

# ALL LIFE IS SACRED



T.L. VASWANI



# **All Life is Sacred**

**By**

**T.L. Vaswani**

**With a Foreword by**

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**Sadhu T.L. Vaswani**

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## Publisher's Note, 2022

I first came upon this little book in 1971, and was deeply moved by T.L. Vaswani's simple yet profound message of compassion. I have studied *All Life is Sacred* many times over the years, and have quoted from it in several of my own books about *Ahimsa*, the ancient Jain philosophy of harmlessness and dynamic compassion.

Although the book was first published in 1964, Sadhu Vaswani's message remains more important and timely than ever.

I am grateful to the Gita Publishing House of Pune, India for its kind permission to republish this little gem, which had been long out of print.

*All Life is Sacred* was first published over 58 years ago, and included the now-disused gender-specific terms "man," "mankind," "he," "his," and "him" that were intended to refer to individuals of all genders. The reader's understanding is appreciated.

Although I have been careful not to change Sadhu Vaswani's original words, the format

of the book has been slightly altered: words have been changed from their original British Indian spelling to American, small errors in punctuation have been corrected, and chapters are numbered for easier reference. I have also added a short biography of the author.

I hope that this little book will provide both practical information and inspiration to readers who are working to make our planetary home a place where kindness, compassion and peace form the foundation of our lives.

Nathaniel Altman,

GAUPO PUBLISHING

April, 2022.

# Foreword

This Foreword is written to commemorate the 85th birthday – 25th November 1964 – of Sri T. L. Vaswani, regarded from East to West as saint, sage and seer, and known to his devoted followers as “Dear Dadaji.” In this book you are invited to accompany Dadaji on a miraculous adventure toward the merciful heights of your own heart. As J. P. Vaswani has said of his illustrious uncle: “He speaks – and writes – with the Power of the Spirit. And, as we hear him, his words lift us out of ourselves, and our hearts travel afar to regions unknown.”

I can verify this statement from personal experience, for ever since my wife and I were presented to Dadaji by our beloved friend, Gangaram Sajandas, Editor of the *Mira*, new and wonderful things have happened to us which never happened before!

As I am still a novice on the path, I hesitate to say anything further, having learned from long experience as a writer that the same word which attracts one person may repel another. If you have listened to the Voice of

Vaswani, however, you will know without my telling you that a frightened world can never hope to be a Free World. At times one is tempted to debate this question, but nothing can be gained by a battle of words. Each militant word invites its opposite number, blow is returned for blow, and finally in the foolish scuffle of half-truths, Truth as a whole is lost. Far better to put into action Dadaji's healing advice: "Remember, whatever you send out comes back to you. Do you hate another? Hate will come back to you. Do you love another? Back to you will come the angels of Love."

Fortunately, there are alternatives to fear, hate and cruelty. Instead of a head-on collision in a one-way street, opposing forces can always be creatively integrated. With properly adjusted sails the ship of life may go forward even against the wind. Before men and women of all nations can ever hope to make lasting progress toward world-unity, they must first establish a right and merciful relationship with the individual members of the world-family, starting with their younger brothers and sisters in the animal kingdom.



To unite nations and to keep them united, is a task beyond the powers of politicians and social reformers. Mankind can be brought and held together only in the illumination that comes from the giving – and - forgiving heart of a compassionate pilgrim like Dadaji. When hate and fear and explosion enter the field of endeavor the light of Truth goes out.

If man at present were not stagnating in the barbaric hunting and fishing stage of his evolution, he could not fail to see all earthly creatures are members of one and the same body. If the arm blows off the head or the foot the body does not benefit. Nevertheless, in spite of man's brutal violence, many animals prefer to be with him rather than with their own kind. Animals as well as people wish to feel important. They too, like all other members of the world-family, are seeking higher status. I am inclined to this opinion because my wife and I over the years have lived from time to time in close contact with innumerable denizens of the jungle. A lemur from Madagascar, an African chimpanzee, a Russian bear, a Canadian wolf, an American mountain-lion, an owl from the Everglades Swamp, a vulture from the Andes

Mountains, a twelve-foot Indian python, and dozens and dozens of other creatures from squirrel to elephant. All these animal friends of ours without exception evidenced a touching capacity, each in his own fashion, to express love and – even more than most men and women – to forgive those who trespassed against them.

In return for the trust and affection man inspires in animals by feeding them, caring for them in many ways and teaching them to come to him when he calls, how does he reward them? It seems to me he treacherously betrays their confidence. Sometimes it would appear that man, not lion, is the king of beasts. I shall not argue the point, but merely ask you to consider the facts as you yourself know them to be. As Dadaji says: “Whatever you send out comes back to you.” So is it any wonder the world today is full of frightened men and women seeking to escape the fear and the other consequences of their own cruel conduct by burrowing deep shelter-holes in the ground? But no amount of new shining automobiles, iceboxes, television sets, vacuum cleaners, or air-raid shelters, can cast out fear. Only one

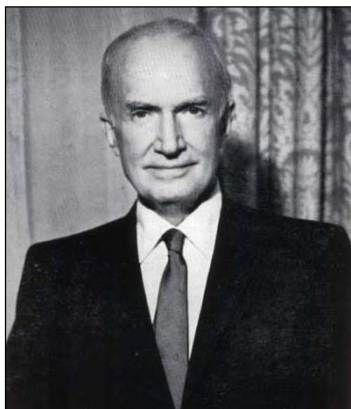
thing can cast it out – it is *Ahimsa*. Nothing short of not-doing will do.

“I do not care who kills who,” says an old fisherman in a much admired fish-story written by a world-famous author who recently won the Nobel Prize. The author himself, evidently didn’t care either, if we are to base a conclusion on the manner in which he lived and died. What a remarkable contrast between the viewpoint of Sri T. L. Vaswani and that of so many contemporary writers and artists who at the present moment are skimming at top speed along the hard superficial highways of the 20th century with neither time nor capacity to communicate the profound eternal values of human existence.

How fortunate we are to have still living in our midst a great and good man like Sri Dadaji, who invites us in this book to set out with him on an individual quest in search of our own better selves. For the traveler who remains faithful to the end of the spiritual journey not only will the scenery round him change, he too will change – *everything will change*. The only sure way to help the whole

world progress is to move forward oneself  
along the Vaswani Bridge of Brotherhood.

Woodland Kahler, Marquis de St. Innocent.



Woodland Kahler (1895-1981) was an American writer who served as President of the International Vegetarian Union from 1960 to 1971. He and his wife Olga were adopted by a French aristocrat, who was heiress to the title of Marquis de St. Innocent. When she died, the Kahlers inherited the title.

# **All Life is Sacred**

# **1. Harm No One!**

Holy, holy, holy, is every creature!

Touch ye these children of the Lord with  
reverence and love!

Harm them not! But serve them in deep  
humility!

## **2. God's Image**

I have seen God's image shining in birds  
and beasts.

I have learnt of them lessons which have  
drawn my heart nearer to Truth and  
Love.

And one of the purest aspirations of my  
life is to be spent, more and more, in the  
service of these younger brothers and  
sisters in the one Great Family of Him  
who loves all life.

### **3. Life is One!**

Leibnitz,\* a German thinker, says that life on earth has three manifestations. Life sleeps in plants: life dreams in animals: life wakes in man.

Yes, life is one. And the One Life, that wakes in man and dreams in animals, is a mystery that we can but gaze at in reverence.

So injure not the creatures that creep or fly.

\*Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646 - 1716) was a German mathematician, philosopher, scientist, and diplomat.



## **4. God and the Angels**

In a pretty, little story, we read that the Angels asked God if there was anything in the world stronger than rocks.

“Yes,” answered God, “stronger than rocks is iron: for iron can break rock.”

“Anything stronger than iron?” asked the Angels.

And the Lord answered: “Fire, for iron may be melted in fire.”

“Anything stronger than fire?” asked the Angels.

And the Lord said: “Yes, water; for fire is quenched by water.”

“Anything stronger than water?” the Angels asked again.

And the Lord answered: “Yes, wind; for wind may scatter water.”

“Anything stronger than wind?” asked the Angels.

“Yes,” said the Lord; “sympathy is stronger. And nothing there be that is stronger than the compassionate heart.”

Compassion, *maitri*,\* will be the key to the new social order.

\*benevolence, loving-kindness, friendliness, amity, good will, and active interest in the welfare of others.

## 5. All Life is Sacred

All life, I regard, as sacred. And, it seems to me, in ethics we are concerned not alone with mankind but, also, with animals.

The ethical ideal, as I understand it, is: Help all life; have sympathy with all life; avoid injuring anything living.

Consider if the animal, too, is not our brother. Some years ago, I read the following:

*“This man careth for all creatures. Are they his brothers and sisters that he should love them? And he said to them: ‘Verily, these are your fellow creatures: they are your brethren and sisters having the same breath of life in the Eternal.’”*

And the words went into my heart.

## 6. Light of Life

Love is the light of life, my child!

O, brightly let it burn each day!  
To bird and beast be ever mild:  
To love them is to truly pray.

In them, too, is His image fair:

Behold it in the light of love!  
His mercy shines in the masks they wear,  
His beauty smiles in deer and dove!

