Om

The Immanence of God

ईश्वर वास्तविक व वस्तुविक जगत्यां जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तं हृदीया मा गुरुः कस्यसिद्धनम् ॥

Madan Mohan Malaviya
OM

THE IMMANENCE OF GOD

By

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya
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The Immanence of God

The Vedas are the oldest literary monument of the world. Even European scholars admit that the Rgveda is at least 4,000 years old and that an older book does not exist in the libraries of the world. The Rgveda tells us that darkness prevailed everywhere before the creation of this universe. In the midst of that darkness and even beyond it subsisted, all by Himself, one Glorious Being (God), consisting of nothing but intelligence (शान्तिक्रम) and having no origin other than Himself (श्रायभू). He evolved Himself out of the darkness and created the universe by dint of His Tapas, i.e., His knowledge-power (शान्तशक्ति). The Rgveda says:

तम आसीत्तमसा गुण्ठिमये-  
प्रकेतं सखिंदं सवंंमा इदम् ।  
तुर्च्यन्याम्यिनिहिहं यदालीत्  
तपस्सस्तन्महिनाजयतैकम् ॥  
( 8. 7. 17. 3 )

This very idea has been echoed by Lord Manu, who says that before its evolution this universe consisted of nothing but darkness. Everything was lying dormant, as it were. Out of that darkness arose that Intelligent (शान्तमय), Effulgent (अक्षासमय)
Being, the Originator of Himself, who does not depend on any other power to reveal Himself and who subsists for ever in His own grandeur (समर्थिम्) and supports Himself on His own power. The veil of darkness was lifted as soon as He revealed Himself. The actual words of the Manusmṛti are quoted below:—

आसीतिर्व तमोभूतम्मथ्नातममलक्षणम् ।
अपतििक्ष्मिक्षितों प्रसुतमिच्च सर्वं: ॥
तत्त: स्वभूमभूमिक्षान्वयको व्यःस्यचिदम् ।
महाभूतदिव्यवर्त्तिः प्रादुर्जीतमोनुवः ॥
योजसामतिीनिद्रियवाहः सुमोजन्यक: सनातन: ।
सर्वभूतयोजित्व: स एव स्वभूतस्मृतिः ॥

(1. 5-7)

"(At the time of universal destruction) this universe had merged, as it were, in darkness. It was in a chaotic condition, indistinguishable, indefinable, inconceivable and incomprehensible: it was lying dormant, as it were. At the end of this period that Glorious Being, who is the originator of Himself, evolved this manifest universe though Himself unmanifest, and, having thus unfolded His creative energy, revealed Himself after lifting the veil of darkness. He who is beyond the ken of the senses, subtle, unmanifest, eternal and incogitable, nay, who is the very soul of all beings, thus shone by Himself."

The Rgveda further says:—
There is another Śruti which runs as under:

आत्मा वा हिंदमेक एवावश आसीत्
एकमेवावःतिर्थयम्

In The Bhāgavata-Purāṇa the Lord says:

आह्मेवासमेवाः नायवत् सदसत्यरम्
पश्चाददं यदेतदं योज्यविशेषत् सोस्यिद्धम्

(2. 9. 32)
“At the beginning of creation I alone subsisted, the one beyond the manifest and unmanifest, and nothing else. And it is I alone who survive the creation. This phenomenal world is nothing but Myself, and whatever remains after that is also Myself.”

The following verses occur in the Śiva-Purāṇa:

एक पत्र तदा रुद्रो न द्वितीयोपस्ति कहन।
संस्रृय विश्वं भूवनं गोतान्ते संचुकोच स।
विश्वतत्सुरुवाचायमुः। विश्वतौभुवः।
तथेव विश्वतोवाहुविश्वत्। पदंसंयुत॥
धावाभूमी च जनयन देव एकोऽभेद्यवर॥
स पत्र सर्वदेवानां प्रभवविध्वस्तथा॥
अचतुर्गि यः पद्मश्चरणोऽपि श्रणोति यः।
सदं वेति न वेत्याय तमाहुः पुरुषं परम॥

“At that time it was Rudra alone who existed. It was that Protector of the Universe who first created it and in the end dissolved it. He has eyes all round, faces on all sides, and hands and feet in every direction. Lord Maheśwara is the sole Creator of heaven and earth; He is the undoubted origin and source of all deities. He sees without eyes and hears without ears. He knows all, though no one knows Him. He is known as the Supreme Being.”

The Bhāgavata further says:-
“He alone is the Soul, the Eternal Being, real, self-luminous, infinite, the primordial cause of all, constant, imperishable, always happy, untainted by Mayā (illusion), self-sufficient, peerless, unqualified (absolute) and immortal.”

