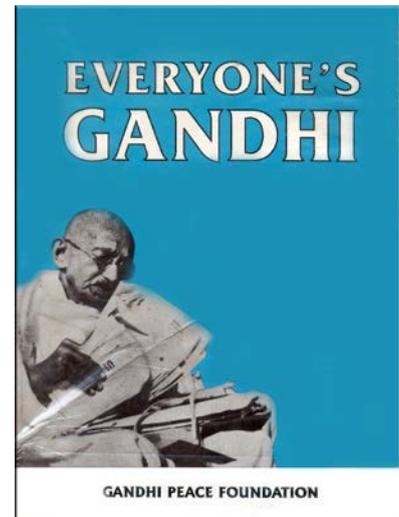


Everyone's Gandhi

A Collection of Gandhi Columns

Transmitted by : Gandhi Peace Foundation
and Press Trust of India (30 January 1995 to
30 January 1996)

Editor : Rita Roy



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The Idea

In the years since independence, an enormous amount of material on Mahatma Gandhi has been produced for children – much of it boring and of indifferent quality, though occasionally excellent as well. In spite of this, there is much in the life and work of Gandhiji that is interesting but not well-known. The Gandhi Peace Foundation therefore decided to use the occasion of the 125th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi to bring out some material for children in an effort to re-represent the Mahatma as a flesh and blood human being (rather than an idealised, semi divine figure) placed in a historical era, with a view to re-evaluate, not only what we have inherited but where we may be heading.

At a meeting held in the Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi, it was decided that the attempt take the form of a weekly syndicated column on Mahatma Gandhi for Children. The Column would perhaps be able to reach out to a greater number of children across the country.

It was also decided that the Column would refrain from using an overt moralistic self righteous tone and use a diverse range of material such as stories, letters, essays, dialogues, etc.

The Press Trust of India was approached for the purpose and very kindly agreed to transmit the column on a weekly basis, every Sunday, starting from 30 January 1995 for a year.

A core group comprising Shri Subir Shukla (who was then with the National Centre for Children's Literature, National Book Trust), Smt. Vasudha Pande (Lecturer in History, Lady Shri Ram College), Smt. Rita Roy and Shri Babulal Sharma of Gandhi Peace Foundation was formed to work on the column and a large number of eminent Gandhians and others were requested to contribute articles, stories, and reminiscences of Gandhiji for the column. Some readily complied; others, despite several reminders, did not. For the rest, we depended on material researched and culled out from books, journals and archival material on Gandhiji.

Our sincere thanks to all those who contributed, as well as to libraries of the Gandhi Sangrahalaya and Nehru Museum who allowed us liberal use of their archival material.

The columns were transmitted regularly in English and Hindi by the Press Trust of India and Bhasha, for one year.

In the initial stages, it was largely Shri Subir Shukla who took great pains to edit the material and use all his expertise in the field of children's literature, to present it in a form that was not only interesting and appealing to children but thought provoking as well. He was assisted ably by Ms. Shalu Kalra. Smt. Vasudha Pande went from library to library in search of materials. For Subir and Vasudha, as well as all those who contributed, it was a purely voluntary effort – as well as a labour of love. Later on, the task of not only editing and research, but total coordination was taken up by Smt. Rita Roy and Shri Babulal Sharma. Many of the stories (which carry no credit line) were written by the team members. Smt. Perveen Kapoor and Smt. Vasantha Chandran provided secretarial assistance.

Several leading newspapers such as *Hindustan Times*, *The Hindu*, *Pioneer*, *Hitwada*, *Rashtriya Sahara*, *Nav Bharat Times* as well as certain language newspapers such as *Samyukta Kamataka*, *Prajavani*, *Udayvani*, *Udayam* and *Canara Times* picked up the columns. Seeing the popularity of the column the PTI asked us to continue the columns for another year, though making it more issue-based and opening it for a more general readership.

