

Part One

Nature, Creation and the Cosmos



*"Just as the waves of the ocean never cease,
the endless festival of life in the forests never ceases."*

The Virtual World and the Real Human

The virtual world is neither natural nor real. Yet the influence of the virtual world on human beings who inhabit the real or natural world is growing without restraint. Along with seeing, hearing and understanding — the influence of the virtual world on the minds and consciousness of human beings is increasing day by day.

Even while living in the real world, we are continuously and gradually — albeit slowly — moving away from the fundamental nature or reality of life, and are continuously, knowingly and unknowingly, not merely adopting virtual activities but beginning to believe in them with our whole being.

The virtual world has changed our ways of seeing, hearing and reacting in a very deep way. Many among us have even begun to form the understanding that living life without the virtual world is simply no longer possible. There is no doubt that the modern world is becoming increasingly infatuated with the virtual world.

With the speed at which the virtual world has kept our eyes and ears busy — even while sitting still — not merely occupied but excessively occupied and then thoroughly disorganised, we are moving away from the continuously unfolding natural activities and bustle of real life at every moment.

In reality, nature has no objection to carrying life beyond reality, and nature does not stop its own portion — the human

being — from sinking or dissolving into the virtual world. Nature may feel no difficulty or trouble whatsoever in the human being's leap from real life to complete immersion in the virtual world. Whatever difficulty or conflict arises does so in the mind and life of the natural human being.

The virtual world is entirely virtual — in it, the coming and going of life's daily toil or joy and sorrow does not happen. The virtual world is exactly like someone in a state of equanimity. And yet it has made the real world's human being bewildered, impatient and unstable in mind and consciousness for twenty-four hours and twelve months.

The virtual world is beyond birth and death as well as far removed from war and peace. The virtual world has no effect on inert and unconscious objects, but on the conscious mind and the fundamental form of life — it is continuously active in pushing them completely beyond real life and making them excessively addicted to a virtual world that does not actually exist.

It transforms the fundamental consciousness connected to natural life into virtual dynamism and transforms real consciousness or natural life into virtual inertness. Most notable in all of this is the fact that the natural or real world's human being becomes so self-absorbed in the virtual world that his capacity to distinguish between the virtual and the real begins to disappear. Yet even as all this happens, the non-human creatures of the natural or real world appear to be unaffected so far in their minds, consciousness and life-rhythms by the virtual world.

Such can be the estimate. In this way, one thing is certain: that the human being, through the arbitrary mechanical expansion of his natural powers while remaining engaged in the virtual world, has set out on a virtual path of living his life. All other creatures besides the human being remain in the natural form and character of their lives.

The expansion of knowledge or perception that the human being had naturally received in his life — for the human being addicted to the virtual world, it has now shrunk into a small screen. For the human being of the virtual world, the screen is life and life is the screen. From endless or void space to the depth of the ocean — everything has fit into the small screen. Today, the entire journey of the virtual world has been confined to the movements of two or four fingers of the hand.

This is how the virtual world has encompassed the entire human society in its grip. All the various arrangements, money and means that were needed in the real world to travel, know, understand, see, write, speak and hear — these a human being, sitting or lying anywhere or even while on the move, has found the means to do everything everywhere through the touch of a finger on a screen.

Doing anything, seeing, sending or ordering anything anywhere in the world — this is no longer the imagination of the virtual world's human mind. It has become the incarnate truth of the virtual world. This is that point at which, from the illiterate to the most eminent scholar, and from the billionaire to the pauper, from the president of any country to the general public — everyone living in any corner of the world can make this virtual world real in their lives through the movements of

their fingers.

Even if the human being may not be achieving anything in the natural world, the virtual world — instead of giving the real experience of continuously doing things — is certainly giving the feeling of continuously doing things. In the virtual world, there may be no direct encounter with truth, but the virtual experience of the dream becoming truth is certainly happening to all of us without discrimination. This scene of today's era is the real truth of today's virtual world.

The Former and the Unprecedented

"The human being is essentially only a human being. The human being carries no adjective. An adjective does not let the human being remain as a human being."

Being *bhootpoorva* (former) means making memories or matters that came into life suddenly or at the end of a tenure an inseparable part of the rest of one's remaining life. Being or remaining *abhootpoorva* (unprecedented) has nothing to do with the necessity of receiving any position or being elected to one.

Being former means the rest of the time that remains in life — like life having suddenly lost the position or authority, responsibility, happiness, convenience, security and entourage, or life at the bungalow — that was achieved with great effort or by chance.

What should this be called? Perhaps this adjective or situation can be understood, in one sense, as the lifelong settling — for good — of the past's systematically achieved positional achievement on the present. You were sitting reasonably well in a position — suddenly, with the passage of time, the position ended, you were freed from the position — meaning you became a former. If the human being remains purely a human being, he will remain unprecedented throughout life.

Anyone — by chance or by the grace of the state, or otherwise,

through some effort of his own or through circumstance — if he reaches a position or achieves a position, whether by election or without election, then he acquires for himself the possibility of becoming former in the rest of his lifetime.

If a human being has not achieved any position in his lifetime through his own effort, or by chance, or by the grace of someone else — then such a human being can never become former in his lifetime. To become former, it is necessary to have achieved some position in one's life.

The innate natural qualities or specialities present in a human being in his fundamental form never give him the opportunity or right to become former in his lifetime. Being former is an adjective that reminds any human being of the glory of his past or history.

The qualities of being unprecedented are either always or innately present in the human being in the form of innate talent from birth. But the human being has to express those qualities as much as possible within himself in his lifetime.

For example, if you are accomplished in singing or vocal music, or have mastered the flute — you have to display it publicly before everyone, and then you begin to be considered unprecedented. If your memory is extraordinary, you have to express that remarkable memory before others — only then do people accept the authority of your memory. If you are a very good painter, you have to develop this feeling in people's minds through your paintings. Your practice and dedication awakens in people's minds the feeling that you are a wonderful painter, singer or have mastered some other field. Your speech,

expression and manner of speaking make you an unprecedented speaker. People, listeners or the gifted bestow this adjective upon you.

You cannot yourself attach such an adjective to yourself. If you express your distinctive identity or expertise in any art by your own mouth, it is considered your weakness or petty longing for fame. You can certainly express your qualities through your writing, painting or speech in your life — but you cannot sing your own praises yourself.

The former can also be unprecedented — but the unprecedented never becomes former; he remains unprecedented throughout life. The sum of the matter is this much: that the status or rank that a human being achieves in his lifetime — if that changes, then such a change suddenly places you from the present into history. The human being is essentially only a human being. In the human being there is no adjective. An adjective does not let the human being remain as a human being. An adjective limits the human being's possibility or expansion.

The human being is a living energy of nature with infinite possibilities — who has been continuously struggling from prehistoric times to today, with the dream of living life while subjugating nature through thought, understanding, contemplation, reflection and creativity.

Struggle and life are unprecedented from eternal time and will remain so. The infinite flow of life and creature — a series that never ends — is moving in an unprecedented way in nature, or this series can never become former. Life is unprecedented,

but the most intellectual human being of this world — in his lifetime — within the system or course of time he himself created, suddenly becomes former from unprecedented. This is the joyful yet unprecedented play of life's energy according to the course of time.

The Forest is Life's Endless Festival

"The dense forests of Satpura, forests lost in slumber, absentminded thick forests — sink into them as deep as you wish."

— Bhavani Prasad Mishra

Forest and life together form a living, inexhaustible thread of natural activity on this earth. If we regard life on earth as a celebration, then the forests spread everywhere across this planet can rightly be called life's infinite festival. It is in the essential nature of the human being that he cannot live in stillness or inactivity.

Just as human thought, contemplation and creativity know no boundary, so too the festival of happenings within the forest knows no end. The human being spends a lifetime making efforts, experiments and attempts to celebrate, then pats himself on the back. But the forest — absorbed entirely in itself — silently allows infinite activities to unfold within it. When you see and understand this, you feel that the forest is itself a quiet yet endless festival.

A forest is not a random tangle of brush and shrub. It is a natural museum of processes that have been continuously unfolding since time immemorial. A forest — without any master plan — is a natural gathering of natural systems, constantly reshaping its own form in its own way, so that the human being watching the natural changes in the forest always

feels immersed in an ocean of delight. One never tires of the jungle, never panics. Rather, it rescues the human mind from boredom. The presence of forests on earth has rescued the human being from his own loneliness.

There is no despair in the forest. A ray of hope and an infinite enthusiasm for life are always present for all. In the forest, there is a natural arrangement for every creature — from the ant to the beetle, from the moth to the enormous elephant — to live in its own way. There is fire in the forest, and yet the forest is itself a naturally growing garden without gardener or fence.

The forest does not worry that someone will intrude or cut it down. The life of the forest itself is devoted, in a natural way, to all who wish to partake of life's joy within it — for a lifetime. The forest or the woodland is such an open courtyard of infinite fruits, flowers and activities that a fresh festival happens within it of its own accord every single day.

The forest is a unique flow of the earth — it appears meditative on the surface, yet across the entire forest area, infinite forms of life arise, dissolve, are born and merge back into themselves in every corner. The forest teaches us that life — whether of creature or of plant — is an endless living series of birth and dissolution, happening on its own.

The forest is nature's own creation. It is the infinite great assembly of countless creatures and plants. The vast form of forests embedded in our life neither worries like an ordinary person nor makes plans — yet it is a festival that naturally, on this earth, has created and sustained the natural forms of water, forest and land. Containing the ocean of life within

itself, it has initiated a unique festival whose natural joy every creature and every plant — not just humans — are freely entitled to partake of.

We can also say that the name of the endless freedom of living is the van mahotsav — the forest festival — that happens in every moment in the forests. It has no organiser and can never be brought to a close. The forest is in itself our earth's endless natural festival. *The forest is life and life is the forest.* The form and temperament of life do not change with differences in our outward appearances — this is nature's immortal message.

Just as the waves of the ocean never cease, the endless festival of life in the forests never ceases. War or peace, day or night — the creation of life in the forest never ends. And so, on our earth: where there is forest, there is life, and where there is life, there is the forest's ever-fresh, ever-new, unique natural cycle of creation.

The views expressed in this essay are the author's own.

Creation is Joy, and Joy is Creation

Creation is essentially the direct experience of the infinite, wondrous joy of vast natural energy. The expansion of joy permeates all of creation in its most subtle form. Joy is present not only in the human mind but in human thought, contemplation and creativity — and equally in the plant kingdom and the animal kingdom across this entire world: in aquatic, terrestrial and aerial beings alike. From sound waves to rays of light, the cosmos creates an endlessly wondrous world of forms. The presence of light keeps the world in its conscious form, making it perpetually dynamic.

The dormant state is consciousness at rest. The conscious state and the dormant state are like the two poles of life in creation. The gentle flow of air and water — in its mild, soft form — scatters joy in a new world of forms, and there is no substitute for it. Water and air are, in a sense, the progenitors of creation. Gravity is creation's timeless current.

Fruits and flowers large and small, insects and countless butterflies and plants of every colour — they create a living natural tableau and continuously sustain an extraordinary life cycle in the plant kingdom. Everything that exists on this earth is both distinct from and inseparable from everything else. There are no two identical things in our creation. Every single leaf on a single tree is different from every other leaf — and this is that unique, infinite chain of distinction-within-inseparability.

The five elements blended with joy — water, air, earth, sky and fire — are the creators of the vast form of creation. Life and birth are two different flows. Birth brings with it the inevitable arising of death — an indivisible part of birth. Whatever is born must die. Birth and death are the two poles of life. What is unborn is imperishable. Creation and joy are a wonderful flow of life — distinct from one another, yet inseparable.

The presence of the human being in creation brought humankind into direct encounter with the existence of creation. If joy had not been born in the human heart, the direct experience of all creation could never have come to the human mind or life. Life is essentially the original biological form of infinite biological energy.

The direct evidence of the vast and the minute — in the form of a drop and an ocean — we who are human continuously encounter this directly and naturally. Infinite water-drops present in the air take the form of clouds through gravitational force, then once again as rain bestow infinite life-force upon earth and sky, filling the entire conscious world with joy.

Every creature in creation experiences the joyful experience of life — but it is only the human being who can express the unique experience of creation's joy in letters, words and sound. We can put this in essence: *creation is joy, and joy is creation*. This formula too — like the distinction and inseparability we spoke of — has continuously come into being in the world, and from time eternal has caused us all, at every moment, to encounter creation and joy in the form of the world's conscious energy.

Governance Systems and Their Unanswered Questions

Whether it is multidimensional democratic governance, military rule or even monarchy — every kind of human-made system is rapidly collapsing under the weight of ever-new, unsolved or newly arising questions, or is steadily moving toward a state of solution-void. This is the open truth of the period from ancient times through to the modern era.

Even in a country like India — with its philosophical heritage, tradition, and endless diversity and plurality — the tsunami of questions deepens day by day, and simultaneously the graph of solution-void also expands. Why are fundamental answers to basic questions not forthcoming in this era?

One fundamental difference between the past and today is this: in the ancient or pre-historical world, there were fewer questions and fewer means of living — yet the thrill of seeking solutions and living through challenges was far greater. This was because the questions arising in the human mind also showed the human mind the way to deal with challenges.

In modern civilisation, a fundamental difference has arisen: the questions that arise in the human mind have no answer that a solitary individual or a governance system can provide alone. Because an overwhelming accumulation of human-made means has piled up — and modern humanity and its systems have erased from their memory the eternal power of the natural means given by life: the body and mind.

In early civilisation, a solitary human being could not do much beyond sustaining an individual existence — but in today's crowded world, where everything is becoming global, an individual cannot live alone. Today's human being has almost no means of living life without the support of the state or governance system. What to eat, what to do, how to live — this is no longer the solitary individual's mental game. Human life has become entangled in the clutches of the machinery of governance.

Simple life — in the name of development — is becoming complex, then more complex still. This is the most challenging situation of the present era, for which neither a solitary individual nor the entire world can find a remedy. In both the so-called developed countries and continuously developing nations, life has become difficult to sustain simply even amid an abundance of means.

One more great change is happening day-doubled and night-quadrupled: everyone is silently living with this chaos and averting their eyes from the fundamental questions arising in life. Recognising the challenge of the questions of one's era and finding a way through them has been considered the life-force of human life. If human society cannot find a solution to the challenges of its present era, it will not be the complexity of the challenges that is at fault — it will be the indolence of human life.

In this way, we can say: in nature, there is neither a question nor a means of seeking a solution. Nature in itself is complete — and in completeness there is no imperfection, no question, no solution — just as truth has always been truth, with nothing

added or diminished. The human being is a part of nature, and the part can live only by merging with nature. Nature's own cycle cannot be changed.

Gandhi — The Living Answer

"Future generations will scarcely believe that a man of flesh and blood like this ever walked upon the earth."

