Introduction

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To individuals who follow the news, the topic of the current volume—truth and governance—requires little explanation. Not a day passes without worried commentaries on the ability of national and transnational actors to distort the information reaching rank-and-file citizens. New technologies have given these forces the ability to tailor misleading messages to small groups, and even to create images of their political adversaries saying things they never said and doing things they never did. Fragmentation of media generates echo chambers in which people are bombarded with confirmation of their opinions and criticism is dismissed as "fake news" or unpatriotic propaganda. Proven falsehoods are blandly labeled "alternative facts." Faced with these developments, some observers have gone so far as to proclaim the "death of truth" and the ascendency of "post-truth politics," an arresting exaggeration that dramatizes an urgent problem. Less pessimistic studies warn of growing "truth decay" in contemporary political discourse.

In a sense, this problem is as old as politics. More than two millennia ago, speech moved to the center of public life in the Greek polities, or city-states. When public deliberation replaced force, tradition, and augury as the primary means of deciding on the common course, matters of truth and falsehood, honesty and deception, and dispute and verification moved to the fore of thought. Plato's *Gorgias* laid out a challenge facing truthful politicians: the truth is often unpopular, and people will pay more attention to what they want to hear than to what they need to hear.

At roughly the same time, biblical writings showed prophets wrestling with similar problems. Rulers dismissed the rebukes and warnings the prophets offered, and the people often followed suit. Sin proved more popular than virtue, intransigence more palatable than repentance. In the short run, ignoring the truth could succeed. In the long run, doing so spelled disaster. But most human beings are myopic, especially leaders filled with the arrogance of power.

In China, the tradition associated with Confucius made the moral courage of the cultivated person to speak truth to those in power central to statecraft. The truthful/moral minister would not deceive the ruler, but "oppose him openly." Truth telling was held to be inseparable from morality and from good governance.

Because the interplay between politics and speech is one of the great universals of human life, every religious and philosophical tradition has been forced to wrestle with it. In this volume, we have brought together authors representing ten such traditions—three great non-Western faiths (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism), the three "Abrahamic" faiths (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), and four streams of secular thought (natural law, liberalism, feminism, and political realism). We asked the authors of each chapter to address a common template of issues: the nature of truth; the morality of truth telling; the nature of government, which shapes each tradition's understanding of the relationship between governance and truth; the legitimacy and limits of regulating speech, whether by government or other centers of power within the polity; and, finally, remedies when the relation between truth and governance goes awry.

Although many readers of this volume will think first of the relationship between truth and democracy, many traditions developed within nondemocratic regimes and regarded those regimes as legitimate to the extent that rulers governed with an eye to the well-being of their subjects or conformity to divine mandate. Although democracy is distinctive in requiring truth to be dispersed among nongovernmental actors and individual citizens, nondemocratic forms of government also cannot do without truth. If ministers cannot give candid advice to rulers, the government's policies are likely to proceed on false premises and therefore fail. If rulers do not speak truthfully to their people, trust will erode.

It is likely that some readers of this volume will have grown up in traditions that not only take the virtue of truth telling for granted, but also

regard it as absolute and inviolable. If so, they will learn that they are in a distinct minority, and that most traditions carve out a space in which deception and lies are permitted. This book explores the variety of ways in which religions and secular schools of thought make this argument and draw this line.

Readers may feel overwhelmed by the wealth of information contained in the first ten chapters of this volume. To help them orient themselves, the concluding chapter summarizes and compares the treatment of the key issues across the traditions.

About Ethikon

The Ethikon Institute is a nonprofit organization that publishes a series of books in comparative social and political ethics, and organizes conferences on moral issues of current importance. Ethikon projects explore and compare a range of influential ethical perspectives, secular and religious, with the aim of clarifying areas on consensus and divergence. Its method is to engage experts on diverse traditions to use a common template of questions to illuminate what each tradition says (or does not say) about the moral issue under consideration. The hope is to broaden the scope of ethical discourse while sharpening its focus, with the aim of building understanding across the traditions that shape politics and society.

Over the past three decades, Ethikon has organized twenty conferences and meetings, and has published eighteen books along with two journal symposia and two case studies in international affairs. The current volume is the nineteenth in this long-running series. (For more details on each meeting and publication, please visit the organization's website, ethikon.org.)

Hinduism

NIMAI M. MEHTA

KARTI SANDILYA

BHAKTI PATIL

**People should learn and respect the fundamentals of
one another's Dharma. . . .**
There should be a growth of the essentials of Dharma *among
men of all sects.*
       Rock Edict XII, *Inscriptions of Aśoka*[1]

**[There] is one failure of Gandhi which has inflicted positive
harm on the people of India. It has come from the rejection
by the ruling order in India of the very basis of his teachings,
whether in politics or in morals, and that rejection is of the
Hindu notion of Dharma. They have put what they call sec-
ularism in its place, which is not the secularism of Europe.
European secularism is a rational alternative to Christianity,
with its ultimate source in Greek rationalism and final basis
in modern science. In India secularism of even the highest
European type is not needed, for Hinduism as a religion is
itself secular and it has sanctified worldliness by infusing it
with moral and spiritual qualities. To take away that secular-
ism from the Hindus is to make them immoral, and cultur-
ally debased.**
       Nirad Chaudhuri, *Thy Hand, Great Anarch!* [2]

Governance is an applied science and a craft. Our first task has, therefore,
been to identify the concrete circumstances under which an account of the
key theoretical and practical views on truth and governance contained
within Hinduism may be made meaningful to the contemporary reader.
Second, the Hindu view of Truth that we highlight in this chapter obliges

us to go beyond the precepts of truth and morality laid down by a specific religion and to consider the broader, civilizational approach that Hinduism as a tradition has taken to the question of Truth. That is, we embrace the challenge Nirad Chaudhuri poses to the Hinduism-as-a-religion interpretation of the tradition, requiring that Hinduism be understood as a way of life that includes faith and reason, the spiritual and material-secular, renunciation and work, and knowledge of the self and knowledge of the world. It is that open-ended and, to use a more modern term of reference, open-sourced pursuit of Truth that gave rise to the main *dharmic* faiths—Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism—and to a flowering of multiple schools of thought, including heterodox ones such as the materialist school of *Carvaka* (or *Lokayata*), which would reject some of the core beliefs contained within the orthodox faiths.[3]

The civilizational essence of the Hindu tradition is captured in its understanding of Truth and the related notion of *dharma* that, as we show in the next two sections below, have functioned as a guide to human action at three distinct but related levels—metaphysical, individual, and societal. The ethical-moral precepts for individual behavior, including truth telling, the abhorrence of violence, acceptance of varied truths, and rejection of falsehoods, have been anchored in dharma. It is understood, at the individual level, as doing one's duty and, at the societal level, as the natural order. And the quality of governance provided by the state has been judged in terms of its ability to sustain conditions conducive to the observance of dharma at all levels. The fourth century BCE Rock Edicts of Emperor Aśoka,[4] along with the writings of Kautilya—the author of the ancient Indian treatise on governance, *Arthashastra*—a century earlier, provide some of the earliest evidence of these principles of good governance. The quality of governance historically observed over time in India has thus depended on the strength of its observance of dharma in the context of the ebb and flow of Hindu civilization.

