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THE RELIGION WE NEED

S. RADHAKRISHNAN

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**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF
ADVANCED STUDY
SIMLA**

The Religion We Need

BY

S. Radhakrishnan

1963

BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY PRESS

BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY


VARANASI—5

DATA ENTERED Re. 1

MOTILAL BANARSIDASS
DELHI 7

CATALOGUED

FIRST INDIAN EDITION 1945
SECOND INDIAN EDITION 1963

 Library IAS, Shimla

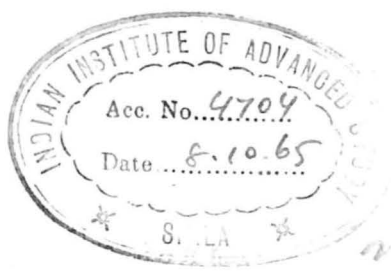


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Printed by
LAKSHMI DAS
at the Banaras Hindu University Press,
Varanasi-5.

THE RELIGION WE NEED

The Tendencies of Modern Belief

To all who care to notice the symptoms of modern life it is clear that the present is a transition time. The slow dissolution of traditional codes of social customs and beliefs, the steady breakdown of inherited sanctions of religion and law, the confusion in regard to social ethics and the principles of government are some of the most striking features of our age. The application of the methods of science to the facts of religion has resulted in an unsettlement of religious beliefs. *The Nation and the Athenæum* and the *Daily News* conducted a religious questionnaire, and striking differences were noticed in the two groups of answers submitted. While the majority of the readers of the *Daily News* are clearly in sympathy with the traditional religious convictions, belief in a personal God, personal immortality, and in the divinity of Christ in a sense "in which all living men could not be said to be divine," it is clear from the returns of the *Nation and the Athenæum* that the educated men are abandoning these beliefs. It has become a sign of good breeding to avow disbelief in traditional religion. Those who profess to have seen visions of God or heard voices from heaven are declared to be highly suggestible folk of disordered brains and intemperate imagination. A generation that sends its thoughts flying through

the air cannot be persuaded that thunder is the voice of God speaking. Religious beliefs are said to illustrate on a large scale the power of the will to believe. We project against the vast dark screen of the unknown our own fond fancies and unfulfilled desires. It is an age that seeks for positive proof and tangible evidence. When the author of *Babbitt* stood up in a Christian church and called upon God to strike him if he wished to prove his existence, we had a typical exhibition of the mind and manners of a modern intellectual. God's existence as a valid objective reality is not vouched for by any kind of proof or demonstration that can convince the disciplined mind of man. The causal argument that, as everything we see in the world has a cause, there must be a first cause, can deceive nobody. If everything must have a cause, then God must have a cause. If God can be without a cause, the world itself may be without one. There is no reason to suppose that the world had a beginning at all. It may have existed for all time. The hypothesis of evolution has shattered the validity of the argument from design. Besides, the world with all its defects and imperfections cannot be regarded as the best which an omnipotent and omniscient deity could have produced after millions of years of muddling. The moral argument that God remedies the injustice of this world in another is, if anything, a telling proof against the existence of God. The simple consolations of religion—that love of God will make up for human unkindness and that cruelty and failure will give place to love

and victory—may indicate a warm heart but not a clear head. We cannot believe in the traditional arguments even if we would.

The scientific mastery of natural forces has intoxicated the modern mind with a sense of material success and intellectual conceit. We are prepared to account for the scheme of the universe without indenting on the region of the transcendent. The world is pictured as a vast mechanism where natural forces automatically bring about all the changes. Descartes was the first of modern European philosophers to seek an explanation of all things in purely mechanical terms. "Give me extension and motion", said he, "and I will construct the universe". His ideas received elaboration in the development of mechanical physics during the next two centuries. All qualitative differences in the world were reduced to quantitative differences of size, shape, and speed in the motion of the particles of matter. The processes of living organisms came to be explained in terms of physics and chemistry. Many biologists regard the actual creation of life from non-living matter as something that can be accomplished in the laboratory. Benjamin Moore says, "Given the presence of matter and energy forms under the proper conditions, life must come inevitably". Consciousness is an inert spectator of life as ineffective and as ubiquitous as one's shadow. If we delete consciousness from the universe, nothing will be changed. Professor Watson, the leader of the Behaviourist school, writes, "Psychology as the behaviourist views it, is a