— Albert Einstein, on Gandhi's martyrdom

The boy born on 2 October 1869 in Porbandar — one hundred and fifty-five years ago — is present even today, more than a hundred and fifty years later, as an inspiring flame in our personal and public lives, in some form or other, for all of humanity. Gandhi is not a question for any of us — he is the answer. Gandhiji suggests the simplest solutions to the complexity of life for civilisations from the most impoverished to the most prosperous.

Before and after Gandhi, there have been many views and counter-views about God embedded in all our hearts and minds. The debate between the manifest and the formless continues — but Gandhiji taught that *truth is God*.

Now the question arises: what is truth? Gandhiji did not merely explain it — he demonstrated through his personal and public life that truth is eternal, natural conduct. Human conduct beyond truth is a constriction of life. Just as nature is permeated by the breath of life, so truth is the life-force of the human being. Perhaps it was to make people understand this very insight that Gandhi called his autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*.

Truth and non-violence are the natural wealth of life — just as leaves, flowers and fruit are the wealth of a tree. Without them, the tree is a bare stump. In the same way, without truth and non-violence, the human being is nothing but a framework of bones — lifeless. Truth and non-violence are the eternal thought of the naturalness of human society.

As a child, Gandhiji was afraid of the dark. At that age, almost everyone fears the dark. But Gandhiji gave the entire world the practical method of satyagraha — a means of bringing fearlessness into the mind through truth and non-violence — to drive fear from the hearts of all. *We will neither frighten nor be frightened. We will not speak falsehood, nor will we ever abandon truth.*

Simplicity and plainness are the natural means of living, which all of us can observe ourselves, throughout our lives, without any complexity. Gandhiji, keeping life's needs to the absolute minimum and internalising the dignity of personal and public life, made the resolve of self-rule a reality.

Gandhiji considered no work small and no human being lesser than another. Physical labour as a regular part of daily life — labour keeps both mind and body healthy — this is Gandhi's science of well-being. By connecting eating to the vow of unsavoury eating, Gandhi described *eating to live, not living to eat* as the key to health.

Once at Sabarmati Ashram, late at night, a man entered with apparent suspicious intentions. The ashram-dwellers caught him and locked him in a room. After morning prayer, they brought him to Gandhiji and said: "This man entered the

ashram last night with the intention of stealing." Gandhiji asked: "Was he given his morning breakfast?" They were astonished. "Bapu, he is a thief! Why give him breakfast?" Gandhiji said: "He is a human being just like you. You had breakfast — he should have been given morning breakfast too." The man's eyes filled with tears. His mind filled with energy and he fully joined Gandhiji's freedom struggle.

Gandhiji was himself a lawyer, but Gandhi held truth in the courtroom and never let go of it. In *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhiji wrote that he would consider the dream-India built when India's lawyers and doctors began to starve for want of work — meaning his dream India is one in which there is not a single dispute and no one is ill.

Gandhi's belief: our earth has the capacity to fulfil the needs of all living beings, but not the capacity to satisfy the greed of even one. Even seventy-seven years after Gandhi's passing, we neither trust ourselves nor trust one another. For exactly such a situation Gandhi had said: a single drop of water has no power alone — but when it merges into the ocean, the ocean's power becomes the drop's power.

Gandhi's simplest thoughts and conduct are our own lives' natural, eternal and ever-fresh joy.

Gandhi's Final Words — "Hey Ram"

On the evening of 30 January 1948 at Birla Bhavan, Delhi, the incarnate Gandhi — who had stepped out for his evening prayer — dissolved into infinite formlessness with his final words: "*Hey Ram.*"

In this world, birth is the beginning of life in its incarnate form, and the great departure is life's dissolution into infinite formlessness. A creature — an effigy of flesh and bone — is what ordinary understanding takes it to be. From time eternal, such effigies of flesh and bone have come and gone in this world in diverse forms, like breaths. The world is an endless series of transformations from life's incarnate to formless state. The incarnate form ultimately dissolves into the formless — but the formless pervades everywhere: in the void and the infinite, in the subtle and the vast alike.

The greatest teaching that the incarnate Gandhi left the world was: "*Truth is God.*" Regarding God, questions of theism and atheism may arise in the minds of incarnate human beings — but regarding the eternity of truth, no conflict or question of faith or faithlessness was ever raised. Gandhi turned life itself into a school of truth.

Truth is utterly simple, natural and plainly unpretentious. In truth there is no pollution, no intolerance, no coarseness or artificiality — in truth there is no concealment, no question of remembering or forgetting.

The total distillation of Gandhi's story: how can an ordinary

human being of flesh and bone, through continuous self-review, continuously shed his own shortcomings and transform life itself into a satyagraha? In South Africa, Barrister Gandhi — though possessing a valid first-class ticket — as a Black man could not board or travel in the first-class railway carriage, however much a barrister he was. If there had not existed in some corner of truth-committed Barrister Gandhi's mind an understanding of truth, then a man of flesh and bone like Gandhi could not have transformed formless truth into the incarnate satyagraha.

The thought-formula "*Truth is God*" of Mahatma Gandhi gave the world a natural formula for understanding truth — instead of spending a lifetime searching for God. It transformed life itself into a living satyagraha, treating truth at every moment of daily life as naturally as one's own breath.

Truth and non-violence are woven into each other. Truth and non-violence are self-reliant and natural — simple and accessible for everyone. To adopt both truth and non-violence, no organisation, institution or supporting companion is even needed. Living fearlessly — a self-reliant life, in a truthful and non-violent way — is the natural form of life.

The person who shot the incarnate Gandhi — pretending to bow in prayer — could not be stopped. But the truth, non-violence, non-possession and fearlessness of the formless Gandhi — who made his great departure saying "Hey Ram" — cannot be stopped or extinguished by bullet or abuse from any individual, group, organisation or civilisation. *This is the eternal truth.*

Man and Woman — Complete Human Beings

From the very beginning of life, men and women have lived together. Through all the struggles of human history, men and women have journeyed side by side. And yet, even today, inequality in the relationship between men and women continues to grow more visible. The present age — even while claiming to take continuous steps toward women's empowerment — sees voices for women's freedom rising on many levels in many ways.

The socialist thinker Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia had raised the question of equality between men and women. In the present era, the role of women has become more effective across the world in every area of public life compared to before. But even if the era of limiting a woman's role to the family alone appears to be somewhat diminishing in urban society, the lives of the majority of women remain confined to home and family.

Today, a question has also arisen from the side of women: what we wear, how we wear it, how we live, how we want to live — what does any of this have to do with anyone else? Our life is our own. How we live it — why should anyone else decide? We will decide for ourselves.

Actually, I feel the fundamental question is not who decides, or who does what, or who lives how. The fundamental question is: how do men and women see each other? Today the greatest mistake being made is that women see women as women, and

men see men as men. It is because of this difference in vision that human society has become, not a society with a holistic human vision, but a society divided along the male-female gaze.

Both men and women are complete human beings — yet neither can fully integrate with a holistic human vision. The result is that our entire life has been divided into two perspectives or two roles. Living together for centuries, we have yet to become fellow-travellers of the same mind.

In human history, the question of male empowerment has never been raised — yet women's empowerment has been considered a step forward on the path of progress. This directly means we have perhaps proceeded on the assumption that man in himself is already complete, and should play a special role in empowering women.

The creation of man and woman has happened in an inseparable form — yet we have continuously lived with a different, divided vision. The result is that neither men nor women can think or live with equanimity about each other's way of living and thinking. Every human being has the right to live however they wish — but we reject this holistic vision and want to live by imposing our partial insistences upon one another. *This is the root of all our disputes.*

Why Questions Are Necessary

The symphony between a human being and the brain cannot exist without questions and answers. If no questions arose in the human brain, then today the human being would still be exactly as he was — a prehistoric primitive. In those times, there was no particular need for the primitive mind to think or do anything — yet he thought continuously, and the world kept advancing through the endless series of questions and answers. In the modern developed world, wherever you look today, a world is being built that seems to be shying away from the questions arising in the human mind.

Questions and answers in parliaments replaced by noise:

Until now, wrestling with countless questions, we kept moving forward — and we never tired of proudly saying we found the answer even to the most profound question. But now, throughout the world, human beings are beginning to avoid open question-and-answer. "Don't ask questions of elders, of the powerful" — this is where it begins. Questions are now being called rebellion or rudeness.

It is not that questions aren't asked because there are no answers. It's that if questions are asked, they will have to be answered — and from the answers, more questions will arise. So — don't let the question arise in the first place, and the question of having to answer won't arise. In parliaments across the world, hue-and-cry and noise have displaced questions and answers.

More trust in machines than in people: The fun of today's world is that the human being's trust in machines is growing more than his trust in human beings. The fundamental difference between a human being and a machine is that a human being can be pleased, honoured and bought with inducements, and can be threatened — but a machine cannot be pleased, threatened or made to feel honoured through greed. Humans are a part of nature; machines are a part of human creation.

The sovereign citizen everywhere in the world has become a powerless consumer. Today, a human being asks any question not of a human being but of a machine — Google and Grok have become like straws for drowning citizens to grab onto.

Asking questions as rudeness: Raising questions or demanding answers has now come to be considered rudeness or incivility. Not saying anything, not asking anything, has become the first preference of those who run power. Even in our educated, supposedly enlightened families and societies, the younger generation is not encouraged to ask questions. On the contrary, being obedient — or accepting what is happening without question, blinking-eyed — is considered the glorious tradition of civilisation and culture.

Parliamentary democracy and parliamentary work — question-and-answer and logical debate — have become history. Today's world has come to a general consensus that debate should be called dispute or quarrel or empty wrangling. This is why the tendency to make the mechanical function of machines — rather than human consciousness — popular is continuously growing.

In the world's largest democracy by youth population, the transformation of the youth mind's questions and answers into something that has "become former" — a relic of the past — is, in the modern era, an unprecedented situation.

Thought and Propaganda

When we think and reflect on the interrelationship between thought and propaganda, we find this formula: *thought is the progenitor of propaganda*. Thought is essentially the root or seed of the contemplation process. Without thought, nothing — neither contemplation, reflection, writing, creativity nor destruction — can arise.

Thought can arise anywhere, anytime, in any way — suddenly, while thinking and pondering, while sitting or moving, while working or quietly at rest. In the journey of thought, the idea came to human beings that thoughts should not be limited to oneself alone — thoughts should be spread. In this sequence was born the idea of propaganda.

Today's world seems to be going mad for propaganda more than for thought. In the era of information technology, the dependence on original thought processes in human society is waning, and simultaneously the endless hunger for propaganda is growing. Thus, the endless sequence of propaganda — like a tsunami — is in a sense blunting the very thought process of human society.

Under the artificial empire of propaganda, critically important changes are visible in human civilisation and society's thinking and mutual conduct. The endless expansion of the propaganda system has completely transformed human concepts and the mutual conduct and behaviour of daily life. *Thought is the natural power of human beings* — but propaganda requires

unnatural resources and the support of economic, political, commercial and technical institutions. A solitary human being can think on his own strength — but propaganda without resources is impossible.

Today's world has begun to feel that we can live without natural thoughts — but we cannot do anything without propaganda. This thought process is spreading rapidly, and modern human beings are being seen taking the direction of an imaginary propaganda system as a substitute for easy living, in place of their own intellectual brilliance.

State, society and market — all three, instead of making human beings vehicles of creative power and building a society of conscious citizens — are advancing toward a machine-based, artificial intelligence-based human civilisation, making the diversity of human civilisation vanish.

Thought in its natural form comes to the mind like a dewdrop in the morning — and with the increasing intensity of sunlight after sunrise, it disappears on its own, dissolving back into creation. In the same way, the natural form of thought, having dissolved into countless minds, absorbs its original form and natural character — like a dewdrop — back into creation.

Thought is natural. The unnatural empire of propaganda cannot eliminate the natural seed of human thought — this is the fundamental ground of human thought.

Loneliness in a World of Eight Billion

To call this world of eight billion people a crowded world would not be considered an exaggeration. But in today's crowded world, the sense of loneliness in the minds of human beings is growing day-doubled and night-quadrupled — this is something new. *Crowd* and *loneliness* are two mutually contradictory words. Crowd means a very large number of people in one place; loneliness means the complete absence of any other person's company or thought in one's mind. The human being fears loneliness more than crowds.

A crowd somehow seems to give the human being's courage a boost — but loneliness neither lets one stay at home nor gives the enthusiasm to go into the crowd. Both loneliness and crowd reveal the state of the human mind. A person can feel lonely even in a crowd, and can enjoy the feeling of a bustling crowd even alone. These are entirely games of the human mind.

These days, the endless crowd of residential buildings in cities is visible everywhere from outside — but peering inside this crowd of buildings, one encounters human beings carrying a feeling of great loneliness.

Our personality and working style also determine how we want to live. When we are in trade and commerce, our wish is that there should always be a crowd at our shop. If our work involves reading, writing or painting, we enjoy working alone. But when we put our paintings on exhibition or place our goods on sale, our wish is that the crowd should come. Crowds and

loneliness are relative states of our mind — dependent entirely on circumstance and purpose.

The human being during his lifetime can only remember those people he has known through family, neighbourhood and acquaintance. He only misses those with whom he has had contact at some point in the past, or whom he knows or recognises in some form or other.

Loneliness is felt precisely when we are distant from those we know or are close to. If the thoughts of our near ones differ from ours, and we cannot make them understand our thoughts, then the feeling of intellectual loneliness comes upon us all at once. Intellectual loneliness dissolves on its own through deliberation — and human society feels itself connected through ideas.

Loneliness is narrowing one's life, in a world of eight billion people, to such a constricted mental state that we have learned to live limiting our life to only our previously known people or ideas. Continuing to be unable to harmonise our thoughts, conduct and nature with ever-new thoughts, conduct and natures — and to keep going in the direction of feeling loneliness — this is what loneliness truly is.

The thoughts, personality, achievement and conduct of eight billion human beings are infinite and eternal. If a single human being were to dive into the ocean of eight billion people's lives for all eternity, the feeling of loneliness could not even arise in his mind. *Loneliness and crowd are nothing more than a way of seeing and understanding.*

Writing and Reading Stories

Writing and reading novels and stories are things not within everyone's power. Immense patience is required. In this world, nothing is truly within anyone's power — and yet the human being keeps trying with patience to do something new. Whenever a human being thinks something new, he doesn't know he is thinking something new. But when his thought or writing is complete and he reads what was written, he doesn't experience the same feeling he had in his mind before writing.

Writing stories and novels is the exclusive domain of the human being alone. The human being and the writer are essentially one and the same maya — the human being is a noun, the writer is an adjective. That is why the human being does not have a special feeling of being human, but the writer rarely escapes the expression of specialness.

Countless stories have been written on the same plot, and will continue to be written. Whenever a human being sits down to write, he does not worry whether what he writes has never been written before. Yet he writes in the hope of writing something new. But by the time the writing is complete, the sense of novelty has more or less dissolved. The enthusiasm in the writer's mind at the point of starting is not the same as when the writing is done.