This idea, which is common to the Vedas, the Smṛtis and the Purāṇas, has been succinctly expressed by the immortal saintpoet Goswami Tulasidas in the following verses:—

vyāpak eka prakāra abhināsī. ।

satt chaṭita pan amandh rasi. ।

ādī ant kōl jātū n pāva. ।

mati anumāna nīgam jātū gāva. ।

binu pād chālē, sunē binu kāna. ।

kār binu kārm kāre vichār nāna. ।

ānunāhita sakal rasa bhogī. ।

binu vāni vakta bhaḍ jogī. ।

tathā binu pārśa, nāmin binu deshā. ।

gṛhā ānand binu vāsa asēkha. ।

acca sva mānti aṭhākik karnī. ।

mahima tāthu jāya kimī varnī. ।
“Brahma (God) is one, all-pervading, imperishable, all-existent, a mass of spirituality and an embodiment of Bliss; no one has been able to find out His beginning or end. Even the Vedas have sung in praise of Him according to their limited capacity. He walks without feet, hears without ears and performs various actions, even though devoid of hands. He relishes all flavours even without a palate, and is a master-orator even though He has got no tongue. He touches without a body, sees without eyes and smells everything without a nose. In this way all His activities are marvellous. How can one describe His greatness?”

But how are we to believe that such a God exists?

The Vedas, which affirm the existence of such a God, also say that we cannot perceive Him with our eyes:

\[ \text{न संदर्शे तिष्ठति सुपमस्य} \\
\text{न वच्चुषा पद्यति कथ्यनेनम्।} \\
\text{शान्तसादिन् विगुडङ्गत्वम्} \\
\text{स्ततस्तु तं पद्यते विष्णुलं ध्यायमान्।।} \]

“True, no one can see Him with his eyes: but everyone of us can realize Him with the help of his purified intellect after purging his mind of all evil propensities.” Accordingly, those who seek to have a Vision of God with their
mind's eye (intellect) should cleanse their body and mind and purify their intellect, and then commence their search for God.

What do we see?

From the day we are born in this world and till we leave this tabernacle of our body we see grand and wonderful sights which excite a great curiosity in our mind to know how they come into being and how again they disappear. We daily observe that the bright orb of the sun with its wreath of thousand rays appears in the eastern horizon early in the morning and, journeying through the heavens and transmitting light, heat and vitality to the whole world, disappears in the west in the evening. By mathematical calculation the astronomers have arrived at the conclusion that the sun is 9,283,000 miles away from the earth. What a wonder that from such a long distance the sun is able to bring light, heat and vitality to all the living beings inhabiting this globe! It sucks up the moisture of this earth during every season through its myriad rays, sends it up to the heavens, and then, transforming it into clouds, discharges it again over the earth and thereby revitalizes the grass, the foliage, the trees and the corn, and infuses new life into all living beings. Astronomy tells us that there are countless millions of suns much larger than the one which we see, but which appear to us like tiny stars
on account of their being remoter than the sun with which we are familiar. Every evening after sunset we see the spacious firmament on high spangled with numberless stars, planets, satellites and other heavenly bodies. The silvery moon with its cool and soothing rays careers through the sky from the east to the west like the sun, immersing the whole world in nectar, as it were, and making the nights appear golden. The bright lustre shed by the various heavenly bodies in dark nights and enveloping all the points of the compass appears so beautiful that one does not find adequate words to describe its charm. All these stars and planets are seen revolving in the sky in fixed orbits from day to day, month to month and year to year under immutable laws, as if strung together in a cord. It is evident that if the sun does not shine brightly in a particular summer we do not have good showers during the following rains. It is equally plain that if the rains fail we cannot have a good harvest of corn and fruits to feed ourselves with. Thus we clearly see that it is the sun who provides us all with food in the shape of corn and fruits. Now, the question arises whether all this organization is the work of some intelligent principle whose object it is to create and sustain all movable and immovable creatures, or is it the result of a fortuitous conjunction of particles of matter only? Has this most marvellous constellation of heavenly bodies (solar system, as it is called) sprung up under
the law of gravitation, which attracts material objects towards one another as a matter of course, and has been revolving in the sky of its own accord from year to year and century to century, nay, from one cycle to another, or is it some intelligent principle which is responsible for bringing it into existence and setting it into motion? It is the latter hypothesis which appeals to our intellect. The Vedas also endorse the verdict of our reason. They declare that the sun and the moon, as also heaven and earth, were created by God:

सूर्योचन्द्रमस्य घाता यथापूर्वमकल्पयत्।
दिवं च पृथिव्यं बालत्तरिक्षमथे खः॥

The Evolution of Life

Similarly, we observe that the evolution of the organic world also proclaims that the creator of this universe is God. This organic world is full of wonders. Mammals (ज्वायुः) like the man, the lion, the elephant, the horse and the cow; hatched creatures (अग्न्धः) like birds; lice and other insects bred by sweat (स्तेल्व) and refuse of body; and trees, etc., which spring out of the soil (उद्भ्न) — the origin (उत्पत्ति), shape (रचना) and career (जीवन) of all these are simply marvellous. When the male and female unite together in love, a very minute yet organic element of the male's body makes its way into the uterus of the female, where it is joined with a similar
element of the female's body. This combination of the male and female elements is known as the Jīva (living organism).