The Five Rs of Hinduism and Governance in India

This chapter highlights five main sociocultural forces and political developments that we argue have shaped the observance of dharma in modern Indian society and within its institutions. We label these the five Rs: one, a *First Revival* that started with the modern Hindu awakening in the form of

the *Bengal Renaissance* of the late eighteenth century and later inspired the movement for independence from the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century; two, a *Rejection* of the Hindu way of life or dharma—referenced in the quote from Chaudhuri above—that almost immediately followed Indian independence with the embrace of Nehruvian "secularism," socialism, and Soviet-style industrialization, and continues to hold sway even today[5]; three, a *Reaction* in the shape of the *Hindutva* movement that evolved over two distinct phases—pre- and postindependence, culminating in the 2014 and 2019 general election results; and four, a *Second Revival* that has paralleled the postindependence Reaction. The Second Revival, too, has occurred in two phases—an early political phase that emerged in the form of the Swatantra Party to counter the Nehruvian form of secularism-socialism and the License Raj,[6] and a second phase that began with the partial liberalization of the Indian economy in 1990s. Unlike the First Revival and the first phase of the Second Revival, this second phase has been far more dispersed and uneven, and has so far lacked any organized political expression. Finally and most importantly, we identify a fifth R that permeates the four phases identified above and endures through their highs and lows. This is the *Resilience* that we attribute to the underlying, highly decentralized nature and workings of the dharmic tradition that has shaped morality and ethics in India. The presence of Resilience can be seen throughout Indian history, from the early Vedic period (circa 1200 BCE) to the present.[7]

The First Revival Views on Hinduism and Governance

The principal sources of the modern Hindu outlook on truth and governance are found within the First Revival movement that was sparked by the writings of Raja Rammohun Roy.[8] By the turn of the nineteenth century, as the prospects for independence from British rule came into greater focus, views first put forth by Roy and his contemporaries concerning the philosophical roots of, and the cultural and political basis for, a "new" Indian state assumed increasing salience in the writings, and lives, of the next generation of Hindu (as well as Buddhist) intellectuals. The latter could be regarded as the "children" of the Bengal Renaissance, and this was literally true in the case of the Indian poet laureate Rabindranath Tagore, whose father had played an important role in the earlier renaissance. The

group that took the views of the First Revival forward included Tagore as well as Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Dayananda Saraswati, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Mahatma Gandhi, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, and Chakravarti Rajagopalachari. The latter would also later lead the first phase of the Second Revival within a decade of Indian independence.

Three common beliefs characterized this long period of the First Revival. First, due to material impoverishment, Hindu society had suffered through a long period of cultural-moral debasement. There was strong agreement on the specific ills that were plaguing Hindu society. These included casteism and untouchability; restrictions placed on women and widows; and superstition and beliefs that encouraged fatalism, dependency, and an adherence to regressive customs. Second, the ability of Hindu society to govern itself as an independent, unitary, or federal political state in the foreseeable future would require broad-based social and moral regeneration. And third, a revival of the Vedic-dharmic[9] philosophical and ethical roots of Hindu society was essential to such reform.

The modern Hindu views on governance as they evolved under the First Revival were strongly motivated by the objectives of a social and political revival of the Hindu civilizational ethos. This was effectively captured in the Vedic term *Swaraj*, employed by Dayananda Saraswati, and then later by Gandhi, to argue that the movement for political independence was simultaneously a striving for moral betterment by the individual through the practice of self-rule or self-governance.[10] While political independence in 1947 brought an end to this First Revival, that revival remains very much a work in progress. On the eve of his assassination, Gandhi discouraged the Indian National Congress (INC) from assuming political office and offered the following draft resolution:

> Though split into two, India having attained political independence through means devised by the Indian National Congress, the Congress in its present shape and form, i.e., as a propaganda vehicle and parliamentary machine, has outlived its use. India has still to attain a social, moral, and economic independence in terms of its seven hundred thousand villages as distinguished from its cities and towns. . . . It must be kept out of unhealthy competition with political bodies and communal bodies. For these and similar reasons, the A.I.C.C. resolves to disband the Congress organization and flower

into a *Lok Sewak Sangh* (Servants of People Society) (A.I.C.C. draft resolution, January 29, 1948).[11]

At this point, it is important to mention the distinctions that we develop in later sections on truth, falsity, honesty, and deception. The "cultural ills" that concerned the First Revival were arguably mainly in the nature of falsehoods born of ignorance and superstition rather than dishonesty or deception. That would explain why the revival appeared early in the form of a renaissance led by a mix of philosophers, poets, artists, writers, educationists, and scientists.[12] Similarly, by weakening the dharmic roots of morality and ethics in India, the postindependence Rejection of the Hindu way of life has led to far higher levels of dishonesty in the form of corruption, especially in the public sector.[13]

Truth and Knowledge: Brahman and Jnana

The Hindu view makes a clear separation between truth and falsehood on the one hand and truth telling and deception on the other. Truth telling is seen as a part of morality that, in the Hindu tradition, is rooted more in dharma than in Truth. And while various texts in the tradition allow for deception to be employed under a limited number of circumstances— for example, those that threaten life and the greater good—they frown upon viewing truth and falsehood in instrumental or utilitarian terms.[14, 15] Truth, in the Hindu view, is neither good nor evil. For Hinduism, Truth is a notion that is much wider than mere factually correct or valid statements. Truth encompasses all of knowledge, and the search for it is, in fact, the goal of life. Central to the Hindu metaphysical view of Truth is the Vedic concept of *Brahman* that is meant to capture an all-encompassing, expansive reality: Truth that unifies the physical universe, matter, and mind.[16]

Of greater significance, and perhaps unique to the Hindu worldview, is a theory of knowledge, or *Jnana*, that is built into the definition of Brahman. The Vedas deny that knowledge of Brahman is exclusive to any authority, person, or method. Instead, they affirm the opposite—that all methods of knowing are equally valid in that they all capture a valid but limited aspect of the Truth.[17] The Vedic poet-philosophers refused to provide a definitive answer to the nature of Truth or Brahman—stressing, on

the contrary, its fundamental unknowability and its mystery. Thus, the Rig-Veda, the earliest of the Hindu corpus, declares:

> *But, after all, who knows and who can say*
> *whence it all came, and how creation happened?*
> *The gods themselves are later than creation,*
> *So who knows truly whence it has arisen?*
>
> *Whence all creation had its origins,*
> *He, whether he fashioned it or whether he did not,*
> *He who surveys it all from highest heaven,*
> *He knows—or maybe even he does not know.*
>   *Rig-Veda Book 10,* Hymn of Creation: 129:6–7[18]

Accordingly, Hindus approach reality as complex and many-sided. Physical reality is explored by the natural sciences, but these are—and may remain forever—works in progress. Political, economic, and social reality is more complicated. Accordingly, all assertions are, at best, opinions. At the very start, therefore, while upholding the presence of a metaphysical unity in the concept of Brahman, Hinduism admits there are infinite ways of knowing the Truth. More importantly, no method, type, or source of knowledge or belief is ruled out, *ex ante,* by Hinduism. Instead, every possibility is considered and analyzed for the kernel of truth that it may hold and, when found, the latter is to be accommodated and made its own, *ex post*.[19]

The Knowing Individual

At the level of the individual, each person is seen as embodying a part of Brahman. The Hindu imperative has thus been to recognize that the same Truth or Brahman resides within each and every individual. That is, knowledge of Brahman is as much knowledge of the self as it is of the universe. The pursuit of Truth as a process of self-discovery, and thus unique to each individual, emerges as a defining motif of the Hindu worldview and way of life. And, as we discuss in the section on morality below, the same process of self-discovery informs an individual's dharma.

Two things are of interest here. First, an individual's ability, and willingness, to discern Truth—of the self, in others, and of the external

world—was recognized as the main or necessary condition for the acquisition of knowledge. Thus, the Sanskrit root *Vid* that forms the word for learning—*Vidya*—points to the "discerner" or "knower" rather than to the external object of knowledge. In other words, Vidya is not simply a stock of acquired knowledge. From this follows a second, and perhaps more important, aspect of Vidya, namely the active discernment of truth by the knower. The Vedas (and later, the *Upanishads* and *Puranas)* turned the light of reason inward to explore behavioral and ethical attributes that support Vidya, the ability to discern truth from falsehood. We consider this more fully in the section on morality.

The Threat of Falsehoods

The rise of falsehoods has always been seen as a greater threat to the Hindu way of life than mere deception or lies, since it is a symptom of a weakening of the core civilizational ethos of the Hindus: the pursuit of Truth. Falsehood in this sense may be born of ignorance or superstition, or it may reflect a partial view of the whole. The Hindu tradition has, as mentioned above, actively encouraged diversity of beliefs and faiths as ways to approach the Truth. The sustainability and governance of its society has, in turn, rested on the ability and the fortitude of individuals to pursue and discern truth in all spheres of life—religion, art, philosophy, science, and governance—as part of their individual dharma, while recognizing its roots in a common Truth or Brahman. With the rejection of the normative-ethical glue of dharma in secular, postindependence India, diverse beliefs have petrified into dogmas, with each group failing to comprehend or consider the same Truth or Brahman that binds them together within their common Hindu civilization. As a result, many Hindus have focused on external manifestations and symbols of their worldly and religious beliefs, and thus undermined the universalism intrinsic in the Hindu approach to faith. That has become increasingly evident under the contemporary Hindutva-led Reaction—for example, the ban on beef eating and the imperative of cow protection. That is, the unwillingness to consider such beliefs as representing only partial truths, and the inability and unwillingness to weigh them within a larger Truth, has enabled falsehoods to take hold. That is in sharp contrast to the leaders of the First Revival, who considered the fight against the widespread ignorance, superstitions, and falsehoods that had accumulated over time to be as—if not more—

important as the struggle for political independence. In contrast, the politics of the Hindutva Reaction does not lend itself to such self-criticism.