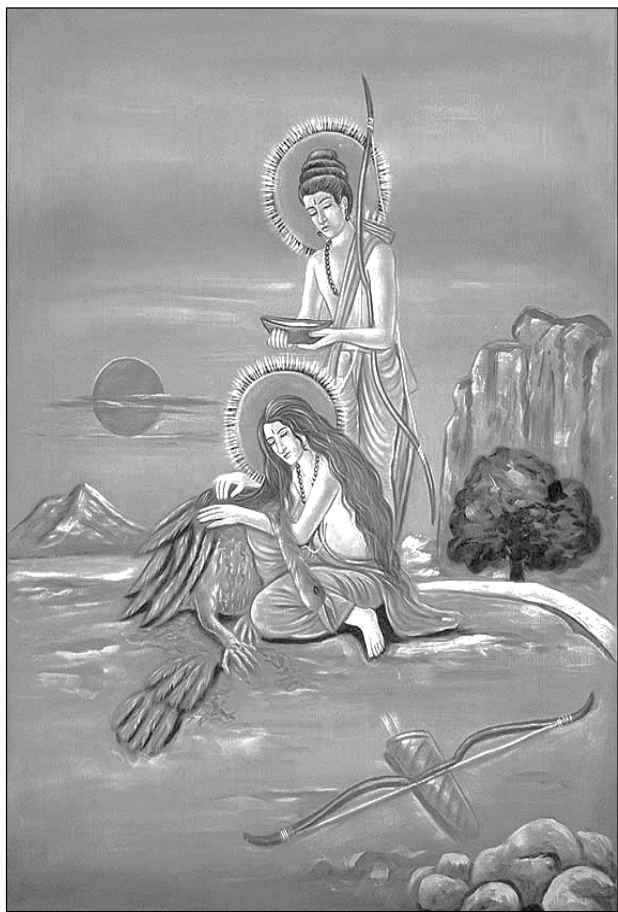
To mother Earth and father Sky

Bow every day, and so be blessed!  
All creatures live to beautify  
The world: harm none, but love's light  
shed!

## **7. God's Children**

For me not to love bird and beast would  
be not to love the Lord.

For His children are birds and beasts, no  
less than human beings.



**Dying Jatayu in the Lap of Sri Rama**

## **8. Is Not the Animal, Too, My Brother?**

If, indeed, Life is One, is not the animal, too, my brother? And am I not his keeper?

Again and again, I have felt that when the life of men becomes purer and nobler, they will realize that they must have reverence, they will grow in the thought that their life is linked with all life.

## 9. India is Not Free!

A cry of sorrow mingles with my morning meditations. O, the burden of the sin of daily slaughter in our cities!

A Free India, I had hoped, would abolish all forms of cruelty to animals. But India is not free. And no nation is truly free until the animal – man’s younger brother – is free and happy.

We have adopted Ashoka’s\* *dharma-chakra* as our symbol. Are we true to the spirit of Ashoka and Ashoka’s ideals?

\*Ashoka was the third king of the Mauryan Empire (322-185 BCE) and was best known for his renunciation of war, the development of the concept of *dhamma* (pious social conduct) and the promotion of Buddhism.



## **10. Stop All Slaughter!**

I have heard educated Indians speak, echoing the words of Western books, of “humane” slaughter. As well might we speak of humane murder!

Stop all slaughter!

Animals and birds have, alas! no language which we can understand and in which they can tell us of their sufferings and pain.

Won't you see in them your brothers and sisters? Won't you behold in animals and birds the shadow of evolving Humanity?

## **11. Whither Civilization?**

Modern civilization has gone astray; it thinks from the head, not the heart.

Animals are become a victim of our “researches” in schools and colleges. We sacrifice animals by testing drugs on them and inoculating them with disease. We inflict tortures on them in order to demonstrate to our students lessons in the laboratory.

Think of the burdens we thrust on animals when we yoke them to carts or carriages. Think of their cries as we cage them in railway trucks or on board the ships! Think of the cruel way in which they are killed in the slaughter house! Think of the cruelties inflicted on the monkeys we export to foreign countries for petty profits! Think of the bloody sacrifices at the temples and mosques! Think of the starvation we inflict on the proverbially faithful animal – the dog!

## **12. Cosmic Consciousness**

To commune with the Earth-Spirit is to have a new feeling for the 'animal' world.

The 'lower' animals are then seen to be children of Mother Earth. To treat them harshly is wrong. To take them to the slaughter house is a sin.

The 'lower' animals are our brothers. This is what the greatest among the great ones of Humanity so richly realized. They had Cosmic Consciousness.

Yes: these animals are thy brothers. Kill them not. Believe me, meat-eating will one day be condemned as murder.

## **13. Nature's Wonderland**

If we could but appreciate the poetry of animal life! Some of the birds are a miracle of beauty in nature's wonderland.

And I have wondered how man can have the heart to catch and kill them!

Larks and nightingales – sweet singing birds – alas! are killed and eaten.

## 14. Lessons in Kindness

In the long ago, he whom I regard as one of the early prophets of *ahimsa*,\* Ashoka, opened hospitals for animals. Such hospitals need to be multiplied today.

Let schools and colleges give to their students lessons in kindness to animals!

Let boys and girls be trained in little acts of mercy, little deeds of love!

\* The term *ahimsa* (pronounced ə'him,sä) comes from the Sanskrit, and has long been defined in the East as “non-injury” or “non-killing.” When viewed in a more vigorous Western context, it means “dynamic harmlessness” or more properly “dynamic compassion.”

## 15. Kinship with All Life

To defend the weak, to guard those that are below us in the scale of evolution, is to grow in the nobility and strength of life.

The beast and the bird cannot speak to us in the language we understand: they cannot protect themselves: for centuries they have suffered for our sins against them.

The blessed Buddha said: "When wisdom came to me, I resolved to defend the weak, and to all living things I gave compassion of my heart."

Yes, with wisdom grows "*maitri*" or the feeling of kinship with all life: and *maitri* (compassion) will be the basis of a new morality, a new culture, a new civilization in the coming days.

## **16. On the Threshold of Heaven**

In an ancient book we read of the great Bodhisattva. On the threshold of Heaven standeth he, about to enter into bliss. Just then from a corner of the far-off earth comes a cry: "Behold! I suffer; is there none to help?"

And the Bodhisattva says: "Back to the Earth must I go for a cry of pain cometh from a human heart."

And back to the Earth he comes renouncing the bliss of the Heaven-world!

The Eternal built the world, we read, out of sacrifice; and in sons and daughters of sacrifice is a people's hope, a people's destiny.

## 17. Who Will Save Them?

The beautiful sentiment of kinship with the lower world survives in our custom of feeding birds and the fish and the ant and the cow. It is a custom most of the “educated” have ceased to respect.

The cry of the animals whom we slay for our sense-satisfaction rises in our cities every day: and see how mercilessly horses and oxen are beaten and driven by the *garriwallas* and cartmen!

Who will save the animals?



## 18. Reverence for the Cow

An important note in Aryan life was, reverence for the cow. The cow was revered as ‘mother’ of the world. “Cows with their milk,” we read in the *Mahabharata*, “uphold all creatures of the universe.”

In the Vedic prayer the Rishis invoke the cow thus: “Rich in blessings, come!”

The unit of scale in the Vedic days was the cow. So we read: “Gold worth a hundred cows (*hiranyam satimatam*)”.

And Aryan India’s Superman, Sri Krishna is always pictured as the supreme lover of the cow.

## 19. Music of Mercy

There is great need of a strong village organization. Volunteers should be sent to the village-folk to ask them not to sell cattle to those who would slaughter them.

Workers should go out into different parts in Krishna's and Buddha's spirit of mercy and build up centers of *daya dharma* – the religion of humanity.

The movers and shakers of India, the makers of history, her true leaders and liberators have ever been the dreamers and music-makers of this dream and music of mercy – the prophets and proclaimers of *ahimsa*.



**Sri Krishna: Protector of the Cow**

## **20. The World's Need**

Piteous and urgent is the world's need of the vision of the One Life in all.

Humanity cries for a new Mahavira,\* a new Buddha, a new Francis to teach us the truth that to love the little creatures is to love God, the Great Lover of the little ones.

\*Mahavira (599-527 BCE) was a Jain spiritual teacher and among the first to preach the message of nonviolence. His simple message "regard every living being as thyself and hurt no one" is the foundation for a harmless life.

## 21. A Vehicle of the Spirit

According to Hindu thought, the physical body is a vehicle of the *Atman* (Spirit). To express the *Atman*, the vehicle must be a fitting one.

Flesh-diet disturbs the vehicle and it becomes less serviceable to express the spiritual.

A musician is at a disadvantage if given a broken instrument.

So the soul does not find it easy to function through a body nourished on unnatural food.

Walt Whitman did well to emphasize the mystic value of the body.

The motive of Hindu fasting, diet rules, breathing exercises, etc., is to discipline the body so that, purified and refined, it may become a fit instrument for the *Atman*.

## 22. Walking with God

The *brahmacharya* body is what Hindu culture aims at.

“*Brahmacharya*” is “moving with *Brahman*,” “walking with God.”