The Vedas say:—

बालाधारशतभागस्य शतथा कलिपतस्य च।
भागो जीवः स विशेषः स चानन्त्याय कल्यते॥

"Divide the extreme end of a hair into hundred parts and take the hundredth part of one of these parts: then you can gauge the minuteness of a Jīva." This Jīva grows in the form of an organism from the moment of its conception. Students of medical science have been able to discover with the help of microscope that a single drop of our seminal fluid contains hundreds of thousands of living germs, and that only one of such germs, finds its way into the uterus where it persists and grows to be a foetus. The organism of a female's body is so constituted as to enable the Jīva from the time of conception onwards to draw its nourishment through something which is shaped like a pipe. As the foetus grows in size there forms round it inside the uterus a sort of membraneous bag full of fluid, which protects the foetus from injury. Wherefrom does this minutest and subtlest substance, as nice as the ten-thousandth part of the point of a hair, derive the capacity to assume gradually the features, the complexion and the shape of its parents? What is the
power which sustains it and helps its growth in the mother's womb? How do you account for the strange phenomenon that milk begins to ooze from the mother's breasts shortly before the child's birth? What power is there which supports the numberless living creatures, including men, animals and birds, worms and insects, nay, even trees and plants, and provides them with nourishment in time? What is the power which enables the ant to ascend a steep wall during the day-time as well as at night? What power enables birds of every size, big and small, to soar high in the limitless expanse of the sky without any guide or support?

How are innumerable varieties of forms, such as males and females, human beings, cows, lions, elephants, birds and insects, created? How is it that only human beings are born of human beings, lions of lions, horses of horses, cows of cows, pea-cocks of pea-cocks, swans of swans, parrots of parrots and pigeons of pigeons, a true copy of their parents in every respect. From tiny seeds spring up numberless big and small trees, reared with the help of some unknown power and serve the living creatures for many years with their foliage, flowers, juice, oil, bark and wood, nourish and feed them with hundreds and thousands of their rich, juicy and delicious fruits, breathe the air, suck the moisture and draw their nourishment from the earth and
the atmosphere, and wave and dance majestically in the air.

In our attempt to discover the miraculous power which is managing this whole show we find our attention arrested by a residential building which we see before us. It is found to have a big entrance by which we can enter the house. It also contains a number of windows and ventilators at various points to admit air and light. The interior of the house has many huge pillars and arches. It is also provided with roofs and balconies to protect the inmates from the sun and showers. Every device has been employed to minister to the comfort of the inmates in every room and apartment. Drains have been constructed to allow water to flow out of the house. The house has been so designed as to prove comfortable to the inmates during every season. By seeing this house we can say that the builder of the house was a skilled architect who designed it in such a way as to provide every comfort to the inmates. Although we have not seen the architect who built the house, we feel certain that it was built by one who is either still alive or is no longer in this world, and that it is or was a clever and intelligent man. Now let us examine the machine of our body.

It has got a mouth by which we eat and drink, teeth and jaws with which we masticate
our food and a passage in our throat, known as the alimentary canal, through which we pass the food on to the stomach. Adjoining this there is another passage by which we inhale and exhale. The stomach has got a separate compartment in which the food which we eat is stored and undergoes the process of digestion and assimilation.

The food, when digested, is transformed into blood, which accumulates in the heart, and therefrom it is conveyed through the numerous arteries to all parts of the body and thereby sustains, invigorates, enlivens and rejuvenates the whole frame. The body has further been provided with an outlet for passing the superfluous element of the food, which is not necessary for the nourishment of the body, in the form of excreta and another canal, called urethra, for pumping out the redundant part of milk, water and other fluids that we take, which is not required for the nutrition of the body. We have also been provided with a pair of eyes to see, a pair of ears for hearing, a pair of nostrils to take smell, a pair each of arms and legs with which to work and walk along respectively, and a generative organ for procreation. We now ask whether this most wonderful mechanism has come into being merely as a result of concatenation of particles of matter or whether it has been moulded and fashioned by some architect similar to the one who built the house referred to above, though infinitely more skilful, intelligent and powerful than the latter.
Miraculous Powers of Mind and Speech

As we turn to our mind, while engaged in these thoughts, we find that our mind, too, is a wonderful specimen of divine skill. The diverse faculties of our mind, such as the cogitative faculty, the imaginative faculty, the reckoning faculty, the constructive faculty, the retentive power, the power of understanding and the penetrative faculty are all such as leave us in bewilderment. It is by exercising these faculties that so many books have been written, so many poems have been composed, so many sciences have been discovered, and so many inventions have been made and are still being made. Is it something less amazing? Our powers of speech and modulation of voice are also marvellous. We find this purposiveness working everywhere in this universe. Moreover, we do not find the beginning or end of this creation. The various limbs of the different species of living beings have been fashioned and assorted in such a symmetrical way that the whole creation appears full of charm. We thus see that ever since the beginning of creation some miraculous power has been at work in every clime and at every age, and that it will continue to work for ever.