Morality, Self-Governance, and Individual Dharma

The importance placed within the tradition on the behavioral and ethical-moral requirements for the individual's pursuit of Truth is to be found in the parable of the chariot driver within the *Katha Upanishad* (verses 1.3.3 to 8):[20]

> *Know thou the soul* (ātman), *self as riding in a chariot,*
> *The body as the chariot.*
> *Know thou the intellect* (buddhi) *as the chariot-driver,*
> *And the mind* (manas) *as the reins.*
>
> *The senses* (indriya), *they say, are the horses;*
> *The objects of sense, what they range over.*
> *The self combined with senses and mind*
> *Wise men call "the enjoyer"* (bhoktṛ).
>
> *He who has not understanding* (a-vijñāna),
> *Whose mind is not constantly held firm—*
> *His senses are uncontrolled,*
> *Like the vicious horses of a chariot-driver.*
>
> *He, however, who has understanding,*
> *Whose mind is constantly held firm—*
> *His senses are under control,*
> *Like the good horses of a chariot-driver.*
>
> *He, however, who has not understanding,*
> *Who is unmindful and ever impure,*
> *Reaches not the goal,*
> *But goes on to transmigration [saṁsāra].*
>
> *He, however, who has understanding,*
> *Who is mindful and ever pure,*

Reaches the goal
From which he is born no more.

That is, Swaraj, or self-governance, is seen as an essential condition for an individual's pursuit of the Truth. Similarly, for good conduct, virtue, and truth telling:

Not a man who has not quit his evil ways;
Nor a man who is not calm or composed;
Nor even a man who is without a tranquil mind;
Could ever secure it by his mere wit.
Katha Upanishad, Second Valli, verse 24[21]

Having taught the Veda, a teacher further instructs a pupil:—
Speak the truth.
Practice virtue (dharma).
Taittiriya Upanishad, I.xi.1[22]

Truth and Truth Telling in Hinduism

Truth (with a capital T), as defined above, is all-encompassing and cannot be instrumental; it is neither good nor bad—that is, it is absolute and distinct from notions of morality. Falsehood is the opposite of Truth in this most fundamental sense. Falsehood, like Truth, cannot be proven or disproven. Falsehood (with a capital F) is distinct from a notion of falsehood as something that contradicts a widely held belief or is contrary to scientific knowledge and can, therefore, be disproven. It is also distinct from an understanding of falsehood as a presentation of a partial truth that is deliberately misleading.

Truth telling, by contrast, refers to the telling of "a" truth (with a small t)—that is, a truth as known by the individual teller. When an individual is purposely not telling what she or he knows to be true, she or he is lying or deceiving—that is, lies are the opposite of truth telling. Truth telling is recognized as important both for upholding dharma as the natural order and as a moral imperative or part of dharma as an individual duty. Deception, in turn, is a betrayal of dharma as both cosmic order and individual duty. Deception, then, is as much a violation of the self as

it is an injury to society, desecrating the essential object of dharma—the furtherance of *lokasangraha*, or universal welfare, and the maintenance of social order. It is in its role in the preservation of lokasangraha that the morality of truth telling in Hindu tradition can be best understood. In other words, Truth is absolute, but truth telling, or truthfulness, is judged based on its instrumental significance in the furtherance of dharma and lokasangraha.[23] It is only on that basis that "not telling the truth," or deliberate deception, becomes morally acceptable under certain circumstances.

Allowable Exceptions to Truth Telling in Hinduism
While Truth and its pursuit are fundamental and overarching values, exceptions to truth telling are allowed and even encouraged in circumstances where speaking the truth would lead to greater injustice or harm to others.[24] Thus, in the Hindu epic *Mahabharata*, there is repeated affirmation of the conditions that make for permissible lies or deception, when the latter furthers the upholding of dharma or lokasangraha. For instance, in the "Karna Parva" section of the *Mahabharata*, Krishna calls upon Arjuna to acknowledge the circumstances that make lying a moral imperative:

> Behold, however, truth as practiced is exceedingly difficult to be understood as regards its essential attributes. Truth may be unutterable, and even deception may be utterable, where falsehood would become truth and truth would become deception (Karna Parva, LXIX).[25]

The "Santi Parva" section of the *Mahabharata* goes further and asserts the contingency of truth telling on "time and place," where "appropriation" (of what belongs to others), untruth, and injury and killing may, under special circumstances, become virtues:[26]

> Acts that are (apparently) evil, when undertaken from considerations connected with the gods, with the scriptures, with life itself, and with the means by which life is sustained produce consequences that are good.[27]

The Bhagavad Gita famously opens with a discourse on such conditionality. In the context of a righteous war and the battlefield, the *himsa* (violence) of killing is rendered morally permissible. Krishna's discourse on the righteousness of battle therefore affirms that dharma and the condition of *anasakti* (nonattachment) can render sin (here, killing of one's kin) moral in its consequences:

> He who is free from self-sense, whose understanding is not sullied, though he slay these people, he slays not nor is he bound (by his actions) (*The Bhagavadgita*, XVIII.17).[28]

Ahimsa and Karma: The Paths to Truth
Besides truth telling, two additional principles are embraced in the tradition to guide the individual's pursuit of Truth—*ahimsa* and *karma*. The principle of ahimsa (absence of violence) necessarily constitutes an essential element in the Hindu metaphysical worldview, since violence, as an exclusionary device, is contrary to the Vedic understanding of Truth. In addition, recognition that Brahman (i.e., Truth) resides in each individual precludes the resort to violence against another, except under extremely circumscribed circumstances related to preservation of life, self-defense, property, and the larger welfare. Ahimsa is also seen as an essential behavioral requirement for those who seek the Truth. Thus, the Bhagavad Gita declares ahimsa to be a mark of those with a "divine nature," and violence and anger to be the mark of the "demoniac kind."
The Blessed Lord said:

> Non-Violence, truth, freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquility, aversion to fault finding, compassion to living beings, freedom from covetousness, gentleness, modesty, and steadiness [absence of fickleness] . . . are the endowments of him who is born with the *divine nature* [emphasis added].

> Ostentation, arrogance, excessive pride, anger, as also harshness and ignorance, these, . . . are the endowments of him who is born with the *demoniac nature* [emphasis added] (*The Bhagavad Gita*, XVIII.16).[29]

The principle of karma needs to be understood as the actualization of the individual self through action. Its first mention occurs in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanisad*, which defined it tersely:

> The two went away and deliberated. What they said was karman. What they praised was karman. Verily, one becomes good by good action, bad by bad action (III.2.13).[30]

> According as one acts, according as one behaves, so does he become. The doer of good becomes good; the doer of evil becomes evil. One becomes virtuous by virtuous actions, bad by bad action (IV.4.5).[31]

In other words, karma is both the performance of action and the resulting change that it produces within the individual actor—more so than any external outcome that results from the action. Every deed, speech, and thought produces a change in the doer. By the logic of karma, the individual is the sum of her or his past behavior. This view is reinforced by the philosophy of dispassionate or selfless action expounded in the Bhagavad Gita. In the discourse between Arjuna and Krishna, the former is asked not to be swayed by the external outcomes of his action—and the resulting pleasure or pain—but to be guided solely by his duty, or dharma.

