards himself as your enemy, is the quintessence of true religion. It is no non-violence if we merely love those that love us. It is non-violence only when we love those that hate us.

In its positive form, Ahimsa means the largest love, greatest charity. If he was a follower of Ahimsa, He must love my enemy. He must apply the same rules to the wrong-doer who is his enemy or a stranger to him, as He would to his wrong-doing father or son. His appeal to us is to cleanse our hearts and to have charity. Make our hearts as broad as the ocean.... Do not judge others lest we be judged. There is that supreme judge who can hang us, but He leaves you alive. There are so many enemies within us and around us, but He protects and looks upon us with a kindly

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53 Young India, 02.04.31, P.54.
54 Young India, 11.05.*47, P.146.
55 Hartjan, 11.05.47,P.146.
The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.

They say 'means are after all means'. He would say means are after all everything'. As the means so the end. There is no wall of separation between means and end. Indeed the Creator has given us control (and that too very limited). Over means, none over the end. Realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that of the means. This is a proposition that admits of no exception. He has therefore concerned himself principally with the conservation of the means and their progressive use. He knows if we can take care of them, attainment of the goal is assured. He feels too that our progress towards the goal will be in exact proportion to the purity of our means. This method may appear to be long, perhaps too long, but He has convinced that it is the shortest. We need not be afraid that the method of non-violence is a slow long-drawn out process. It is the swiftest the world has seen, for it is the surest.

It (resistance by love) is a force that may be used by individuals as well as by communities. It may be used as well in political as in domestic affairs. Its universal applicability is a demonstration of its permanence and invincibility. It can be used...

57 Young India, 01.01.25 P.8.
58 Young India, 02.04.31 P.59.
59 Young India, 17.07.24, P.236.
60 The Amrit Bazar Patrika, 17.09.33.
61 Young India, 30.04.25 P.153.
alike by men, women and children. It is totally untrue to say that it is a force to be used only by the weak so long as they are not capable of meeting violence by violence... This force is to violence, and therefore to all tyranny, all injustice, what light is to darkness.

In the application of the method of non-violence, one must believe in the possibility of every person, however depraved, being reformed under humane and skilled treatment.

It is against my creed to punish even a murderer, a thief or a dacoit. When a person claims to be non-violent, he is expected not to be angry with one who has injured him. He will not wish him harm, he will wish him well; he will not swear at him; he will not cause him any physical hurt. He will put up with all the injury to which he is subjected by the wrongdoer. Thus non-violence is complete innocence. Complete non-violence is complete absence of ill-will against all that lives. It therefore embraces even sub-human life not excluding noxious insects or beasts. They have not been created to feed our destructive propensities. If we only knew the mind of the Creator, we should find their proper place in His creation. Non-violence is therefore in its active form goodwill towards all life. It is pure love. He reads it in the Hindu scriptures, in the Bible, in the Quran.

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62 Young India, 03.11.27, P.369.
63 Harijan, 22.02.42, P.49.
64 Young India, 02.04.31 P.55.
Non-violence is a perfect state. It is a goal towards which all mankind moves naturally though unconsciously. Man does not become divine when he personifies innocence in himself. Only then does he become truly man. In our present state we are partly men and partly beasts, and in our ignorance and even arrogance say that we truly fulfill the purpose of our species, when we deliver blow for blow and develop the measure of anger required for the purpose. We pretend to believe that retaliation is the law of our being, whereas in every scripture we find that retaliation is nowhere obligatory but only permissible. It is restraint that is obligatory. Retaliation is indulgence requiring elaborate regulating. Restraint is the law of our being. For, highest perfection is unattainable without highest restraint. Suffering is thus the badge of the human tribe.