Our intellect forces upon us the conclusion that this purposive creation has a primordial (आदि), eternal (सन्तान), unborn (अज), imperishable (अविनाशी), and ubiquitous (जगद्धापक) efficient cause,
who is endowed with infinite power (अनन्तशक्तिसम्पन्न) and is all-existent, all-intelligent and all-blissful (सत-चित्त-आनन्दस्तुष्ट). That one indescribable power is called by thousands of names such as Īśwara, Parameśwara, Parabrahma, Narāyaṇa, Bhagavān, Vāsudeva, Śiva, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇu, Jehova, God, Khudā, Allāh, etc.

**There is only one God**

The Vedas say:—

एकमेवाहितियम्। एकं सद्भूधा वहुधा वदन्ति। एकं सन्तं बहुधा कल्पयन्ति।

"There is only one God, one without a second. That one is called by the wise by various names. Although He is one, people have different notions about Him."

The Viṣṇusahasranāma and Śivasahasranāma afford a striking illustration to this truth. Yudhiṣṭhira asked Grandfather Bhīṣma to name the deity who was one without a second, who was the greatest refuge of all living beings, and whose worship and eulogy brought everlasting happiness to man. To the above query Bhīṣma gave the following reply:—

जगातप्रभुं देवदेवसनन्तं पुरुषोत्तमम्।
स्तुव्रद्धामसहस्रैैं पुरुषः सततोतिथितः॥

× × ×
"That is to say, every morning, on quitting one’s bed, one should extol God Viṣṇu, who is the Lord of the whole universe, the Supreme Deity, the Eternal and Ideal Being (पुरुषोत्तम). One who always eulogizes Him who is the Supreme Lord and Ruler of the whole universe and who is all-pervading, unborn and imperishable, is rid of all troubles. He is the brightest of all effulgent beings and the most austere of all austere penances. He is the greatest of the great and the most hospitable refuge of all creatures. He is the purest of the pure, the most sacro-sanct of all that is sacred, the most auspicious of all that is auspicious, the godliest of all gods and the undying father of all created beings."

The above excerpts should suffice to show that the Viṣṇusahasranāma and Śivasahasranāma and all other laudatory compilations of that type aver that one God and no other is the object of their praise. It therefore behoves us all to
concentrate our minds on, and sing in praise of, Him every morning and evening.

Though one, He is called by three names

This one God is known by the three names of Brahmā, Viśnū and Maheśa. The Viṣṇupurāṇa says:

संस्कृतर्थलकरणं ब्रह्मविष्णुयावाविभाषाम् ।
स संज्ञाः याति भगवानेक पव जनादनं ॥

"Lord Janārdana, though essentially one, assumes the name of Brahmā at the time of creation of this universe, that of Viṣṇu while maintaining it, and that of Śiva while destroying it."

We find the same idea echoed in the Brhamnāraḍīya-Purāṇa:

नारायणोद्श्रोजन्त: सर्वस्यापी निरज्ञ: ॥
तेनेदमेवलं व्याप्तं जगत् स्वाभिरजग्मम् ॥
तमातिदेवमजरं केचिवाहु: शिवासिष्ठम: ॥
केचिदिक्षणु सदा सत्यं व्रजाणं केचिद्वृंदे ॥

"Nārāyaṇa is imperishable, infinite, omnipresent and untainted by Māyā. He pervades the whole creation consisting of sentient and insentient beings. That ever young, primeval deity is called by some by the name of Śiva, by others by the name of Viṣṇu, who is always existent, and by still others by the name of Brahmā."
In the Śiva-Purāṇa as well Lord Maheśwara says:

त्रिधा भिन्नो यथा विष्णो ब्रह्मविष्णुहरायश्य ।
संसारालयुपौरिणिन्द्रकोलयं सदा हरे ॥ ।
अहं भवानयं चेतु रुद्रयं यो अविष्यति ।
एकं सूक्तं न भेदोभिः भेदे च बनन्यं मशेत् ॥

"O Viṣṇu, although in reality I am always undifferentiated, I have to assume three different appellations, viz., Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, while discharging the functions of creation, maintenance and dissolution (of the universe) respectively. Yourself, Brahmā, who is with us at present, Myself and Rudra, who is still to come, are all one. There is no difference between us all. Differentiation entails bondage."

In Śrīmad Bhāgavata Śrī Bhāgavān says:

अहं वहा न शर्यं जगतं कारणं यथम् ।
आत्मेश्वर उपद्रवं ख्यमद्वदिशेश्यम् ॥
आत्मायं समाविष्यं सोहं गुणमयं हिजं ।
सुजन्धमहर्षेन विभक्तं द्वरे संश्यामक्रियोचिताम् ॥

"Brahmā, Śarva (Śiva) and Myself are the ultimate cause of this universe. We are the Universal Soul, the Lord of all, the Spectator, Self-seeing and unqualified. O Brahman, after penetrating My one Māyā, which consists of the three Guṇas (attributes), I assume three different
epithets according as I create, maintain or dissolve the universe."