The man with the pure body, the *bramacharya*-body is, to quote the words of the Scriptures, “a companion of the Lord.” Such a body carries about a brain which transmits pure, noble thoughts in the ether. Such a body becomes the vehicle of a mighty spiritual energy. Such a body could not be built on meat-diet or any *himsa*-food.\*

\*food obtained through violent means

## **23. The One Symphony**

In silence, the feeling has grown on me  
that every cow and every dog and every  
bird is a note in the one symphony of the  
universe.

Krishna sings on His Flute for all – not  
alone for thee, proud man!

And all creatures are children of the One  
Divine Mother of the universe.

## **24. New Patriots**

I have tried, in a humble way, to study the struggle of centuries for human rights, for human liberation. And I have bowed to the patriots and martyrs of humanity.

Then mine eyes have been touched with tears: and I have cried a lonely cry in my heart. And I have said to myself: “When will the day come, the day when the great ones of humanity may be banded together for the service of the animal world?”

When may new patriots appear – new teachers – who will be drawn together in service of birds and beasts; of the dog, the faithful animal; the horse, the honest animal; the cow, that looks with mild eyes and looking thus rebukes me, saying: “What art thou doing for the animals that groan in suffering and pain?”



## **25. The Wings of the Soul**

I recall what a Dutch novelist wrote many years ago: “You are proud of your airplanes. But when will your souls have wings?”

The wings of the soul are two: wisdom and sympathy. Friends of the Animal Welfare Association! Build ye in sympathy and wisdom.

Today we are so few. And in my heart wakes a lonely cry, as of the moaning of the sea, when I survey the situation of the world. I see its hard-heartedness: I see its lack of sympathy: I see how the slaughter houses are multiplying: I see how my brothers and sisters – the animals – are being slaughtered every day!

## 26. The Best Prayer

The sacred Upanishad rightly says:  
“*Ahimsa* is *yagna*, is true sacrifice.”

Abolish animal sacrifices!

Surely, true religion should teach us to be guardians of birds and beasts – our younger brethren.

As a Chinese sage said: “The practice of religion involves as a first principle a loving, compassionate heart for all creatures.”

And did not the English poet, Coleridge, voice the very teaching of the Rishis of India, when he said:

*He prayeth best who loveth best  
All things both great and small;  
For the dear Lord who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all.*

## 27. The Secret of a New Society

In ancient India appeared Gautama Buddha, the Blessed One. He went from place to place, from village to village, taking his message to the multitudes:

“Build your society and build your civilization in *maitri*.”

And they asked him one day: “Master! what is *maitri*?”

And the Buddha said: “Friendliness and friendship with all, this is *maitri*.”

And this, indeed, is the secret of a new society and a new civilization, which is our piteous need.

## **28. The Faith of St. Francis**

I am happy, you are celebrating October 4. It is a day sacred to many in many parts of the world as the Animals' Day.

On that day, over seven centuries ago, passed away the great saint, the great awakener of his age – St. Francis.

He was a lover of the bird and the beast, even as he loved the lily and the tree, the sun and the moon and the stars. He loved them all, calling them his “brothers” and “sisters.” He loved them as he loved the simple folk – the peasants – the village-folk of Assisi.

It was St. Francis who said: “May the birds be blessed and every creature that has breath be blessed!”

This faith of St. Francis, which, I believe, you propose to celebrate on October 4, is, to an Indian, the ancient faith of Buddha

and Mahavira. It is the faith which illumined, in our days, the life and teaching of Mahatma Gandhi.

## 29. The Law of Karma

Back of the ideal of reverence for all life and, therefore, the thought of “protection of animals” is India’s theory of *jiva*. *Jiva* is, literally, “what is alive.” *Jiva* is individuated *Atman* or soul. This is different from *prakriti* or matter. The *jiva* is associated with matter, but is not matter.

The *jiva* is in the lower animals, too. They attained to that stage in evolution when consciousness of pleasure and pain appeared. Modern science tells us this consciousness is developed even when the body is in the bacterial stage.

The lower animal, thus, has its “rights.” To voluntarily inflict pain upon it is to violate its rights. Nor can we be unconcerned in causing it pain. For in obedience to the Law of Return (*Karma*), the pain I inflict upon another will come back to me, and the happiness I give to

another will vibrate back to me, adding to  
my own happiness.

## **30. The Voice of the Voiceless**

Our education should not link us only with the poor. Our education should be a communion not only with the needy, the humble and the oppressed. There is a world which is speechless, the world of the dumb ones, the world of birds and beasts.

Mira students should be linked with this speechless world.

The students should be servants of these dumb ones, whom so many of us trample upon in utter thoughtlessness.

May this teaching move on from student to student that this speechless world, also, has its voice, the great voice which calleth us to compassion!

This speechless world may thus become our bond with the Eternal.





**Students of St. Mira's High School  
Feeding Cows**

## 31. The Faith of Tulsi

“Who is my neighbor?” The answer to this must be given by the heart, the purified heart of the awakened man.

Man is the elder brother of the animal. So must man be the animal’s guardian and helper – not his tyrant and oppressor.

A great Indian poet, Tulsi, wrote: “Compassion is the root of religion, as pride is the root of sin.”

A great English poet voiced Tulsi’s faith, when he said:

*If I can spare one heart from aching,*

*I shall not live in vain!*

*If I can help one fainting robin*

*Unto his nest again,*

*I shall not live in vain!*

## **32. The New Religion**

Sordid, alas! and blood-smeared: is this “civilization”? For still we shoot birds and still we enslave beasts of burden and still we slay animals to eat their flesh.

This civilization is built in the blood of creatures and the patience of the poor.

This civilization must give way to something bigger than secular socialism, to a new vision of the One Life in all.

Our urgent need is a religion of Reverence for All Life!

### **33. Groaning in Pain**

I plead for mercy to the animals. Can I, indeed, truly love God, if I do not love all things, all beings that God loveth?

Sometimes, sadness fills my heart, as I think of how so many of us live thoughtlessly, even when we see ourselves being surrounded by suffering.

How oft we forget that creatures groan in pain!

## **34. Teach Our Hearts**

Appalling, indeed, is the suffering of these creatures whose helper and guardian man should be, just because man's mind is richer.

Yet, alas! we let them suffer day by day. We let them go to the slaughterhouse. We suffer them to be tortured.

With anguish in my heart, I can but pray to Him, my Lord and my Master: "O Thou, who hearest the pain of the weakest and lowliest of Thy creatures! teach our hearts to hear their pain, to hear the voice of these voiceless ones, to hear them and to heal them!"

## **35. Prophets of Animal Rights**

History is a story of noble struggles in defense of human rights: and I bow to the patriots and martyrs of humanity.

Centuries have been spent in this mighty struggle for the freedom of man.

Yet my heart has cried, again and again:  
“When may we hear the voice of the prophets of animal rights? The voice of the great saviors of birds and beasts? When?”

## **36. The Sub-human God**

Slavery in its gross forms has been abolished in civilized areas. In a new era of awakening, animal rights will, also, be recognized.

Civilization will become humanization, and men will learn to bend in reverence to the sub-human God.

## 37. The Sin of Current Civilization

The time has come when we should rekindle in us the faith of the Vedic Rishi who said: "Look upon all sentient beings with friendly eyes."

Current civilization suffers from cruelty. There is cruelty in our laboratories: we call it "vivisection."

There is cruelty in our sports and our fashion: how we destroy birds for beautiful feathers!

There is cruelty in our diet.

There is cruelty in our dealings with dogs and horses. This cruelty (*himsa*) is entering more and more into Indian life also. This cruelty reacts on our character.



## 38. Athletes of Ancient Greece

“Man is what he eats,” wrote the great German thinker, Feuerbach.\*

And the Hindu teaching connects *mana* (mind) with *anna* (food). It is not right to say that vegetarian races are weak.

History bears witness to the fact that the athletes of ancient Greece took figs, nuts, curds, grain and bread.

\*Ludwig Andreas von Feuerbach (1804 – 1872) was a German anthropologist and philosopher. Feuerbach is best known for his book *The Essence of Christianity*.

## **39. Children of the Universe**

He, who is inspired by the motive which sees one's own good in the welfare of others, will draw an increasing number to the service of man – the service of the Universe.

And are not the animals, too, children of the Universe?

Yet we send them to the slaughterhouse!

Meat eating, unfortunately, is a growing habit.

## **40. Begin with the Child**

I would humbly ask you to do what you can to influence students' opinion, youth opinion, in regard to animal welfare.

Legislation, you say, yes. But what is legislation? What is the State?

Legislation must work through men.

And if your children are going to grow, in the years of their manhood, to be patriots of the true type, you must ask them to look with friendly eyes upon the bird and the beast.

The State has two sides. One, I call the "form-side;" the other, the "function-side."

Organization is necessary: but it is not so important, I submit, as the functioning of the State. And the State must function through the heart and through wisdom. So you must teach your students, you

must teach young men to think of birds  
and beasts as their brothers and sisters.  
Build your work in the minds and hearts  
of students and youths of this generation.

## 41. The Birds' Share

Near the place of Tukaram's meditations in the forest there was a crop of corn. The owner of the corn often saw Tukaram sitting quietly in the forest.