The Gandhi Peace Foundation has now decided to publish the first set of English columns in the form of a book "Everyone's Gandhi/' as part of its programme of Taking Gandhi to Schools.'

We would also like to thank the Gandhi Foundation, London, for encouraging us in this venture.

It is hoped that the articles and anecdotes will serve a long felt need: to bring the Mahatma closer to us, make him a Father in every sense of the word i.e. every one's Gandhi.

RAJAGOPAL P.V., Secretary

Word from PTI

Gandhiji could move millions during India's freedom struggle as India's teeming millions closely identified with this simple ascetic. He towered above them all, yet he was one of them.

But, for the present generation of Indians, Gandhi is a remote figure who inspires awe and ritualistic tributes on his birth and death anniversaries. The Gandhi name appears everywhere but one knows so little of the real Gandhi.

One was thus sceptical when the Gandhi Peace Foundation proposed that we run a weekly column for children on Mahatma Gandhi. We were told that the proposed column would refrain from using a moralistic, self-righteous tone and would instead use material that will be comprehensive as well as interesting to children. We then agreed to give it the widest reach through our extensive network.

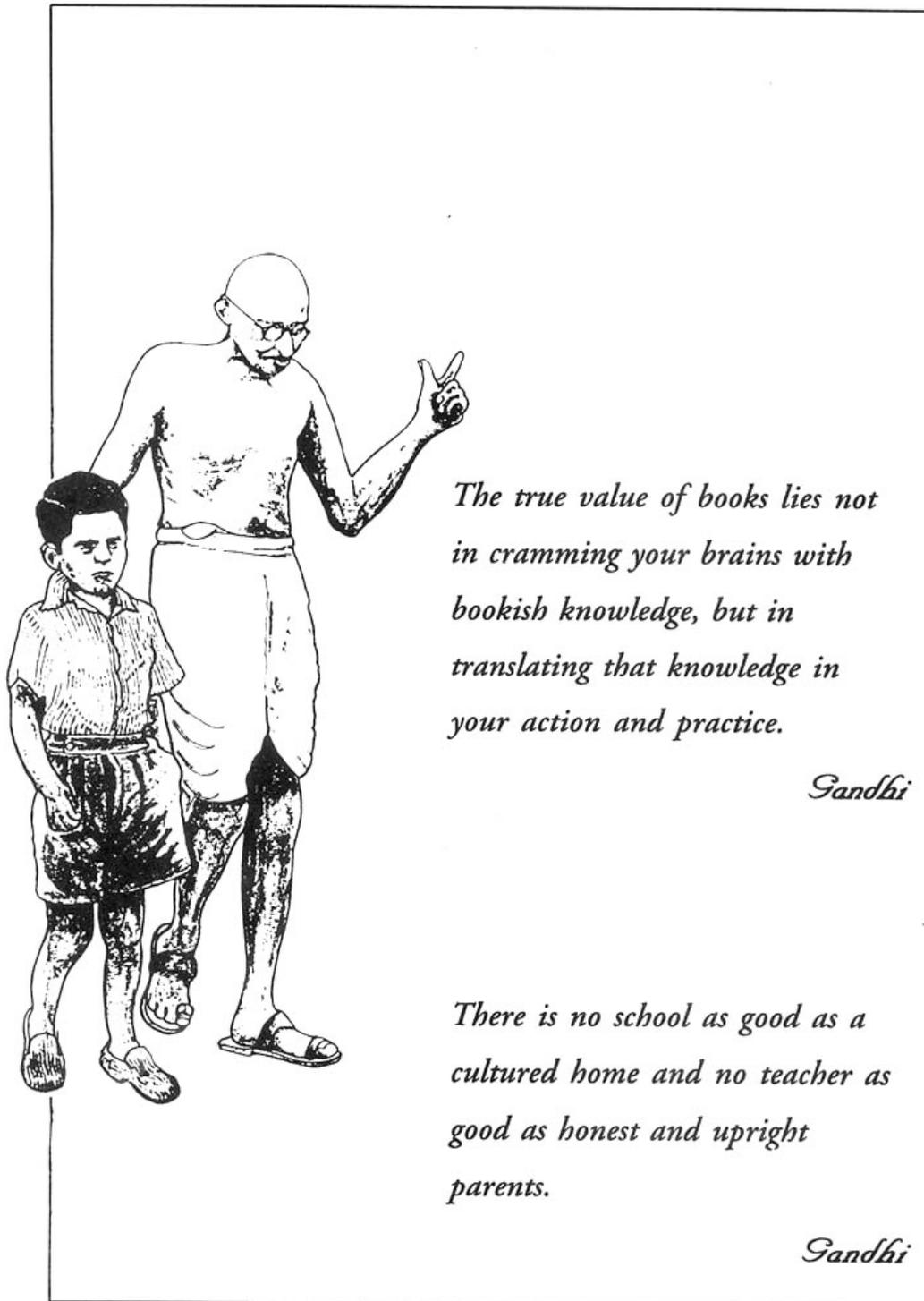
As we ran the column made up of interesting stories, pictures and puzzles, several unknown facets of Gandhi's life came to light like why Gandhi stopped using soap or how he wrote letters with a 'kitta' or a wooden pen holder sharpened like a nib, to pen even letters to Mountbatten.