Hence it is a mistake to regard Brahma, Viṣṇu and Śiva as different from one another. They are the appellations of one and the same God.

The Śiva-Purāṇa further says:—

शिवो महेश्वराद्वेय स्त्रो सिष्णु: पितामहः ।
संसारबैवधः सर्वेऽः परमात्मेति मुख्यः ॥
नामाभिकमिद् नित्यं शिवस्य प्रतिपादकसा ॥

"Śiva, Maheśwara, Rudra, Viṣṇu, Pitāmaha (the Primeval Father), Samsāra-vaidya (the Healer of the World), Sarvajña (Omniscient) and Paramātmā (the Supreme Soul), these eight names particularly refer to Lord Śiva."

It is therefore clear that ‘ॐ नमो महेश्वरे वासुदेवाय,’
‘ॐ नमो नारायणाय,’ ‘ॐ नमः शिवाय’, ‘अरामाय नमः’ and ‘श्रीकृष्णाय नमः’
all these formulae are salutations of one and the same deity.

What is that God like?

The Vedas describe Him as ‘सत्यं शाश्वमनः महाः’.

Śrīmad Bhāgavata describes Him as under:—

विस्तृतं केवलं शाबं प्रत्यत् सम्यगविश्वितम् ।
सत्यं पूर्णमानवतं नित्यं नित्यमद्धयम् ॥
ऋणे विद्विन्ति मृणय: प्रशान्तार्मेन्द्रियाशाया: ॥
“God (Brahma) is real; He has always existed, exists and shall exist for ever. He is all-knowledge, all-intelligence and all-bliss. Having no separate body, He is enacting this drama of the universe through the various perishable bodies. He is absolutely pure (निर्मल), consisting of nothing but knowledge (व्यक्तिय) and self-sufficient (पूर्ण). He has no beginning and no end. He is eternal (नित्य) and peerless (अद्वितीय). Though one, He manifests Himself in various forms.

In another context it says:—

“Entering the various bodies as their very self (Ātmā), that Eternal Being (पुराणपुरुष), who is self-luminous (स्वप्रकाश) and unborn (अज), who is the Supreme Lord (परमेश्वर) and who is known by the names of Narāyaṇa, Bhagavān and Vasudeva, is illuminating every form created by Himself by dint of His Māyā (enrapturing power).”

The third chapter of Skandha 11 of Śrīmad Bhāgavata contains a full and most illuminating exposition of God (Brahma), who is the main theme of the Vedas, the Upaniṣads and the Purāṇas.

King Janaka addressed the seers thus:—

“O seers, you are the very cream of those who are well-versed in theology. Be pleased to
give me an accurate idea of that Supreme Being (परमात्मा), that Ultimate Reality (प्राण), who is called by the name of Nārāyaṇa."

The sage Pippalāyana gave the following answer:

"O king! know that Ultimate Reality to be Nārāyaṇa who is responsible for the creation (यूजन), maintenance (पालन) and destruction (संहर) of this universe, though Himself attributable to no cause; who persists, within as well as without, in all the three stages of dream (स्वम), waking life (जागरण) and sound sleep (सुप्ति) and who inspires and stirs the body along with its various sense-organs (शृङ्ग), the respiratory organs (आन) and the heart (हृत्य) to their respective functions. Just as sparks cannot penetrate the fire, in the same way our mind, speech, eyes, intellect, respiratory organs and sense-organs are incapable of comprehending that Ultimate Principle; nay, they cannot even approach it, much less describe it.

"He was never born and shall never die; He does not grow, nor does He ever diminish in size; He is immune from changes like birth and death, but is only a witness of all changing conditions; He is present everywhere and at every time and shall ever remain so; He is imperishable and consists of Knowledge and Knowledge alone (शान्तात्र). Just as vitality (आन) is one, although it functions differently though different organs (for instance, the eyes see, the ears hear
and the nose smells, and so on), and thus appears differentiated, similarly, the Ātmā (Spirit), though one, appears as differentiated, because of its manifesting itself through different bodies. God is present everywhere—in the whole creation—alike in mammals such as the human being, the cow, the horse, the elephant, the lion, the dog, the sheep, the goat, etc.; in birds and other hatched creatures; in insects—bred by sweat and refuse of the body, etc., and the vegetable world which springs up from the soil; in short, wherever there is vitality functioning in some form of another. That which is seen abiding in us as a constant witnessing factor even when all our senses lie dormant, nay, when even the 'Ego' as expressed by the words "I am" is merged for the time being, and which we recall to our mind, on our waking, by using such expressions as 'We had a good sleep', 'We saw this dream', and so on, is Brahma (God).

Where is the abode of this God?

The Śruti says:—

एको देवः सदभूतेषु गृह:
सर्वेद्यायि सर्वभूतान्तरत्मा ।
कर्मोच्च्छतः सर्वभूताधिवासः,
साक्षी चेतां केवलो निर्गुणः॥

(Śvetāṣṭaropanisad VI.11)

"There is only one God who is hidden within us all, nay, who is pervading everything, who is
the inner self of all living beings and is the controller (नियन्त्र) of all that is going on in this universe. He is the indweller of all creatures, the disinterested witness of all the activities of the world, the one intelligent principle without a compeer, and untainted by attributes (युग).