The goal ever recedes from us. The greater we progress, the greater the recognition of our unworthiness. Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment. Full effort is full victory.\textsuperscript{45}

If we turn our eyes to the time of which history has any record down to our own time, we shall find that man has been steadily progressing towards Ahimsa. Our remote ancestors were cannibals. Then came a time when they were fed up with cannibalism and they began to live on chase. Next came a stage

\textsuperscript{45} Young India, 09.03.22, P.141.
when man was ashamed of leading the life of a wandering hunter. He therefore took, to agriculture and depended principally on mother earth for his food. Thus from being a nomad he settled down to civilized stable life, founded villages and towns, and from member of a family he became community and a nation. All these are signs of progressive Ahimsa and diminishing Himsa. Had it been otherwise, the human species should have been extinct by now, even as many of the lower species have disappeared.

Prophets and avatars have also taught the lesson of Ahimsa more or less. Not one of them has professed to teach Himsa. And how should it be otherwise? Himsa does not need to be taught. Man as animal is violent, but as Spirit is non-violent. The moment he awakes to the Spirit within, he cannot remain violent. Either he progresses towards Ahimsa or rushes to his doom. That is why the prophets and avatars have taught the lessons of truth, harmony, brotherhood, justice, etc. all attributes of Ahimsa.

And yet violence seems to persist, even to the extent of thinking people like the correspondent regarding it as the final weapon. But as He has shown history and experience are against him.

If we believe that mankind has steadily progressed towards Ahimsa, it follows that it has to progress towards it still further. Nothing in this world is static, everything is kinetic. If there is no
progression then there is inevitable retrogression. No one can remain without the eternal cycle, unless it is God Himself.

He has found that life persists in the midst of destruction and therefore there must be a higher law than that of destruction. Only under that law would a well ordered society be intelligible and life worth living. And if that is the law of life, we have to work it out in daily life. Whenever there are jars, whenever you are confronted with an opponent conquer him with love. In this crude manner He has worked it out in my life. That does not mean that all my difficulties are solved. Only He has found that this law of love has answered as the law of destruction has never done. The more He works at this law, the more He feels delight in life, and delight in the scheme of this universe. It gives him a peace and a meaning of the mysteries of nature that He has no power to describe.

He knows how difficult it is to follow this grand law of life. But are not all great and good things difficult to do? Love of the hater is the most difficult of all. But by the grace of God even this most difficult thing becomes easy to accomplish if we want to do it.

In this age of wonders no one will say that a thing or idea is worthless because it is new. To say it is impossible because it is difficult is again not in consonance with the spirit of the age.

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66 Harijan, 11.08.‘40 P.245.
67 Young India, 01.10.‘31, PP.286-87.
68 From a private letter dated 31.12.‘34.
Things undreamt of are daily being seen, the impossible is ever becoming possible. We are constantly being astonished these days at the amazing discoveries in the field of violence. But He maintain that far more undreamt off and seemingly impossible discoveries will be made in the filed of non-violence.\textsuperscript{69}

He was an irrepressible optimist. His optimism rests on his belief in the infinite possibilities of the individual to develop non-violence. The more you develop it is your own being, the more infectious it becomes till it overwhlems your surroundings and by and by might over sweep the world.\textsuperscript{70}

**F. Prayer**

Prayer is the very soul and essence of religion, and, therefore, prayer must be the very core of the life of man, for no man can live without religion.\textsuperscript{71}

God has a thousand names, or rather, He is Nameless. We may worship or pray to Him by whichever name that pleases us. Some call Him Rama, some Krishna, others call Him Rahim, and yet others call Him God. 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 In-Dweller all-Powerful and Omiscient knows our innermost feelings and responds to us according to our deserts.

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\textsuperscript{69} Hartjan, 25.08'40, P.260.
\textsuperscript{70} Hartjan, 28.01.'39, P.443.
\textsuperscript{71} Young India, 23.01.'30, P.25.
Worship or prayer, therefore, is not being performed with the lips, but with the heart. And that is why it can be performed equally by the dumb and the stammered, by the ignorant and the stupid. And prayers of those whose tongues are nectar but whose hearts of full of poison are never heard. He, therefore, who would pray to God, must cleanse his heart. 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, wide-awake consciousness of God within. He who has achieved that faith wants nothing. Bodily diseased he is spiritually healthy, physically pure, he rolls in spiritual riches.