After writing, the first question that arises: will this be liked? Will it be published? And if published, will people read it? And if they have read it, how did it land? In other words, the

writer's gaze shifts entirely. Now the writer stops thinking about his own thought and begins thinking about the reader's reaction. This is an entirely different thing from kindling the hunger to write within oneself.

Why do we write, after all? Just as we make bread — why? The direct answer: to eat, to satisfy hunger. Writing, creation and contemplation — this triad is the formless means to satisfy the hunger of the human being's inner self, which continually brings the human being into direct encounter with his own achievement, becoming manifest from the formless by his own hands.

Just as hunger comes morning and evening, and food satisfies it — in the same way, because of creative power, every day there is something new to do and the series of completing creative work with mind and body continues throughout life. Creation is simple and difficult both — but maintaining creative power in mind and body until the very last breath would be considered a person's own heroism.

The Human Voice and Civilisation

The human being receives speech naturally from birth. Other living beings also receive a voice in some form — but in the way human beings expanded speech through languages and music as a means of expressing life, this is the root of the development and expansion of human civilisation. The development of speech — through sounds from the human mouth — into various languages can be considered the greatest collective achievement and heroism of the people of the earth.

Voice, intelligence and wisdom — along with the capacity to hear — if the human being lacked these, he could not speak at all. Even with a voice, if the human being does not want to speak or wants to remain silent, this too is his own natural power.

The eyes are for seeing, which we call vision — but separate from this capacity, the human being also has an inner vision that can be seen, thought or perceived with the mind's eye. Inner vision requires neither light nor eyes — only thought, understanding and imagination. For things incarnate, the activity of the senses or knowledge-faculties is necessary — but formless imagination is the play of mind and intelligence.

The continuous interplay of nature-given sensory faculties and the human being's creative and destructive tendencies has brought today's world to a point where we can increase and also destroy and corrupt the entire civilisation's creative power. Yet no one can return to prehistoric civilisation — even

as several civilisations from primitive to modern exist simultaneously on this earth, each struggling to preserve its original existence.

In human civilisation, the entire journey of knowledge arose from languages — and the endless dimensions of literature, culture and creative civilisation became permanent moods of human civilisation. The script form and sound form of language are both important dimensions of human civilisation. The knowledge journey that began with script divided society into two forms: the literate and the unlettered. In this way, yet another difference arose in human society — one that endures today.

Knowledge certainly helps to develop human society — but the unknown and ignorance also impel human society toward further discovery. Knowledge, ignorance and the unknown — all three should be understood as the foundational ground of all human civilisation. *Human civilisation is an extraordinary chain of sensory faculties and the endless thoughts created by human beings* — which, through the consciousness of both the incarnate and formless world, has advanced the waves of human civilisation and, according to the course of time, has also caused them to disappear.

Creature, World and Life

Around creature, world and life — all thoughts, views and counter-views are born, expand, and in various forms register themselves in the folk-mind of the world's people. These diverse thoughts and views continuously rise and set in the memories of the folk-mind according to the course of time.

Any creature needs regular nourishment — appropriate to its needs — to keep its life energised. The natural food chain for both human beings and other creatures is one and the same. Aquatic, aerial and terrestrial beings — all three categories — are essentially dependent on their natural food chain.

Despite this, human society has created so many views and counter-views around the food chain that the history of human diet is a separate and extraordinary dimension. Non-human creatures that are free essentially depend on whatever is available in their natural food chain throughout their lives. But human beings throughout the world are never satisfied with their own food — and simultaneously, thoughtless commentary about other human beings' eating habits continues uninterrupted.

The human being is, in a sense, the master of his own uncontrolled will — the only creature who not only eats for nourishment but determines his diet on the basis of preference, taste and status, and also eats to satisfy the mind.

Perhaps this is why human society has created such deeply and broadly diverse contemplations, views and dietary sciences —

giving rise to an endless army of dietitians who engage in verbal warfare over their own theoretical differences.

Mahatma Gandhi gave a simple formula: "*Eating when hungry is nature; eating without hunger is distortion.*" The human being cannot easily internalise simplicity — so the human dietary process advances day by day toward ever-greater complexity.

Food is the primary source of life's essential energy. Today in the world, food has become the biggest trade and commerce. The question arises: is food merely the primary energy source of life — or is it the natural flow of life itself, flowing continuously in creature, world, plant and life?

Part Four

Democracy, Politics and Citizenship



*"Democracy is not the politics of temporary victory or defeat —
it is the continuously and freshly transformative series of
endless public expression."*

Indian Democracy — Seventy-Five Years

Democracy cannot be one-sided or single-party. A democracy can function naturally and smoothly only with the normal, minimum, continuous presence of both the ruling side and the opposition. Indian democracy — multi-party — has completed its seventy-five years. Even after so much time, the fact that a natural ruling party and a natural opposition have not emerged or developed is a question that requires not only broad discussion but also steps toward an effortless democracy.

Democracy cannot become a living democracy without mutual dialogue, goodwill and understanding. Indian democracy is the world's largest democracy by population. All governments since independence have been elected on the basis of universal adult franchise — an extraordinary example of the strength of multi-party Indian democracy.

All political parties developed in Indian democracy are registered on paper and in law according to democratic procedure — but in word, conduct and deed, they are not felt to be integrated with the soul of democracy. The external structure of Indian politics may appear democratic — but the internal conduct is the complete opposite.

Indian politics and Indian society — even after 75 years — have not been able to embrace democratic values and traditions with their whole being. Yet even after all this, both Indian political parties and voters have developed an extraordinary addiction to elections. This has become both the strength and

the weakness of Indian democracy — and without changing this, we cannot transform the democratic dreams of India's people into reality, that is, into *swaraj*.

Democracy is a system of governance of the people, by the people, for the people. We cannot run Indian democracy smoothly without giving opportunities to all thoughts and all groups. In India today, we can only incorporate this vast population into political processes if we all together give everyone opportunities in a democratic way.

In democracy, both the ruling side and the opposition will have to step forward in finding more democratic and people-supporting political working methods — only then will we be able to reflect not only our own dreams but everyone's dreams. This is the essence of democratic politics.

The views expressed are the author's own.

Mental Stress and Anger

If anger or stress is momentary, psychology considers it a momentary state of the mind — like waves. Continuous anger or stress, and never experiencing anger in any situation — both are extraordinary mental states. If someone never gets angry about anything, he is called calm or submissive. Conversely, if someone gets angry about every little thing, or stays continuously angry — what name do we give this behaviour?

Even the ocean does not always have a storm — but in today's world, the human being's life has become permanently restless from a self-made tsunami of extraordinary mental stress. Uncontrolled anger without reason proves self-destructive.

From ancient times, anger's existence has been present in human society's mind and life. The term *sattvic anger* is living evidence of this. But today's so-called modern mechanical lifestyle is continuously pushing human beings into an extraordinarily and needlessly agitated and aggressive life.

Sattvic anger has evaporated like camphor into the air — and continuous stress and anger are becoming our almost permanent nature. When anger and stress become the permanent nature of life, understand that our life has abandoned peace, goodwill and coordination — and we have internalised an unnatural life.

In this world, life has been expressed in many forms. The plant kingdom even today exists in the most natural state. In nature, no flower blooms in anger — it flowers, spreads the fragrance

of life through the natural chain of life without interference or adulteration, and gives birth to the seed to sprout again.

The life of human beings and creatures is an infinite flow. The continuous natural flow of blood and thought in our body and mind — circulating through every cell in a certain rhythm — keeps life moving in a peaceful, natural way. But when the human being gets uncontrolled anger without reason, or permanently lives in a stressed mental state — then life moves in an unnatural direction.

When we get angry at someone else, we are essentially depriving not that other person — but ourselves — of equanimity. *Peace and goodwill are the fundamental nature; anger and ill-will are the abandonment of fundamental nature.* Therefore: avoiding anger, or abandoning ill-will, is the dharma of the age.

Human Potential — Ecosystem vs. Ego System

The ecosystem and the ego system — both deeply influence the quality of life on this earth. From air, water, light, soil and the infinite plant varieties, the ecosystem came into existence. The ecosystem can be called the seed of life. In the same way, from mind, thought, greed, desire, prosperity-fame, feeling and deprivation, along with the continuous expansion of power — the ego system was born.

The human being is, in a sense, a parasite of the plant world. Without the plant world, imagining the existence of the human being is simply not possible. Life requires the plant kingdom as indispensable. The ecosystem is the progenitor of human life's vital energy. Without the ecosystem, the human being's continuous existence is not possible.

Where human beings are absent on this earth — the ecosystem there is in the purest form of life's vital energy. The portions of earth dense with human beings cannot keep the ecosystem pollution-free. The portions of earth without human beings always remain in their original, naturally pure form.

As long as the daily stirrings of human society were conducted through the strength of body and mind, there was no feeling of concern for the ecosystem. Now — running on borrowed energy instead of body and mind — the ecosystem has become a topic of concern.

War, mutual disputes, intolerance and political, economic, social, familial, religious and intellectual discord — the endless series of controversies and counter-views are changing the permanent mood of the ego system at a day-doubled, night-quadrupled pace. Violence, terrorist activities and dictatorial arbitrary governance — these have begun continuously coming to human life as the by-products of the ego system.

The ecosystem is like the incarnate form of peace and natural life. Air, soil, water, light and biodiversity have advanced human values. *The solution to saving the ecosystem lies in the natural means of conducting human life through the strength of body and mind.* Only by personally and collectively adopting natural life can we continuously move in the direction of always maintaining the natural form of the ecosystem.

India's Young Population

India is a country that has been living life since very ancient times with its original understanding and broad lifestyle — in civilisation, culture, family and philosophy. Indian life, with its ancient tradition of agriculture, animal husbandry, crafts, direct dealings with family and local people, and trade from across the world, has been a society with a rich tradition of original knowledge and philosophy.

In Indian society today, a particular transformation has occurred — the greatest challenge emerging in modern India. The tradition of acquiring knowledge in Indian society has been running through direct, face-to-face proximity and learning between human beings. But the birth of information technology and its sudden spread across every corner of the world has completely transformed the entire method of acquiring knowledge and mutual conduct.

65% of the population under 35 years: In India, citizens from zero to 14 years of age have become 25 percent of the total population, and citizens from zero to 35 years have become 65 percent. That is, India's youth population is the largest in the entire world.

Indian youth have, in the past two to three decades, recorded their effective presence in every country and field of life. The global economy has separated India's youth from their homes and families in search of opportunities. In every town and city of India, a scene is becoming increasingly common: even

though India is the world's most youth-populated country, in its residential settlements, the absence of children and youth is visible.

Indian families are rapidly moving toward virtual meetings and conduct. Children from villages and small towns came to larger cities for opportunity — and after studying, went to foreign countries or big city technology institutions. Just as migratory birds come to parts of India in cold weather, so too the migrant younger generation comes home to their family and then leaves.

Urban crowding increases: The global economy has brought the depths of Indian society to the surface. Indian families and society — in the dazzle of economic development — are continuously losing their own naturalness, drifting away from their natural lifestyle. *This is the challenge of today's era — whose solution too must be found by youth and senior populations together.*

Silence — *Maun*

The expanse of silence is infinite — or we can also say that the breadth of silence is beyond limits, making silence completely limitless. Silence — though devoid of sound — is meaningful, and in a sense is the formless expression of words. Just as light — soundless — continuously expresses itself with varying intensity according to the course of time, in the same way silence too continuously exists in its soundless form.

If silence is limitless, then words are limited. Silence pervades earth and sky everywhere — while the expansion of words begins from breaking our silent state. In silence, words dissolve into a dormant state — countless words rest in dormancy within silence. The expression of words seems to give incarnate existence to silence in the form of words, manifesting the formless Brahma in incarnate form.

Not uttering words is not silence. Becoming quiet and sullen, or becoming entirely quiet and silent — both are different states. Silence is not always just remaining quiet. The eloquence of silence can be lethal, constructive and redemptive. Silence does not merely mean the pure absence of sound — it can also be considered the natural calm state before the birth of words.

Silence is a natural state in which the stillness pervading everything — from the void to the sky — if there has been a direct encounter with the quietude embedded in nature, only then can the originality of silence be understood. Silence

cannot be understood through absence of sound or muteness or deliberate adopted silence. Silence cannot be understood deeply either — because silence has no shape or form — yet through silence, both agreement and disagreement can be expressed.

Silence is the human being's extraordinary experience — in which there is never any incompleteness in expression. As has been said: if from zero you subtract zero, still zero remains — that is, the void or silence is a natural state always present within and around us. Words and sound are the creation of the human being or of a creature — but silence and void are the nature of life and the creature.

Word is creation; silence is nature. Just as nature's existence has been there from the very beginning, so the presence of silence in life is life's eternal expression. Life is not merely continuous stirring. The presence of infinite peace or silence seems to silently explain the breadth and originality of nature and life. This is the presence and originality of silence expressed — which is experienced but cannot be expressed in words.

Silence is nature, or nature is silence. The human being — knowing the breadth of silence beyond words — cannot distance himself from the company of words. Therefore, silence seems to have developed as a spiritual practice rather than as a natural state. Silence is an inseparable part of life and nature — like sky, light and time — woven into our life, contemplation and reflection in such a way that it can only be known, understood and mentally expressed, experienced and internalised by remaining silent, beyond words.

Lok Sabha Elections 2024 — The Mandate

The mandate that came in the 2024 Lok Sabha election results is an extraordinary philosophical expression of India's ordinary voters. An important directional message has also been revealed in this mandate for Indian political parties and Indian politics. This message is for all of us — whether governing or in opposition. This message is the fundamental point of Indian philosophy, life-practice and the eternal dignity of social life: *India belongs to everyone, and all belong to India.*

The Preamble of the Indian Constitution — born from the womb of the Indian independence movement — with the words "*We, the People of India*" clearly signals that the essence of Indian people's lifestyle is to live together harmoniously and in peace, taking everyone along.

In Indian politics, all political ideologies — political, social, religious, spiritual and economic — have the full right and opportunity to openly present their understanding before India's voters in their own way.

The Indian voter — in every general election since independence — has given clear signals of his democratic commitment. Embedded in the mandate of voters in Indian politics is also this: that election victory or defeat is not the first and last word. *Democracy is not the politics of temporary victory or defeat — it is the continuously and freshly transformative series of endless public expression.*

In politics, political parties have become addicted to only their

own kite flying ever higher. But the Indian voter does not give anyone the monopoly of kite-flying for life. India has placed, in the form of the National Democratic Alliance and the INDIA Alliance — two Indian political groupings — a role of keeping Indian democracy alive while fulfilling their people-welfare roles.

In seventy-five years of India's democratic republic's politics, the Indian voter has given a mandate to ruling and opposition political parties to create a politics that brings colour to the dreams of India's 1.5 billion citizens — not to their own personal and party dreams. "*Dignity and work for all*" — this is the clear mandate of the Indian voter in the 2024 general elections.