The Vedas, the Smṛtis and the Purāṇas are all unanimous in declaring that this Supreme Deity is immanent in fire, in water, in the air, in the whole universe, in all herbs and plants, in all living creatures.

The Śruti says:—

एष देवो विद्वकर्मा महात्मा
सदा जनानां हुद्ये सत्विविहः ।
हत हरिस्यं मनसा य एन-
मेवं विदुरस्मृतात्स्ते भवन्ति ॥

"That Supreme Deity, the creator of the universe, always dwells in the hearts of creatures. Those who feel the holy presence of this Great Being in their hearts with their purified minds become immortal."

न तस्य कष्ट्यत्पतिरस्ति लोके
न चेतिता नैव च तस्य विद्गम्
स कारणं करणाभिवाधिषो
न चास्य कष्ट्यज्ञानिता न चाधिपः ॥

(Śvetāṣṭaropanisad VI.9)
“He owes allegiance to none in this world, nor is He amenable to any one’s authority or control. He has no distinguishing mark either. He has no origin, no originator, no protector.”

(\textit{Ibid VI. 7})

“We have come to know that Paramount Lord of all those who are in power or authority, the Presiding Deity of all the deities, the Master of all masters, the Lord of all the three worlds, the most adorable of all.”

Goswami Tulasidas says:

\begin{verse}
सोइ सचिवानंद्वन रामा ।
अज विग्यानरुप वर्धामामा ॥

d्वापक व्याप्य अवंति अनंता ।
अविन्द अमोहतिक्षिष्मणंता ॥

dयुग निरालोतिता ।
समारसी अनवध अजीता ॥

dिरमाल निराकार निरमोहा ।
नित्य निरंजन सुखसंदेहा ॥

dृक्कुतिपार प्रभु सब उरवासी ।
हृद निरीह बिरज अविनासी ॥
\end{verse}
Verily Rāma is that God who is all-existence, all-intelligence and all-bliss, who is unborn, who has knowledge as His very essence, and is a great reservoir of strength; He is all-pervading and also constitutes that which is pervaded; He is indivisible and infinite; He is the embodiment of all unfailing power and the Lord of all; He is unqualified, vast, unapproachable by speech and other senses, impartial, faultless, invincible, blotless, formless, free from ignorance, eternal and untainted by Māyā. He is a mass of happiness; He is beyond the reach of Prakṛti (primordial matter), the master, the indweller of every heart, free from desire and attachment, and imperishable. Infatuation cannot prevail over Him. Can darkness ever appear before the sun?

The aforementioned God dwells in the heart of every living creature in the form of the Spirit (जीव).

The Lord Himself says in the Gītā:—

God dwells in the hearts of all living beings, O Arjuna!
The sage Yājñavalkya has put in a nutshell the viewpoint of the Vedas on this subject as follows:—

“One hundred and forty-four thousand positive (वृक्ष) and negative (अहित) arteries branch out from the heart of every human being and are spread through out the body.

“In their midst there is an orb, as luminous as the disc of the moon, and in the core of that orb shines the Ātmā (the Spirit), emitting a steady light like that of a lamp. That is the only object worth knowing, as its knowledge frees one from the cycle of birth and death.

“That Ātmā is present alike in all forms of life, big and small, from the human being down to the meanest insect, nay, even in trees and plants.”

Śrī Vedavyāsa says:—

न्योतिरास्मनि नान्यत्र समं तत्र सर्वजन्तुष ।
खर्म च शक्त्यते द्वषु खसमाहितेऽवेषसा ॥

“God’s light dwells within us; it shines alike in every living being. One can see it with the mind’s eye after one has fully composed and steadied the mind.”

In Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā the Lord Himself says:—

समं सर्वेणु मूलेषु तिष्ठन्ति परमेश्वरम् ।
विनिविभिन्नत्वं यः पद्यति स पद्यति ॥

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"Verily he is the seer who sees the Lord installed in the heart of every living being as the only imperishable substance among all perishable things.

"That God, the illuminator of all lights, shining beyond the darkness (of ignorance), having knowledge as his essence, the only knowable substance, that which is grasped through knowledge, and who is kindly disposed towards all, is installed in every heart."

Every human being ought to do homage to that one God who dwells in every heart with unalloyed Devotion. One should love every creature, taking it to be His abode. One should be friendly to every living being.

That paragon of devotees, Prahlāda, says:—

"Therefore, O Dānavas! be devoted to Śrī Hari, who is the soul and Lord of all living
beings, believing that all our fellow-creatures are as susceptible to pleasure and pain as you are. The Daityas, the Yakṣas, the Rākṣasas, the woman-folk, the Śūdras (the labouring class), the cow-herds living in dairy farms, nay, even beasts and birds and other dammed creatures have indubitably attained salvation through Devotion to Lord Achyuta. To be solely devoted to Śrī Govinda and to feel His presence in all living beings is the summum bonum to be attained in this world.”