The owner promised to give Tukaram half a maund of grain, if Tukaram would protect the corn from the birds. Tukaram agreed. But when the birds came for a meal, Tukaram said to himself:

*Are not the birds, too God's creatures,*

*Children of Vitthal, the Beloved?*

*Are they not hungry?*

*Last year a famine spread far and  
wide:*

*This year God hath sent us a crop.*

*Have the birds no share in the crop  
of corn?*

*Must I turn them away?*

*Am I a true worshipper of Vishnu*

*(God)*

*Or only a lip-worshipper?*

*If, indeed, I am a true devotee of*

*The Beloved,*

*Then I must not chase away the*

*birds: I must release them,*

*Then greet them gladly*

*And feed them to their full.*

The birds came, day by day: and Tukaram fed them, day by day – as in another country and another period in history, did St. Francis.

The proprietor of the corn – a peasant – came one day to see the field. He was taken aback when he found that the whole field was empty.

The peasant flew into a rage. Alas! he dragged the Saint by the hair and brought him to the *panchayat* (the city- council). They heard and they laughed: what else could they do?

## **42. An Adventurer of Sacrifice**

Life is one. So do not separate man from the animal or the bird.

The world is full of suffering. It is our duty to build a Brotherhood, a Fellowship of those who would bear and suffer for the poor and weak and serve them with love and compassion in their hearts.

In the measure in which you think you are happy, you must renounce for the sake of those who suffer. You must in return give of your life for the lives of those who are in need and suffering. You must become “an adventurer of self-sacrifice.”

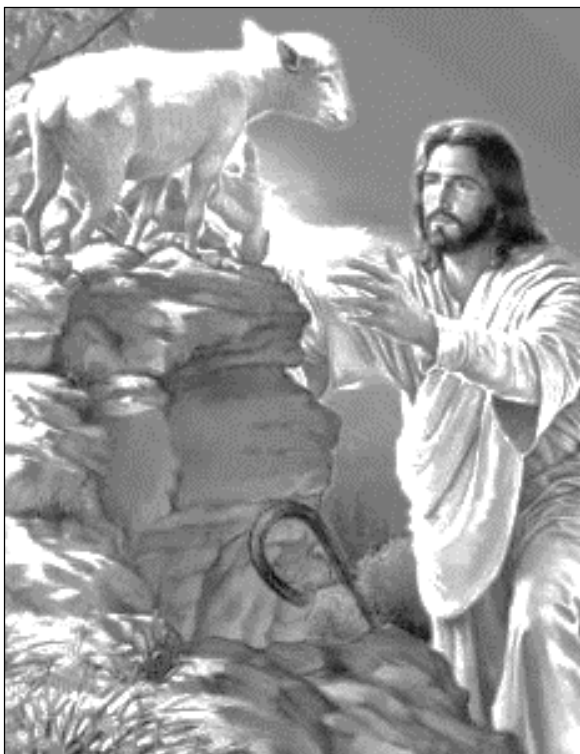
## **43. Blessed are the Merciful!**

There is a Voice within each man. It makes the heart a channel of wisdom and love.

And the more we study the life and consciousness of the lower animals, the more do we learn of their sociality, their intelligence, their emotions, their essential kinship with man.

In justifying the killing of beasts and birds for food, sport and vivisection, Christendom is trampling upon the teaching of the Master who gave the great message of Mercy and Love.





**The Compassionate Christ**

## 44. A Pilgrim's Song

Suddenly I found him in my room.  
His face was fair:  
Silent was he, with tears in his eyes.

“Who art thou?” I asked.  
“A singer,” he said.  
And on his lips I saw a flute.  
“What singest thou?” I asked.  
“Hearest thou not?  
I sing the Love that hath no ending.  
To children I sing: ‘Blessed are ye,  
O little ones!’  
And I sing to hopeless hearts,  
And to those that travail and groan,  
In anguish and pain,  
And to the birds whom we shoot to  
death,  
And the animals we drag to the  
slaughter house!”  
I looked up!  
I gazed at the beauteous face.  
Tears trickled down mine eyes.  
I touched the Lotus-feet of my Lord.

I said:

“Shyama! Shyama!  
Beloved of my heart!”

I looked up again:

He had vanished!

I rose up: and I said:

“O Thou, the Ever-ancient,  
*Puratanam!*

Still dost Thou sing

With the stars and the moon

And the sun!

A pilgrim am I

On the Unknown Way!

Thy shelter I seek.

And I am a lover of life.

May I love

Every bird and every beast,

And every insect that crawls,

And every creature that loves the light

And may I love the little ones!”

## **45. Humanitarianism**

The modern world is face to face with many problems. To solve them we need the light of a New Renaissance and a New Faith in life. Humanitarianism is rooted in Faith in life.

The eminent French thinker rightly said: "The heart has its reasons which reason knows not."

The world is waiting to listen to simple things and simple men.

Humanitarianism stands for the gospel of simple life and the spirit of creative sympathy.

Humanitarianism is inspired by an intuition of the kinship of all sentient life, a vision of the Fellowship and Brotherhood of life.

In the larger sense, humanitarianism covers the whole field of unselfish service.

## 46. Reverence for Life

Reverence for life is the fundamental concept of ethics. Ethics is reverence for life. Its one essential rule, one *sadhana* is that I give myself for other lives. For, all life is sacred, even the life of savages, of primitive peoples, of uncivilized ones, of wild jungle men, of the criminal, the robber, of the bird and the beast.

All life is sacred. All life has its claims on every one of us. True ethics, therefore, rests on a recognition of this thought – the reverence for life.

When we renounce this reverence for life, we sink into unreason, into thoughtlessness. Every time there is war, there is lack of thought. War is irrational and, as results have shown, no party in the war really wins. War is a game of unreason.

Reverence for life includes (1) sympathy or fellow-feeling and, (2) something more i. e. love.

Reverence for life is love for all living beings – the whole universe. This reverence makes it imperative on us not to cause pain to anybody. This pain is triple: pain by thought, pain by word, pain by deed.

Reverence for life demands of us unselfish service and devotion to others, and something more, sacrifice for others.

Further, reverence for life asks for love for the Absolute; i.e., love for God, the All-life.

He who is filled with deep reverence for life, becomes creative, releases creative forces and, with the creative powers unfolded within him, he becomes a helper of all. He becomes, what Eastern books call, a *bodhisattva* or a servant of

*bodhisattvas*. Such a man the Gita calls a *karmayogi*.

In reverence for life are emphasized the following elements:

1. affirmation of life;
2. affirmation of the world as a theater wherein is played the drama of life;
3. service, not only of humanity but of all creatures;
4. communion with God through love.

Reverence for life finds its fruitage and fulfilment in the will-to-love. He who is filled with reverence for life (1) awakens his interior life through communion with the Absolute or the Life Divine, and (2) on the outer plane, takes his share of the burden of pain that is found everywhere.

Why is there pain? Who can answer the question? Pain is a mystery, for life is a mystery. Enough for him, who has reverence for life, to know that there is pain, there is suffering. Enough for him



to say: “I, too, shall bear a part of the burden of the pain that makes the life of the world and the life of humanity.”

## **47. Building a New World**

A Free India must need to co-operate with the forces for the making of a New World.

And if, indeed, a new world is to emerge, we must strive against: (1) ignorance; (2) poverty; (3) injustice; and (4) cruelty.

The use of knowledge and power for destruction and not for service, I regard as a form of cruelty.

Man, indeed, has gathered knowledge and power. Is he using them for service or for destruction?

Sympathy, I regard as a fundamental law of the life of everyone who would build and beautify the world.

## 48. Yudhishthira and the Dog

Yudhishthira of the Great Heart stands—so we read in the *Mahabharata*— before the gate of heaven.

And the Angel at the gate tells him:

“Come! enter thou the heaven!”

Yudhishthira says: “The dog is with me!”

The Angel says to him: “You must leave the dog behind.”

Yudhishthira says: “Faithful has been the dog to me: I cannot leave the dog, no! Not for the sake of God!”

“Come!” says the Angel; “let the beast stand outside. Enter thou!”

Yudhishthira says: “I cannot enter heaven alone!”

And the dog changes its form. The dog becomes *Dharma* and says to Yudhishthira: "Well done! enter thou the highest heaven!"

And into the Kingdom of Krishna man cannot enter alone. Man must receive into his brotherhood both bird and beast. And, without their blessings, their association, their comradeship, and without a heart of helpful love, man cannot fulfil his pilgrimage nor enter the highest heaven. In the words of the Blessed One.

*For who beholds in every form*

*The One Living life,*

*Sees all separate living things*

*Issued from the One:*

*Such a one hath Brahman!*

*He attains!*

## **49. My Daily Prayer**

Animals bear the burden and heat of the day. Their lives are guileless. They labor for our well-being. And it is our duty to do all we can to give them our loving kindness.

Every night, as I go to bed, I offer the prayer: "Save them, O Master-Savior of the World! Save them!"

I recall the words of a spiritual teacher of India: "O Father! it is my aspiration that I should regard the lives of all creatures as my own, promote their happiness, remove their miseries and banish their fear!"