The views expressed are the author's own.

Indian Politics — Vote-Centric Democracy

The meaning of democratic politics has become obtaining votes by any means. The result: politics without votes has completely disappeared from society and from politics itself. In India, if you raise any question publicly, instead of debating it, people begin to think: "What is the politics in this?" And the entire politics of the country has entangled itself in the mathematics of adding and subtracting votes day and night.

The thought of how to run a country of 1.4 billion people peacefully and lovingly simply doesn't arise in our personal or collective mind. This vast-population country has begun to consider forming and toppling governments as the fundamental mantra of political life. Since independence, slowly but surely, our political activity has been transformed entirely into the single endeavour of obtaining votes. *What to do after getting power* — this has not even become a subject for deliberation.

The fundamental political question is: why is the vast public energy lifeless even after obtaining power in a democratic way? Even after 75 years of electoral politics, why has the feeling in Indian society not grown strong that "*India belongs to all, and all belong to India*"?

Despite full constitutional clarity in India's Constitution against discrimination based on religion, caste, gender, place and race — nearly all political forces are making discrimination-based conduct the main part of their politics. India's real strength is the people of India — and the Constitution does not give any

elected or unelected political force the right to declare any citizen of India insulted or unwanted.

In India, governments have been and will continue to be elected through people's votes — but this is not a mechanical process. This is a living democratic system in which all political parties can ensure participation by making citizens alert. But we have built the complete opposite situation in our free India's politics. Democratic politics cannot be individualistic — this is the cornerstone of democratic politics.

The fundamental thought of the independence movement was to build a governance system that could solve the daily challenges of Indian society collectively. *If a conceptual movement is run to consolidate people-oriented ideology in governance in Indian democracy, only then can we all together realise the fundamental spirit of the independence movement.*

Mahatma Gandhi — Death Anniversary Reflection

On the evening of 30 January 1948 at Birla Bhavan, Delhi, the incarnate Gandhi — who had stepped out for evening prayer — dissolved into infinite formlessness with his final words: "*Hey Ram.*"

In this world, birth is the beginning of life in its incarnate form, and the great departure is life's dissolution into infinite formlessness. The world is an endless series of transformations from the incarnate to the formless state of life. The incarnate form ultimately dissolves into the formless — but the formless pervades everywhere: in the void and the infinite, and in the subtle and the vast alike.

The greatest teaching that the incarnate Gandhi left the world was: "*Truth is God.*" Regarding God, questions of theism and atheism may arise — but regarding the eternity of truth, no conflict or question of faith or faithlessness was ever raised. Gandhi turned life itself into a school of truth.

Truth is utterly simple, natural and plainly unpretentious. In truth there is no pollution, no intolerance, no coarseness or artificiality — in truth there is no concealment, no question of remembering or forgetting. Gandhi adopted the simplest path — keeping life's needs to the absolute minimum, living a life devoted to labour — in his personal and public life.

Gandhi explained the distinction between need and greed. The

natural, decentralised way of living simply — through the individual and collective strength of local people and resources — he described as *Ram Rajya*.

Explaining the difference between life's needs and greed, Mahatma Gandhi said: "*Our mother earth has the capacity to fulfil the needs of all living beings, but not the capacity to satisfy the greed of even one.*"

Gandhi neither swelled with praise in his life, nor gave attention to criticism or abuse. His belief: if someone abused you and you responded with abuse, the abuser succeeded. But if you didn't pay attention to the abuse at all, the abuser's abuse became futile. This is practical concentration and focus.

The person who shot the incarnate Gandhi could not be stopped. But the truth, non-violence, non-possession and fearlessness of the formless Gandhi — who departed saying "Hey Ram" — cannot be stopped or extinguished by bullet or abuse from any individual, group, organisation or civilisation. *This is the eternal truth.*

The views expressed are the author's own.

Ram in the Indian Consciousness — Ayodhya and the People's Mind

India's folk-consciousness is like the ocean of the people — carrying great depth and diversity, yet with natural ease. If we say that Ram's name is embedded in the Indian folk-mind, that would not be considered an exaggeration. Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia had described Ram, Krishna and Shiva as synonyms of the dignified, the liberated and the infinite — saying that in the Indian folk-mind, Ram lives as dignity, Krishna as liberation, and Shiva as the infinite or the imperishable.

Mahatma Gandhi gave the mantra of awakening the Ram within oneself to the Indian folk-mind during the independence movement.

Baba Vinoba's belief was that everything is contained in Ram Hari. His expression of greeting was "*Jai Jagat*" — victory to the world. Ram Hari and Jai Jagat contain both the incarnate and the formless, the subtle form of world and life.

In Indian folk-society, a unique Ram-devoted sentiment is visible in the naming of sons. The thought that "*everything is contained in Ram*" — those who believe this carry a name-ocean of Ram's diversity within the folk-mind. The author lists 108 names — from Ramchandra to Ramkishan, Ramlal to Ramsevak — as one example of how Ram's name is embedded in the Indian folk-mind.

Today it seems that this era is one of undignified conduct,

artificial lifestyle, unrest and indiscipline. In the Ram-conscious folk-mind, how will a society find its way out from the undignified violation of every dimension of life? Pandit Jasraj sang a deeply moving bhajan: "*Ram bhajo, aaram tyago — Ram hi prem ki moorat hai, Ram hi satya ki soorat hai*" — Worship Ram, abandon comfort — Ram is the form of love, the face of truth.

The solution for today's Indian folk-mind — to escape the mechanical lifestyle-born comfort-seeking and laziness-filled narrow-mindedness — is this single formula: *abandon comfort*. Ram alone teaches life's work. Ram alone enables our deliverance.

The views expressed are the author's own.

Human Being and Humanity

At birth, the human being receives the human body. But the human being's shape, conduct, thought and nature do not by themselves become synonymous with humanity. This is the fundamental difference between the human being and animals or other creatures. All other creatures — from birth to the last breath — maintain the same shape, style and way of life in which they were born. They cannot modify it even if they want to.

But this is not so with the human being. The human being cannot maintain the same conduct and behaviour throughout life as he was born with. The human being is such a creation of nature that he has begun to consider a blind race of competition with nature as developed life. The natural meaning of human development is the development of humanity.

In the present era, the human being is getting entangled in the spider-web of his own making and becoming helpless before the challenges of the modern era. The complexity the human being faces in life is created by the human being himself and his own constricted concepts. In the present era, human life — abandoning simple, natural daily routine — is rapidly moving in the direction of purposeless rushing and greed.

The human being is adopting a complex, unnatural and monotonous mechanical routine, abandoning simple and natural life. With an excessively stressful and competitive lifestyle, the human being has begun to feel complexity even in

coordinating with his contemporaries. Today's human being no longer has the same trust in himself or in the contemporaries around him as before — and because of this, the ancient yet natural lifestyle of speaking openly with human beings is continuously disappearing.

Today's human being — considering his contemporaries guilty — wants to avoid himself making every possible effort to solve the problem, and mechanically places all blame on other human beings. Because of this, the daily conduct, behaviour and life of human beings is rapidly changing everywhere in the world into human-created explosive mental stress.

Only through broad coordination of immense biodiversity and intellectual contradictions can the feeling of humanity remain in its natural state. In every situation, coordination and cohabitation alone can keep humanity alive in human society. *The human being and humanity can cohabit only by remaining synonymous with each other.*

Violence and Hatred Are Not Permanent Human Traits

Violence and hatred are not permanent moods of human society. Just as natural fire is not always blazing, so too communal and caste-based violent events occur only temporarily. Not just today — centuries ago, feelings of violence and hatred arose in the human mind. But not a single human being or society has been able to live with violence and hatred throughout his whole life.

In human history, organisations and principles have been fashioned that some groups have used as instruments to increase violence and hatred in the human mind — considering this their heroism. But this has not been able to become the natural path of the world and of life.

Violent events and hateful thoughts damage the other a little — but they first and most thoroughly deprive oneself of a free and fearless life. *Violence and hatred are not the fabric of human society.* Today or at any time, the country and world cannot be run through violence, hatred and distorted systems. Human society has fought countless wars — all came to nothing.

Violence is not a natural state — it is a human-made event. Hatred pushes the human brain in the direction of death. Violence and hatred are the distorted momentary agitation of a thoughtless mob. *Nature is essentially peaceful, profound and life-giving.*

Violence temporarily makes the human being helpless. But non-violence also kindles in the human mind the hunger for peace, goodwill and the direction of civilisation. People living in mountains, jungles, plains, river banks or deserts — all human beings have, from time eternal, lived together in peace, goodwill and mutual understanding. *Considering the natural challenges of life as the infinite struggle of life, and fighting and living through them, increases the hunger for peace and goodwill.*

Indian Democracy — 75 Years, Citizenship and Apathy

India has had democracy and freedom for seventy-five years. Yet in the minds of India's citizens and political parties, a feeling of apathy toward democracy and citizenship is continuously and increasingly growing. Voting once every five years, then no active civic role — this is what has generally been going on in Indian democracy for seventy-five years.

The form of political parties that has emerged is that of person-centred and power-centred groups. What is most needed in today's politics is democratic political wisdom, discernment and patience. Because there is no wisdom in Indian politics, apathy in people is deepening continuously.

Democratically elected representatives mostly think, understand and behave like kings or feudal lords. Instead of making citizens and workers alert, they consider it the fundamental mantra of remaining in active politics to keep them entangled in attractive dreams. That is why India's citizen — in seventy-five years — has been transformed from a free-thinking citizen into a helpless, mute subject. He votes mechanically, without thinking, without raising questions.

The rapid result is that civic pressure in Indian democracy is negligible, and the position of political workers has become that of puppets — the leaders dance them as they please. In all parties, the empire of "*yes sir, yes sir*" has been built.

We talk of democracy — but most of our conduct continues to nourish feudal tendencies. That is why, in Indian politics, the supreme leadership receives continuous glorification — but the fearless personality and achievement of citizens and political workers has not been able to shine in the way it should.

In a democratic system, the absence or decline of vibrant citizens and thoughtful party workers is transforming Indian democracy completely into mechanical mob-rule.

Democratic civic consciousness is another name for civic responsibility. In democracy, people create government — government cannot ignore people.

Freedom of the Press

Journalism has, from its very birth, been the vehicle of public awakening and civic consciousness. Without fear of established political, religious, social, economic, criminal, administrative and ruling powers — through fearless writing, contemplation, expression and intellectual guidance — continuously keeping people alert: this is journalism's fundamental dharma and essence.

When India did not have democracy and the country was bound in foreign rule, we can say with full authenticity that Indian journalism devoted itself to civic consciousness and awakened people's minds.

In the present modern era of journalism — having crossed even the 75th year of independence — this intellectual crisis has arisen: who will raise the question of press freedom? Without fear of government and market, without the greed and attachment of advertising — remaining people-oriented, registering open dissent from arbitrariness of government and market — who will establish the life-principle of the pen that discriminates between water and milk?

In the era of globalisation, a fundamental change is visible in the thinking of state, society and market — all three. Many newspapers' clear answer is: the newspaper is our commercial product and journalism is our livelihood. Society too has begun to accept this as a part of so-called developed civilisation.

When the thinking class — who should be raising

consciousness — itself begins to join the market-controlled herd without resistance: this is the greatest democratic tragedy of post-independence India. Globalisation has transformed the sovereign citizens of the world into mute consumers of the world market.

The question of today is: who will do the work that press freedom and writing-journalism's holiness require — work that the governance system and the market do not? *When newspapers became commercial products, the people too accepted them in that form. This is the greatest democratic tragedy of post-independence India.*

Ideas and Circumstances — *Khayalaat* *Aur Haalaat*

Circumstances do not change on their own. For circumstances to change, a change in *khayalaat* — ideas, thinking — is very necessary. All changes in the world do not come on their own. As ideas changed, circumstances changed.

Today, circumstances are changing far faster than ideas are changing in people. In the past hundred years, we have seen how rapidly circumstances changed — from the bullock cart to the supersonic aircraft. Today, both run in the country and world simultaneously. Today's world has old-fashioned minds as well as minds that constantly think something new. In a living mind, thoughts of inertia are almost never born.

Not every thought that comes to the human mind necessarily transforms the thinking and conduct of all human society. It may just be a daydream. Change in human society and mind takes a long time. Our lifestyle, thinking, home and family have continuously changed with new ideas.

Organised thought trusts more in herding human society like sheep. That is why independent thought can be agreed or disagreed with — but with organised thought, the person who agrees has no option of disagreeing. The leaders of organised groups brand you an organisation-opposer and expel you — thereby proving themselves opponents of independent thought.

In independent thought, there is no option of expulsion — it is

free and all-pervading like air and light. Your independent thought can lead to both revolution and delusion — yet the kind of expulsion that organised thought makes possible is not possible with free thought.

The story of the human being in this world — from prehistoric times until today — is the endless story of *circumstances changing because ideas changed*. Ideas will keep changing circumstances — this is the truth of our world or life. *Nature gives us the opportunity and teaching to live through all changes, and also provides throughout life the opportunity of living with a fresh mind along with new ideas to change our circumstances.*

Religion and Politics

When the means that should give peace and solution to life become the biggest challenge or problem — what should today's human being do? This is today's era's challenge. About 70 years ago, socialist leader Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia said: *"Politics is short-term religion, and religion is long-term politics."* Both politics and religion are fundamental means of making the human being's thinking and conduct radiant, glorious and heroic.

The means to resolve every problem of human society is naturally available with religion and politics. Yet how has the form of politics and religion in today's world become such that these two streams have turned human life and mind into unrest and endless tension?

The meaning of politics is the endless series of empowering people. But this very meaning has completely changed — into the arbitrary will of powerful people against citizens. Religious leadership and political leadership — both have slipped from the hands of citizens to only money-loving politicians and self-styled religious leaders.

The root cause of trouble and disorder in any country, society or group is almost always citizens' apathy, inactivity and blind following of politicians and religious leaders born from momentary agitation.

Throughout the world, politics and religion — in their constricted form — are visibly helping to end their own

universality by their own hands. Development's blind and citizen-demolishing understanding has deeply advanced the lethal capacity of development, and has made the sovereign power of citizens in democratic republics a matter of history.

All citizens of the world have for centuries been living with their own thinking and wisdom — enjoying life with pleasure. That has been completely transformed into permanent stress-filled life by self-styled custodians of power-hungry politics and so-called religious protection.

Part Five

Economy, Market and Life



*"Eating when hungry is nature;
eating without hunger is distortion."*

— Mahatma Gandhi

The Philosophy of Food

Around creature, world and life — all thoughts, views and counter-views are born. Any creature needs regular nourishment — appropriate to its needs — to keep its life energised. The natural food chain for both human beings and other creatures is one and the same.