Individual Dharma and General Welfare, or Lokasangraha
The Bhagavad Gita makes it clear that the individual's dharma is not predetermined by birth or fate but rather guided by her or his *sva-bhava* (own nature)—the latter, shaped by her or his karma (actions) over time. Nor is an individual's dharma decreed by any religious or secular authority. Instead it is discerned through a process of self-discovery as the individual progresses through different stages of life and under varying circumstances. This understanding of individual dharma has been captured by the Hindu notion of *varna-ashrama-dharma*—that is, individual dharma as defined through different stages of life and shaped by the individual's own nature.[32] Importantly, the admonition in the Bhagavad Gita for individuals to fulfill their respective dharmas—relayed by Krishna to the conflicted warrior-prince, Arjuna, on the battlefield—is based on the allied notion of lokasangraha, or general welfare. By fulfilling his individual dharma on the battlefield, Krishna argues, Arjuna helps maintain social order and

promotes the general welfare at the same time. In sum, morality comprises the behavioral tenets that are supportive of the individual search for Truth as well as the maintenance of social order and general welfare. These include truth telling, *nishkama karma* (selfless action), ahimsa (nonviolence), and the fulfillment of one's individual dharma.

The presence of caste rigidity and caste-based discrimination was thus seen by members of the First Revival as a debasement of the varna-ashrama-dharma ideals, sustained by falsehoods and ignorance prevalent in Indian society. Restoring the above-discussed dharmic ethics would thus become an essential part of social and political reform under the First Revival.

Governance

Sukhsya Moolam Dharma
   (The root of Happiness is Dharma)
Dharmasya Moolam Artha
   (The root of Dharma is Wealth)[33]
Arthasya Moolam Rajyam
   (The root of Wealth is Good Governance)
Rajyasya Moolam Indraya-Jaya
   (The root of Good Governance is Self-Restraint)
Indrayajaya-stha Moolam Vinaya
   (The root of Self-Restraint is Humility)
Vinayasya Moolam Vrddhopaseva
   (The root of Humility is in the Wisdom of Elders)
                    Chanakya Sutras (1 to 6)[34]

Truth and the Legitimacy of Government
In the Hindu view, the legitimacy of government cannot be seen as founded on truth claims. Such legitimacy instead rests on a government's ability to enable and empower the different constituencies among the governed to follow their respective dharmas. Since doing so assumes a minimum level of material well-being, the earliest sources (*Mahabharata* and *Arthashastra*) stress that securing the welfare of subjects is a ruler's first responsibility. Policies must permit the various economic sectors—agriculture, industry,

and trading—to function as smoothly and harmoniously as possible to enable the creation of wealth. In turn, this implies maintenance of law and order on one hand, and of trust (enforcement of contracts) on the other.

The Hindu perspective does not accept any monopoly on Truth or dharma—least of all, any claim to such a monopoly by the government. It was this perspective—the polycentric nature of Truth and dharma—that informed the First Revival's views on the appropriate role and form for the (prospective) new Indian state. That the role of the state in Hindu society always was, and ought to be, highly circumscribed remained an article of faith within the First Revival group. And it found expression in the writings of Gandhi, Vivekananda, Aurobindo, B. R. Ambedkar, Rajagopalachari, and Tagore. Thus, in his 1904 essay "Society and State," Tagore pointed to the far greater "public goods" role that the Hindu view of dharma conferred upon individuals, groups, and communities, relative to the state.[35] Following Tagore, Gandhi leveraged the Hindu concept of ahimsa (nonviolence) to argue for a decentralized political structure that would rest on a materially strengthened economy of "village republics."[36] He cautioned against the Nehruvian plans for state-led industrialization, which Gandhi saw as being contrary to the principles of ahimsa. And the necessary expansion in the role of the state in society that such plans entailed would, Gandhi and others within the First Revival feared, weaken the Hindu moral fiber by corrupting the individual and reducing local communities to a state of greater dependency.[37, 38] In a more analytical vein, Aurobindo, in an extended series of four essays on the "Indian Polity," argued that a decentralized polity was a necessary requirement for sustaining the Hindu civilizational ethos of an open-ended search for Truth, which required a greater degree of freedom than could be expected under a centralized state.[39]

Truth Telling, Dharma, and Governance

Similarly, the Hindu view admits of no special relationship between truth telling and governance. As with morality, truth telling in governance stems from dharma. For the individual, adherence to her or his dharma calls for self-control, *vinaya* (humility), and truth telling. It also requires ahimsa, or eschewing force and violence, at all times. Since governance, one may argue, is a collective or group effort by individuals, similar pre-

cepts hold for it. Governance within the public sector is seen along a con-
tinuum of dharmic principles that also guide individual action within the
private sector. Thus, the Bhagavad Gita asserts the "public-good" value
of an individual's work, or dharma. The true value of work, according to
the Bhagavad Gita, lies not in the weighing of pleasure and pain for the
individual worker, but in the fact that it allows for lokasangraha (main-
tenance of, and welfare for, the world or society).[40] The individual who
devotes herself or himself to work in a selfless manner without the expec-
tation of rewards, the Gita argues, also inspires others to work, thereby
ensuring lokasangraha. Krishna urges Arjuna, therefore, to see labor as
a sacrifice—an offering that, in Vedic terms, is needed for preservation of
the world and for prosperity. It is only by understanding all work in these
terms, Krishna argues, that Arjuna will be able to embrace the dispassion-
ate and detached approach needed for constancy in work.[41]

Here, the Bhagavad Gita points to an additional motivational pathway
to ensure that the individual acts in ways that take the welfare of others
into account. This is the path of *Bhakti Yoga* or the path of devotion—
characterized by love and compassion toward one's fellow humans, based
on a recognition of the Brahman that exists within each individual.[42]
Lying or deception is, therefore, both a violation of an individual's *sva-
dharma* (her or his own dharma) and of the commitment made to others in
society through work done within the context of governance.

Nehru's Secularism-Socialism and the Rise of Adharma

Jawaharlal Nehru's promotion of a "secular-socialist" state drew intellec-
tual inspiration more from Western thought (especially English Fabian so-
cialism) than from the Hindu tradition. It put an end to a conscious revival
and application of the above-discussed Vedic-dharmic ideals that had,
since Raja Rammohun Roy and in the years prior to independence, been
part of broad-based efforts at moral regeneration and education.[43] Gandhi
feared that the resulting rejection of a Hindu way of life would lead to a
significant and widespread weakening of governance. The buildup of a
socialist state engaged in top-heavy industrialization and suppression of
the private sector was directly antithetical to the Hindu dharmic ethos
and risked undermining the accompanying ethical precepts of karma and
lokasangraha. In a context where both the normal Hindu entrepreneurial

spirit was suppressed and the state monopolized areas far beyond its traditional mandate, the actions of individuals were likely to be divorced from their ethical moorings.

Postindependence management of the Indian economy took a heavy interventionist turn. Instead of adhering to a policy framework that allowed different social and economic sectors to operate harmoniously, which would be in keeping with the spirit of dharma, economic policy and governance-imposed plans were formulated by some on the entirety of society. What followed was a bloated and inefficient public sector that crowded out a severely circumscribed private economy. In an economy in which the government controlled access to both resources and benefits, rent-seeking and corruption were endemic. The consequences of that rejection of a more dharmic ordering of economic and cultural life were not only anemic economic growth, but also—more importantly—a general breakdown of honesty and trust in society. The large number of elected representatives, in parliament and state legislatures, with criminal records perhaps exemplified this most vividly.

Nor was criminalization of politics the only adverse outcome. Even more generally, there was a weakening of the Hindu work ethic in its attributes of karma (selfless action), sacrifice, and devotion through service. It was that erosion of attitudes to work and duty that was perhaps most damaging, since it was well-nigh all-pervasive, especially among those working in government agencies. Far from taking pride in service to the public, bureaucrats—junior and senior—not merely betrayed a lackadaisical approach, but also, more often than not, expected illegal and inappropriate inducements to perform their duty and functions. The resulting loss of integrity and accountability also eroded the capacity of the civil service to perform.[44] Apolitical and recruited through rigorous competitive examinations, today's officers of the Indian Administrative Service (successor to the Indian Civil Service of colonial times) begin their careers managing districts across India. As they rise up the ladder, though, first in the government of Indian states and later at the federal level, interaction with corrupt politicians taints many bureaucrats. Their standing has therefore fallen in the eyes of the public. It is also no surprise that those work attitudes infect the private sector as well. Both public and private sectors could benefit from a return to dharma-based moral precepts.[45]

Resilience of Hinduism and the Survival of Indian Democracy

India's post-partition democracy was supported by an underlying civilizational ethos, which included a fundamental recognition of the polycentric nature of Truth and knowledge, and with a willingness to both engage with and accept different belief systems. Democratic governance found solid footing in the unwillingness to grant any group, interest, or state an absolute monopoly over human affairs; the upholding of the concept of dharma by all as an independent source of law and justice; an abhorrence of violence in daily life and thought; and the acceptance of one's own and others' sva-dharma based on karma and sva-bhava (the individual's own nature).