purely objective experimental branch of natural science which needs consciousness as little as do the sciences of chemistry and physics. This suggested elimination of states of consciousness as proper objects of investigation in themselves will remove the barrier which exists between psychology and the other sciences. The findings of psychology become the functional correlates of structure and lend themselves to explanation in physico-chemical terms" (*Behaviour*, p. 27). Psychology is a study of the physiological reactions of the human organism as a whole. As biology is a branch of chemistry, psychology is a branch of biology. Men are conscious automata and freedom is a delusion. Values as truth and beauty are mere by-products of a universe whose reality is physical. Though some evolutionist philosophers like Herbert Spencer believe in an automatic law of progress, that the course of evolution is an upward one in spite of reversions and atavisms, loops and zigzags of reactions deflecting the straight line, others repudiate this view. There is no certainty that the human species is likely to outlive many of the so-called lower forms of life, such as the bacteria of the soil or the unicellular organisms which destroy mankind. There is more degeneration than advance, and some even go to the extent of saying that degeneration is the rule and advance the exception. The religion of the mechanical scientist is best described in Bertrand Russell's essay on the *Free Man's Worship*. Life is an incident in the cooling of the solar system. Man comes into being in the midst of unconscious forces

which will eventually destroy him. Humanity appeared on earth as inevitably as beetles on a dunghill. The cosmic fate of all values is to perish without trace. The end of it all is darkness, death.

Confronted by such a cold view, those who are anxious for religion are building for themselves different ways of escape. We have first of all the fundamentalists—and they are not confined to America or to Christianity—who ask us to shut our eyes to the facts of modern thought and inquiry. They want us to go by the beaten track, like horses in blinkers, looking neither to the right nor to the left. They call upon us to repeat blindly the sayings of the illustrious dead. It does not matter whether they are illustrious or not, as Aldous Huxley says, what matters is that they should be dead. For the fundamentalists, education is the greatest calamity. There is much to be said for ignorance; but as education has come to stay, fundamentalism does not seem to have any future. A few intellectuals, who are apparently weary of the perpetual flux of the modern-time spirit and are therefore anxious to come to an anchor somewhere, also seek refuge in fundamentalism.

Durkheim and his followers see in religion a merely social phenomenon. For them, truth is social utility. The hypothesis of God has value since it helps us to an adjustment of our desires. Religion is a part of the social mechanism. It has a social purpose, a social interest, and a social hope. We can *use* God though we cannot know him. Religion has little to

do with the discovery of truth ; its chief aim is the enhancement of life. It does not express the meaning of the universe or the deeper reality of the historical process, but yet fulfils man's inmost and deepest wants, his highest hopes and aspirations. This school of thought asks us to use religion as a means of self-culture and social improvement. But we cannot believe a thing simply because we wish to. We cannot worship what we know to be a mental fiction. No amount of earnest ethical exhortation can take the place of religion. J. S. Mill in his Autobiography tells us of the melancholy that came over him as he contemplated the eventual accomplishment of all social reform. When privileges and corruption are done away, injustice remedied, and the oppression of the poor abolished, will not the spirit still remain unsatisfied ? The very thought overwhelmed him in despair. If we are to stick to our ideals in face of all obstacles, we need to feel certain that they are not private fancies of our own, but are somehow rooted in the universal nature of things.

There are some who uphold a lazy scepticism which declares that truth is unattainable and evidence is inconclusive. They are unable to believe and are afraid to doubt. They are growing indifferent to religion and the higher interests of life. On occasions they are inclined to give God the benefit of the doubt.

A few openly repudiate any divine or spiritual reality in the world. They assert that there is no purpose in the world and any day anything might happen. The world is changing in un-

known directions and not even God knows what will come next. Let us not be fooled into falsehood by blind faith or imaginative piety. A considerable number of this school assert selfishness in morals and anarchism in social life. The more heroic among the atheists ask us to make the best of this world with all its cruelties and imperfections. For them the highest religion is endurance and enterprise, the strength of soul to suffer and strive.