It then struck us that there was much more to Gandhi than these endearing aspects of his life and that adults too may find answers to their present day concerns through Gandhi. So we decided to enlarge the scope of the column to address young and old alike. An attempt was also made to link the column's contents to contemporary events to make it more attractive to the newspapers.

The Gandhi column has just crossed the 100 mark covering such aspects as communal unity, adult education, economic liberalisation and probity in public life.

We are happy to note that the Gandhi Peace Foundation has chosen to bring out the first set of the 52 columns for children in a book form. This would be useful for both children and adults alike. We hope they will also bring out a companion volume covering the second set of columns meant for everyone.

*ARUN KUMAR, Editor
Special Services; PTI*



Illustrations on this page and p. 124
Courtesy : Dilip Chinchalkar

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All for a Stone

Many people know that instead of soap, Gandhiji used a stone to scrub himself. Very few people, however, know how precious this stone, given by Mirabehn, was to Gandhiji.

This happened during the Noakhali march, when Gandhiji and others halted at a village called Narayanpur. During the march, the responsibility of looking after this particular stone, along with other things, lay with Manubehn. Unfortunately, though, she forgot the stone at the last halting place.

"I want you to go back and look for the stone/' said Bapu. "Only then will you not forget it the next time."

"May I take a volunteer with me?"

"Why?"

Poor Manu. She did not have the courage to say that the way back lay through forests of coconut and supari, so dense that a stranger might easily lose his way. Moreover, it was the time of riots. How could she go back alone?

But go she did, and alone; after all she had committed the error. Leaving Narayanpur at 9:30 in the morning, Manu trudged along the forest path, taking the name of Ram as she went.

On reaching the village she went straight to the weaver's house that had been their last halt. An old woman lived there. And she had thrown the stone away. When Manubehn found it after a difficult search her joy knew no bounds.

Carrying the precious stone, she returned to Narayanpur by late afternoon. Placing it in Bapu's lap she burst into tears.

"You have no idea how happy I feel. This stone has been my cherished companion for the past twenty-five years. Whether in prison or in a palace it has been with me. Had it been lost it would have distressed me and Mirabehn as well. Now, you have seen that every useful thing is worth taking care of, even a stone."

Manubehn said, "Bapu, if ever I took Ramanaam with all my heart it was today."
Bapu laughed and replied, "Oh yes, one remembers the Lord only when one is in trouble."