Despite this, human society has created so many views and counter-views around the food chain that the history of human diet is a separate and extraordinary dimension. Non-human free creatures essentially depend on whatever is available in their natural food chain. But human beings throughout the world are never satisfied with their own food — and simultaneously, endless commentary about others' food habits continues without pause.

The human being is the only creature who not only eats for nutrition, but determines his diet on the basis of preference, taste and status, and also eats to satisfy the mind. In the human dietary process, there is nothing that says he will only eat when hungry — he can eat anytime, anywhere. This is why human society has created such deeply and broadly diverse contemplations, views and dietary sciences — giving rise to an endless army of dietitians who engage in verbal warfare over their own theoretical differences.

Food has become an extraordinary life-philosophy of human society. Essentially, the living world is divided into two forms — vegetarian and non-vegetarian. But the human being has

developed such an enormous diversity within both that one wonders: is food for satisfying natural hunger, or for satisfying the hunger of creative power?

Mahatma Gandhi gave a simple formula: "*Eating when hungry is nature; eating without hunger is distortion.*" The human being cannot easily internalise simplicity — so the human dietary process is advancing day by day toward complexity.

Food is the primary source of life's essential energy. Today in the world, food has become the biggest trade and commerce. *Is food merely the primary energy source of life — or is it the natural flow of life itself, flowing continuously in creature, world, plant and life?*

Part Three

Gandhi and the Philosophy of Truth



*"The body in which we live is our country.
The mind that inhabits it is our world."*

Vinoba Bhave — 125th Birth Anniversary

Saint Vinoba Bhave, born on 11 September 1895, completes his 125th birth anniversary year. Gandhi at 150; Vinoba at 125. Mahatma Gandhi, in the independence movement, considered Vinoba the first and complete satyagrahi. Essentially of spiritual temperament, young Vinoba was thinking of going to the Himalayas. The curiosity arising from contact with Gandhi's energy-filled intellectual inspiration brought Vinoba to Bapu — and through Bapu's company, the path of sarvodaya spiritual practice became clear to Vinoba forever.

Saint Vinoba is remembered in world history as a luminous figure who — remaining continuously active throughout his life, before and after independence — showed all of humanity the way to live a peaceful and service-filled life simply and naturally through intellectual energy.

Vinoba taught through his own life: the meaning of life is to become one with the people. After independence, Vinoba continuously walked for nearly 14 years. He walked on foot through every part of the country and in neighbouring countries too. Vinoba's padyatra was the direct experience of living under a new sky every morning and new ground every day.

Vinoba composed the *Geetai* text — presenting the Gita's life-commentary in a language style that even uneducated village women could easily understand. Only a truly simple and erudite scholar can explain the essence of life to folk-society in

their own language.

Vinoba's belief: the stories we tell children should not be from one religion only — they should be from many religions. Children are not Hindu, Muslim or Christian — they are children of God. That is, they are not religious or sectarian. Children are by nature in a state of pure spirituality.

Gandhiji's principle of trusteeship — Baba expressed as: "*All land belongs to God, all wealth belongs to God.*" Village self-rule through village's own strength — this is sustainable self-reliant society. If villages survive, the country will survive.

Vinoba said: "*The body in which we live is our country. The mind that inhabits it is our world.*" Thinking globally, acting locally — this is the meaning of *Jai Jagat*.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

On 31 October 1875, in the village of Karamsad in Gujarat, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was born into a modest family. His father Jhaverbhai had around 8-10 bighas of land. The child Vallabhbhai's indomitable enthusiasm for reading — despite adverse circumstances — shows that Sardar learned the path of building the country's prosperity from his personal life's problems, living in poverty.

In his lifetime, Sardar Patel was called the "*Iron Man*." Because of extraordinary will-power, remarkable work-strength and devotion, he was able to serve the country in such multidimensional and extraordinary ways that in the latter part of his life he settled in the hearts of fellow citizens almost like a transcendent being.

After entering the civic life of Ahmedabad in 1917, he appeared before the country as an extremely fearless freedom fighter — as Mahatma Gandhi's close companion and disciple — as the victorious helmsman of the Borsad and Bardoli satyagrahas — and as a remarkable statesman in the transfer of power — becoming eternally alive in history through his epic work of integrating India.

On 14 November 1949, broadcasting to the nation from All India Radio Delhi, Sardar Patel said:

"We must fully understand the current national crisis. Just as we do in the face of a common

danger, we must forget our mutual differences today. To discharge our debt to the nation, we must become economical. Industrialists should try to produce as much as possible. Workers should help the nation draw maximum benefit from their resources. Traders too should ensure that finished goods reach consumers with minimum extra cost. They should earn a fair profit — but earning unfair profit will be considered a national crime."

Sardar Patel's call to every section of the country for nation-building is as inspiring and emulable in today's era as it was at the time of India's independence.

Part Six

Freedom, Justice and Social Change



"Independence is open revolt against fear."

Freedom — *Swadheenta*

Freedom, liberty, independence — the true meaning of these words: are they merely words of our speech today, or are they a living, natural mutual conduct woven into our public life and inner selves? The fundamental meaning of freedom can only be: *becoming free from fear*. As long as the mind is not fearless, there can be no natural encounter with independence.

Independence and self-reliance are so intertwined with each other that without understanding and internalising both, the life-force of either cannot be known. In this world, except for human beings, everything else is self-reliant — that is why non-human creatures have never faced the question of independence.

Only human beings — out of greed, helplessness or fear in their minds — have voluntarily lost their independence, adopting subjugation out of fear and mental helplessness. A human being who trusts himself is independent. A human being who doesn't trust even himself and remains fearful cannot know the meaning and essence of independence.

Independence is a way of living that embeds dignity and responsibility within it. Open mind, open thinking and open understanding are, in a sense, the life-breath of independence. The form of independence is refined on the foundation of democratic society and governance. *Independence is not a decorative ornament but the life-force or breath of life.*

A fearful mind does not build the path of independence. The

mind's fear accepts subjugation as the helpless destiny of life. From this point we can say: *independence is open revolt against fear*. Our self-discipline expands independence.

Independence is open revolt against fear. Fearlessness is the independent and natural state of the mind. A fearless mind alone builds the path of independence. *Independence is our most fundamental proclivity — and fearlessness is independence's root.*

Expensive or Cheap — The Market Culture

Not everything expensive is necessarily better. What determines the price of any item — no standard or benchmark has been established throughout the world, nor will it perhaps ever be. Yet most people do not consider what is expensive as open looting. The longing to obtain the expensive remains continuously in the human being — but the courage to reject it does not always arise in the mind.

This is a strange contradiction: we smoulder inside about the expensive — but the mental preparation to reject it, question it or consider it open looting simply cannot form. One thought also arises: if we reject the expensive, the world will consider us poor, destitute and without economic standing. This false fear is also an important factor in the expansion of the empire of the expensive.

The civilisation run by money makes the human mind money-centred — the result: the human being knows, accepts and understands every activity of his life on the basis of money. Today, the item, thought, service or technology that is very expensive — at first glance we have gotten into the habit of considering it good. The result: our life is continuously becoming stressful precisely because expensive life has become our life's pattern.

We adopt expensive things in our life because we feel: if we reject expensive things, we will be considered of the weak

section. This very thinking has made every expensive item an instrument of open looting. *If the attraction for expensive grows, the stress of life will never end.*

Our entire being — wise and unwise alike — is silent about price rise. Life's sighs continue — yet one never tires of admiring expensive things. Expensive has become not a challenge but a display of wealth in life. We are troubled not by the expensive but by the cheap.

Our obsession with expensive things has made open looting a legitimate form. The result: our society and democracy, filled with extreme inequality and contradictions, has on its own been transformed into an open looting-system.

Good and Bad

Will it ever be possible that the world's people become so healthy and joyful that no complaint ever comes to their mind? Yet healthy and joyful people can also have complaints. The human being is such a creature that he can even have complaints about himself.

We associate good and bad with a person, thought, conduct, work, custom, means, organisation, society, language, dress, speech, caste, song-music, sound, painting, food, property, religion, country, resource and technology. But good and bad are relative assessments. The good I consider may not seem good to everyone — some may find it very good, some less, some not good at all.

One view is: never harm anyone. Another: you cannot live by being good. Another: be good with the good and bad with the bad. Speaking truth is good, speaking falsehood is bad. Even accepting that good is the best, we cannot live with conviction and insistence on goodness throughout life.

Badness works as a teacher for us in a sense — it teaches us what is bad so we can avoid or distance ourselves from it. Even knowing and understanding the importance of goodness, we cannot abandon badness — nor can we adopt badness in place of goodness.

Day is day because it is always luminous. Light ends — day ends. Similarly, goodness is itself automatically good. In goodness there is not even the most subtle trace of badness.

Night and day have a certain fixed sequence — but goodness and badness have no sequence. Everything depends on our thinking and state of mind.

Goodness keeps our vision of life always broad and filled with understanding of naturalness and ease. *Goodness is the sattvic form of life and badness the tamasic. Goodness is living beyond greed; badness is living with greed. Goodness is for everyone's welfare — not for keeping and hoarding with oneself.*

Democracy and Dissent

Democracy is not the system of unanimous consent alone. "Everyone must agree on everything" — this can be the life-force of monarchy, feudalism or dictatorship — but in democracy, the presence of dissent is what makes democracy alive. Even if everyone agrees on something and a single person dissents — considering and ignoring that single, fearless voice as a minority is not a living democratic system. *Democracy becomes complete and effective not by name but by allowing and continuing to raise even a single fearless voice.*

Democracy is the system of the ruling-side and opposition's discernment-born wisdom. In democracy, dissent carries the fundamental right for everyone to express their thought or opinion. No one can be stopped from intellectual expression. Though decisions in democracy are by majority, the fundamental right to dissent from the majority is always available to dissenters.

India's democracy has been around for 75 years. India is the world's largest democracy. Yet dissenters and dissent are not welcomed wholeheartedly. All the agreeing opinions immediately attack the thought of dissenters. If dissent had no meaning, the idea of democracy would never have been born in the world. The coexistence of dissent and agreement together is what makes real democracy run and be continuously refined.

In Indian democracy, most political parties do not give their MPs and MLAs the right or opportunity to freely choose their

leader. The Constitution gives freedom of speech — but in democracy, party workers and leaders rarely get the opportunity to speak freely within their own party. Even in democratic political parties, workers — out of fear of leaders' displeasure — cannot muster the courage to question their own leadership.

We talk of democracy — but most of our conduct continues to nourish feudal tendencies. That is why, in Indian politics, supreme leadership receives continuous glorification — but the fearless personality and achievement of citizens and political workers has not been able to shine in the way it should.

The absence or decline of vibrant citizens and thoughtful party workers who deliberate is transforming Indian democracy into mechanical mob-rule. *Even after 75 years of independence, if mutual deliberation has nearly ended — then citizens and democracy will exist in name only, not in function.*

Gandhi at 150 — The Power of the People

The child born in Porbandar on 2 October 1869 — 150 years ago — is present even today, more than 150 years later, as an inspiring flame in our personal and public lives, for all of humanity. Gandhi is not a question for any of us — he is the answer.

Gandhiji gave the method of satyagraha — truth and non-violence — as the practical means of bringing fearlessness into the mind. *"Neither will we frighten, nor be frightened. We will not speak untruth, nor will we ever abandon truth."* The principle that fearlessness in the mind of the most ordinary person is the simplest means of making life truth-committed was instilled in people's hearts and minds. Through this, India's freedom struggle showed all of humanity a new and unique path.

Gandhiji considered no work small and no human being lesser. Physical labour as a regular part of life — this is Gandhi's science of well-being. Food, shelter and clothing from local resources — everyone can bring sustainable and natural self-reliance into their own lives with ease.

Gandhiji's benchmark for government: when making any plan, the measure should be whether the most impoverished citizen of the country and society is benefiting. *"Our mother earth has the capacity to fulfil the needs of all living beings, but not the capacity to satisfy the greed of even one."*

Even seventy-two years after Gandhi's passing, we neither

trust ourselves nor trust each other. Gandhi had said: "*A single drop of water has no power on its own — but when it merges into the ocean, the ocean's power becomes the drop's power.*"

If the simple natural conduct of Gandhi's life becomes the simple natural conduct of all our lives, then India can become such a country of people's energy that no one will be ill and no dispute will be born among us. *Gandhi's simplest thoughts and conduct are our lives' natural, eternal and ever-fresh joy.*

Birth and Death

What is life? What is it not? Deciding this is both simple and challenging. One understanding is that life is only life — nothing less or more. But this stops the conversation before it begins.

Life is eternal — a series of continuity that governs birth and death. Birth is the incarnation of the living being as a creature, and death is the creature's dissolution into the formless. Life can also be considered the endless series of the creature's transformation from incarnate to formless — like the waves of an ocean.

For the creature, life is the most important time. The creature's fundamental desire is generally to remain in incarnate form, not to dissolve quickly into the infinite formless. Most of us want to celebrate a festival at every occasion of life beyond just the creature's natural form.

The festival of life forms in the natural world — the spring flowering of mango, the butterfly-flight festival, the rain announcing new life — all these are examples of the natural, fixed cycle of creation's festival tradition. Life too is in a sense a game — which we must play throughout life on this earth with the support of mind and body.

In the ancient world — death through war, in defence of honour, of belief, through illness, by devotion — all these carried their own complex, diverse meanings. *The jain tradition of Sallekhana and Santhara sees death not as the end of life*

but as the culmination of the spiritual practice of life.

Mrityu — death — has been both feared and embraced, mourned and celebrated, across human civilisation. The way in which a culture approaches death reveals much about how it understands life. In the end, both life and death are nature's eternal gifts — two poles of the same flow.

All of us who have been expressed in some form of life on this earth — whether we want to or not, believe it or not — our life itself is a festival. That is why the festival-nature of every creature continuously remains dynamic throughout life — forever advancing this earth's life in an ever-fresh life-cycle.

Swadeshi — The Philosophy of Local Self-Reliance

Our folk-understanding teaches us: what is *deshi* — indigenous, local — is *swadeshi*. Thus the meaning of swadeshi is not "not foreign" — but being indigenous, because someone can be formally swadeshi yet in every dimension of material life be entirely dependent on others.

Swadeshi is not a shallow and narrow concept. It is the name for continuously and together living the life's journey connected with the strength of the individual and society's mind and body — *this is the swadeshi spirit*. The sprouting of swadeshi happens on the ground of self-reliance.

Swadeshi is not the narrow philosophy of "mine and yours" — but the life-skill of local society throughout the world. The meaning of swadeshi: every human being getting — in the place he resides — through his own surrounding area's means, the ways of living self-reliantly with dignity on equal terms.

The narrow interpretation of swadeshi would be: a product made in the country. But a product that establishes monopoly over the means of living of the country's people, making those who produce by hand unemployed — cannot be considered swadeshi. The meaning of swadeshi is dignity and work for all — not eliminating the opportunities of those who work with local means.