'But how is the heart to be cleansed to this extent?' one might well ask. The language of the lips is easily taught but who can teach the language of the heart? Only the bhakta—the true devotee—knows it and can teach it. The Gita has defined the bhakta in three places, and talked of him generally everywhere. But knowledge of the definition of a bhakta is hardly a sufficient guide. They are rare on this earth. He has therefore suggested the Religion of Service as the means. God of Himself seeks for His seat the heart of him who serves his fellowmen.

A prayerful heart is the vehicle and service makes the heart prayerful. Those Hindus who in this age serve the 'untouchables'
from a full heart truly pray; the Hindus and those others who spin prayerfully for the poor and the indigent truly pray?2.

What is it that millions of Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians, Jews and others do everyday during the time set a part for the adoration of the Maker? It seems to me that it is a yearning of the heart to be one with the Maker, an invocation for His blessing. It is in this case the attitude that matters, not words uttered or muttered. And often the association of words that have been handed down from ancient times has an effect which in their rendering into one's mother-tongue they will lose altogether. Thus the Gayatri translated and recited in, say, Gujarati, will not have the same effect as the original. The utterance of the word Rama will instantaneously affect millions of Hindus, when the word God, although they may understand the meaning, will leave them untouched. Words after all acquire a power by long usage and sacredness associated with their use. There is much therefore to be said for the retention of the old Sanskrit formulae for the most prevalent mantras or verses. That the meaning of them should be properly understood goes without saying.

There can be no fixed rule laid down as to the time these devotional acts should take. It depends upon individual temperament. These are precious moments in one's daily life. The

?2 Young India. 24.09.'25. PP.331-32.
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 weakness, asks for forgiveness and strength to be and do better. One minute may be enough for some; twenty-four hours may be too little for others. For those, who are filled with the presence of God in them, to labor is to pray. Their life is one continuous prayer or act of worship. For those others who act only to sin, to indulge themselves, and 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 be living purely for self. Hence have all religions set apart times for general devotion. Unfortunately these have now-a-days become merely mechanical and formal, where they are not hypocritical. What is necessary therefore is the correct attitude to accompany these devotions.

For definite personal prayer in the sense of asking God for something, it should certainly be in one's own tongue.
Nothing can be grander than to ask God to make us act justly towards everything that lives.73

Man's destined purpose is to conquer old habits, to overcome the evil in him and to restore good to its rightful place. If religion does not teach us how to achieve this conquest, it teaches us nothing. But there is no royal road to success in this the truest enterprise in life. Cowardice is perhaps the greatest vice form which we suffer and is also possibly the greatest violence, certainly far greater than bloodshed and the like that generally go under the name of violence. For it comes from want of faith in God and ignorance of His attributes. I can give my own testimony and say that a heartfelt prayer is undoubtedly the most potent instrument that man possesses for overcoming cowardice and all other bad old habits. Prayer is impossibility without a living faith in the presence of God within.

We have to make our choice whether we should ally ourselves with the forces of evil or with the forces of good. And to pray to God is nothing but that sacred alliance between God and man whereby he attains his deliverance from the clutches of the prince of darkness. But a heartfelt prayer is not a recitation with the lips. It is yearning from within which expresses itself in every word, every act, nay, every thought of man. When an evil thought

73 Young India, 10.06.'26, P.211
successfully assails him, he may know that he has offered but a lip
prayer and similarly with regard to an evil word escaping his lips or
an evil act done by him. Real prayer is an absolute shield and
protection against this trinity of evils. Success does not always
attend the very first effort at such real 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.