A Car and a Pair of Binoculars

Here's how a close friend of Gandhiji came to give up two of his possessions. This friend, a German named Kallenbach, was an engineer- architect whose earnings had made him rich. Kallenbach shared the beliefs and principles of Gandhiji and worked closely with him in the struggle against the white South African government. This, however, was not always easy.

It was 1908. Gandhiji was being released from jail, having served his sentence for the Satyagraha struggle. At the gate he realised that his friend Kallenbach was so happy at his release that he had actually bought a new car to take him home. Gandhiji refused to enter the car. "It is stupid to spend so much money on a car when other people are suffering. You must return it to the seller before doing anything else."

On another occasion, Kallenbach and Gandhiji were returning to South Africa from England by ship. Kallenbach had a well-crafted and expensive pair of binoculars. This led to a serious discussion. What exactly is essential for a good and simple life? And if non-essentials are not required, shouldn't they be discarded? The binoculars were costly, but not essential. Persuaded by Gandhiji, Kallenbach threw them into the sea. And felt greatly relieved.

K.S. Narayanaswamy

My Master's Master

Gandhiji inspired many, but who inspired *him*? Here's a story that gives hint towards this.

This story has to do with Dr. Kumarappa, who had decided to live in a hut in Kallupatti in Madurai District of Tamilnadu. It was a hut he had built himself. On the inner walls of his hut hung a photograph that would attract anyone's attention. It was a picture that showed a common farmer, with a turban on his head. What was this photograph doing here, in the house of a man such as Dr. Kumarappa? Many an important visitor would ask Dr. Kumarappa about this mysteriously unimportant looking man.

"Oh, he's my master's master." Dr. Kumarappa would say.

"Master's master?"

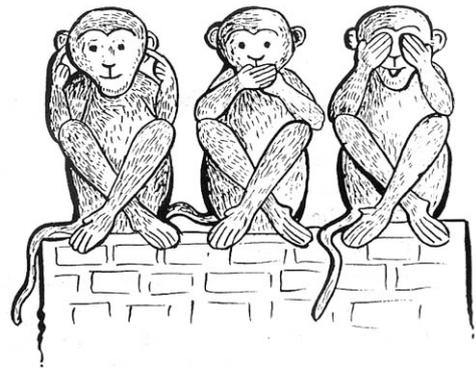
"You see/" Dr. Kumarappa would explain to the puzzled visitor, "my master is Gandhiji, and this villager, indeed every poor person in the land, is *his* master."

K Muniyandi

Dr. J.C. Kumarappa was an economist educated in England and America. His article 'British Rule and Indian Poverty' brought him in touch with Gandhiji on 9th May 1929 in Sabarmati Ashram. Becoming a partner with Gandhiji in the struggle for freedom, he helped set up and run the All India Village Industries Association at Maganwadi, Wardha.

Enter the Monkeys

Of course you've heard of the three monkeys that are always mentioned along with Gandhi's name. But have you also heard of how they came to be with him in the first place? Find out from this recollection by someone who worked with both Tagore and Gandhi.



Most of the people who came to see Gandhi sought his advice on something or the other. But one day came a party of visitors from China.

"Gandhiji, we have brought you a small gift," they said. "It is no bigger than a child's toy, but it is famous in our country." To Gandhi's delight it was a set of the three monkeys that were later to become so well-known and to be kept carefully by him for the rest of his life.

Marjorie Sykes

Marjorie Sykes was born in 1905, and obtained a Teacher's Diploma from Cambridge in 1927. She came to India to teach at Madras, then went on to Santiniketan during 1938- 47.

She came to Sevagram in 1948 to work in the Nai Talim School. Later she worked at Hoshangabad. She passed away in April 1996 in England.

Premchand Quits his Job

Did you know that, inspired by the Non-cooperation Movement, the Hindi writer Premchand decided to give up his job? But it wasn't such an easy decision. Here's how it happened, narrated by his wife.