It is no use repudiating the religious implications of science. I believe that the growing dissatisfaction with established religion is the prelude to the rise of a truer, more spiritual, and so more universal religion. The scientific temper is opposed to the acceptance of dogma. The scientist pursues truth without any bias or pre-suppositions. He does not start with the idea that his conclusions should square with dogmas. Religion as revelation or dogma has no appeal to the believer in science. If religion starts with the assumption of an absolute God and tries to infer his characteristics, the nature of the world, etc., from its initial assumption, it tends to become mere scholasticism or deductive development of dogma. If there is an omnipotent and beneficent God, then the world which is his creation must be good. Evil is only an appearance. The suffering of the wicked is God's judgment and the suffering of the righteous is God's test. Science has no sympathy with such a priori schemes of revealed religion. It starts not so much with the creator as with the creation. It studies the facts of nature and society and frames an idea of

God to suit them. It approaches the problems of religion in an attitude of empiricism or experimentalism.

Rightly understood, science is essentially spiritual in its temper and leadings. Instead of abolishing the mysteries of the world, it has deepened them. We may illustrate this fact by a reference to the scientific theory of evolution.

The Evidence of Biology.

The facts of biology furnish evidence indicating that life on this planet has evolved by a gradual and yet continuous process from the earliest forms of living organisms to the latest product, man. Natural selection, variation, and heredity are said to be the factors through the operation of which new species arise out of existing ones. Natural selection is only a principle of elimination and not of initiation. The offspring of the same parent or parents tend to vary in greater or less degree both from their parents and from one another. If all offspring entirely resembled their parents, the world would still be full of amœba and jellyfish. The principle of heredity tells us that the peculiarities exhibited by the parents tend to be transmitted to the offspring in greater or less degree. With the multiplication of individuals, struggle for existence results. Those members which happen to possess variations which equip them better for the struggle tend to survive and others get eliminated. The offspring of the successful tend to resemble the parents in exhibiting the favoured

variation to a greater degree than the parents, and a new type becomes established by a gradual piling up of small accretions at each generation.

This explanation of Darwin's is amended in some respects by later biologists. Lamarck's theory of the transmission of acquired characters adopted by Darwin is not generally accepted. Weissmann distinguishes between germ-plasm or reproductive tissue and somato-plasm or bodily tissue, and holds that changes induced in the organism can be transmitted only if the germ-plasm is affected. Heritable variations represented in the germ-plasm are called mutations, while the non-heritable ones are called fluctuations. We cannot, however, say which is which until the test of heredity is applied. Darwin's idea of the rise of a new species by the gradual accumulation in successive generations of insensible differences is now abandoned in favour of sudden and considerable mutations. Again, natural selection is not the chief factor. There is such a thing as symbiosis or systematic co-operation between organisms of different species. On account of cosmic necessities, protoplasm developed into the two main lines of the vegetable and the animal. Their mutual dependence suggests the "social" character of the universe.

The hypothesis of evolution substitutes the theory of development for that of creation. But on the question of ultimate causation it is silent. Scientific descriptions are limited to secondary causes. But sometimes they are mistaken for metaphysical explanations. When rightly interpreted, we shall see that the doctrine

of evolution is not inconsistent with the highest idealism. Whatever be the value of the theory of evolution as a description of observed facts, it is thoroughly unsatisfactory as an interpretation of the ultimate nature of the universe. Evolution presupposes an interaction between the organism and the environment. Given the two, it can account for their action and inter-action, but the process of evolution cannot create the conditions for its own possibility. It assumes something behind all evolution which is not the product of evolution, though its ultimate ground and driving power. Is this basis of evolution to be conceived as one or many, blind or purposive, immanent or transcendent?

Variations, small or great, cannot be accounted for. While the changes within the world of living organisms are difficult to explain, the transitions from the non-living to the living, from life to mind, from mind to intelligence, are absolutely inexplicable. If we take up the relation of the non-living to the living, we find that characteristic activities of organic life, such as reproduction, heredity, respiration, circulation, do not yield their secrets to physico-chemical analysis. Neovitalists like Driesch contend that biological phenomena are not properly explicable as physico-chemical processes within the living matter of organisms, but a non-physical principle interferes to regulate and control the physical and chemical reactions. The hypothesis of a mysterious non-mechanical entity which is neither an energy nor a material substance but an agent *sui generis*, non-spatial though acting in space,