G. Religion and Culture

For him religion means truth and ahimsa or rather truth
alone, because truth includes ahimsa, ahimsa being the necessary
and indispensable means for its discovery. Therefore anything that
promotes the practice of these virtues is a means for imparting
religious education and the best way to do this, in his opinion, is
for the teachers rigorously to practice these virtues in their own
person. The very association with the boys, whether, on the
playground or in the class-room, will then give the pupils a fine
training in these fundamental virtues.
So much so for instruction in the universal essentials of religion. A curriculum of religious instruction should include a study of the tenets of faiths other than one's own. For this purpose the students should be trained to cultivate the habit of understanding and appreciating the doctrines of various great religions of the world in a spirit of reverence and broad-minded tolerance. This, if properly done, would help to give them a spiritual assurance and a better appreciation of their own religion. There is one rule, however, which should always be kept in mind while studying all great religions and that is that one should study them only through the writings of known votaries of the respective religions. For instance, if one wants to study the Bhagavata one should do so not through a translation of it made by a hostile critic but through one prepared by a lover of the Bhagavata. Similarly to study the Bible one should study it through the commentaries of devoted Christians. This study of other religions besides one's own will give one a grasp of the rock-bottom unity of all religions and afford a glimpse also of that universal and absolute truth which lies beyond the 'dust of creeds and faiths'.

Let no one even for a moment entertain the fear that a reverent study of other religions is likely to weaken or shake one's faith in one's own. The Hindu system of philosophy regards all religions as containing the elements of truth in them and enjoins
an attitude of respect and reverence towards them all. This of course presupposes regard for one's own religion. Study and appreciation of other religions need not cause a weakening of that regard; it should mean extension of that regard to other religions.

In this respect religion stands on the same footing as culture. Just as preservation of one's own culture does not mean contempt for that of others, but requires assimilation of the best that there may be in all the other cultures, even so should be the case with religion. Our present fears and apprehensions are a result of the poisonous atmosphere that has been generated in the country, the atmosphere of mutual hatred, ill-will and distrust. We are constantly laboring under a nightmare of fear lest someone should stealthily undermine our faith or the faith of those who are dear and near to us. But his unnatural state will cease when we have learnt to cultivate respect and tolerance towards other religions and their votaries.

H. Civilization and Culture

In ancient times there were no restrictions on education. It was not controlled by the State was solely in the hands of the Brahmans who shape the system of education solely with an eye to the fare of the people. It was based on restraint as Brahmacharya. It was due to such a system of education that Indian civilization had outlived so many vicissitudes through thousands of years,
while such and civilizations as those of Greece, Rome and Egypt had become extinct. No doubt the wave of a civilization has been passing through India. But he was sure that is transitory, it will soon away and Indian civilization will be reviving. In ancient times the basis of life was self-restraint now it is enjoyment. The result is that people has become powerless cowards and forsook the truth. Having come under the influence of another civilization, it may be necessary to adapt our own civilization in certain respects to our new environment but we should not make any radical change in a civilization which is acknowledged even by some western scholars to be the best. It may be urged that it is necessary to adopt the methods and instruments of Western civilization to meet the material forces of that civilization. But the forces born of spirituality, the bed-rock of Indian civilization, are more than a match for material forces. India is predominantly the land of religion. It is the first and the last duty of Indians to maintain it as such. They should draw their strength from the soul, from God. If they adhere to that path Swarajya which they are aspiring to and working for will become their land-maid.

Brahmacharya is inherent in Hindu civilization, and Western civilization lacks it. It might be said the people of the West had prospered, but he would ask what the age of their civilization was. Egypt, Babylon, Greece and other great civilizations had perished,
but Indian civilization still lives. The reason for it as that Indian civilization has what they had not, viz., *Brahmacharya*.

We can only hope that, if the Asiatic has faith to himself and in his civilization, he will not ever the latter and we doubt not that which has stood the test of ages will come out scathless on the test it is now undergoing in this sub-continent.