In India's folk-mind, the general belief is: one's root village is

one's *desh* — country. That is why when people go to their village they say "*desh ja rahe hain*" — going to my country.

If we understand swadeshi from a spiritual perspective: the body given to us by nature for life's incarnate form — this is our *desh*. Everything we produce through our own body-labour for ourselves, family or society — this is essentially the incarnate form of swadeshi.

Global contemplation and body-labour-based life — this is the soul of swadeshi. The swadeshi of speech and the swadeshi of conduct — understanding the difference between these two, we will become unified with the vast global power of swadeshi.

Citizens, Silence and Expression

Even a free society cannot fully tolerate expression. Words, thought and language cannot be free of dignity — and this is unwritten civilisation. Our speech can be lethal and constructive both. Our silence or quiet is also expression. Our speaking can cause noise, disagreement, disrespect and opposition — but remaining quiet can also be the height of expression.

Silence too has many meanings — deep meanings. When people are quiet, their silence is eloquent. Remaining quiet is not always being neutral. Deep silence is the harbinger of change. Some people are troubled by noise — some don't want any noise to arise. Understanding noise is important.

From someone's way of speaking or manner alone, people generally sense what kind of person the speaker is. Our banter can be lethal and constructive both — our silence or quiet is also expression. Our speaking can cause noise, disagreement, disrespect and opposition — but remaining quiet can also be the height of expression.

These days, the system is more worried than the people: "Is anyone raising any question?" Often people don't raise questions because the system doesn't listen — and often questions don't arise because there is no answer. The system should speak less and listen-understand more. But these days, the system continuously speaks and listens-understands less.

From the silence of people, the system can get relief — but

from people's question-raising, it feels challenged. The system prefers people's silence. *People's voice helps the system become effective.* The freedom of expression extends mental slavery and expands civic consciousness.

In democracy, both expression's clarity and sharpness, and silence's deep eloquence — both raise questions on the very process of raising questions. *Silence in democracy is the disrespect of the people. In democracy, the people should be living and the system full of public sensitivity.*

The Farmer's Movement

Every movement's fundamental thought may not succeed completely — but in every movement a possibility of making a dream come true is certainly hidden. *Life is a conceptual movement* — that is why it keeps flowing with the thoughts of ever-new experiments. Governments come in many forms and colours, but a movement always has one form and colour: raising life's questions fearlessly with the full force of humanity, and continuing to seek solutions.

As long as there is life in the world, movements will continue. Movement is in a sense the life-force of dynamic life — or the eternal heritage of life. *Life is movement, or movement is life.* The people, public or folk never fear movements — movements are like the life-force of the people.

From the people's life-force, every kind of government's sensitivity should grow — but no government welcomes movements, nor does it initiate dialogue on its own. Even responsible governments generally want to remain indifferent or unresponsive to the questions of movements.

Governments' indifference to movements reveals their fundamental shortsightedness in conducting governance. *Movement is an open opportunity to understand the questions arising in the public mind* — this governments of the world cannot understand. And governments get entangled in trying to end or crush movements — instead of finding a solution to the problem, they throw their strength into a battle with their own

country's people.

Agriculture and farming is the basic natural work that maintains the continuity of life. The farming community is generally engaged in the natural, continuous productive work of agriculture. In this country and world, people have always together resolved the daily life questions of existence — arranging bread together. This is the life-force of today's farmer's movement.

India's farming community — in its agricultural lifestyle — is not a worker-for-wages or a salaried, mechanical, system-operated working group. It is a living, decentralised community present in every corner of this country — which, with its own understanding, resources and cooperation, produces not only its own bread but also the food of the village, country and world. *This is the open question of all our lives — whose solution we will have to find together.*

Part Seven

Corona, Crisis and the Human Spirit



*"The smouldering question mark of today's era —
fearful silence cannot give an answer to it."*

Corona, Democracy and Lockdown

India is a democratic country — but in the corona era, our democracy split into two parts. First: the ever-stirring people. Second: the continuously uncertain system. Corona not only created a pile of challenges and questions in people's lives and minds, but the endless desire for a secure life also created many new stirrings. But on the other side, India's democratic system — almost entirely — remains in a perplexed silence.

In the corona era, almost the entire system became entangled in the challenge of corona — and other normal activities became almost lax. India's Parliament and legislative assemblies have not been able to come to the mental state of conducting normal work. Parliamentary and legislative work is almost completely at a standstill.

The most important thing is: even in the system's and governance's perplexed silence, the stirrings and endeavours of life and effort in some form or other are continuously maintained. The educational, knowledgeable, administrative and youth energy — with all these mental, economic, administrative and political forces — why does everyone appear helpless? One thing we all must understand: such a blind situation and challenge has come for the first time in human civilisation.

Today we have no ready-made solution from the past. From the events so far, the hollowness of the vast governance system we have built has been exposed in such breadth — that escaping

from or recovering from it — every living human being must think and contemplate and develop and make real a path of their own.

We all — our home, family, society and livelihood, education, health, justice, transportation — with all the dimensions of life — by continuously building a path of recovering from anxiety-stricken mental states — the challenge that the corona era has placed before our people and system — cannot be solved by anyone other than us. *We must never forget this.*

The human being's continuous collective thinking and mutual thought-exchange — the combined strength alone is the only available remedy. We are not using it — instead keeping the human being's thinking power continuously diminishing in a fear-stricken mental state. *We all must think, understand, contemplate and seek the means of a new secure, normally functioning way of living — only then can a fearless governance system be built in our public life. This is the only available remedy.*

Fear and Fearlessness — Corona

"I am a smouldering question mark — if you remain silent, who will give the answer?"

— Ramkumar Chaturvedi 'Chanchal'

The pandemic has lit so many question marks on the life, society, governance, administration, commerce, production and distribution of the everyday world — that wrestling with them will remain the open challenge of the future of humanity. All of ever-dynamic humanity is stunned. Will we all, scorched with every breath, remain in fearful silence — or will some path for secure civic life sprout in our inner selves?

We are afraid — and we need to understand why. The human mind prefers to remain under the canopy of hope and trust. Despair reduces the speed of the mind. Even in a completely secure home with all one's family, despair does not let enthusiasm arise. But today's world's fear is not mere despair or hopelessness.

Knowledge and ignorance both play important roles in determining the human being's state of mind. Knowledge often increases fear — the mind generates many kinds of turbulence. Ignorance generally maintains fearlessness as a factor. An unknown danger, whose knowledge is absent, creates no fear of danger even when the danger exists.

The corona pandemic made all of humanity fear-stricken in such a breadth as no previous global epidemic had. It exposed

the hollowness of our language and thinking. We are blaming each other for the disease. We are not recognising the infectious power of the disease.

The natural human being is the one who lives self-reliantly in small, mutually cooperative and sensitive units — fearlessly, alertly, one breath at a time. *Artificial life's hollow fear — through this pandemic — has introduced us to ourselves.*

From fearfulness to fearlessness — a step arises in the human being's mind when, without getting entangled in the debate of knowledge and ignorance, one begins to see oneself too as part of nature. The moment the feeling of becoming one with the world comes to the mind — all fears dissolve and the human being's mind merges into the stream of fearlessness.

The smouldering question mark of today's era — fearful silence cannot give an answer to it. Our mind's resolve alone can, across the entire earth, make the natural, self-reliant chain of civic society's endless threads descend upon the earth.

The Migrant Worker — Village vs. City

In a vast land like India, even today there is no comprehensive vision and initiative for ensuring continuously available local employment in small human settlements. The mass of people who live on the strength of their body-labour have, generation after generation, left their settlements, villages and families, and gone to large, medium or small towns and cities.

The greatest quality of labour-committed people is that they know how to run their life anywhere and at any time, only through the exchange of labour, with the strength of body and mind. In the corona era, these labour-committed people came into discussion because in lockdown they were going from metropolitans and cities back to their home-villages. Not hundreds, not thousands — lakhs. Not one or two — but masses set out on foot, with the strength of feet and courage of mind.

For the village, walking long distances is a very old pattern of life. The village life runs daily on foot — from morning to night. The biggest question or problem for the village is: there are simply no resources and opportunities for earning food throughout the year in the vicinity of the entire village settlement. That is why the migration of employment in Indian villages continuously increases every year.

In India, instead of increasing employment opportunities in villages, the agenda of continuously expanding cities is the main cause of employment migration. The pandemic has raised

deep and fundamental questions on the daily life security of any crowded urban settlement.

An anxious mind cannot build a secure and vibrant society. Today's challenge is difficult — but the solution is not impossible. We have not been able to establish fundamental equality in our lifestyle in our public life and folk-consciousness.

In the future, let us lock down urban expansion — and in villages, expand the means and resources of livelihood and life-sustenance so much that migration for livelihood almost stops — and people understand staying where they are, stay home, as the synonym for secure life.

Virtual World, Real Fights

Fighting is a quality or defect of the human being — no further commentary on this. But today in the virtual era of information revolution, even people of naturally calm and simple temperament throughout the world have gotten entangled — and have now begun to continuously remain — in the whirlpool of fights while just sitting at home.

The real world and the virtual world are as different as sky and earth — yet today's world population is increasingly addicted to the virtual world more than the real world. The dazzle and speed of the virtual world is perhaps the main factor in the human being's infatuation with it.

From the beginning of life, the human being could only know, understand or see the real world through direct encounter. The virtual world created the world's biggest revolution — now no need to go anywhere for anything. Sitting anywhere, all day, all the small and large activities of the world — even those with which you have no direct or distant connection — are present in your life at all times through the movement of your fingers.

Information technology has had a remarkable effect: it has fragmented our privacy and brought it within everyone's reach. In today's world, only that human being who does not consider information technology a subject of his use has the joy of his own privacy.

The era of information technology — before this era, opening and reading someone else's letter was considered not only bad

manners but a well-recognised unwritten convention of civilised life. Today, the entire range of privacy has been brought before the world voluntarily — and yet people are happy, because while their own privacy is gone, they have gotten the endless instrument of interfering in others' privacy.

We are transforming from direct, natural, free people into mechanical herd-walkers of the virtual world — and this is the open question of the present, which in our personal and public life, we are knowingly ignoring.

Children During Lockdown

These days children are having fun. Adults are very troubled — not by the pandemic, but by worry and needless conflict. Adults have big worry about children's future too. That is natural — children are the country's future. But children have neither worry about the present nor the future. Worry is not children's jurisdiction — it is adults' special privilege.

In our country, there is a very large number — perhaps crores — of such children who never went to school at all, and are merrily immersed in their own fun. They have the fun of the present and a self-created, worry-free abundant future. The children of the formless school — children who learn from their surroundings. Children swinging in fun.

The children of small villages wander more in the village than in the home. The village itself is their home. Children of tribal areas build on their own a broad understanding of forests, mountains, rivers, various animals and plants — without being taught. They have almost no literacy — but the general knowledge of daily life comes on its own through direct experience.

Worry-lessness is the greatest strength of children. The innocence, naivety and simplicity of childhood — on growing up it goes somewhere unknown. But we adults don't want to learn anything from children — we always want to keep teaching children something or other.

If we consider the child-mind as our teacher, our work-style

can become simple and sensitive — especially in the field of children's education. In children's minds is an ocean of curiosity. Their curiosity knows no end. Without grasping the child-vision's root, we have built such a framework of children's education that we ourselves raise a question mark on our understanding of the child-mind.

Children — whether urban or rural, rich or poor — want the maximum time of their parents. In small children's eyes, the search for the mother is always visible. Children are happy only in the company of parents — *this is the eternal truth of human life.*

People — *Lok*

People means the unadulterated human being. People means those with no special or separate identity. People are not a crowd — they are life's eternal identity. Nothing is hidden from the people — they know, believe and recognise everything. The joy that people get in living with people — eating, drinking, sitting, singing, talking — this is the greatest wealth of human life.

The human being is the drop of life — the people are the ocean of life. Continuous dynamism is the life-force of the people. People don't do the multiplication-division or addition-subtraction of life — they remain natural. Just as water is always liquid, people are always simple.

People neither fear anyone nor frighten anyone — yet the fear of people persists in the human being. "If I do this, what will people say?" Even when people say nothing — the human being hesitates in his own inner mind. The silence of people or their noise — both bind the human being.

When people become a crowd, they begin the herd-walk. A crowd is ready to cheer, clap or throw stones. The crowd's herd-walk is the greatest question standing before the originality of humanity — to which neither human beings nor the people have an answer.

The human being spends his whole life entangled in building an identity — but in the process of building an identity, he forgets the meaning of being a human being. The people never

try to build any identity — they don't even seek the meaning of being people. The people have lived on this earth from time eternal in the way they are — like air, like light, like darkness, like fire, like the flow of water.

When the human being integrates himself with the people — all the feelings of mine and yours, all the lacks of life dissolve into the ocean of the people. The transience of the human being has given the people their eternally vibrant, fresh form.

This is the eternal life cycle that always keeps the people unprecedented — and the solitary human being who considers himself the most superior creature often becomes, in his own lifetime, a former, a bygone.

The Welfare State — Constitution's Promise

India's Constitution is committed to the welfare of India's citizens. All state activities and policies being people-friendly and equitable toward all citizens is a constitutional obligation. Indian democracy, Indian society and the state system — all three — in the rush of accepting the economy of globalisation, have knowingly forgotten the constitutional obligation of the welfare state — thereby depriving the majority of India's citizens of this constitutional protection.

The economy of globalisation has made governance policies market-oriented through the power of the global market. Because of this, people-oriented and welfare-based programmes have been considered loss-making — and the fundamental works that make the life of the common person dignified have been given the status of neglect.

Even in a multi-party democracy, not a single political party has made the weakening of the state's welfare character a cause. This is a deep question about the fundamental character and direction of Indian politics. India's politics has completely abandoned the path of making all the country's people powerful and thoughtful. The country's people themselves are the country's dynamic wealth — whose exchange can be done by making every citizen responsible.

Not a single citizen of ours should feel alone, helpless and unsafe — generally or in emergency situations. This is the

individual and collective responsibility of us all — state, society, all political factions and all citizens.

Our Constitution has provided each citizen the fundamental right of living in a dignified manner. In reality — this is not going to descend from the sky merely by provision in the Constitution. The welfare state exists in theory in our Constitution — but in practice, it appears in a partial and broken form. Our political and social understanding must become broadly equity-based.

Without adopting broad people-welfare vision, we cannot find just solutions to the challenges facing present India. We must understand well: when facing state's arbitrariness or discrimination, the Constitution stands with us — whereas with the global market, we face it alone.

The Constitution's Vision vs. Society and Governance

India's Constitution does not make any distinction or difference among its citizens. The Constitution has given all citizens the fundamental right of equality before the law. But in daily conduct, there are many differences of name and form in Indian society — and the governance functioning under the Constitution is also not free from discrimination.

