

WHAT I BELIEVE

(by Shiva Kant Jha)

[for our countrymen to reflect and act]

1 To be born a human being is great fortune. One gets life ('बड़े भाग मानुष तन पाया') as an instrument for action [*karma-samigri* (कर्मसामिग्री)] to participate in the cosmic *kriya* (actions) of which what we think, see and do become the integral parts. One's unalienable duty is one's *kartavya karma* (duty) the consequences of which are to be gladly accepted as they cannot be evaded. This existential grammar is both peremptory and inexorable.

2. The best way to judge the acts of others is to find out, whether or not his *reason* is pure and equable, by observing the external actions of man; 'otherwise, a man will by his mouth say that his Reason is pure and equable, and by his hands do whatever he likes.' The best way to judge one's actions is to measure them in the light of what one does for one's *kalyana*, and also for the good of the world believing that it is God Himself who is getting revealed in this world. The *Srimad Bhagavata Maha Purana* says: 'आद्योऽवतारः पुरुषः परस्य' ('the world is God's first incarnation'). This is the true 'globalisation', not that which followed the post-Bretton Woods phase (see p. 345 of this Memoir).

3. Our Constitution sets up as our core mission to work for social justice that establishes a great egalitarian society. I believe that our best manifesto for governance, and agenda for action, are well articulated, and powerfully stated in the Preamble to the Constitution of India which we can be compendiously described as our 'constitutional socialism'.

4. The institution of 'property' is for the welfare of people. One must put in one's best to earn it, augment it, and preserve it, as much as it is possible without compromising the nobility of the means for acquiring that, and also for amassing that. The propriety of 'property' depends on two factors: the state of one's mind in which one strives to acquire property, amass it, and protect it; and the way one puts it to use: whether for himself alone, or for the benefit of society treating 'property' as held in trust.

5. It is our duty to tread on the straight line of right and justice but always without violence. I believe that that Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed as expressed in the Constitution, created by 'We the People', and sustained, in the end, by the same 'We the People'.

6. I believe (i) that both in life and polity, a fast changing technology and decadent morality would become disastrous; (ii) that the right approach in dealing with grave socio-political problems is to adopt pragmatic, and piecemeal approach recognizing our own limitations and the constraints within which we live and work; (iii) that we must bridge the distance between people and government, and also between people and power; (iv) that the principles of Accountability and Responsibility must operate without allowing pockets of tyrannies to grow because of the lack of vigilance by 'We the People'; (v) that we can enjoy peace and prosperity only if we do not allow non-human actors (like the corporations and their consortia) to become dominant and decisive; and if we promote measures to promote peace and love amongst the humans of all lands under the aspects of social justice and equality.

7. I believe that to achieve our constitutional objectives we need minimum government but maximum governance not only because this model provides synergic participation, and

collective-collaborative creativity for common weal, but also because it accords well with our national genius, and is in tune with our classical thought for collective welfare. Both conjointly run the affairs of the State preserving even the best of the 'market' and the best of the 'government': thus ensuring pragmatic, democratic, and purpose-driven exercise of the political power. The role of the government becomes most crucial as it has to ensure that laws and the Constitution operate effectively for all without 'democratic deficit' or 'moral deficit'.

8 I believe that in our democratic Republic where 'We the People' have given to ourselves this great Constitution, unique in most ways, keeping, by an inevitable logic of existence, the ultimate political sovereignty in themselves to be exercised in those rare moments when its exercise would become essential. If all the organs created by the Constitution fail, then that course would become the only way left to protect and preserve our democratic Republic. In fact, this inherent and unalienable ultimate residuary right of course correction remains, in such rare moments, vested in every citizen to act for himself, and also for all, illustrating precisely the logic that our *Isavasyopanishad* so well expressed in its very first *shloka*:

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते ।

पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

(The parts illustrate and represent the whole; and the whole itself inheres in the parts. The whole and the parts are all perfect.)

9. I believe that even a little effort done to do good has salutary effect. Nothing done for public weal turns in vain, good work done never perishes. A step towards that is itself enough. I believe that the *Bhagavad-Gita* provides the very grammar of life, and it never fails one in the moments of need. It has never failed me; it shall never fail you, wherever you be, and under whatever conditions. I believe what Bal Gangadhar Tilak says in his *Bhagavadgita Rahashya*:

"Keep in mind the universal rule that, "Nothing happens unless something is done", and devote yourselves to Desireless Action ; that is all. The Gita was not preached either as a pastime for persons tired out after living a worldly life in the pursuit of selfish motives nor as a preparatory lesson for living such worldly life; but in order to give philosophical advice as to how one should live his worldly life with an eye to Release (*moksa*) and as to the true duty of human beings in worldly life. My last prayer to everyone, therefore, is that one should not fail to thoroughly understand this ancient science of the life of a householder, or of worldly life, as early as possible in one's life."

10. Admitting a margin of error that creeps in most generalizations, my intellectual journey through the Western thought, mainly in the realms of economics, political economy, history, sociology, philosophy, and jurisprudence (including laws and constitutions) have led me to believe (i) that the intellectuals of the West were almost always pursuing their given, or assumed, briefs: they seldom acted as the independent inquirers of truth in the quest of wisdom that lasts the momentary changes specific to a country, regime, or phase of passing time; (ii) that their tomes of learning are erected to provide to their authors the same measure of thrill that the visitors of Mount Everest, or the Moon or Mars get on unfurling their flag there, or what a chef

gets after preparing a recipe that makes him move here, there, and everywhere for a patent. A resume of my exploration is given in Chap. 24 of this Memoir. If some of the ideas, set forth in this Memoir, do not please the intellectuals at the high academic, or administrative echelons, I beg to be excused. In my defence I would just refer to Bhartrihari's *shloka* that I have quoted at page 43 of this Memoir which my father, himself a revolutionary and freedom-fighter, thought it fit to quote in an apt context.

11. We are responding to the challenges in these difficult moments. These moments are neither for depression nor for elation, but for actions, actions, and actions. The words of Vyasa in the great *Mahabharata* are enlightening and inspiring: to quote ---

'Sorrow which we share in common, it is unwise to shed tears thereon;

It is prudent to find and forge some ways, to diagnose the cause to get rid of the ailments.'

'We are ourselves our friends, and are ourselves are our foes.' (the *Bhagvad Gita* VI. 5).

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