## **50. Animals' Welfare Day**

Government may help educational institutions and other associations to observe on a good scale, an Animals' Welfare Day, every year.

On that day, among other things, let birds and beasts be generously fed.

So may the students' emotional side be awakened in the right direction.

So may the perception gradually grow that, as a great student of science observed, "among horses, elephants and dogs, there are single individuals which appear to have almost the understanding of men."

## **51. My Heart is Troubled**

What an appalling slaughter there is of birds! They are shot for their beautiful feathers.

Horses, bullocks and camels are over-worked, lashed and, in other ways, cruelly treated.

How my heart is troubled by the cruelty I see around me.

Horses, cows, oxen, goats and other domestic animals, when they become old and unfit for work, are driven out, killed or sold to the butcher. What a pity! They served in the day when they were strong. Have they no right to pass in peace the evening of their life?

The Turks will never send away an old servant. When age or sickness disables

him from being any further useful, he is looked after by the master's family.

The same rule applies to the animals. They, too, becoming old, are looked after. A traveler tells us he saw an old camel near a hut, passing the evening of its days in plenty and tranquility.



## **52. Be Ye Kind to One Another!**

In training your young children in acts of kindness to animals, you teach them effectively the one great lesson of life: “Be ye kind to one another!”

The best way, indeed, to teach our boys and girls gentleness and mercy to the weak and reverence for life is to let them see these ideals reflected in the laws of the land and in the activities of social life.

## **53. The Indian Government**

Governments, I well understand, move slowly. I can but hope that the Government of a truly Free India may, step by step, arrive at a stage which, indeed, may reflect the Soul of India and the Spirit of Humanity.

Therefore, I submit, that the Indian Government should move in a direction which may be truly humanistic, inspired by the noble ideal of *ahimsa* – reverence for all life.

## **54. Victims of Research**

Today, in many places, animals are victims of research. They are made to suffer tortures in order that students may be shown scientific truths, which are perfectly well-known already. Why not show students experiments with the help of frogs and other animals who have died a natural death?

There are other sufferings of animals, too. Vagrant dogs are shot on sight or poisoned. Then there are horrors of the cattle-trucks and transport steamers and airplanes. Referring to them, a man of letters wrote, not long ago: "If we really knew a hundredth part of the agony of animals, we should rather starve than profit by it."

There are cruelties, too, inflicted on the animals in hunting and circus shows. Think, too, of the roughness and cruelty in our slaughterhouses. Then there are

cocks and hens done to horrible deaths in our kitchen.

These and other sufferings of animals should be put a stop to, as early as possible.

## 55. The Friend of the Friendless Beast

Leagues of Mercy should be started  
throughout the country.

In the Mira School some of us feed birds  
and beasts, every day. In all schools of  
Bharata there should be a network of  
such Leagues of Mercy.

School-boys and school-girls should be  
taught to give their sympathy to birds  
and animals.

Well sang the poet:

*Amongst the noblest in the land,  
Though he may count himself the least,  
That man I honor and revere,  
Who, without favor and without fear,  
In a great city dares to stand,  
The friend of every friendless beast.*

## **56. Which Education?**

I believe all education is defective which does not teach sympathy with birds and beasts.

I believe, too, that without teaching our students to do their best for God's creatures, all efforts at character-building must fail.

## **57. The Buddha and the Limping Lamb**

A story which has moved me much is a beautiful commentary on the Buddha's compassion for animals.

The Buddha is in Rajgir and is, one day, having a walk. He gazes at the beauty of the flowers of the field and says: "O trees and flowers of the field! how trustfully you turn your faces to the sun! And how trustfully nightingales and doves take shelter in you! Alas! Man hurts the birds and slays the animals. The wisdom of man is drenched in blood."

Just then, a flock of goats and sheep passes by. The Buddha finds that the herdsman is driving them with difficulty.

"What is the matter?" asks the Buddha.

The herdsman says: "Sir! there is in the herd a limping lamb. He finds it hard to keep pace with the others in the herd."

Affectionately, the Buddha takes the limping lamb on his shoulder.

Then, the Buddha asks the herdsman: “Why are you driving the herd in the heat of the noonday sun?”

The herdsman says: “I am asked to give the King a hundred goats and sheep for sacrifice in the *yagna* which takes place this evening.”

And the Buddha says: “I too, shall go!”

They enter the city, side by side, the herdsman and Gautama. Meekly walks Gautama with the lamb on his shoulder. They cross the bazaar. And the buyers in the market stop awhile to gaze at Guatama. And women open their doors to see how gently and gracefully he walks – this great lover of peace! He moves on. Many gaze at him, again and again. Many know him not. They have but heard of



him and say: “Behold the holy man who dwells on the hill!”



### **The Buddha and the Limping Lamb**

And the Buddha reaches the palace where preparations have been made for sacrifice in the *yagna*. The man in charge is about to strike the sword against the lamb marked for sacrifice, when suddenly the Buddha exclaims: “Great King! Let not the man strike! Take my life

as a sacrifice, o King! and spare the lamb.”

The words move the heart of the King. He, then, asks Gautama to speak to the people. A few words only does Gautama speak on the occasion:

*O men! you can take life easily but,  
remember, none of you can give life!*

*So, have mercy, have compassion!*

*And, never forget, that compassion  
makes the world noble and beautiful.*

*Remember, too, that all living beings are  
linked together in maitri.*

*Therefore, resolve that you will live on  
bloodless diet.*

*Verily, in gentleness is the crown of life!*

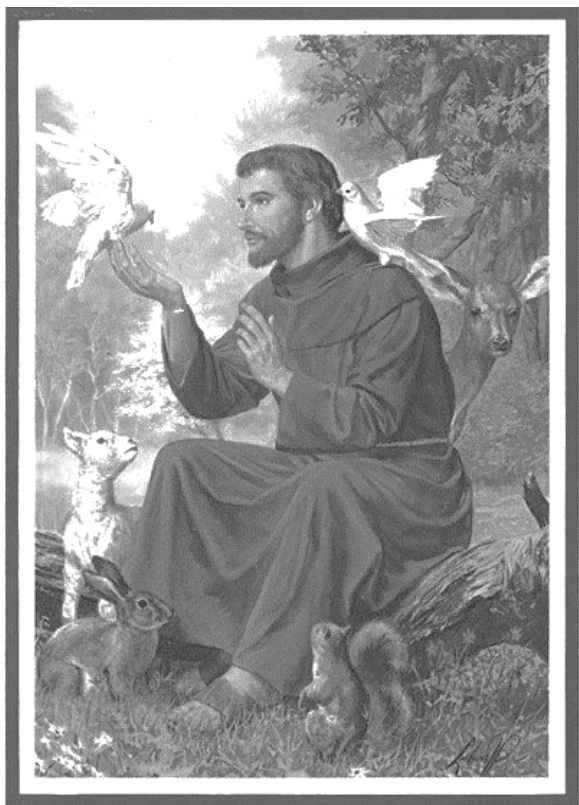
The next day, a decree is proclaimed by the King. The order goes forth that none shall henceforth kill for sacrifice or for private pleasure. For life is one: and the crown of life is mercy or compassion.

## **58. Francis and Brother Birds**

Francis understands what a blessing it is to belong to the brotherhood of the poor. "It were a quicker journey to God from a hut," he says, "than from a palace." And poorer and purer than the "poor" are birds and animals. How much Francis loves them!

A youth has caught a number of turtle-doves and is taking them to market. He meets Francis on the way. "I pray thee, give me these gentle birds," says the saint. The good youth gives them all. And Francis receives them into his bosom, talks to them tenderly, and builds nests for them all.

A fisherman brings to Francis a water-fowl. Francis accepts the bird, then opens his hands to let it fly away. Another fisherman brings to him a great fish alive.



**St. Francis of Assisi**

The saint puts it back into the water of the lake. He speaks to swallows: he preaches to birds.

So great was St. Francis' love for the larks and other birds that he, on one occasion, said in tender, touching words:

*“How happy would I feel if all the mayors of the cities and all the lords of the castles and towns would solemnly promise every year on the day, sacred as the birthday of our Lord, to induce their men to do one thing, to throw their wheat and their grain along the roads beyond the cities and walled towns so that our sisters, the larks and other birds, may have plenty to eat!”*

## 59. The One Great Heart

By One Great Heart the world is stirred:  
The One Great Heart doth throb in  
stars:

Its sorrow beats through strifes and  
wars:

It thrills through wing and song of bird!

And ages name this Great Heart – God.  
In deepest pain, in mother's tears,  
In streams and seas, thro' aching  
years,

In vale and dale, in soft, green sod,

The One Heart works, the One Heart  
bounds,

And makes all climes and creatures  
one!

And still in every moon and sun,  
The One Eternal Heart resounds.

So softly touch the ground you tread: Nor  
harm the worm, the bird, the beast:

For of the little ones, the least  
Is by the Life Eternal fed!

To every creature be ye kind:

Bring beauty to the lives of all,

See God's face in the great and small!

In Mercy build: in Mercy bind!

## 60. Ahimsa

To live the life of *ahimsa* is to live in sweetness and light. To live thus is to grow in the vision of unity.

None is your enemy. You are protected by the Divine Plan.

