

THE MORAL FOUNDATIONS
OF NATIONAL GREATNESS
M. TIMUR

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PREFACE

Ethics like Politics is a subject in which every body takes interest and considers himself something of an expert. It is difficult to write anything new and startling on such a subject. Moral truths, indeed, are as old as the human race itself, but every age has its own peculiar problems and it is to adapt the old truths to the new conditions that we have to examine them again and again in the light of new experience. In the words of Goethe, "Everything that is wise has been thought already ; we can only try to think it once more."

The object of writing this book is to point out the deficiencies of the Indian character and the directions in which it ought to be improved. It is not enough to place high ideals before young men ; we must also tell them what stern qualities they must possess for their attainment. I cannot say if I have succeeded in my object ; but even if I have failed, my failure may help others to steer more cautiously. There is room for a series of books to be written on this subject. If our object is to reform character, we must try to influence it in all possible ways. I have confined my efforts to making a direct appeal to reason. This method is sometimes very useful. It conquers through conviction and makes sure and sincere converts. The method of teaching morality by biographical anecdotes is also effective and we may say its influence is more subtle ; but both methods could not be employed in the same book without inordinately increasing its size.

The only justification for writing in a foreign language, a book primarily meant for Indians is that India has not yet been able to develop a common language of its own and that English is understood everywhere in the country. However, if the book has any value, it must reach the masses in their own language and I would therefore, welcome any proposals to render it into Urdu, Hindi or other Indian languages.

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	1
I. WORK	7
II. CO-OPERATION	34
III. JUSTICE	58
VERACITY	75
IV. SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND COURAGE	81
V. PERSEVERANCE	100
VI. THRIFT	108
VII. PRACTICAL WISDOM	117
VIII. HOPE	127