In addition, the early years after independence continued to benefit from the enlightenment values that were secured under the First Revival and the accompanying Bengal Renaissance. These fueled a strong commitment on the part of many Indians to pursue education, the sciences, and modernization. The same revival also enabled the rise of a merit-based administrative service that would provide the "iron frame" of the newly unified Indian state.

At the same time, the Resilience we attribute to Hinduism was evident in the highly decentralized hold the tradition continued to display both at the level of the individual and within households and communities. Thus, while Hindu values were disavowed in the workings of the secular-socialist state, including most importantly within the K–12 public education curricula, Hindu households and family businesses continued to follow the customary norms found within the tradition. This is evident in both heterodox and orthodox Hindu communities—such as Jains and Marwaris, respectively—that base their secular business engagements on dharmic-moral precepts. And while caste-based prejudice and discrimination have continued, urbanization and the economic growth achieved since the liberalization of the 1990s have made these practices less salient. However, the problem of corruption has inevitably emerged at the intersection of private and public sectors, and within the public sector.

The Cost of Competitive Politics Unrestrained by Swaraj

As we argue at the start of this governance section, the Hindu view does not, in theory, exempt government or office seekers from the truth-telling norms that form an integral part of an individual's dharma. However, the

Rejection of the Hindu way of life created conditions under which competitive politics has tended to both discourage truth telling and encourage deception and falsehoods. As long as the objectives of the First Revival remained unattained, the country's widespread poverty, illiteracy, and ignorance would make India susceptible to "unhealthy competition with political bodies and communal bodies," according to Gandhi.[46] He made his fears known by contrasting the notions of "democracy and government by the people" against his definition of Swaraj and *Ram Rajya* (the reign of Rama, the ideal type of virtuous ruler).[47]

It is thus no surprise that the postindependence years under the License Raj, by failing to bring about general prosperity, sustained a competitive politics based on populist measures and a dependency relationship based on state handouts for the poor. And while the economic reforms begun in the 1990s have helped weaken those dynamics, the politics of dependency continue to handicap the ability and the willingness of successive governments to undertake further reforms.

Regulation: Self-Enforcement of Truth Telling

It follows from the principle of the unknowability of Truth, and from the understanding of dharma as fulfilling the natural order and the individual's own duty, that any concept of "enforcement of truth telling" is not meaningful in the Hindu tradition. The government, like the individual, does not know the Truth—though individuals in government, in their private roles, may hold parts of the truth. The best way to approach the Truth is through realizing one's dharma. Hence, the role of regulation is not to enforce the Truth or even truth telling, but to enable each individual to follow her or his dharma in a manner that does not interfere with other individuals doing the same.

Self-control, self-discipline, and self-regulation—by individuals, by society, and, hence, by a minimally coercive government—would represent a return to the tradition of the First Revival. As Tagore noted, the Indian tradition was for communities and other entities in society to voluntarily undertake many of the responsibilities that governments perform elsewhere.[48] If the glue of dharma holds all constituents of society together, in theory there is no need for any external government regulation. Conversely, should dharma be absent from society, no amount of enforcement

by government will help. It will neither produce the desired results nor preclude the need for further acts of enforcement to counter wrongdoing (whether of commission or omission).

The slow climb back since economic liberalization began in 1991, to a situation where the role of the government in the economy is relatively more limited and private enterprise is given more space, may increase the level of trust in society and the economy, if accompanied in time by a true revival of the dharmic tradition.

Remedies: Moral Legitimacy of the State and Satyagraha

The moral legitimacy of the state and its subservience to the conscientious will of its subjects, as stressed by Mahatma Gandhi, reflects the Hindu conception of dharma as the "ruler of rulers."[49] The state always remains subject to dharma. Its sovereignty emerges from its fundamental function of furthering the welfare of its constituents and, in so doing, supporting their ability to pursue their sva-dharma. The use of force (*danda*) is legitimized only in the service of dharma. Both the *Arthashastra* and *Manav Dharmashastra* affirm this function of the state, and that of dharma, in circumscribing the power and absolutism of rulers.

When a government exceeds the constraints of dharma, its subjects have a right to dissent. The right to dissent is recognized in both the *Mahabharata* and the *Arthashastra*,[50] and affirmed in the *Dharmashastra* as the fundamental right of a subject. It is legitimized in instances where a ruler has violated dharma or where a state fails in furthering the welfare and protection of its subjects.

The Hindu tradition as interpreted by Gandhi is very clear that a dishonest government deserves to be overthrown and that unjust laws must be disobeyed. But such dissent must be exercised through peaceful means. In the context of a democratic state, whose polycentric structure is more conducive to the fulfillment of the dharma both of the state and of its citizens, there are internal constraints to a dishonest government, in the form of checks and balances (the judiciary, parliament, and various formal accountability institutions). A corrupt or ineffective government can also be contested through elections.

Gandhi's notion of civil disobedience may be understood in the context of his commitment to *Satyagraha*, the right of nonviolent resistance against

an unjust government. What constituted the latter—that is, what made for the injustice of a government—may be drawn from the centrality of the Hindu notion of dharma. The legitimacy of a government, for Gandhi, came from its subservience to its subjects and its furtherance of dharma and lokasangraha, universal welfare:

> The rulers should depend upon the will of those who are under their heels. Thus, they have to be servants of the people, ready to do their will. Independence begins at the bottom.[51]

While sovereignty of a government was contained in the will of subjects, Gandhi also affirmed the necessity of adherence to dharma and the dispensation of duty as the *a priori* conditions for an enlightened citizenry. The right of resistance and civil disobedience was contained as much in citizens' praxis of dharma and ahimsa as in the moral illegitimacy[52] of the object of their resistance—that is, an unjust government:

> Civil disobedience is not a state of lawlessness and licence, but presupposes a law-abiding spirit combined with self-restraint.[53]

Civil disobedience against laws (or a government) that violate dharma is not merely a right but the fundamental duty of a citizen. As such, it is transformed into her or his sva-dharma, and the failure to resist an unjust law or government becomes necessarily *adharma*, a moral lapse by which one partakes in the corruption and perversion of the offending government:

> Civil disobedience therefore becomes a sacred duty when the State has become lawless, or which is the same thing, corrupt. And a citizen that barters with such a State shares its corruption or lawlessness.[54]

Remedies against official malfeasance or indifference can be political (elections), legal, or extralegal. Short of voting governments out of power, citizens can move the courts to seek redress against government actions. In India, aggrieved citizens often engage in so-called public interest litigation (PIL). In such cases, concerned citizens turn to the judicial system,

not to pursue a perceived personal or corporate claim or compensation for injury but to seek a legal injunction for righting some government wrong. Such PILs have been popular in drawing attention to environmental issues where government is believed to be responsible for pollution or lax in enforcing regulations of harmful externalities. In addition, public protests—on the streets and through social media—help to call mendacious, corrupt, or inefficient governments to account.

Political, legal, and extralegal remedies would reflect an overall trust in the basic functioning of democratic institutions under normal circumstances. But when government legitimacy is fundamentally undermined by violation of dharma, extralegal remedies may be the only recourse available to citizens. In such cases, dissent cuts across society and involves the public at large. It may include systemic campaigns, such as the nonpartisan campaign led by Anna Hazare, a Gandhian activist, against a climate of corruption.[55] It may also result in civil disobedience of the Gandhian type.