It was 1920. Non-cooperation was in the air. Gandhiji came to Gorakhpur. He (Premchand, that is) was ill. Even then, our two sons, Babuji and I went to the meeting. Both of us were deeply affected by Mahatmaji's speech. Of course there was illness. There were compulsions. But from that very time he lost interest in continuing in his government job.

When he had recovered from his long illness he said to me one day, "If you agree I will leave this government job."

I asked for two to three days time to think it over. We had thought that he would become a professor, that our days would pass in comfort. More so, because his health had not been very good. And now this idea of simply letting go whatever had been attained.

At that time he got an overall amount of around Rs 125. And because he taught in a school, he also got time at home. I kept thinking: what will we do once he gives up his service. Looking at our needs, his prolonged illness, the fact that we had no house of our own, all this made me feel like telling him not to resign.

Four to five days later he asked me what I had decided. I thought, now that he is better, I will not worry about his giving up the job. In just those days, too, everyone was seething with anger at the gruesome massacre at Jallianwalla Bagh. Perhaps I was too.

By the next day I had braced myself to face all those difficulties which were bound to come in the wake of his resignation. I said to him, "Give up the job." I had thought it would be painful leaving a job he had had for twenty-five years. But no, compared to the oppression being wreaked on the country, it was almost no pain at all.

Returning his Medals

In South Africa, Gandhi had worked shoulder to shoulder with the British on occasions - and even received awards for this. However, as soon as he felt he could no longer accept the British government, he returned the awards bestowed upon him. This was how his letter to the Viceroy ran, quoted from *Young India* dated 4th August, 1920:

It is not without a pang that I return the Kaiser-i-Hind gold medal granted to me by your predecessor for my humanitarian work in South Africa, the Zulu War medal granted in South Africa for my services as officer in charge of the Indian volunteer ambulance corps in 1906 and the Boer War medal for my services as assistant superintendent of the Indian volunteer stretcher-bearer corps during the Boer War of 1899-1900.¹ I venture to return these medals in pursuance of the scheme of non-cooperation inaugurated today in connection with the Khilafat movement. Valuable as these honours have been to me, I cannot wear them with an easy conscience so long as my Mussalman countrymen have to labour under a wrong done to their religious sentiment. Events that have happened during the past one month have confirmed me in the opinion that the Imperial Government have acted in the Khilafat matter in an unscrupulous, immoral and unjust manner and have been moving from wrong to wrong in order to defend their immorality. I can retain neither respect nor affection for such a Government.

Boer and Zulu Wars

Like the British, Boers were white Europeans who had settled in South Africa. The Boers had come from Holland. In his autobiography, Gandhi writes thus on this war:

When the war was declared, my personal sympathies were all with the Boers, but ... my loyalty to the British rule drove me to participation with the British in that war. I felt that, if I demanded rights as a British citizen, it was also my duty, as such to participate in the defence of the British Empire. I held then that India could achieve her complete emancipation only within and through the British Empire. So I collected together as many

comrades as possible, and with very great difficulty got their services accepted as an ambulance corps.

In 1906, the Zulu Rebellion broke out in Natal. This was actually a campaign against tax being imposed by the British on the Zulus, who were demanding their rights in their own land. However, the whites declared war against the Zulus.

Again, Gandhi's sympathies with the Zulus but he considered it his duty to help the British and he volunteered to form an Indian Ambulance Corps. This Corps had twenty- four men, and was in active service for six weeks, nursing and looking after the wounded.

Basic Pen



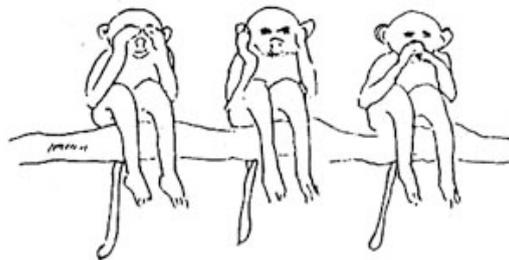
Most people have lost a pen at some time or the other. So did Gandhi. He had a costly fountain pen which was pilfered. The pen was immediately replaced but the theft pained him. Henceforth, he decided, he would not use anything so attractive that it would tempt someone to steal it.