Thus while there is recognition for the thought-philosophy of equality in Indian society, it is not fully accepted in daily practice or conduct. Our entire thinking and understanding is generally based on adjectives — about ourselves and about others. Our understanding and thinking is generally comparative. That is why we have gotten used to seeing life and the world only in relative terms.

Seeing creature and world simply in a neutral way — most of us generally don't have this practice. Our social and governance consciousness — rather than being of broad understanding — is generally that of discriminatory conduct. Accepting the human being as a natural human being rarely comes to mind.

India's Constitution has the constitutional right of equitable conduct and dignified life — which, even existing constitutionally, appears only partially and broken in form in the entire folk-society and democratic governance.

Today, with the speed at which the population of the entire country is growing — the struggle for life is increasing day by day. The human being's simplicity in living with each other in equity and goodwill will be helpful in making our life active — at the level of individual, society and governance — with the living values of life.

Only by adopting broad people-welfare vision can we build a just, solution-based fairness to the challenges before present India. We must understand well: the Constitution stands with us when facing state's arbitrariness or discrimination — but with the global market we face it alone.

Money and Civilisation

People of today's world cannot imagine life without money. That is why all human conduct, behaviour and thought moves around money. The expansion or development of human civilisation started near rivers. The idea of money came very late in the development of human civilisation — and overshadowed everything so completely that today's human being has forgotten the thought and conduct of a world without money.

Originally, the imagination of establishing money as a means of mutual conduct between human beings came to the human mind. But the small means of mutual conduct became such a large purpose of life. Today's human being is so entangled in the web of money that life without money seems empty to him.

Life is nature's creation and money is the human being's creation — yet the human being values human-created money more than nature-given life. Money has made the human being both helpless and the master of an economic empire. Many people feel: everything can be obtained with money.

The civilisation before money was of labour — exchange of labour met the mutual daily work. This mutual exchange of labour period continued — and even today in remote traditional villages, remnants of this civilisation are alive. In this period, human beings could run their lives with the strength of body and mind — living simply, cooperatively, without the anxiety of money.

A human being can produce endless money — but money cannot produce a single human being. This thought itself is the power of human civilisation. Those who don't consider money as the purpose even today — they believe in the human civilisation that is greater than money's civilisation — and don't let the power of the human mind slide before money's power.

Money's civilisation has created an endless pile of problems instead of enriching human civilisation — problems whose solution is not possible through the power of money alone. *The loss of labour's civilisation to money's civilisation is the story of the reversal of human civilisation.*

Today and Tomorrow — *Aaj Aur Kal*

From time eternal, deeply philosophical and spiritual thinkers have been telling us: we should live in the present. In reality, we live our entire life only in the present. Throughout our lifetime only the present exists — meaning we have today; tomorrow too will be today. Yesterday, today and tomorrow — the simplest calculation of time. But today is eternally only today.

Tomorrow keeps appearing as if coming and going — but today neither comes nor goes and remains always. Just as the sun exists, always — but we have the illusion that it is rising and setting. We say every day: tomorrow will come — but tomorrow never comes. Always only today exists.

If we always live only in today, then why did this saying arise: one should live in the present? Today is always there — but we cannot live the life of today in the worry of tomorrow. *The worry of tomorrow has always been the greatest thief of today's joy.*

All our work-system, desires, plans and the thinking of securing the future are about securing tomorrow. This is somehow the fixed pattern of all our life journeys. We are generally lost in the imaginations of tomorrow rather than in the experience of today.

Today is direct, present experience — and tomorrow is entirely imaginary, the game of possibility. Our fascination is with possibilities rather than with the direct reality. *This is why we*

are all generally lost in the imaginations of tomorrow rather than in today's experience.

The meaning of the sages' and seers' teaching — in the context of being vibrant at every moment of life — is to understand the pointlessness of accumulating resources for the security of tomorrow's life instead of living every moment of life through the continuous flow of life.

Only today is life — therefore living today and life in the security of tomorrow is not possible for anyone. Whatever there is — is only today. Tomorrow never comes into life. Tomorrow's imagination is virtual.

The Human Being — *Manushya*

The human being's conceptions are extraordinary. Conceptions were born from the human capacity for imagination. Human capacity has two dimensions: first, physical; second, mental or intellectual. Physical capacity has a limit — but mental or intellectual capacity has no final boundary. The narrative of human intellect is, in every way, contained in the minds of every human being in infinite forms.

The expression of life happened from the creature. The creature is the incarnate expression of life. Life and creature are both momentary and bearers of an infinite chain. Life was born from the energy contained in the infinite — or energy's incarnate form is the creature, and within the creature's dynamism, life is contained.

What is the situation of the drop and ocean — the same is the situation of the moment and the infinite. The drop contains a fragment of the ocean; in the ocean the drops are dissolved. They are so intermingled that only their combined form appears — not separate. The same with moment and infinite. In principle both appear separate — but essentially they are two ends of one imagination. Imagination is always formless — but the human being considers giving incarnate form to his imaginations the goal of life.

The creature is the drop; life is the ocean in which the plant kingdom is also included. In this world, no two creatures are alike — no two plants the same. Creatures and plants are an

unbroken series of endless diversity. Even a single tree has no two identical branches or leaves — yet amid such differences, there is uniformity in life: the endless chain of birth and death.

Life is like an extraordinary chain of energy — in which somewhere every moment some creature is born and dissolves into formlessness through death, yet the endless incarnate chain of creature and life continues unabated. The dynamism of the formless world has no beginning or end — yet the activities continuously running in the world keep the life-cycle of all the world's infinite creatures going without pause or fatigue.

Life is simple — but today all human beings in this world are continuously making modifications in their imaginations in diverse ways. The fundamental difference between human beings and other creatures: the life of non-human creatures runs in the natural state. But the human being's imagination power, easily turning away from natural cohabitation, is getting entangled ever more deeply in the dreadful hunger to live in a human-made virtual world.

The King's Drum — *Raja Ka Baja*

Playing the king's drum — this has been the preferred work of many human beings for centuries. As long as the king's power continues, most of the subjects — from morning to night, sitting or standing — keep playing the king's drum. Playing the drum is not the king's declared edict. But the king's subjects cannot open their mouths before the king — and cannot keep their mouths shut throughout life either. In such a situation, the safest path seems to the subjects: play the king's drum. Enjoy through life.

Sometimes there are also people in society who not only stay away from playing the king's drum — they also refuse. They say to those playing the king's drum: play not the king's *baja* (drum) — but teach the king his *baja* (lesson). The words are the same — but the difference in essence is like earth and sky.

In today's world, various kinds of democratic governance exist. Yet even in countries where an elected representative gets the opportunity to serve people through written constitutions — even there, instead of keeping civic check on elected representatives, most citizens mechanically, silently, without thinking, play the king's drum.

The continuous alertness and participation of citizens in democracy — this is the life-principle of democracy. Democracy provides elected representatives the opportunity to serve people. Being a king and continuously making people play the jaikara of one's own drumbeat — there is no place for this in

democracy.

In the era of digital information technology, the playing of the king's drum has taken on a new form: whatever pre-made message is sent to the political worker every morning, sharing it mechanically on social media is the sole programme of Indian democratic political party workers.

The civic alertness and participation of citizens in democracy — this is the life-principle of democracy. Democracy provides elected representatives the opportunity to serve people — not the opportunity to make people play the king's drum.

Words — *Shabd*

The human being is the only creature who can give expression to the story of creation. The development of speech — through the human mouth's sound — into various languages is perhaps the greatest collective achievement and heroism of the earth's people.

In today's era, the lethal power of the human being's destructive words is growing faster than even a pandemic. There is no means of breaking the chain of toxic words. Toxic and lethal words grow at every moment.

When the human being has got the worldwide tool of continuously propagating words in written or sound form through information technology — it seems like the verbal dignity of human civilisation has disappeared. Today's human being has become afraid of the virtual lethal capacity of words. Words — instead of being means of thought-exchange and dialogue — are becoming ever-new generators of dispute and human despair.

All this happens because today all our conduct is virtual and behind-the-back. Full-time toxic word-soldiers are being recruited on salary to frighten people of different thought. Ready-made scripts of toxic disputes are given to them and orders issued to fire them like fire.

The same words that ancient human beings coined — but their impatient transmission has weakened the patience of thought and word's inspiring and creative power. Today we are

becoming residents of such an impatient world where unrest, anarchy, injustice and oppression are breaking news that go viral — and peace, goodwill, creative thought-conduct are continuously becoming objects of history.

Just as to avoid the corona virus, after touching any external object, we wash hands with soap — in the same way, the moment toxic words or thoughts come to mind, express them with full patience and goodwill in the inner self — bathed, washed — and then express or write or propagate forward.

Word is Brahma — its inspiring, spiritual and natural power is the first need of today's diverse and crowded world. The speciality of the human being being a human being is embedded in the words propagated by all of us.

Complaints — *Shikaayatein*

Will it ever be possible that the world's people become so healthy and joyful that no complaint ever comes to their mind? But this does not mean that healthy and joyful people have no complaints at all. The human being is such a creature that he can have complaints even about himself.

We never willingly desire sorrow — we always desire happiness and prosperity — and generally our desire for happiness and prosperity is not fulfilled. Thus we become unhappy or complaining. The desire itself determines whether we will be unhappy or happy.

When the endless desire for something or for continuously obtaining something becomes our inner self's permanent mood — often a complaining feeling comes in our life. And we slowly make complaints the means of fulfilling our desire.

Our entire world has become, in a sense, a society of endless complaints. Today's era has placed this challenge before all the world's human beings: that all of us together solve the complaints of the world's human beings.

Why has human society — being the most thoughtful creature in the world — not been able to develop the capacity to solve complaints immediately? While other creatures living in nature have never made any complaint of any kind from the human being or all of human society?

Every human being in our world has the birthright to raise

every kind of question — but neither the individual, society nor state-system has any right to ignore or delay complaints. *Every day questions and every day solutions — this is the incarnate form of a world without complaints.*

Wandering — *Ghummakdi*

Nature has given us all two feet — for wandering. But the expansion of knowledge, science and technology has pushed foot-walking wandering backward and transformed it into a morning-evening monotonous walking ritual. The human being's one pair of feet has left footprints on every corner of this earth.

Wandering is a joyful experience like playing in mother earth's lap — which all of us find continuously in our life journeys. Dense forest is the endless treasure of wandering. Riverbank or mountain stream's companionship as you walk — the joyful experience of this can only be felt by foot-wanderers.

Making wandering the goal of life means considering the entire earth one's home — freedom from buying, building or returning home. Since the human being first took a step, from that point begins the story of foot-wandering.

The thrill of foot-wandering: at every moment we move with new ground and new sky. Human being's curiosity has nourished wandering with full heart. The diverse diversities spread across every corner of this earth keep inviting the human being to wander in every era.

Kakasaheb Kalelkar — companion of Mahatma Gandhi — used to say: all difficult places should be wandered in youth itself. When the body becomes weak, the desire to wander comes — but the body's weakness creates doubts about wandering.

Saint Vinoba wrote about Adi Shankaracharya: *"Shankaracharya walked all of India twice. Born in one corner — Kerala — he took samadhi in the Himalayas and experienced being in his own motherland everywhere."* Shankaracharya's life-basis: the begging bowl. His words: *"Beg and eat, consider hunger as disease and don't hope for delicious food. Whatever comes naturally, find contentment in it."*

Life is a journey. Life is an experience. Life is an open challenge. Life is air, water, soil, vegetation, the extraordinary expansion of biodiversity — in which there is ample room for every life to remain alive.

Life and Food — *Jeevan Aur Bhojan*

Life and food are so integrated with each other that imagining either without the other is impossible. If there is life, food is indispensable. Without food, the continuity of the chain of life is disrupted. The entire chain of life depends entirely on the chain of food.

Nature's feat is that the infinite storehouse of life and food on this earth is continuously in sequence — and the natural cycle of creatures and plants has come from time immemorial and will perhaps remain till eternal time.

The chain of life is in a sense the chain of food itself. One creature eats another creature to stay alive — like the cat and snake eating the mouse. Even within the creature's own body, the unceasing series of birth and death of countless cells continues. Who when is the creature and when becomes someone's food — no one knows. *This is the extraordinary mystery of this chain.*

The human being, considering himself most knowledgeable and most powerful in creation, is troubled about life and food. In the form in which nature has naturally maintained the cycle of life and food — continuous human-made interference filled with greed has created a temporary crisis on the natural continuity of the chain of life and food itself. Now the human being himself is anxious: what is the solution and how?

Mahatma Gandhi in his life and thoughts left for all humanity the formula: "*Our mother earth has the capacity to fulfil the*

needs of all living beings — but not the capacity to satisfy the greed of even one."

The human being's self-control over his endless desires and greed — this alone is sufficient to continuously meet life and food's needs for eternal time.

Life's Motion — *Gati*

The literal meaning of *gati* is the action of going from one place to another. *Sadgati* means always moving — like the sun or air. *Durgati* means bad state or deterioration. In life too this sequence appears at every moment. From birth to death — or from seed to germination, plant to flower, flower to fruit and fruit to seed again — this endless action is also the motion of life.

Motion can also be understood through flow. The flow of life becomes in a sense the cause of life's good or bad motion. In life, everything is based on dynamism. The dynamism of light and air is perennial — but the speed of thought has no measure. Thoughts alone are the determinants of our motion, good motion and bad motion.

In today's era, the human being addicted to motion wants motion in every dimension of life. Compared to the old era's human being, today's human being appears to have decreasing patience and concentration. Hurriedness in everything is an effect we all feel widely.

Information technology's revolution has made the human being such that in just 1-2 decades, the human being's way of seeing, understanding and living has changed so completely. Without moving anywhere physically, the human being got the capacity to conduct work through virtual presence from anywhere in the world — which was not possible before.

The wave-technology's form is worldwide — the expansion of

waves is beyond limits. The dynamism of the brain is open for the world — yet on the bodily or citizen's dynamism of people, there are various restrictions in every country for both domestic and foreign. This is the extraordinary contradiction in the history of human dynamism.

Motion and life, sadgati and durgati, inertness and dynamism — this is nature and human intelligence's extraordinary meeting and the ever-new extraordinary play of life.

Part Eight

Eternal Philosophy



*"Thought, light and air — all three are eternal waves of energy.
They can never be permanently bound."*

The World's Most Powerful Force — People's Power

These days, an easy and fundamental question arising in the mind: what is the most powerful force in India? The answer that will perhaps immediately come is: the ruling faction and its supporters are today's India's most powerful force. But seen clearly, this is not the correct answer. This is a superficial, virtual-understanding answer.

In our country for a long time — from ancient times to today — in the folk-mind, ruling power was never considered the most powerful force. The majority of India's citizens' daily life is not state-dependent but based on the power of their own mind.

The ruling power forces consider themselves the most powerful force. The ruling group's self-understanding is: we are everything and all-powerful. We cannot be told or suggested anything by anyone. The result: even a government elected with a thumping majority appears helpless before the country's fundamental questions.