**The Bedrock of Sanatana Dharma**

भगवान् वासुदेवो हि सर्वभूतेष्ववस्तितः ।
पतञ्जलिः हि सर्वस्य मूलं धर्मस्य शास्त्रवतम् ॥

“The knowledge that Śrī Vāsudeva is dwelling in the heart of every living creature is the eternal and abiding principle of Sanātana Dharma.” The same truth has been preached by the Lord in Śrīmad Bhāgavadgītā:

समोहं सर्वभूतेषु……। (IX. 29)

“I am undifferentiated in all creatures.” He further says:

विधाविनयसम्मते ब्राह्मणे गावि हस्तिनि ।
शुनि चैव इथपाके च परिणतः समदर्शिनः ॥ (V. 18)

“The wise look equally on a learned and cultured Brahman, on the one hand, and a cow
or an elephant or a dog or a pariah (Chāndāla) on the other." That is to say, they realized that they are equally susceptible to pleasure and pain. The Lord also says:

आत्मोपमः सर्वं संम पश्चाति योड्जुः।
शुचं वा यदि वा दुःस्वं स योगी परमो मतः॥

(VI.32)

"Verily he should be regarded as the greatest Yogi who looks upon all as equal, on the analogy of his own Self so far as pleasure and pain are concerned."

The sage Vedavyāsa has therefore said:

श्रूतां धर्मसंस्कृतां शुचा चायवचारयंताम।
आत्मनं प्रतिकृतानि परेवं न समाचारेत्॥
न तत्तु परस्य संस्कृतश्च प्रतिकृतं यदातमनं।
एव सामालिको धर्मं कामावलं प्रचैते॥

"Know this to be the essence of religion and then practise it: refrain from doing unto others what you will not have done unto yourself,—what you may resent, if done unto you.

"We should not do unto others what we may resent, if done to ourselves. In short, that is religion; all other creeds have some selfish motive behind them."

जीवितं यः स्वं चेच्छेत् कर्यं सोर्वं प्रहातेत्॥
प्रवदातांसचि चेच्छेत् तत्तु परस्यापि चिन्तेत्॥
"How can he who wants to survive dare take the life of others? One should always design such things for others as one may choose for one's own self."

The virtues of harmlessness (अहिंसा), truthfulness (सत्य), and refraining from wrongful possession of a thing (अस्तेय)—the practice of all of which has been enjoined upon every human being and the neglect of which is sure to lead to one's downfall,—take their stand on the above doctrine. It is in pursuance of these tenets that the performance of the five great sacrifices (पञ्चमहायज्ञ) has been enjoined upon us by the Vedas in atonement for the sin accruing from the unintentional taking of any life. Carnivorous animals, such human beings as may be bent upon taking our life or that of any other innocent person or robbing him of his property or outraging his religious susceptibilities, those who assault us or invade our country or village, and those who practise incendiariism or administer poison to others have been characterized as outrageous persons (जात्तावी). It has been made obligatory on us to kill such persons or creatures by way of self-defence, when necessary, with a view to protecting the person, property, faith or honour of a brother or sister of ours. It is, however, a sin to kill innocent and harmless creatures.

It is in pursuance of the above doctrine that Hindus have from the Vedic period down
to the present day maintained an attitude of sympathy towards all innocent creatures of the world. The cow is adored by the Hindus as a mother (देवमाता) in recognition of the fact that she supplies wholesome milk to the human race and benefits them in so many other ways. It is, therefore, specially incumbent on every human being to preserve this useful animal. Even ordinarily it is forbidden (अकार्य) according to the fundamental doctrine of the above religion to take the life of any innocent and harmless creature, to rob anyone of his or her life and property, to wrong anyone, or to practise fraud upon anyone. On the other hand, to render some service or to do some good turn to one’s fellow-beings, who are as susceptible to pleasure and pain as one’s own self, constitutes a creed which is true for all times and all climes.

It is in consonance with the above fundamental doctrine that it has been enjoined upon the followers of the Vedic Religion to feed not only human beings but even birds, beasts and all other creatures through the ritual known as ‘विशंग्रेव’, as will be clear from the verses quoted below:—

ततोज्यद्रश्मात्राय भूमिभागे शुचो पुनः।
द्वादशोपभूततेष्य स्वेच्छया ततो समाहितः॥

deva manushya: pasho vyantil
sastra: sambho padaflaksana:

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"After performing other Vajñas (sacrifices) a householder should take some more food, as much as he may like to have, and, placing it on clean ground, offer it with a peaceful mind to all creatures with the following words:—‘‘May this food, which I have set apart on this occasion, serve to appease and gratify gods, human beings, animals, birds, Siddhas, Yaksas, Nagas and other beings, reptiles, evil spirits (प्रेत) and genii (पिद्धाच), trees, ants, insects, moths and other creatures, whoever
may be starving in consequence of their past actions and may want food from me. All the above-named creatures, the food which is lying here and my own self are none else than Viṣṇu; there is nothing apart from Him. That is why I offer this food, which constitutes the body of the various creatures, for the sake of preserving them."