non-material though acting on matter, is hardly satisfactory. Biologists who are opposed to both mechanism and vitalism hold that the living organism itself and not some directive principle is dominant in organic activity. The organic exhibits a new character, though such an exhibition of new character is more the rule than the exception. Highly differentiated physiological processes are accompanied by mental events. When we reach the human level, we have the new variation of reason. All development is something more than a mere rearrangement of pre-existent material. No product of evolution is completely accounted for by a statement of the specific factors which have preceded it in a limited context. Its whole setting in the cosmic process conditions its rise, though we cannot determine the precise manner of this conditioning. A and B must precede C, though C is neither A nor B nor A and B. There are no empty gaps in time and so every change is a new start. The new is said to be a continuation of the old, if it conforms to the normal and does not contradict what has gone before ; it is said to be a new product if there is a change in the structure. When one organism succeeds another, we have the continuation of the old ; when life supervenes on matter, we have the production of something new. But strictly speaking, every change is a novelty. Nothing can be said to be a resultant of the past. It is literally true that we walk among mysteries. To account for the universe, which is an unceasing procession of changes, we need not assume an infinite series of entelechies. The law of

parsimony demands the supposition of a single supreme superentelechy. The unity and continuity of the universe require us to conceive the creative power of the world as one and not many.

Cosmic Evolution.

The supreme creative ground of the universe cannot be an unconscious force. Let us look at the story of the cosmic evolution. At one time the earth was a gaseous part of the sun. Thence it was removed by cosmic forces, when it gradually cooled and water was collected on its surface. It soon became swathed in an atmosphere containing oxygen. The atoms combined into various complicated forms and the singularly complex substance called protoplasm developed. Living things gradually made their appearance. With the rise of organisms in the scale of existence, rudiments of mind appeared. As mental endowment improved, intellectuality, knowledge of good and evil, arose. It is difficult to imagine that this effort has no aim or significance. That the organisms are able to change and that the environment is able to further the favourable changes cannot be traced to a blind and blundering accident. Even within the limits open to our observation, we cannot be certain that evolution is due to blind mutations selected by a blind environment.

Lamarck's theory of the transmission of acquired characters is repudiated on the grounds that there is no mechanism by which the changes in an organism such as increase of size could

be represented by changes in the structure of the germ-cell and that there is no experimental evidence in support of the inheritability of the effects of use and disuse. Our ignorance of the way in which the germ-cell reacts to the bodily changes does not compel us to deny all changes in the germ-cell as the result of bodily changes. The conditions under which alone experiments are possible are not favourable to decisive conclusions. We have to induce changes in the organism by more or less unnatural interference from without, and our observations regarding such artificially induced characters need not be true of naturally developed changes. Besides, evidence in favour of Lamarckian hypothesis is steadily increasing. The experiments of Kammerer, Durkheim, Pavlov, are cases in point. Pavlov made some observations with white mice. While some white mice were feeding, an electric bell was rung. After a time an association was established and the mice showed signs of expecting food on the sound of the bell, though the food was not there to stimulate the organs of vision and smell. Some 300 lessons were needed to teach these mice that the sound of the bell meant food. For the children of these mice, 100 lessons sufficed; with their children, thirty lessons were enough; and in the case of their children belonging to the fourth generation, five lessons impressed the association. It is clear that though the habit is not inherited in the strict sense of the term, it is acquired much more easily. What is acquired in earlier generations facilitates learning in later ones.

In his *Creative Evolution* Bergson argues that if life manufactures like apparatus by unlike means or on divergent lines of evolution, then a strictly mechanical explanation becomes inadequate. The structural analogy between the eye of a vertebrate and that of a mollusc is a case in point. We cannot account for it on the hypothesis of insensible accidental variations (Darwin) or sudden and simultaneous variations (De Vries) or the theory that assigns a direct influence to the environment explaining the evolution of the various organs by a kind of mechanical composition of the external with the internal forces. The convergence of effects seems to be unintelligible except on the assumption of an inner directing principle. Variations are neither accidental nor determined from without, but spring from the effort of the living being to adapt itself to the environment. Modifications of structure and function are achieved by more or less intelligent efforts of individual organisms and are transmitted in however slight a degree from parent to offspring. If we attribute initiative to the higher animals, the law of continuity requires us to endow the lower animals also with some form of spontaneity. Such a view will explain the fact that modifications and variations do not come singly, but in complexes involving innumerable minor modifications. If we follow out the implications of this view, we shall be led to the theory of Samuel Butler, Bernard Shaw, and Bergson that creatures vary because they want to. Evolution is not blind and mechanical, but is the expression of a purposive force which creates

living organisms and endows them with life and with the need to develop and evolve in pursuance of a definite purpose. As the lower organisms are not endowed with intelligent foresight, their changes as a result of which new species occur are said to be the expression of the unconscious will of the organism acting in pursuance of the purpose of life. In other words, we have to assume the reality of a single supreme spirit which is at work in the whole course of evolution, though it operates in different ways in different stages of the cosmic process.