India's people-power's majority — residents of remote rural areas — on their own understanding, resolve and struggle — continuously produce the basic nutritious food needed for life. Maintaining India's livestock without land and resources — is an extraordinary skill of India's folk-community. India's vast folk-community uses energy in countless productive works without troubling anyone and without expectation.

India's most powerful and continuously life-giving force is India's 1.4 billion people. Not just India — all the world's all people are incarnate orbs of energy.

The people's power is the greatest power — and every ruling faction must always remember this. The power of the ruling faction obtained in its time — if it is engaged in making folk-society prosperous and powerful — then folk-society and the state's power, through mutual cooperation and coordination, will enrich itself daily. Otherwise, in mutual unrest, both parties' power diminishes needlessly.

Hindu Philosophy — Governance vs. Non-Governance

The spiritual experience's eternal flow has been contained in all of our lives' joy from time eternal. But when we abandon the fundamental spiritual joy — overwhelmed by mechanical propaganda — allowing the fundamental energy of thought and contemplation to nearly disappear — accepting the destructive and inert form of "mine and yours" as the only valid thing — then neither does life's fundamental joy become known to us, nor do we experience life's eternal and spiritual form daily.

Our life is essentially bond-free. Even knowing and understanding this eternal truth — we keep binding our life in ever-new bonds and have gotten used to spending our life this way. Life's fundamental form is peaceful, simple and embedded in cohabitation.

From 'Aham Brahmasmi' to 'Tatvamasi' — the entire eternal contemplation is contained — pervading creature, world and entire life in the simplest form of thought. Life is energy's incarnate form; world is the foundational form; creature is the incarnate fragment of time's energy.

Thought, light and air — all three are eternal waves of energy. They can never be permanently bound. Through artificial means, they can be stopped for some time. These are the fundamental energy that determines the speed of life in the world.

The **Sarkari Hindu** (the governmental, politically defined Hindu) is twenty-four hours worried and fearful — always stressed and suffering from high blood pressure. The **Asarkari Hindu** (the truly effective, inwardly acting Hindu) — the mind free from worry — always calm. Always conscious and joyful, spontaneous lifestyle.

The Sarkari Hindu — though conscious — mechanically lives in inertness — busy in the pretence of restraining people's consciousness and unable to know and understand his own fundamental form while alive — thus alive with consciousness yet inertly lifeless. Clinging to invisible dangers throughout life. Cannot understand the experience of fearlessness and joy.

The Asarkari Hindu, since eternal time, has been engaged in learning, understanding, knowing and expressing his life-form — and this series continues and will continue. *The human being is energy's conscious incarnate orb.*

Peace, Thought and Eternal Civilisation

Peace-unrest, thought and ideology — these are all stirrings in the human mind from time eternal. Just as light has natural flow and expansion from time eternal, in the same way motion and flow in mind and body are continuous. Restless mind searches for peace. Calm mind keeps all stirrings contained in seed form within itself.

The thought of seeking peace also arose in the restless human mind — meaning: after expansion of unrest, returning to the fundamental calm form again is the eternal natural order. *Peace is the nature's eternal state of the mind* — in which, as soon as a feeling of unrest comes, the thought of going from unrest to peace spontaneously arises. Peace is the seed form of life's eternal flow.

Eternal religion and thought have always remained in seed form in the human mind — and have remained coming from time eternal. That is why they also got the appellation of eternal and permeated the folk-mind of the entire world in diverse forms. A thought also came: that which gives spontaneous peace to all — meaning all living beings — that eternal feeling or eternal thought; and that which brings unrest to the mind — that sectarian thought.

Peace is the eternal state of a stirring-free mind — which spontaneously integrates the creature with nature. The conscious state's peace is the living example of the conscious form of life's vital energy. Unpeaceful mind is a blockage in the

flow of consciousness of life. Blockages are always momentary — that is why unrest is not eternal.

Ideologies have bound thought and divided human beings into countless forms — using the endless power of human beings' eternal energy in "mine-yours" constricted thinking — building a peace-root confusing maze. *Peace and thought alone keep the eternal civilisation's natural civilisation continuously running. The eternal presence of human life-values in every human mind has always remained. Thought alone is this world's eternal truth.*

In today's era, a new thought has emerged in a new form — the thought of mechanical solution. The expansion of mechanical civilisation is settling in the human being's life at such a pace that the human being itself has become a fragment of mechanical civilisation. *Propaganda takes the human being's thought toward blind imitation — while thought provides the free energy of remaining a free-thinking form from time eternal to human beings.*

The Sanaatan and the Sarkari

Since eternal time, Hindu philosophy, curiosity, life-force and the thought of searching for spirituality — or the human life-style — has been there. Even today in the entire world it is present in the same form. And till eternal time, Hindu philosophy will remain in this form. From the word '*Hindu*', the awareness of such a philosophy spontaneously comes — which it was never possible to bound or shrink in any way. Just as the sky has no shape or type, no interpretation or form, no boundary or bond — in the same way, Hindu philosophy or Hindu thought too is like this.

From where does the sky begin and where does it end — no one can ever decide. In the same way — what is Hindu and what is not — no one can decide this either. Just as truth is always complete — cannot be imperfect or incomplete — in the same way eternal has neither beginning nor end. What neither comes nor goes — that is eternal — always-remaining present.

Eternal cannot be made history, nor can the future be moulded or pushed in any colour and form. Hindu philosophy is essentially the path of self-knowledge. Just as all the water-flows of the earth from time eternal — losing their own self-form — merge into the ocean and become part of the ocean — in the same way is Hindu philosophy — in which the human being can dive for life, can be its fragment — but cannot be the determiner, constructor, redeemer or organiser of Hindu thought.

The **Sarkari Hindu** is always worried and fearful — stressed and suffering from high blood pressure. The **Asarkari Hindu** — mind free from worry — always calm. Never agitated or excited. Neither expects from anyone, nor neglects anyone. In mind, word and deed — peaceful and busy.

The Sarkari Hindu — though a human being and conscious — forgetting his fundamental self-form — claiming to be busy in restraining or giving direction to people's consciousness throughout life — unable to know and understand his own fundamental form while alive — thus living with consciousness yet inertly lifeless. Clinging to invisible dangers throughout life.

The Asarkari Hindu since eternal time has been engaged in learning, understanding, knowing and expressing his life-form — and this series continues and will continue. *This is the eternal civilisation's philosophy of living — to know this, internalise this, and live practicing this throughout life.*

The Most Powerful in India — *Lok Shakti*

These days, a fundamental question arising in the mind: what is the most powerful force in India? The ruling faction and its supporters — this is the superficial answer. But in our country for a long time — from ancient times to today — in the folk-mind, ruling power was never considered the most powerful force.

Ruling power forces — whether or not they believe it — consider themselves the most powerful force. Yet the ruling group's most solution-void, most frightened of fundamental questions arising in the country — are the ones who most consider themselves all-powerful.

Even today, the majority of India's people-power — residents of remote rural areas — continuously produce the basic nutritious food needed for life. India's folk-community uses energy in countless productive works without troubling anyone and without expectation.

India's ruling groups do every work expecting their power and organisation becomes strong. But the fundamental question — having obtained power, how does a sustainable process of finding solutions to public life's fundamental questions continuously emerge? — remains unanswered.

The ruling factions cannot be more powerful than folk-society — but from folk-society itself, ruling groups get the power to form. This is folk-society's democratic life-force. Lok shakti — people's power — is sanaatan. Ruling factions are temporary

events. People's power is the permanent reality of India and every democracy.

Spirituality — The Joy of Eternal Life

The spiritual experience's eternal flow is contained in all of our lives' joy from time eternal. But when we abandon the fundamental spiritual joy — overwhelmed by the mechanical propaganda system, allowing the fundamental energy of thought and contemplation to nearly disappear — accepting the destructive and inert form of "mine and yours" as the only valid thing — then neither does life's fundamental joy become known to us, nor do we experience life's eternal and spiritual form daily.

Our life is essentially bond-free. Even knowing and understanding this eternal truth — we keep binding our life in ever-new bonds and have gotten used to spending our life this way.

From creature, life and world's eternal flow — we got knowledge of infinite time-sequence. The entire time-period from birth to death — the creature's continuous eternal flow from incarnate to formless — we experience all forms, colours and flows of life.

From '*Aham Brahmasmi*' to '*Tatvamasī*' — the entire eternal contemplation is contained in zero to eternal incarnate form — automatically pervading creature, world and entire life in the simplest form of thought. Life is energy's incarnate form; the world is the foundation form; creature is the incarnate fragment of time's energy. Which is contained in zero to infinite in such a way that no one can ever separate it.

Thought, light and air — all three are eternal waves of energy. They can never be permanently bound. Having light yet living in darkness; having the infinite expanse of air yet being deprived of open air; leaving the inexhaustible thought-ocean of spiritual joy — mechanically clinging to a group's ideology and continuously fighting against opposite thoughts — considering this as life. Considering inertness as paramount and negating the conscious element — means negating one's own fundamental form.

Thought too is essentially free like light and air. We get bound in thought's artificial form. That energy — which should make creature, world and life joyful — instead creates an endless stressful environment.

The joyful, non-dual and fearlessness experience in life — *understanding the fundamental nature of thought as the vast orb of consciousness like the sun — knowing, understanding and accepting it — this is the life-principle of eternal civilisation*. To know this, internalise it, and live practicing it throughout life — this is human life's natural, eternal, ever-fresh joy.

Asht Chang Pe — Children's Games

The joy and imagination of child-life know no end. The simplicity and imagination of children's games in India and Asia are unmatched. "*Asht Chang Pe*" — this is not the name of some ancient Chinese emperor. This is the name of a game extremely popular among countless children of India and many countries of Asia across multiple generations. This game taught children from India and Asia — for many generations — the lesson of playing together.

Asht Chang Pe is a Hindi name. Its meaning is: eight-four. Through this one game, children learned the joy of playing together while sitting down. Splitting an imli (tamarind) seed into two pieces with a direct, sharp blow from a small stone — this was the first challenge of starting the game for small children. Splitting the *cheeye* (seed) into two at the very first blow was the child-player's first achievement — and at this success, the child simply couldn't contain himself with pride. If this didn't happen, all the children playing would raise such a ruckus of "not split! not split!" — what is a game without noise and laughter among children!

Things scattered on the earth, and the human being's thinking and creativity, have given birth to many games. The human being is himself the creator of his own personal and collective joy. The entry of external means into the joy of life — and dependence on others — are from the period after the rise of the civilisation of the market.

Today's supposedly modern and developed world's human beings become inactive merely from lack of means or money. But activities in life are not born from sitting inert and lamenting about lack.

Perhaps the greatest sorrow of today's world is that the natural journey of joy in human life has come to a standstill. *The essential quality of life-joy is that it grows by being shared — and when hoarded and confined to oneself, the natural expansion of life-joy becomes muted or disappears.*

Life too is in a sense a game — which we must play throughout life on this earth with the support of mind and body. If our mind is lonely, our life's activities suddenly begin to diminish. To maintain a rhythm in life's activities, the human mind has created many games. Life and play — both are the joyful incarnate forms of life — which we know, but do not always accept. The joy of living is the most profound game we ever play.

Solutions to Life's Challenges — Living with Loneliness

In this vast world of eight billion people, why does any human being begin to feel utterly alone? In such a great world where people are visible everywhere — when a human being begins to feel that he is completely alone in this world, that there is no one to listen to or understand him — or, on the contrary, the thought keeps coming: everyone is busy with their own affairs, no one has time to talk to me.

Another thing that has begun repeatedly coming from our mouths in this era: "No one is anyone's — we want to help but no one wants to take help." This is not only at the individual level — it is running in the inner minds of all public institutions, political parties, government departments, self-styled leaders, social activists, politicians, spiritual gurus and religious saints as well.

The fundamental question is: why are we all unable to trust ourselves and unable to trust the contemporaries in our world? Do we even have trust in ourselves? Can we regard a human being different from ourselves as just like us?

The vastness of the world and the narrowing of the human being's likes and dislikes-based mind have so deeply established the feeling of loneliness in the vast world that the mind — though present within the body — is also beyond the entire world. But the human being cannot maintain his balance in the endless flow of the mind.

The forest appeared on earth — but the human being has developed the way of living life in his own way across the world since ancient times. The human being never found a solution from the way of life he built — and looking at, examining and testing his experiences, contemplation and needs, he made countless experiments in his lifetime, enthusiastically adopted them and quickly forgot them himself.

The human being should learn — in a crowd as well as alone — to live joyfully, internalising throughout his whole life the art of living vitally. Life is natural expression — but living is the game of the human mind. *Therefore, maintaining balance to live joyfully — both in a crowd and alone — is essential. Without this, we can neither live alone nor live with our contemporary human society.*

Knowledge and Labour — Vinoba's Teaching

"The body in which we live is our country. The mind is our world."

— Vinoba Bhave

Saint Vinoba Bhave used to say: present education means reading-writing and sitting on a chair and giving commands. Learning to read means leaving work. Educated people feel ashamed to work. This is a completely dangerous situation — that in society, body and intelligence have become separate.

God has given everyone both hands and intelligence. Therefore, those who are learned should also be hardworking — and those who are hardworking should also be learned. In this way, when knowledge and action, study and labour are joined — the country will progress and the country will be unified.

Today our problem is that knowledge and action have lost their connection. Knowledge doesn't reach those who work — and those who read and write don't do physical work. Because of this, contemplation has no foundation. Gib said: because of contempt for productive labour, Rome's civilisation declined.

Vinoba used to say about education and life: Arjuna faced direct duty while fighting — and to answer it, the Bhagavad Gita was created. This is the name of education. Let children

work in the field. Let some question arise there — then to answer it, give them science or earth-science or whatever other knowledge is needed. This will be true education.

Vinoba also said: There should be no independent profession called 'teacher' — and no creature outside the human category called 'student.' When asked 'what do you do?' — the answer of 'I am studying' or 'I am teaching' should not be needed. 'I farm' or 'I weave' — such pure professional answers, or practical answers, should come from within life itself.

In life, there must be the union of knowledge and action. As word and meaning are different yet always together — so too knowledge and action must be together. Stitched together, they make the cloth of life. This is the unique teaching that Vinoba left for the world — *that education is not something separate from life, but the very flowering of life itself.*



*"Struggle and life are unprecedented from eternal time
and will remain so.*

*Life is unprecedented — but the most intellectual
human being of this world,
in his lifetime, within the system he himself created,
suddenly becomes former from unprecedented.
This is the joyful yet unprecedented play of life's energy
according to the course of time."*

— Anil Trivedi



End of Book

Jeevan Ka Mela — Life's Endless Festival
Essays on People, Truth and the Human Condition
by Anil Trivedi

These essays were originally written in Hindi and published in Webdunia and other Indian platforms.

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If these words have moved you, share them with someone who needs them.