The householder should then devoutly leave the food on the ground for the good of all creatures, as he is the mainstay of all. Again, in pursuance of the above doctrine, the followers of Sanātana Dharma, while performing the ritual known as Tarpaṇa everyday, appease not only their forefathers but the living beings of the whole universe, as will be evident from the following verses:

देवानुरास्तथा यक्षा नागा गन्धवर्गराक्षसाः ||
विद्वाचार्युपदास्त्रवाट बगा: ||
जलेघरा भूनियाका वायुधागाराङ्ग जन्तव: ||
प्रीतिमेते प्रयाणत्वायु मद्दात्मान्यावाक्षातः ||
नरकेन्द्र समस्तेषु वायुधर्मावस्था च ये स्थिता: ||
तेषामण्यायं त्याहि सस्व यथा: ||
पदवायुधत्वा वायुधवाच च येषां त्यं त्यन्तरति वायुधवाः: ||
ते सनेत्र तुलिस्मायान्तर ये चास्वत्त्वोक्षापिण: ||

“The Devas, the Daityas, the Yakṣas, the Nāgas, the Gandharvas, the Rākṣasas, the Pišāchas, the Guhyakas, the Siddhas, the Kūṃḍās, plants, birds, aquatic creatures, burrowing animals, creatures flying in the air, all may be appeased with the
water offered by me. I offer this water with a view to alleviating the sufferings of those who are undergoing tortures in the various infernal regions. I offer this water to appease those who have been connected with me by ties of blood or not or those who may have borne kinship with me in any previous life or those who may be expecting an offering of water from me."

The quantity of food that remains after allotting the share of crows and dogs is too inadequate to appease all other creatures (सर्वभोज्योऽयम्: ). Notwithstanding this, it has been made obligatory on every householder to perform this ritual (विश्वमेव वदेव ) because it symbolizes the sacred and lofty idea that a human being stands in the relation of a brother to all his fellow-creatures, and further serves the high and laudable object of surcharging the atmosphere of the world with the idea of fellowship of all living beings under the fatherhood of God and nourishing the idea with the moisture of love like drops of tears.

One cannot adequately praise the catholicity of this faith, which will also be evident from the following benedictory verse coming from the pen of one of the foremost and universally adored exponents of this faith, the great seer Vedavyāsa, who personified in himself the golden maxim 'सर्वभूतिविदेश रतं' (One should always be devoted to doing good to others):—
“May all living beings be hale and hearty; may all see happy days; let no one be miserable.”

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the life and soul of Sanatana Dharma, has extended a loving invitation to the whole human race in the following inspiring and reassuring words:—

“Leaving all other creeds alone, take refuge in Me. I shall absolve thee from all sins. Do not worry.”

The Lord further says:—

śoṣhāḥ sarvaḥ mūtēṣu n me kṛṣṇyodakṣita n priyaḥ
ye bhajanāḥ tu māṁ bhaktya maṁya te teṣu caṣṭaham
āpi cēryaḥ durāchaḥāḥ bhajate māmāntāḥbhācaḥ
alāḥurēḥ sa māntāḥ: saṁyogadakṣitaḥ hi s:
śeṣam bhavati yathāśāyaśaḥkṛṣṇaṇītā nyagunāṇāt
kūntaeḥ prāti jānīhināḥ n me bhakṣ: prāṇahita
maṁ hi pārtho vyapāsītāt yēyapi śyā: pāpyoḥāt
śrīyēḥ vēṣaḥsthaḥ śrūṣaṁstetāpi yānāt parāmgarām

“I am the same for all living. I bear no ill-will against any, nor do I love anyone. Those who devoutly worship Me abide in Me, and I abide in them. Even the worst sinner, who solely depends on Me, should be regarded as virtuous; he will in no time be transformed into a saint.
and is sure to attain abiding peace. O Arjuna! take it from Me that harm shall never befall him who is devoted to Me. O son of Kunti! even the womanfolk, the Vaiśyas (those belonging to the trading class), the Śūdras (those belonging to the labouring class) and those of sinful birth will surely attain the highest position if they take refuge in Me."

Blessed are they who have been initiated into this sacred and philanthropic creed! My devout prayer is that, guided by this divine light, all religious-minded persons, after refining and solidifying their knowledge and replenishing the store of their vigour and zeal, may propagate the truths underlying this creed and convince the whole world that God is one and only one, that in His essence He is present not only in all human beings but in all other animals, and plants,—in other words, in human beings, beasts, birds and insects, moths, trees and plants alike, and that the best mode of worshipping Him is to feel the divine presence in all creatures, to be friendly with all and to wish all well. Let us all consolidate and propagate the divine energy by preaching the cult of universal love and diffusing this true knowledge. Let us drive ignorance out of this world, eliminate wrong and injustice and promote mutual good-will, happiness and peace among men by preaching truthfulness, righteousness and compassion.