In the tradition of the *Arthashastra,* the ruler is bound to adhere to dharma just as much as the ruled, and transgressions need to be named and shamed. However, the protest, too, should be dharmic. As Gandhi noted, it is more important to be civil than to be disobedient.[56]

Conclusion: The Reaction and Stirrings of a Second Revival

Any discussion of the Hindu outlook on Truth and governance is necessarily complicated by several factors. First, Hinduism is not a religion of "the Book." The Hindu view of dharma derives from a large and open-ended corpus of scriptural texts based on an oral tradition—consisting of s*ruti* and *smriti*[57]—that demands constant interpretation to distill its essence. Second, Hindu precepts of governance were in abeyance for much of the second millennium of the Common Era, owing to centuries of Muslim and British colonial rule.[58] Third, despite the fact that the struggle for freedom from British rule drew its primary inspiration from the First Revival's call for a return to Hindu dharmic roots—not least by Mahatma Gandhi[59]—the embrace of Western notions of secularism and central planning upon independence entailed a Rejection of Hindu dharmic principles. As part of its "secular policy stance," the Indian state ended up forbidding inclusion of dharmic literature in the basic education curriculum for state schools.[60]

With the subsequent widespread failures in the quality of basic education provided by the state, Indian society ended up with the worst of both possible worlds—secularism that in the Indian context would prove to be an empty vessel devoid of any organic, ethical-moral content, and an unnatural (adharmic) socialist-interventionist state that corrupted its citizens while keeping a large share of them impoverished and illiterate.[61]

The reaction to the imported secular and central planning ideas that became politically dominant in the period following independence was first given expression in the 1920s in the writings of the self-identified Hindutva movement, whose early leaders included Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, Madhavrao Sadashivrao Golwalkar, and Keshav Baliram Hedgewar.[62] While intellectually they claimed the same philosophical roots as the First Revival and embraced many of the same social-moral reform causes, they chose to adopt a more muscular political form—first, in its anti-colonial, nationalist stance, and second, in response to the rising prospects of the carving of a Muslim nation-state out of India. The second Hindutva wave emerged as a political-cultural reaction to the actual workings of postindependence Indian secularism. Partly by criticizing the phenomena of so-called pseudo-secularism, which did not afford equal treatment to all religions,[63] the avowedly Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power in 1998 and then returned to power even more forcefully in 2014 and 2019. In 2019, the party and its leader, Narendra Modi, received an outright parliamentary majority—something no political party had enjoyed in the previous thirty years.[64, 65]

Predictably, the Reaction—in the attempts at a revival of Hindu culture—has been both superficial and extreme. The superficiality is seen in the focus on ending beef-eating and cow slaughter. Although the Indian Constitution discourages cow slaughter and many Indian states have laws prohibiting the killing of cows, hitherto these were observed more in the breach than by enforcement. That changed in 2014, especially in northern India. The Reaction was also extreme in that it led to incidents of lynching of persons suspected of trade and transportation of beef across state boundaries. In addition, there is the politically charged movement for the building of a *Ram* temple in Ayodhya on a site previously occupied by a mosque.[66] The dispute reached the Indian Supreme Court, which issued its verdict in late 2019, directing that the original site be allotted to a trust set up by the government for the purpose of building a Ram temple, and

that a prominent site within Ayodhya be allotted to the Sunni Muslim community for the purpose of constructing a mosque.[67]

Given the neglect of the Hindu enlightenment goals of the First Revival, the weight of the previous seventy years of a Western-inspired secularism (denounced by Hindutva critics for its exceptions), and the overreaction it has provoked, it will take time before India comes to terms with its Hindu heritage. The process will also be prolonged because of the split between the so-called secularists and the Hindutva groups along sharp political lines. In addition, as Gandhi warned, political competition in the absence of true Swaraj has both corrupted and encouraged the spread of falsehoods, in all its senses, within the culture.

That brings us to our final context of a Second Revival that, while partially sparked by the second Hindutva wave mentioned above, seems to have its roots in the discrediting and dismantling of the socialist worldview in the 1990s. This revival is broad-based, uncoordinated, and not yet coalesced into a political grouping, nor is it likely to do so. Instead, it is inspired by a strong "self-improvement" motivation that brings it closer to the earlier pre-independence Hindu renaissance that had argued for a return to the Vedic-dharmic value set as the basis for reform.[68] The highly decentralized nature and workings of the dharmic tradition suggests that it may outlast the Hindutva reaction. Hinduism evolved as an oral tradition with no single dominating text or author. Instead, as we argue in this chapter, its main motivating driver and unifying element has been the polycentric pursuit of Truth-as-Brahman. Hinduism has survived neither by rejecting nor by discarding an idea, a deity, or a group. It evolves, allowing no single idea, deity, or group to dominate for long.[69] And to the extent Hinduism survives, the tradition will outlast the assorted reactions within it.

Finally, a return by India to governance that is rooted in Hindu civilizational values and that, at the same time, preserves the best aspects of its governance framework that have come from the West—such as the separation of state and religion—would, in fact, be in complete consonance with Hinduism's innate eagerness to engage with other traditions. Such a balance would strive to restore, within a modern twenty-first century polity, economy, and society, an order that promotes the attainment of dharma for all of India's citizens.

Notes

1. Translation provided by D. C. Sircar, *Inscriptions of Aśoka* (Delhi, India: Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1957), p. 7. Emphasis added.

2. Nirad C. Chaudhuri, *Thy Hand, Great Anarch! India 1921–1952* (Addison Wesley Publishing Co., 1987), p. 880. The "ruling order" Chaudhuri refers to here is the one established post-1950 by the architects of the newly formed Indian state under the leadership of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. He viewed Gandhi's references to Hindu dharmic precepts as being incompatible with the principles of a secular state and the embrace of a rational, science-based approach to planning and industrialization. A good contemporaneous account of Nehru's rejection of the Gandhian-Hindu outlook is provided by John S. Hoyland, the English missionary who authored multiple books on Gandhi and India during his extended stay in the country. See John S. Hoyland, *Indian Crisis: The Background* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1943).

3. See, for example, the discussion in Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore, *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy* (Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 227–49. We find that the "open-source" metaphor better captures the tradition's active engagement toward the development and maintenance of multiple schools of thought and faiths. In contrast, the passive attribute of "tolerance" commonly referenced in conventional interpretations of Hinduism fails to capture this active nature of Hinduism.

4. The term "edict" should not be understood as being an official command or fiat issued by Emperor Aśoka. Instead, the edicts were part of Aśoka's public service messaging of ethical-moral precepts, meant as recommendations for both his administrators and his citizens. Most importantly—as evident with Rock Edict XII, which opens this chapter—the edicts were not seen as ethical strictures from a particular religion. Rather, they were understood as universal values acceptable to the various religious sects in existence during Aśoka's time.

5. The forty-second amendment (1976) to the Indian Constitution replaced the original description of independent India as a "Sovereign Democratic Republic" with the words "Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic."

6. Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, the founder of the Swatantra Party, used the term "License Raj" to describe the extensive web of permissions, edicts, and controls that the socialist state in India imposed on the private sector.

7. In "On the Upper Castes of India," reproduced in *Selections from the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1986), Vivekananda traced the source and spirit of this Resilience to the lowest of the social classes in rural India, who, in spite of various injustices and material poverty, held fast to their tradition. Sri Aurobindo commented extensively on the decentralized

workings of this enduring spirit of the Hindu civilization. See his 1947 essay "Indian Polity-4" in *The Renaissance in India and Other Essays on Indian Culture* (Pondicherry, India: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 1997).

8. See especially Raja Rammohun Roy, *Second Defense of the Monotheistical System of the Veds: In Reply to an Apology for the Present State of Hindoo Worship* (Calcutta, 1817), https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=wu.89007888928&view=1up&seq=1; and Raja Rammohun Roy, *Translation of the Several Principal Books, Passages, and Texts of the Veds, and of Some Controversial Works on Brahmunical Theology* (London: Parbury, Allen & Co., 1832).

9. Vedic refers to both the earliest core of Hindu philosophy and the so-called Vedantic or Upanishad literature that emerged as part of a more expanded and reformist exposition of Vedic ideals. The Vedic tradition was developed roughly over the course of a millennium—from around 1500 BCE to 500 BCE. See Arthur Llewellyn Basham, *The Origins and Development of Classical Hinduism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989).