He began using a pen-holder and a nib. (Do you know what this was like? Ask your parents if you don't.) But even this did not last forever. For the nib once got bent and he had to send Manubehn to get a new one.

This was a loss of time when every moment was precious. Even a few minutes' delay could upset a whole day's schedule.

When Manubehn returned, she found Bapu sharpening the other end of the wooden holder. "Why?" she wanted to know.

At which Gandhi said, "Now the point of my nib will never get curved. In olden days, people used such *kittas* for writing purposes. Using them made the handwriting better, and they did not cost a paisa." So he now had a pen that would neither be stolen or spoilt. And do you know to whom the first letter to be penned with this *kitta* was addressed—Lord Mountbatten.



Prisoner No. 1739

When Gandhi was a prisoner of the South African Government in November 1913 in Bloemfontein Gaol, his jail card bore the following among other details:

No. : 1739
Name : Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi
Religion : Hindu
Age : 43
Trade : Solicitor
Date of Sentence : 11-11-13
Date of Discharge : 10-11-14
Sentenced : Pounds 20 or 30 months (on each of four counts).

Gandhiji was awarded 50 marks for good conduct. As he did not pay the fine, he had to serve the full sentence. The card bears his thumb impressions.

About the prison diet supplied to him the card says: "Allowed vegetable diet owing to religious scruples. Diet: 12 bananas, 12 dates, 3 tomatoes and 1 lemon each, 2 ounces of olive oil, and 3 selected groundnuts."

Gandhi's White Brother

In the vegetarian restaurant where he took his food, Kallenbach would often see a young barrister. This was an Indian lawyer who dressed like an Englishman and had taken up the cause of Indian labourers in South Africa. It was not long before the German engineer and M. K. Gandhi became friends.

They had a great deal in common—a deep attraction for simple life and working for the good of their fellow beings. At the time Gandhi was struggling for the rights of Indians and Africans in a land dominated by white men.

The form of resistance that Gandhiji used was unique: satyagraha. He would patiently appeal to the good sense of the whites while also refusing to follow their laws that he regarded evil. He was willing to suffer punishment for breaking these laws but refused to hate the white men.

Kallenbach was attracted by this method. He and Gandhiji worked together for the poorest of the poor. They changed their own life style and honoured every useful work. They said that a lawyer or an engineer was not superior to a cobbler or a scavenger. In fact they went to a Chinese cobbler in Johannesburg and learnt to make footwear. And they undertook to clean their own latrines, something most people would not do in these days.

From Ruskin's book *Unto This Last*, Kallenbach and Gandhi laid down three principles for themselves: (i) the good of the individual is in the good of all; (ii) all work is noble and all are equal; and (iii) a life of labour is worth living.

In 1903 Gandhi's family came over to South Africa. Though Kallenbach became a dear uncle to his three children, Gandhi would not let him buy costly toys for them. They must not feel that they are different from poor people, he would say.

In 1910 Kallenbach, who was a rich man, donated to Gandhi a thousand- acre farm belonging to him near Johannesburg. This was a very great gift indeed and was used to run Gandhi's famous 'Tolstoy Farm' that housed the families of satyagrahis.

With the satyagraha campaign in full swing, Gandhi would often go to prison. During such times, Kallenbach would take up the work of editing *Indian Opinion*, a weekly paper started by Gandhi. Being white, he could not be punished under the South African laws. This angered the white rulers no end, but Kallenbach carried on as a co-worker with Gandhi.

When Gandhi started the Phoenix Ashram near Durban, living as a farmer and labourer, Kallenbach gladly joined in this new life. He built the simple sheds for the inmates, working as a mason and carpenter.

