

we have love like the air that we breathe, why is there so much evil? So, love is not controlled by my caste, class, or religious background. This means that I could love people of any caste or class, gender, or religious background. Is this possible? But I could become impure or defiled.

A man of low caste was traveling on a lonely road from one city to another. He encountered a man lying on the road who had been robbed and beaten up by robbers. Before he passed by, two other men had passed but had not stopped. One was a priest and the other a religious devotee of the same caste. They were afraid and did not want to become defiled. But this non-caste man took it upon himself to save the life of this forward caste man. He paid the price for his hospital treatment and gave his own clothes. *This kind of love does not come from another human being. I am convinced that I cannot love my enemies without God's help.*

Love Your Enemies

For me to love my enemies I must break through my caste, my status, my religious background, my heritage, my family, and my community. This seems impossible from a human perspective. So, if love is from God,

how can I have it? A good place to start is with Gandhi's three reflections of love. First, truth and love cannot be separated. If I have love, I must be honest and genuine in practicing the teachings of God's love to all people, despite their status, caste, gender, or religious background. Second, I cannot truly serve people unless I have the Creator God's love for people. Mother Theresa is one modern example of a person whose service was rooted in love. Third, peace and love go together. If peace is desirable, then one must show love by his actions and thoughts.* "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:13).

A Better Place

Mr. Mohan became speechless. He had finally found the answer to how to love his enemies. He dreamed that somehow the world will adopt this teaching. Then, there will be peace forever. For a moment he pondered that if we all love our enemies, there will be no enemies on earth. Love will overcome evil.

¹ Gandhi, Mahatma. 2008. *India of My Dreams*: Rajpal & Sons.

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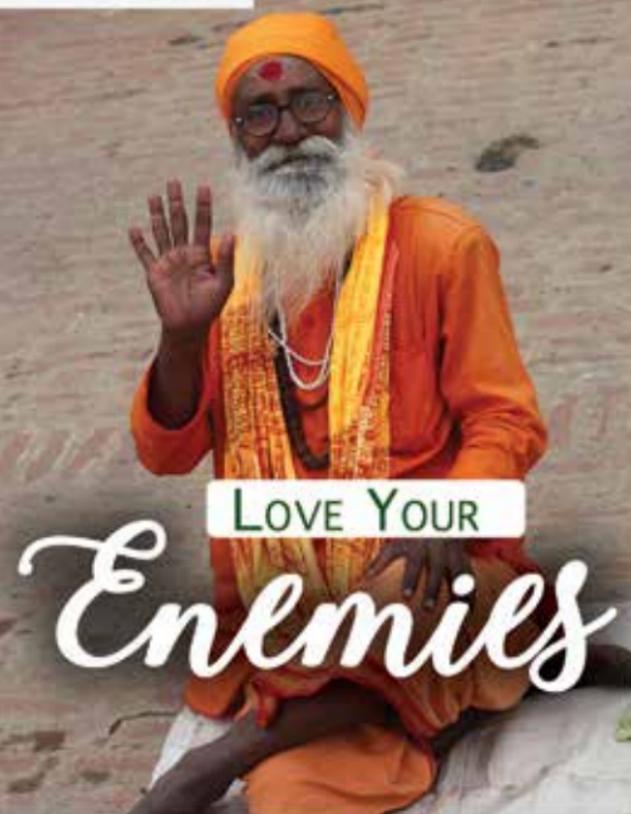


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Giving Light to Our World

Love Your Enemies

One day a stranger approached Mr. Mohan on the streets of Varanasi, India. The stranger handed him a magazine, and he accepted it politely. With curiosity he began to examine the contents with the expectation that he would not find any useful spiritual topics. However, a title caught him by surprise: "Love your Enemies." Wait a minute, he thought. I am a Brahmin. Why have I never heard of such a thing as love your enemies? He continued silently reasoning in his mind. Are there things about Bhagwan (God) and life that I have not heard? He began reading with great excitement and curiosity. What could I learn from this topic, "Love your Enemies"?

He began to reflect. Never have I heard that the Almighty Creator God requires people to resolve problems with their enemies. Should one seek forgiveness for wrong deeds done to friends or family or acquaintances or strangers before seeking the Creator God of the universe? This is a new teaching that I was not aware of. What does it mean to reconcile problems with fellow human beings before seeking the Creator God?

Reap What You Sow

He reflected further. *The holy books teach that what a person sows is what he or she will reap. This new teaching also asserts that all humanity, regardless of their religious background, race, caste, class, or gender, will reap what they sow. So, why must I still love my enemies? If a person does wrong, must I still love him? Why? I was taught that each person is responsible for his actions and pays the consequences. If someone steals my things, that person should repay what he has stolen.*

I feel a sense of relief. I am glad that this new teaching does not disagree with the old teaching of reaping what you sow. But, how do I love my enemies—especially when they have wronged me? What does love really mean? Love is demonstrated by one's actions and thoughts. A father will show love by providing food and a home for his family. A mother would go hungry so that her children have food to eat. Is that love enough to cure the world's evil?

Love Overcomes Evil

Mohan continued reasoning to himself. *Love is much more than a father sacrificing his entire life to provide food, education, and*

a home for his family. Love is forgiving my enemies even when they are wrong and I am right. Does it mean that my enemies are free of the consequences? One of the benefits of loving my enemies even though I don't want to is that it helps me grow and become stronger both emotionally and spiritually. A second benefit is that it frees me of the pain and hurt caused by my enemy so that I can heal both physically and emotionally. A third benefit is that it paves the way for God to teach my enemies that He loves them also and desires them to stop doing evil.

Hate and Love

If I have hatred in my heart, I cannot go to the Creator God until I reconcile the hatred I have toward my fellow human beings whom I can see every day. This seems to be an unusual teaching. Where do I start? How should I resolve problems with my enemies that I did not create or cannot fix? God requires me first to seek Him in prayer about the situation. God says I should bring my burdens to Him, and He will take them from me. But how do I talk to God? Really, I can talk to God anywhere and anytime, even from my thoughts, and He will listen.

After reading about how God answered Shanti's silent prayer request, Mohan was convinced that God really listens to the prayers of faithful people. Shanti became sick six months before her retirement. After many tests, the doctors still could not find the cause of the illness. She was lying helpless in the hospital. Then one of her doctors recommended prayer. The doctor told her that she must believe that God could heal her. Shanti took the advice seriously because she wanted to be healed and continue to live for her family. Shanti prayed in her heart, asking the Creator God to heal her. When the doctors returned the next day, they noticed a drastic change in Shanti's health. They were all shocked at her recovery. She told them that the *Muktinath, Shristi karta* (Creator God) healed her. *This means that God will hear my prayers just as he heard Shanti's prayer on the hospital bed, and He will answer me even in private.*

Who Owns Love?

Parents show love to their children from the time they are born. Husbands love their wives; friends show compassion and love to friends. But where does this love come from? How do I get this love that empowers me to love my enemies? If