*Ahimsa* is peace with all. *Ahimsa* is harmony. *Ahimsa* is attunement to the Life Universal. *Ahimsa* is self-surrender to the One Life, the One Spirit, the One Divine Will, that works in all.



## **61. The World's Need**

A new awakening is the world's piteous need today.

Oh! for sons and daughters of Krishna and Christ, of Buddha and Mahavira, of Nanak and Francis, to reveal anew the beauty of reverence for life – sons and daughters who would, renouncing greed and greatness, be among the servants of animals and humanity.

## **62. Hospitals for Animals**

Hospitals for animals should be opened, on a generous scale, throughout the country.

The present-day “Veterinary Hospitals” are, in many cases, a deep disappointment. One of our dogs here was poisoned. We sent on the dog immediately to the Veterinary Hospital for treatment. Strange enough, that hospital had no equipment for giving the dog a “stomach-wash”!

The New Veterinary Hospitals should be well-equipped and spread all over the villages and towns of Beloved Bharata.

## **63. Have Animals No Rights?**

The Government of India should frame a “Charter of Rights” of animals.

Men have their rights: the right to habitation, the right not to be displaced, the right to move freely, the right to justice, the right to education and other rights.

Have animals no rights?

It should, I submit, be the duty of a “welfare state” to see that a Charter is framed to protect and preserve our birds, monkeys and other animals.

## 64. The Right to Live!

The very first right in the “Charter of Rights” for animals should, I submit, be the right to live.

I know, as I have said already, governments move slowly. But I can’t help submitting, as earnestly as I can, my humble view that slaughterhouses have no meaning in a country like India, a country whose deepest soul is pledged to *ahimsa*, not merely in matters political, but in all social and personal matters.

## **65. Ashoka's Dharma-Chakra**

If, indeed, the Government of India would be true to the ideal of Ashoka's *dharma-chakra*, it should use the power, which science and technology place in its hands, in accord with an ethical ideal and in a spirit of sympathy and compassion.

Science rightly attaches value to reason. Is not reason, at its purest, reverence for life?

## **66. The Face of Gandhi**

I plead for animals and birds. I humbly appeal that you will help to protect them from cruelties of fashion, cruelties that are committed in the name of science and research.

These dumb, defenseless creatures have done us no harm. They have no power to resist us. They are victims of our tyranny.

Who will come to their rescue, if not the Government of Free India? O, let your legislation reflect the spirit of the Father of the Nation! Let your laws reveal the radiant Face of the great-souled Gandhi!

## 67. The Task Before India

It will be to the glory of India and the enrichment of the life of humanity, if the Government will rise equal to the task of opening research laboratories for making synthetic meat equal in taste and nutrition, if not superior, to animal flesh.

All slaughterhouses would then automatically be closed down. Such research laboratories would be India's witness before the world to the great ideal of *ahimsa*.

## **68. The Angel of Compassion**

Asia and Africa, Europe and America!  
Listen ye not to the Call? Slowly, slowly  
cometh Compassion with a stronger  
power than Communism.

In little groups, in unknown men, on the  
glancing wings of pretty birds and the  
feet of gentle beasts and mild-eyed cows,  
is coming the Angel of Compassion to  
teach our hard and wayward hearts that  
to crucify our younger brethren and  
sisters is to crucify the Spirit of Life, and  
that in loving them we love the One  
Living Life that loveth all things that  
wing the air or wander dumb – the One  
Mother-Heart that loveth all things, great  
and small!



## **69. The Ancient Faith**

St. Francis prayed: “Bless all things that have breath: guard them from all evil!”

To us of India, this faith is an ancient faith – the faith of Buddha and Mahavira, the faith of the Rishi who said: “Look upon all sentient beings with kindly eyes.”

In my daily prayer I lift up my heart to the Lord of all life and say: “O Lord! bless the birds: they sing the songs which purify the heart and reveal the beauty and mystery of life. O Lord! protect the mild-eyed cow and the faithful dog and the honest horse and every beast and every worm that groaneth – from the cruel hand of man!”

## **70. Are You Free?**

Sometimes, I feel that Compassion is knocking at the door of every Free Nation, saying: “You are not truly free until your younger brother– the animal– is free and happy. His keepers are ye!”

‘Mid the ruins of a broken and bleeding West, is not Compassion knocking, too, at the door of every Christian church?

## 71. A Humanitarian's Prayer

We are asked to offer prayers not only for creatures on this earth but for all living things in all the worlds. Here is one such prayer offered us for guidance:

*In all lands may all the sufferings of living beings come to an end!*

*May the beaten be freed from blows!*

*May those who are threatened with death be restored to life!*

*May those who are in tribulations become free from all pain!*

*May those who suffer hunger and thirst receive food and drink in abundance!*

*May the blind see and the deaf hear and women give birth painlessly!*

*May sounds of pain be nowhere heard in the world!*

*May living creatures avoid the low way!*

*May the torments and anguish of those  
who dwell in narka loka come to an end!*

*May the animals renounce the habit of  
devouring each other!*

*May the ghosts be happy!*

*May living beings be liberated from the  
cycle of reincarnation!*

## **72.The Supreme Lesson**

We use the word “animal” for these dear, dumb creatures of God. Are they not our brothers and sisters?

Sometimes, I think of them as our earth-companions of whom, indeed, we may learn the supreme lesson of life – the lesson of compassion.

## 73. Children of Krishna

Of Krishna, the Cow-herd, the Protector and Guardian of every *jiva*, every life-unit, every animal, every creature, may the Mira Schools speak to their students, and so teach them the great gospel of *ahimsa*!

May the Mira Schools, as devotees of St. Mira, teach their pupils to refrain from meat-eating!

May the Mira Schools ask their students to approach birds and beasts, every animal, every creature, in a spirit of reverence, as children of Sri Krishna!

## **74. Pray for All Beings**

One of the great sayings in Mahayana Buddhism is: “As long as living creatures suffer, there is no possibility of joy to those who are full of compassion.”

So the Mahayana asks us to pray for all beings

- (1) that they may suffer no want;
- (2) that all be spared pain and sickness;
- (3) that no beings may be deserted and oppressed; and
- (4) that all beings may pass a happy life free from care.

## **75. A New Civilization**

Current civilization is decadent because it turns a deaf ear to the ever-increasing agony of men and women, of birds and beasts.

The foundation of a new civilization must be the service of mercy or love.

This service grows out of reverence for life, for all life.

In this service is the strength of altruistic men and women.

In this service is the strength which noble servants of humanity and creation receive to bear the burden of suffering and responsibility laid upon them, year after year.



## 76. Thus Spake Pythagoras

Long before the birth of the Christian Church appeared in the West, Pythagoras, the Sage who impressed on his Brotherhood the injunction “not to kill nor injure any creature.”

Flesh diet he condemned as “sinful food.”  
Weighty are his words of warning:

*“Beware, O mortals of defiling your bodies with sinful food! There are cereals, there are fruits, bending the branches down by their weight, and luxurious grapes on the vines. There are sweet vegetables and herbs which the flame can render palatable and mellow. Nor are you denied milk, nor honey, fragrant of the aroma of the thyme flower. The bountiful earth offers you an abundance of pure food and provides for meals obtainable without slaughter and bloodshed.”*

## 77. Mercy, Not Sacrifice

The soul of India has never countenanced the killing of creatures. The Vedas are India's most ancient scriptures. They enjoin "mercy," not "sacrifice."

When the Vedas and the Upanishads speak of *yagna*, they refer to "internal sacrifice," the sacrifice of the senses and egoistic self-seeking impulses, the sacrifice of the "animal" within us.

*Dharma* is the great Indian word for "religion." And *Dharma*, literally, is what "holds," "upholds" creation. "*Dharmo-dharayati prajah.*" *Dharma* is what secures the "greatest happiness of the greatest number."

## 78. If You Will Be Truly Happy

The Hindu doctrine of *ahimsa* (non-violence) is a comprehensive one and it emphasizes the value of *satya* (truth), *brahmacharya* (self-restraint) and *tyaga* (non-covetousness). Meat-diet is prohibited. Do not kill even for “sacrifice”!

This is the teaching of the Hindu sages. The statesman sage of the *Mahabharata*, Bhishma, censures animal slaughter for sacrifice.

The mighty faith of Mahavira, the great Prophet of Jainism, re-proclaimed the truth of the ancient Vedic Rishis. Over and over again he taught: “Regard every living being as thyself, and harm no one.”

In his last sermon given on the last day of his earth-life, Mahavira said: “Destroy the bondage of *karma*. Be kind to every

creature!” “O man!” he said, “thou art thine own friend!”

Yes, man is his own friend; he, also, is his own enemy. For there is the great Cosmic Law that what you do comes back to you. What you do unto others, you do unto yourselves. Therefore, be kind to all, if you will be truly happy.

“You are your own friend.” Yes, and you are your own enemy! Be your own friends! Do not be your enemies!

You are all in search of happiness; then make others happy.

He who blesses others is blessed, and he who injures others is injured. Such is the Great Law.

## 79. The Lamp of Love

“Beasts and birds,” says the *Koran*, “are a people like you, and to their Lord shall they return.” One of the great sayings of Muhammed is: “Creation is a family.”