In 1915 Gandhi returned to India. The First World War had broken out. England and Germany were at war with each other. Being a German, Kallenbach was refused entry into India and had to return sadly to South Africa, where he continued his work as a satyagrahi.

Kallenbach did come to India in 1936, when he visited Gandhi's ashram at Sevagram near Wardha. He was ill at that time. Gandhi nursed him back to health himself.

In 1937 the Second World War broke out, Kallenbach was again put into jail by the South African Government.

When Kallenbach died of illness a little after this, in 1938, Gandhiji felt he had indeed lost a brother.

K. A. Narayanaswamy

Who Saw Gandhi?

Sometimes old worlds acquire new meanings, as happened in this incident.

Gandhi had arrived at the Harijan Ashram in Delhi. In this ashram ran a workshop to train boys in various vocational skills.

When Gandhi entered this workshop during his round of inspection, the boys working there stopped what they were doing to stare at him curiously. A lone boy, engrossed in making rotis, was so involved in cooking them over the *chulha* that he did not get to know that Gandhi had just passed from there.

As Gandhi came out of the workshop, one of the boys remarked in amazement, "Arrey, the boy making rotis did not see Bapu at all."

Bapu responded at once saying, "If there is anyone who really saw me at all in the whole workshop, it is the boy who was making rotis."

- *Ram Pravesh Shastri*

Meeting Gandhi

There was always a large number of people wanting to meet Gandhi. He used to try to deal fairly with all his visitors by giving each one a fixed time for an interview. He and his secretary would go through the list of people to be met and agree that five minutes or ten minutes would be enough for what some wanted, although those who come with important public problems might need fifteen or even twenty minutes.

One day I was given a five-minutes period. I had been asked to write the life story of Gandhi's great English friend who had died in 1940, whose name was Charlie Andrews. I know that Andrews had written many letters to Gandhi, and I went to ask Gandhi if I might read and use them for my work.

"Of course you may," said Gandhi at once, "but they are not here, they are in my old ashram at Sabarmati. I will give you a letter to the man in-charge." That was all, and it did not take even two minutes to settle it.

Gandhi did not waste the three minutes which remained. Now let me ask you something, he said, "If you feel it is right, we would be happy for your to help in our Basic School work."

"I can't, just now," I said, "I have this Andrews book to write."

"Not now, of course, but later," he replied, "and only if you yourself think it is the right thing for your to do."

When I got to Sabarmati I discovered something else about Gandhi. The friend there opened his cupboard and showed me the files. All the letters which had arrived on any one day were filed together just as they arrived. A few had typed copies of answers pinned to them, but most had just a handwritten note about the answer that was sent.

Andrews had always written to his friend in his own distinctive handwriting, so it was easy for me to skip through each day's correspondence and stop to make

notes when I found it. But I could not help seeing that some of the other letters were very personal and private.

Now when Gandhi gave me permission to use his files, he had said nothing about this. He had simply trusted me not to misuse any knowledge I might get about these 'private' matters. And really, his trust was such that it made me want me to show that I was worthy of it.

Morjorie Sykes

An Early School

What were schools like a hundred and ten years ago when Gandhi was a child?

The Kattyawar High School, Rajkot where Gandhi studied for seven years, was the ninth English school started in Bombay Presidency (find out from your elders what this was) and the first in Kathiawar (now Saurashtra). It had a good building with classrooms that had benches to sit on and desks at which to write (unlike most other schools of the time). Inside the class-room, the teacher had his seat on a raised dais (or platform) facing the boys. Girls did not attend this school. (In fact, there weren't many schools where girls could study.)

At the age of 11 years, 2 months and 2 days, the young Mohandas was enrolled in standard 1-B. The school's fee for standard I was 8 annas (50 paise) a month. On week days the school worked from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., with a recess of an hour at 2-3. On Saturdays it worked for half an hour less.