10. For an overview of Saraswati's contributions see Ganga Ram Garg, *World Perspectives on Swami Dayananda Saraswati* (Delhi, India: Concept Publishing Company, 1984). For Gandhi, individual self-governance was a prerequisite for achieving political independence:

> "We are like a rider who cannot keep his horse under control and is quickly brought down. But one who drawing in the reins, keeps the animal under subjection stands a fair chance of reaching his destination. Even so does a man who can control his passions make for the goal. He alone is fit for 'Swarajya.' He alone is a seeker after truth. He alone becomes capable of knowing God." (See *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 17 (Delhi, India: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1965), p. 327.)

11. Reproduced in Pyarelal Nayyar, "His Last Will and Testament," *Harijan*, 12:1 (1948), p. 32.

12. See, for example, Subrata Dasgupta, *Awakening: The Story of the Bengal Renaissance* (Delhi, India: Random House, 2011).

13. However, the problem of corruption within the public sector also came to the forefront for Gandhi as he assessed the rapid assumption of state power by functionaries of the ruling Indian National Congress party at independence. Gandhi expressed his fears of a rising tide of corruption and resulting misgovernance in the public sector in a series of interviews, letters, and speeches made from November 1947 to January 1948. These have been reproduced in the *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 90 (1984).

14. "10.87:12: Lead thou the worshipper that eye, O Agni, wherewith thou lookest on the hoof-armed demon / With light celestial in Atharvan's manner burn up the fool who ruins truth with falsehood." Translation provided in Ralph

T. H. Griffith, *The Hymns of the Rigveda*, vol. 2 (Benares, India: E. J. Lazarus, 1897), p. 466, https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.537226/page/n3.

15. While truth telling is seen as having intrinsic value and is considered part of the individual's dharma, some texts also consider the appropriate manner of conveying truth: "Let him say what is true, let him say what is pleasing, let him utter no disagreeable truth, and *let him utter no agreeable falsehood; that is the eternal law*" [emphasis added]. George Buhler, *The Laws of Manu: Translated with Extracts from Seven Commentaries*, vol. 25 of *The Sacred Books of the East*, edited by Friedrich Max Mueller (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1886), p. 150, https://archive.org/details/lawsofmanu00bh/page/n1.

16. The word *Brahman* encompasses the metaphysical view of reality held by Hindus. It is not to be confused with the word *Brahmin*, which refers to an individual person as defined under the varna-ashrama-dharma system of Hindu ethics. The Varna norms, which we deal with in our section on morality, define a Brahmin in terms of both personal behavioral attributes and by the lifelong objective it sets for the Brahmin as a seeker of Truth. Separately, Brahmin also refers to the individual's *jati* (i.e., caste occupation as a priest).

17. The parable of the blind men and the elephant is a famous example of this insight and can be found in Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist texts.

18. Translation provided by Arthur Llewellyn Basham, *The Wonder That Was India*: *A Survey of the History and Culture of the Indian Sub-Continent before the Coming of the Muslims* (Calcutta: Rupa & Co., 1981), p. 250.

19. See, for example, the discussion in Arvind Sharma, *Hinduism as a Missionary Religion* (State University of New York Press, 2011). This approach toward knowledge underlies the proclivity of Hinduism to encourage and support spin-offs while also learning from those theoretical and social heterodoxies. Another key feature of Hinduism has been the phenomenon of assimilation without the need for conversion. It involves accepting into the Hindu fold groups with disparate sets of practices and beliefs. Hinduism has supported both dynamics at the same time—the freedom of groups to "enter" and to "exit." However, some key differences can be observed between the nature of entry into and exit from Hinduism, and they are worth mentioning: one, the exit groups or spin-offs have most often been led by "intellectual elites"—that is, those who had adopted the Vedic-dharmic truths and sought to reinterpret/refashion these to branch out of the Hindu mainstream. Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism are prominent products of the spin-off dynamics within Hinduism. The entrants, in contrast, have brought with them deities and beliefs that remain outside the Vedic-dharmic core but have been integrated into the ever-expanding and changing pantheon of Hindu divinities—each of which is seen as equally deserving of worship by all Hindus. Thus, while much has been written about the multitude of gods and goddesses in the Hindu pantheon, the condition we emphasize here has perhaps not been sufficiently recognized. In contrast with the leaders of the spin-off groups, entering groups have usually been from the lower strata. The

constant accretion of new sects within Hinduism has been the result of this process. See Basham, *The Origins and Development of Classical Hinduism*, and Julius Lipner, *Hindus: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

20. Robert E. Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads: Translated from the Sanskrit with an Outline of the Philosophy of the Upanishads and an Annotated Bibliography* (Oxford University Press, 1921), https://archive.org/details/kathaandprasnaup029591mbp/page/n5.

21. Translation provided by Patrick Olivelle, *Upanisads* (Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 238.

22. Translated in Radhakrishnan and Moore, *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*, p. 57.

23. Ibid., p. 166. "It is always proper to speak the truth. It is better again to speak what is beneficial than to speak what is true. I hold that this is truth which is fraught with the greatest benefit to all creatures" (Santiparva, 329.13).

24. The *Mahabharata* relates the story of Kaushika, a Brahmin, who made a vow of always speaking the truth. We paraphrase from Kisari Mohan Ganguli's translation of the story provided in Pratap Chandra Roy, *The Mahabharata of Krishna-Dwaipayana Vyasa: Karna Parva* (Calcutta: Bharata Press, 1889), pp. 3280–81: One day, robbers were chasing a group of travelers in the forest. When they passed by Kaushika, he also noticed them. The robbers came to Kaushika and asked him whether he had seen the travelers. He told them where the travelers were hiding. The robbers went there and tortured and robbed the travelers. Kaushika had to be consigned to hell for speaking the truth.

25. Ibid., p. 253.

26. The *Mahabharata* also specifies conditions of distress, or *apattikala*, where dharma may be suspended or where adharma and the abandonment of virtue may be both permissible and moral. Matilal argues that several instances in the *Mahabharata* indicate that "normal rules of dharma breakdown during apattikala. . . . All dharmas can be given up during apattikala." See Bimal Krishna Matilal, *Moral Dilemmas in the Mahābhārata* (Delhi, India: Motilal Banarasidas, 1989), pp. 29–30. Similar exceptions are made by Manu and in other Dharmasastras. Manu delineates such situations of abnormality or distress in which actions otherwise prohibited are made permissible and caste norms are suspended—for instance, stealing food, appropriation of another's property, and violating the occupational constraints of one's caste. See Buhler, *The Laws of Manu*, XI: 28–29, p. 435.

27. Radhakrishnan and Moore, *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*, p. 165.

28. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagavadgita* (Noida, India: Harper Collins Publishers, 2008), p. 357.

29. Radhakrishnan and Moore, *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*, p. 153.

30. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanishads* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1953), p. 217.

31. Ibid., p. 272.

32. The word *varna* means "color" or "hues" in Sanskrit, but for the Bhagavad Gita it refers to internal, behavioral attributes.

33. The word *Artha* in Sanskrit has a wide range of meanings that depend on its use or context. We have translated it here to mean "wealth" or "material well-being." The above-quoted sutras (aphorisms) attributed to Chanakya (or Kautilya), the Hindu political philosopher and regent/prime minister during the Mauryan Empire (circa 320–140 BCE), appear in the *Chanakya Sutras*—a work that is less well known than his political-economy treatise, the *Arthashastra*, which we discuss in the section on governance.

34. V. K. Subramanian, *Maxims of Chanakya* (New Delhi, India): Abhinav Publications, 2000).

35. Tagore's portrayal of the division of responsibility between the state and society in India is striking and worth quoting at length:

> In our country the king waged wars, defended his territory and dispensed justice, but society attended to all else, from the supply of water to the supply of knowledge.
>
> That, today, we should have to deplore the scarcity of water in our country, is of comparatively minor import. The main cause of that scarcity is our real regret—the fact that society has lost interest in itself and all its attention is directed outwards. . . .
>
> What in English concepts is known as the State was called in our country *Sarkar* or Government. This Government existed in ancient India in the form of kingly power, but there is a difference between the present English State and our ancient kingly power. England relegates to State care all the welfare services in the country; India did that only to a very limited extent.
>
> Consequently, what we understand by the word *dharma* permeated the whole social fabric. Every man had to acquire the discipline of self-control; every man had to accept the sanctified code of obligations.