The Quest for God.

Science is incomplete and looks forward to something beyond itself. It does not say that the world open to our vision, which is an endless surpassing of itself, is all. When we ask, "Is this all passing away, or does the doom which engulfs things meet its check anywhere?" Science suggests that there is something in the world which is not superseded. Almost all the philosophers who have reflected on the implications of evolution agree in this view, that there is a mysterious reality at the back of it all. Darwin wrote: "The births both of the individual and the species are equally parts of that grand sequence of events which the mind refuses to accept as the result of blind chance. The understanding revolts from such a conclusion". Herbert Spencer called the inscrutable energy God, but, as Bradley said, it was an act of pleasantry on Spencer's part. He called it God because he did not know

what the devil it could be'. "A power not ourselves that makes for righteousness", was Matthew Arnold's phrase. It is better than Spencer's view in that it suggests that the tendency at the heart of things which makes for perfection must be spiritual. Modern philosophers who are at the same time scientists like Lloyd Morgan and White-head adopt this view. Lloyd Morgan defines his philosophical creed thus: "For better or worse I acknowledge God as the Nisus through whose 'Activity' emergents emerge and the whole course of emergent evolution is directed". Such a conclusion is in agreement with the data of religious consciousness on the main issue. From the primitive savage kneeling before some supposedly sacred tree or holy stone, thrilled with the thought that somewhere at the back of perceived phenomena lies and vibrates a force, a power beyond his knowing, into contact with which he must somehow come, down to the great faiths of to-day, men have felt that God is the reality, behind and beyond and within the shifting panorama of nature and history. The possession of a faculty implies the existance of conditions that permit the exercise of the faculty. The presence of eyes means that there is light; the existence of lungs means that there is air. If the human life is a constant quest for God, then God is a conditioning factor of our being. The ineradicable religious instinct in human nature finds fulfilment in the consciousness of a spiritual reality at the back of the cosmic process.

The supreme reality is difficult to grasp and

impossible to define. We can be sure of what God is not, but not of what God is. He is not an emergent deity arriving on the scene at a particular stage of the cosmic process, not an exceedingly able mechanical engineer who devised the world-mechanism and let it go, not a supernatural proprietor of the universe interfering with it at all odd moments. He is not a God to whom we are bound by a covenant, not one who is placated by sacrifices, or who takes sides and has preferences, looking upon this or that body of worshippers with special favour. He is not the remote ground of the structure of the universe, but the immanent spirit working in and through it all. As we are to interpret the unknown by the known, the supreme principle is regarded as the self, not limited and particular but infinite and universal. The supreme is the self of the universe.

While we cannot conceive of the supreme spirit except in terms of our personality, we should admit that personality is only a symbol which is inadequate to the reality which is too large and too complex for us to grasp entire. The history of religion refers to a series of ideas by which the human being attempts to satisfy its innate sense for the infinite. Primitive man chose what seemed to him inexplicable in this world—the mountain and the river, thunder and lightning, the forms of birth and death—as reminders of the infinite which is vaguely felt but not clearly grasped. The symbols through which we apprehend the infinite became more subtle and refined our command over nature and our understanding

of life increased. But even the highest idea of God that we have is but a symbol of the ultimate, a suggestion of the Ineffable.

The soul of man is infinite in character. It has unlimited possibilities in it. The God whom it seeks is equally infinite and wide. The reactions of an infinite soul to an infinite environment cannot be reduced to limited formulas. There is a familiar text which declares: "As the birds fly in the air, as the fish swim in the sea, leaving no traces behind, even so is the pathway to God traversed by the seeker of spirit". Each of us has written in the blood of his own heart the pathway to God. Our idea of God is the result of the interaction between the subject and the object. It is not the apprehension of the real object by a pure subject. The purity of the subject is a matter of degree. The claims of the mind and the influence of the past form the medium of expression and colour the picture of God. Our knowledge of God is controlled by the laws of apperception.