Gautama Buddha realized this truth on that eventful Vaisakhi when, sitting beneath the Bodhi tree, he saw creatures as a chain of causation, and the world as a wheel of Karma. And to live aright, he taught that one must walk the way of *Dharma*.

Buddha gave the message of *Dharma*, of *Daya Dharma*, the Religion of Kinship and Compassion. And, on the last day of his earth-life, as his body lay stretched beneath two trees, and his beloved disciple, Ananda, with tear-filled eyes, asked of the Master to give a parting message, Buddha said: “Weep not for me, Ananda! Hold fast to the Lamp of

*Dharma!*” The Lamp of *Daya Dharma* is the Lamp of Compassion and Love.

Of the “ten inhibitions” in Buddhist philosophy, the very first inhibition is: “Thou shalt not kill.”

## **80. Man – The Destroyer**

The Creative Mystery of Life built a beautiful earth. But see what man has made of this earth! He has waged war against things of beauty. He has reveled in slaughter, murder, riotous living. He has stifled the joy of life, and creation “groaneth and travaileth in pain.”

## 81. Tragic, but True

Here is an extract from an English paper: what a horrid picture! Yet it depicts what takes place every day in the establishment of only one packing firm; and there are many such large packing firms in England alone:

*“Imagine a procession of 10,000 cattle marching two by two, in a line fifteen miles long: let 20,000 sheep follow them, bleating along twelve miles of road; after them drive sixteen miles of hogs, 27,000 strong; then let 30,000 fowls bring up the rear, over a space of six miles; and in this whole caravan, stretching for nearly fifty miles and requiring two days to pass a given point, you will see the animals devoted to death in the packing houses of Swift and Co. in a single day!”*

*It is estimated that this slaughter is responsible for the cruel death, every year, of at least 300 million cattle, a number almost as large as that of the entire population of India!\* (\*1964)*



## 82. In the Interests of Your Health

The cause of Animal Welfare will be considerably helped when it is shown that flesh-diet hinders the growth of the individual. Everything hinders it which is unnatural.

I am happy the West is beginning to understand, more and more, the truth emphasized in the Hindu books that man does not belong to the class of the flesh-eaters. Dr. J. Oldfield, Senior Physician, Lady Margaret Hospital,\* wrote:

*“Today, there is the chemical fact in the hands of all, which none can gainsay that the products of the vegetable kingdom contain all that is necessary for the fullest sustenance of human life.”*

*“Flesh is an unnatural food, and, therefore, tends to create functional disturbance. As it is taken in modern*

*civilization, it is infected with such terrible diseases (readily communicable to man), as cancer, fever, consumption, intestinal worms, etc., to an enormous extent. There is little need for wonder that flesh-eating is one of the most serious causes of the diseases that carry off ninety-nine out of every hundred people that are born.”*

\*Lady Margaret Hospital, Millport on Great Cumbrae in North Ayrshire, Scotland.

## **83. The Task of Transformation**

The Religion of Reverence must enter our schools and colleges. Student-groups must be formed. Students with their idealism will respond to the call.

The world, alas! still is drunk with blood; nations have lost not their lusts; and in the shouts and tumults of today, the Face of Compassionate God is dim.

There must be change in the heart of the world. And this task of transformation will be achieved by education and legislation. The transformation must take place in childhood and adolescence.

## 84. Hate Never Helps

Programs of violence have, for a long time, been accepted in Europe. The pages of her history are strewn with wreck and ruin. War! Destruction! Religious persecutions! Civilizations have failed. Power and pride shout in our fierce cry of progress.

We have not carried the vision of *ahimsa* (non-violence) into our life. Our food, our commerce, our social life, our national programs are infected with *himsa*.

This civilization of *himsa* (violence) must go. A New Brotherly Civilization must we build. Hate will not help us. Today the nations spent their wealth of emotions in strife. It is the Religion of Reverence we need to rebuild humanity.

## 85. The Will to Live

The *jiva* is the will-to-live!

The Mystery of the will-to-live meets us everywhere.

The *jiva* makes all life as such sacred. All life! Then break no ice crystal, tear no leaf from its tree, crush no flower, harm no insect.

Is it a foolish sentiment to treat insects, animals, and birds with kindness? There was a time when it was thought foolish to treat “colored” men as human beings! An Englishman in South Africa said the negro had no soul!

What is *ahimsa*? The harmony of my will-to-live with the others’ will-to-live.

Consciousness attains to a spiritual point when it has a feeling or realization that *All Life is One*.

*Ahimsa* is true “sacrifice.” What is “sacrifice?” Profound surrender of myself for the sake of life in others.

*Ahimsa* is sincerity. I must do nothing to wound the *jiva*, the Life in others. I must be true to the will-to-live.

## **86. The Mild-Eyed Cow**

The one aspiration of my life has been that I should, in little things, in humble tasks of life, endeavor to serve the humble and meek, the lowly ones, the neglected, the despised ones, the poor and suffering creatures of God! And these include not merely those of the kingdom of man but, also, those of the sub-human kingdom – the bird, the beast, the dog, the cow.

Are we not all members of the one World Brotherhood, of one Cosmic Community?

My reverence for the mild-eyed cow has deepened as the years have passed: and the faith in my heart is strong that in serving the cow, in sheltering her from the cruelties of man, who was really meant to be a protector and a guardian of the animal world: man bears witness to the Brotherhood of Life.

## **87. What is Wrong with the Modern?**

Modern civilization has gone astray: it thinks from the head, not the heart. Animals are become victims of “researches” in our schools and colleges.

We sacrifice animals by testing drugs on them and inoculating them with disease. We inflict on them tortures in order to demonstrate to students lessons in the laboratory.

Think of the burdens we make them lift when we yoke them to carts or carriages!

Think of the cruel way in which they are killed in the slaughter house!

Think of the monkeys we stone or shoot!

Think of the bloody sacrifices at the temples and the mosques!



Think of the starvation we inflict on the proverbially faithful animal – the dog.



**Dadaji Feeding Brother Birds**

## 88. A Feast for the Birds

I have, again and again, thought of God as the great Brother and Burden-bearer of bird and beast.

These humble creatures toil for us and we dare their rights deny!

St. Francis of Assisi – Apostle of Compassion and Love – expressed a thought on which I have loved to meditate, again and again:

*“If I can speak to the Emperor, I will beg him to make a universal edict, obliging all those who have the means to spread corn and grain along the roads, that the birds, especially our sisters, the larks, should have a feast.”*

## 89. Nine Rules

The ancient ethic of China, to which Lao-Tse bore witness, was practiced by contemplatives in their monasteries. In the rules of Taoism is enshrined a whole theory, put into practice, of compassion which is essential to the rebuilding of our civilization, which suffers today from decadence.

Here are some of the rules put into practice by the Taoist monks:

1. *Thou shalt not whip nor beat domestic animals.*
2. *Thou shalt not intentionally or carelessly crush beneath thy feet ants and insects.*
3. *Thou shalt not climb trees to take nests and destroy the eggs.*
4. *Thou shalt not take delight in fish-hooks or arrows in order to get amusement.*

5. *Thou shalt not catch birds or animals in snares and nets.*
6. *Thou shalt not alarm and scare away birds sitting in their nests.*
7. *Thou shalt not pluck flowers nor pluck up grass without reason.*
8. *Thou shalt not cut down trees without reason.*
9. *Thou shalt not burn commons nor hill-side woods.*

## 90. Two-Fold Treasure

If, indeed, students be trained in a school of *ahimsa*, harmlessness, of reverence for life, they, in the years of their manhood, would receive a two-fold treasure:

1. The treasure of a new conscience, sensitive to suffering and compassionate to every creature; and
2. The treasure of a new knowledge that would understand India's holy, hidden tradition of sympathy.

O brother! why dost thou so lightly take away the life thou canst not restore?

Why wilt thou not let them have, in their little day, their humble share of speechless bliss?

## **91. A Charter of Animals' Rights**

We speak much of our civilization. We speak, again and again, of the achievements of science. We speak of the wonderful things, done according to some, in the last two centuries.

We speak, especially, of our economic and industrial gains. We speak of our new educational experiments. And we speak of our democratic institutions and of the rights of men.

But I have asked myself the question, again and again: "Have animals no rights?"

We speak of the rights of man: do we speak of the duties of man to the bird and the beast?

I wished you of the Animal Welfare Association got together to formulate, as

early as you can, a charter of animals' rights. And I wish you, also, to come together to formulate a charter of man's duties to the animal world.

## **92. Whither India?**

Some of the thinkers of our days have seen the weakness of our civilization.

Spengler\* went so far as to speak of the “Downfall of the West.” He pointed out that nations of the West were crumbling to their fall.

India is being influenced by the West. There is cruelty in the name of “science”: there is cruelty in our “fashions” and our dress.

What is the urgent need of modern life?

A new sympathy will give us new ideals in education.

\*Oswald Spengler (1880 – 1936) was a German historian. His model of history postulates that any culture is a super-organism with a limited and predictable lifespan.



## 93. Moving Pictures

My heart goes out in sympathy and love to cows and birds, to dogs and other animals. I see in them moving pictures of God, the *Prana-da*, the Great Giver of life.