Rabindranath Tagore, "Society and State," in *Towards Universal Man* (Mumbai: Asia Publishing House, 1961), pp. 49–66.

36. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, *Village Swaraj*, ed. H. M. Vyas (Ahmedabad, India: Navajivan Publishing House, 1962). Critics of the Gandhian view have variously painted Gandhi as "anti-materialist," a Luddite, and an "anarchist." Such labels prove to be highly misleading portrayals of Gandhi by his critics. In multiple interviews reproduced in *Village Swaraj*, Gandhi strongly rejected each of those labels as invalid interpretations of his views. Gandhi did not see himself as a scholar-philosopher offering a unique ideology or "ism." As with all others in the First Revival, Gandhi saw himself as applying core Hindu principles in his efforts to advance moral, social, and political reform. His views on decentralized, self-sufficient, village republics were a concrete response to Nehru's plan for state-led industrialization and central planning.

37. "I look upon an increase in the power of the State with the greatest fear because, although while apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality which lies at the heart of all progress." From *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 65 (1976), p. 319.

38. With the exception of Rajagopalachari, Gandhi was the last of the First Revivalists who protested the Nehruvian socialist plans for the new Indian state. However, the consensus view on the appropriate role of the state for India had been established much earlier—by Tagore, Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, and other revivalists who rejected the welfare-state model of the West, which they saw epitomized by the modern British state.

39. Sri Aurobindo, *The Renaissance in India*, pp. 384–444.

40. Radhakrishnan and Moore, *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy,* pp. 113–115.

41. Ibid., p. 155. According to the Bhagavad Gita, only sacrifices made without the expectation of a reward are considered as "good":

That sacrifice which is offered, according to the scriptural law, by those who expect no reward and believe firmly that it is their duty to offer the sacrifice, is "good."

But that which is offered in expectation of reward or for the sake of display, know, O best of the Bharatas (Arjuna), that sacrifices to be "passionate."

42. Ibid., p. 125. Bhagavad Gita, VI:

He who sees Me everywhere and sees all in Me—I am not lost to him, nor is he lost to Me.

43. Based on previously uncovered correspondence between Nehru and Gandhi, the Indian historian Ramachandra Guha has described Nehru's short-lived engagement with Hinduism under Gandhi's influence, and his subsequent disenchantment and turn toward western, socialist-secular notions. See Ramachandra Guha, "Nehru the Spiritualist?" *The Telegraph*, November 15, 2014, http://ramachandraguha.in/archives/nehru-the-spiritualist-the-telegraph.html.

44. Arun Shourie provides a remarkable "insider view" of the nature of governance failures that have plagued the modern Indian administrative state. See Arun Shourie, *Governance and the Sclerosis That Has Set In* (New Delhi, India: ASA Publications), 2004.

45. Gurcharan Das, who has written extensively on the relevance of dharma for modern India, highlights its role as a guide for both the public and private sector: "Dharma provides the underlying norms of society, creating obligations for citizens and rulers . . . it is pragmatic; hence, it is eminently suited to exchanges in the market place and to public policy. This is especially true of raj-dharma, or dharma of the king or the state."

See Gurcharan Das, "The Dharma of Capitalism," *Business World*, December 7, 2015, www.businessworld.in/article/The-Dharma-Of-Capitalism-/07-12-2015-89081. See also Gurcharan Das, *The Difficulty of Being Good: On the Subtle Art of Dharma* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

46. See Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, *My Non-Violence*, ed. Sailesh Kumar Bandopadhyay (Ahmedabad, India: Navajivan Publishing House), 1960.

47. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 35 (1969), pp. 489–90.

48. Tagore, "State and Society."

49. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, *Indian Thought through the Ages: A Study of Some Dominant Concepts* (Mumbai: Asia Publishing House, 1961), p. 163.

50. Ibid.

51. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 91 (1989), p. 325.

52. Gandhi's assertion, at the Champaran trial, of his right to resist laws that are "repugnant" to one's conscience, and to his "little inner voice," was directly informed by core principles of *advaitism* propounded by the Bhagavad Gita: (a) the essential oneness posited between the Brahman and the atman (the self-within), and (b) the equation of the atman with one's conscience, through the ceaseless practice of dharma. Elsewhere, Gandhi differentiates between willfulness and conscience, recognizing the latter as the product of the strictest self-discipline. See Raghavan Iyer, *The Essential Writings of Mahatma Gandhi* (Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 210–11.

53. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 21 (1966), p. 451.

54. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 22 (1966), p. 143.

55. Ishaan Tharoor, "Anna Hazare's Hunger Fast Rocks India," *Time*, December 10, 2011.

56. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. XX (1967), p. 386.

57. Sruti, or "that which has been heard," includes the Vedas and Upanishads; smriti, or "that which is remembered," includes the epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, *Dharmasutras*, and *Dharmashastras*.

58. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* fell into disuse starting in the twelfth century, which saw the beginnings of Muslim invasions and rule in India, and was only rediscovered in 1904. See Ram Sharan Sharma, *Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India* (Delhi, India: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2015). Similarly, Aśoka's Rock Edicts and stupas had been lost for most of this period, until they were unearthed in the early nineteenth century. See John Keay, *India Discovered: The Recovery of a Lost Civilization* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2001).

59. Gandhi and others in the First Revival group saw political independence from the British Empire as a secondary and instrumental objective. Swaraj, as we consider it here, was the primary objective.

60. Article 28 of the Indian constitution forbids any "religious teaching" within a state school.

61. In 1991, just prior to the start of economic liberalization, the national

literacy rate stood at a mere 52 percent. The economist Raj Krishna would describe the abysmally low rate of per capita income growth of 1.3 percent achieved under socialism as the "Hindu rate of growth." See Montek Singh Ahluwalia, "First Raj Krishna Memorial Lecture, 1995: Economic Reforms for the Nineties," Department of Economics, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, 1995, https://studylib.net/doc/7606817/first-raj-krishna-memorial-lecture--1995---economic-refor....

62. The definition and principles of Hindutva were first elaborated on by Vinayak Damodar Sarvarkar in *Hindutva: Who Is a Hindu?* (Mumbai: Veer Savarka Prakashan, 1923).

63. The charge of pseudo-secularism is commonly brought up in four main areas of state policy—the unwillingness to introduce a uniform civil code in spite of an explicit constitutional directive; since the early 1950s, the passage of various acts that introduced progressive reforms in Hindu personal laws (including on marriage, property, family businesses, etc.) while Muslim personal laws were left untouched; the provision of a so-called *Haj subsidy* that, until very recently, funded travel by Muslim citizens to Middle East pilgrimage spots; and the relatively greater control exercised by the state in overseeing (and administering) Hindu temples as opposed to a more "hands-off" approach adopted in the case of Muslim and Christian religious institutions.

64. From 1989 to 2014, India was ruled by coalition governments.

65. For a history of the Hindutva movement, see Walter K. Anderson and Shridhar D. Damle, *The Brotherhood in Saffron: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Hindu Revivalism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987).

66. The Indian epic poem *Ramayana* places the birth of the Hindu prince Lord Rama in the ancient city of Ayodhya. It is widely believed that a Ram temple had existed on that spot but was demolished by the Mughal emperor Babar and a mosque was constructed in its place. In turn, the mosque was destroyed in 1992 by Hindu rioters led by Hindutva groups who wish to rebuild a Ram temple.

67. Supreme Court of India Judgment of November 9, 2019, in *M. Siddiq (D) Thr Lrs v. Mahant Suresh Das & Ors*, Civil Appeal Nos. 10866–10867 of 2010, www.sci.gov.in/pdf/JUD_2.pdf.

68. Anecdotal data suggests that such a revival has been underway for at least the past three decades, in the form of increasing interest both in dharmic literature and in dharmic principles as guides for moral betterment, health, business, and management.

69. We are grateful to Lakshmi Lal for sharing this insight with us as part of an ongoing conversation on the nature of Hinduism. Lal points to the fate of the preeminent Vedic deity, Indra, who, while never discarded, has assumed a nominal role within the tradition over time. See Lakshmi Lal, *Myth and Me: The Indian Story* (New Delhi, India: Rupa Publications, 2003).