God is supremely impartial to his devotees whatever form of address and approach they may adopt. Peter expressed this faith in the famous words, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted of him". In God's house there are many mansions. Provincialism in religion is obviously a sign of crudity and not culture. The deepest religious souls have always been catholic. The mystics of the world belong to the same blood royal, the same race, the same tradition.

They ask us to get behind and beneath all outward churches and religions and worship the nameless who is above every name. They are certain that the Supreme is *one*, though he has many names, that he has no special favourites, that all men in a true sense are his children, that his inspiration is not confined to any age or race, that his revelation is larger than any single book or set of books, and that he has raised up teachers and saints in all lands.

The illogical idea of a single religion for all mankind, one set of dogmas, one cult, one system of ceremonies which all individuals must accept on pain of persecution by the people and punishment by God, is the product of unreason and the parent of intolerance. A religion represents the soul of the people, its peculiar spirit, thought, and temperament. It is not a mere theory of the supernatural which we can put on or off as we please. It is an expression of the spiritual experience of the race, a record of its social evolution, an integral element of the society in which it is found. No improvement in the religious concepts can be effected without an advance in general knowledge and moral sense. God will not refuse the aspirants' wishes simply because they have not felt the power of his highest nature. In the human family there are many millions of people who are unable to grasp the highest conception of Godhead. They are satisfied with some symbol in wood or stone or words, but as their mind expands and their soul rises, they will leave the idols and the images behind.

God's creation is not an instantaneous act or series of acts, but is an eternal process. There is no divorce between the natural and the supernatural. The two are continuous. If God is anywhere, he is everywhere. He is the ceaseless creative activity which has actualised us, which is working in us, through us, and beyond us. We cannot say, however, how this universal spirit works through the cosmic process. The relation between the two is enveloped in impenetrable mystery. If we regard the cosmic process as the unveiling of a vast, deep design it will be difficult to account for the obvious failures of the world. Such a view has no place for any genuine novelty in the universe. The facts are decisive that there is no inevitability about progress. There have been animals which have stayed still, others with backslidings into degeneracy. Determinism of either the mechanical or the spiritual variety does not deal justly with the facts. There is undoubtedly a certain amount of flexibility within which variations are possible. When we rise to the human level, conscious purpose takes the place of unconscious variation. Man knows that the power which has produced personalities with spiritual, rational, and moral endowments is alive at the centre of the universe claiming adventurous co-operation. The creative process is still going on and is unfinished in several respects and waits for man's willing and heroic service. The future evolution of man on earth is not likely to be on the organic side; it will be in the ideal direction.

The True Religious Life.

Religious life does not consist in the acceptance of academic abstractions or the celebration of ceremonies. It is not sentimental adoration or cringing petition. It is not a confession of faith or a vague social idealism. It is spiritual certainty offering us strength and solace in the hour of need and sorrow. It is the conviction that love and justice are at the heart of the universe, that the spirit which gave rise to man will further his perfection. It is the faith which grips us even when we suffer defeat, the assurance that though the waves on the shore may be broken, the ocean conquers nevertheless. It does not lose heart if the universe seems to be unfriendly ; it does not complain even if the very God seems to forsake us. It is so utterly indifferent to what happens to the little self and so completely taken up by the life of spirit. This is perhaps the significance of Spinoza's great saying that he who loves God cannot want that God should love him in return. Highest love does not expect any return, reward or recompense. Its satisfaction lies within itself. It asks for no consolation and makes no covenant. It is an utter self-surrender, a pure self-giving. It is a deep acceptance of life and death and an unyielding determination to re-fashion existence in conformity with the dreams of heaven. It works for the welfare of the world, not for the sake of personal gain or private advantage, but because highest love (which is the highest wisdom as well) has for its natural outcome this highest duty. It

requires that because it must be so, therefore it shall be so. This is to know and love and serve the highest. This is release from one's bondage, escape from one's littleness. This is to have the peace which the world can neither give nor take away.