Great is their need, and great has been our sin of neglect.

At the bar of Eternal Justice, their silence impeaches us all.

How with trusting eyes the cows gaze into our human faces! Yet, alas! we do so little for them. Many of us, indeed, surrender them to the butcher to be killed! Their cries go out into vacant space. Yet, I believe, they do not cry in vain.

It seems to me, the cries of these dumb, defenseless brothers and sisters of ours are a call to a far-off day when, indeed, many of us will regard the bird and the animal as a brother, a sister of man.

## **94. The Task of the Teacher**

I believe, the heart of humanity is now beginning to awake: and humanity lives in our schools.

The heart of India beats in the little ones.

Hence the great task before you, teachers of the Mira School! Your task and your burden are, also, your great opportunity to train little ones.

Train them in the spirit of sympathy and love.

Blend information with inspiration.  
Blend knowledge with love.

Remember the coming world – the world to be, the world of tomorrow – will be a world of sympathy radiant with the light of love!



**The hand with a wheel on the palm  
symbolizes *ahimsa*.**

## About the Author

Thanwardas Lilaram Vaswani was born in Hyderabad Sind, India, on November 25, 1879. Following the wishes of his mother, he



pursued a teaching career. He received both B.A. and M.A. degrees in Education from the University of Bombay. T.L. Vaswani later became professor of History and Philosophy

at Metropolitan College in Calcutta.

At the age of 30, Professor Vaswani traveled to Berlin as one of India's representatives to the World Congress of Religions. His speech there and his subsequent lectures in different parts of Europe aroused deep interest in Indian thought and linked many with him.

Sadhu Vaswani was a freedom fighter and worked as a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi in the Satyagraha Movement. During this time, he wrote numerous books that inspired others to offer themselves in dedicated service, including *Builders of Tomorrow*, *My Motherland*, *India Arisen*, *Youth and the Coming Renaissance*, *Youth and the Nation* and *Awake! Young India!*

He looked at the freedom movement as something more than the ousting of a colonial ruler; to him it included spiritual upliftment to free the Indian people from poverty and to restore a sense of dignity to every human being.

Later, however, Sadhu Vaswani withdrew from the field of active politics and turned his attention to education and other spheres, emphasizing that *character building* is *nation building*. With this goal in mind, he started the “Mira Movement in Education” which has its headquarters at the city of Pune in southern India. The goals of this school include enriching students with the vital truths of modern life and making them love and respect traditional Indian ideals and culture.

As a spiritual teacher, Sadhu Vaswani was drawn to all religions as viewed them as different paths to the One God. He said, “There are so many who can believe only one thing at a time. I am so made as to rejoice in the many and behold the beauty of the One in the many. Hence my natural affinity to many religions; in them all I see revelations of the One Spirit. And deep in my heart is the conviction that I am a servant of all prophets.”

*Ahimsa* – translated as “harmlessness” or “dynamic compassion” in the West, was central to Sadhu Vaswani’s life. This deep awareness of the need for reverence for all life, in whichever form it is manifest, formed an essential part of his life and teaching. Sadhu Vaswani passed away on January 16, 1966, at the age of 86. Annually, his followers celebrate International Meatless Day on his birthday because he had strongly advocated universal practice of vegetarian living.

Sadhu Vaswani was, in the words of James Henry Cousins, the Anglo-Irish writer and poet, “a thinker and a revealer of the deep truths of the Spirit.” Dr. Rajendra Prasad, former President of India, called his life “a saga of unassuming service, spiritual illumination and a source of inspiration to us all.”

## **Other Books and Booklets**

### **by Sadhu Vaswani**

- \*A Boy in Quest of God and Other Stories
- \*A Pilgrim's Faith
- \*A Prophet of the People
- \*Apostles of Freedom
- \*Atmaguan or Life in the Spirit
- \*Awake! Young India!
- \*Awakeners of Humanity
- \*Bodhi Dharma
- \*Born to Serve
- Breakfast with God
- Brindavan Ka Balak (Hindi)
- \*Builders of Tomorrow
- \*Desert Voices
- \*Diary of a Disciple
- Discover Yourself
- Ecstasy and Experiences
- \*Education: What India Needs
- \*Four Men of Destiny
- \*Gautama Buddha
- \*Gautama, the Buddha
- \*Gandhi: The Man of the Ages
- \*Gita Meditations
- \*Gita: a Bible of Humanity
- \*Gleanings from Gurbani
- \*Glimpses
- God is Real!
- \*Gold: in Gleanings
- \*Guru Nanak: Prophet of Light



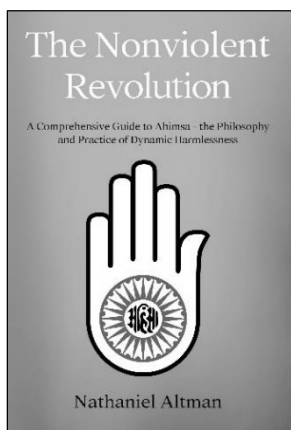
- \*Guru Nanak: The Glory of India
- \*Heart Beats
- \*Heroes of History
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- \*Jesus
- \*Kindle the Light
- \*Krishna-the Healer
- \*Krishna Calleth
- \*Krishna, the Saviour
- \*Krishna: Stories and Parables
- \*Krishna's Flute
- \*Leaves from My Dairy
- \*Life is Endless
- Lights from Many Lanterns
- \*Man Prabodh
- \*Mangalmay Jeev Sakal (Marathi)
- \*Masters and Mystics
- \*Meditation
- \*Message of the Birds
- \*My Dream of a New India
- \*My Master
- \*My Motherland
- \*O ye that are Young
- \*Pause and Meditate!
- \*Pictures from Mystics
- Pilgrimage to God
- \*Quest
- \*Rabia: A Saint of the Silent Way
- \*Religion and Culture

\*Rishi Dayanand  
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 The Bhagavad Gita: The Song of Life (With  
 Sanskrit Slokas)  
 The Bhagavad Gita: The Song of the  
 Supreme  
 \*The Call of Compassion  
 The Call of Mira Education  
 The Call of New Education  
 \*The Divine Spark  
 \*The Face of the Buddha  
 \*The Gita: A World Scripture  
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 The Life Beautiful  
 \*The Living Krishna  
 \*The Prophet of Arabia  
 \*The Saint of Dakhineshwar (Sri  
 Ramakrishna Paramhansa)

- \*The Secret of Asia
- \*The Soul of Sindhi Literature
- \*The Spirit of Indian Culture
- \*The Upanishads and the Modern Man
- \*The Vision of a Village Singer
- \*The Vision of India
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## Of Related Interest

***The Nonviolent Revolution:  
A Comprehensive Guide to Ahimsa - the  
Philosophy and Practice of Dynamic  
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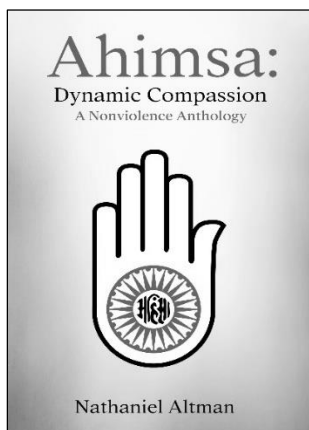
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The book provides a thorough grounding into a philosophy taught by Mahatma Gandhi, Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Peace Pilgrim, to name just a few. The book also shows how Ahimsa can be practically applied in daily life, including

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### ***Ahimsa: Dynamic Compassion***



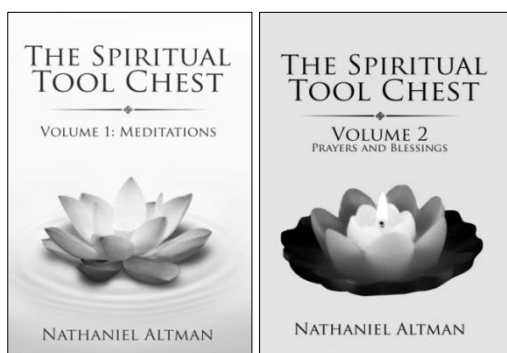
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## ***The Spiritual Tool Chest***



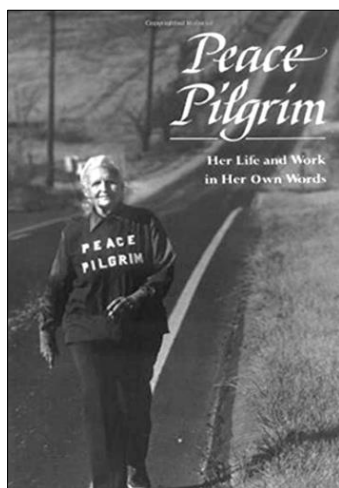
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*The Spiritual Tool Chest* contains material gleaned from major world faiths, including Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism, as well as gems from lesser-known sources, like Zoroastrianism, Jainism, Candomblé, Twelve-Step groups and other spiritual and self-help organizations. Some of the meditations, prayers and blessings were of the author's own creation or were shared by friends. A number of the meditations and prayers involve the use of candles, sacred symbols, mantras, music and being in nature. For meditations, the author includes careful instructions on breathing, posture and visualization.

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