We cannot reach this ideal of religious life without deep meditation and strenuous self-discipline. The true life of spirit with all its ardours and heroisms is not to be cheaply won. The unusual gifts of spiritual power come only to those who are given to solitude and self-denial. We should develop the spiritual or transcendental attitude which is the very heart of religion, and in that spirit move and live in the world of life and sense. The Hindu tapasvin or the Christian man of sorrows symbolises the soul of man standing alone, defiant of surrounding circumstances and indifferent to nature. Religious life is a perilous adventure to be carried out on the principle of "die to live". It is well that it should be so. An heroic temper does not confuse happiness with the mere pursuit of pleasure. We need not be sorry that we do not find ourselves in a world where there are no unfriendly forces to master. The aim of life is not safety and comfort, but heroism and happiness. The cosmic supplies the conditions by which personalities can be perfected. Most of us admire self-control on the stage but shrink from it in life. The spirit of Socrates when he drank death enthralled our imagination. He did not weep, he did not sicken, he did not shrink from the death to which he was condemned by his judges. The

crucifixion of Jesus touches our heart. The superiority to fortune of the Hindu saints compels our respect. But we are not prepared to develop the strength of spirit that can say that I shall not surrender my life-purpose though it may mean my utter ruin. I may be crossed, thwarted, and defeated outwardly, but all that is nothing when compared to the defeat of spirit. Those who are anxious for religious life must be prepared to face the tremendous cost of it. Such people will always be a few, but they are the salt of the earth, the savoury remnant.

The Ideal of Universal Brotherhood.

Self-perfection is the aim of religion, but until this aim takes hold of society as a whole, the world is not safe for civilisation and humanity. The Hindu civilisation has declined since it nourished within its bosom a large mass of ignorance. The Hellenic and the Roman civilisations perished because, among other reasons, they were surrounded by huge masses of barbarism. The religious soul must seek for divine fulfilment not only in heaven above but on earth below. Each individual must strive to spiritualise himself so as to become a fit member of the kingdom of spirit. If the kingdom of God on earth is the ideal destiny of mankind, it cannot be reconciled with a gladiatorial theory of human life which assumes that the weak must go to the wall for the benefit of the strong or which requires man to slay brother-man. "On earth one family" is the rule of the righteous. The Mahabharata

says: "To you I declare this holy mystery, there is nothing nobler than humanity".

*Guhyam brahma tad idam vo bravimi
Na manusat sresthataram hi kincit.*

(XII. 300-20).

Brotherhood of all men, irrespective of race or nationality, is the ideal aim. History provides an explanation of the way in which accident and environment together have made humanity into innumerable races, each with its own language, its own racial individuality, its own physical characteristics. We need not attempt to improve on God's creation by extirpating all races but one. The feuds and agitations which sow seeds of hatred among different nations and impel them to fly at each other's throats in fratricidal strife are the substance of irreligion. For those who have faith in the solidarity of the human race, the sufferings of one nation are a challenge to those which are better placed. We must wage war against oppression and injustice wherever found. The term "prostitution" need not be confined to the grim traffic that is carried on under that name, but may be extended to cover all cases of exploitation of one individual by another, of one historical group by another, and of one nation by another, against the former's real will and in the latter's self-interest. There are those who argue that we should not sacrifice civilisation for justice, which means that we should not sacrifice our prosperity for truth, mammon for God. A civilisation based on injustice cannot last long. It is a welcome sign of the times that a religion which does not make social reform

and international justice an essential part of its teaching has no appeal to the modern mind. Religion is not a simple spiritual state of the individual. It is the practice of the divine rule among men. The believer in God loves his fellow-men as he loves himself, seeking their highest good as he seeks his own, by redemptive service and self-sacrifice. He will put justice above civilisation, truth above patriotism. Witness Gandhi's declaration: "I would sacrifice India herself at the altar not of freedom but of truth". Human unity can be achieved on earth only by strong religious souls whose patriotism knows no limits of geography or of history, but only those of justice and truth, freedom and fair play, God and humanity. The world is in dreadful need of these heroic spirits who have the courage of their vision of human oneness to assume the new leadership. Never in history was there a greater opportunity for religious geniuses who do not count the cost and are prepared to lose caste with the powers that be, the politicians, the merchants, and the traders in religion. A more vivid, a deeper sense of the one universal God is the profoundest need of our age.