The subjects Gandhi had to study in standard I were arithmetic, Gujarati, history and geography. In geography, in fact, his marks in the first terminal examination of standard I were: zero. In English dictation, that is, spelling too, he got no marks at all. In the same exam his rank was 32nd among the 34 students of his division. At the annual exam, though, he was able to secure the sixth rank among *pupils in both* divisions.



Adapted from Mahatma Gandhi as a Student edited and compiled by J.M. Upadhyaya

An Unusual March

It was a celebration of sorts. No *mithai* or *diyas* or even flowers. Instead, a march. To observe a hundred and twenty fifth anniversary.

This was a march to commemorate Mahatma Gandhi's 125th birthday. And this time it was not at Sabarmati or Porbandar but in England—the very place and the same people against whom he had....

The march took place between Birmingham and London, a distance of 125 miles, and lasted from the 22nd of September to the 2nd of October, 1994.

At every step, English men and women joined the march, lending support wherever they could. Sometimes, between one halt and another, there would be no place where we could eat. Village folk would then pitch in with boiled potatoes and tomatoes to keep the march going. Along the way, one of the Indian marchers lost his camera. Later, when he returned home after the march, he was delighted to receive the news that his camera had been found—and an English lady was taking the trouble to send it back to him.

Prof. Ramjee Singh

Gandhi's Spiritual Heir

On 7 June 1916, a young man of twenty waited at the gates of Gandhi's ashram at Kochrab, in Ahmedabad, for an interview with him. Later given the name of Vinoba Bhave, Vinayak Narhari Bhave was a Chitpavan Brahmin from Maharashtra. He had been drawn to the Mahatma, on reading reports of his stirring speech at the foundation stone ceremony of the Benares Hindu University in February that same year.

Gandhi had invited him to his Ashram for a detailed discussion. Their first meeting was in the kitchen where Gandhi was cleaning and cutting vegetables. He welcomed the newcomer warmly and offered him full membership of the Ashram.

The hard and austere life of the Ashram did not deter Vinoba. He participated quietly and painstakingly in all its activities. It was only when he was heard reciting verses from the Gita and Upanishads early one morning that the inmates of the Ashram came to know of his profound knowledge of Sanskrit and religious scriptures.

After some months, Vinoba's younger brother Balkoba also joined the Ashram. It was Balkoba who once found the 12-year-old son of the Ashram sweeper weeping when he was unable to lift the pots of nightsoil. He helped the young boy with his work and Vinoba, too, joined him. This created a sensation in the Ashram. "How could two Brahmins take to such work?" Many, including Gandhi's elder sister, left the Ashram.

Vinoba's humility and self-effacing ways made him relatively unknown till 1940. An article by Gandhiji in the *Harijan*, his weekly paper, drew public attention to the man who was later to become his spiritual heir. Gandhi described him as a man who "believes that silent constructive work with civil disobedience in the background is far more effective than the already crowded political platform."

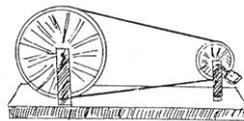
Later, it was his work for the improvement of villages that was to make Vinoba famous. His Bhoodan (land gift) movement that took him from village to village

in an attempt to find a solution to the problem of unequal distribution of land, was started in Pochampally (better known for its sarees!) in Andhra Pradesh.

This was in April 1951, when the land problem was so bad that it led to murders, fights and fires raging all around. On a padayatra, returning from Shivrampally, Vinoba camped at Pochampally. Here he held a prayer meeting attended by people from different walks of life. When he referred to the land problem, one of the Harijans said, we work on the land with the sweat of our brow, but we have no land."

Vinoba asked them how much land they required. They quickly calculated: "80 acres". He, in turn, appealed to the conscience of the audience. Was there any among them generous enough? After a minute's silence, one gentleman, Ramachandra Reddy, got up, and offered, not eighty but one hundred acres.

Rita Roy



The Less you have the More you are

If you had lots of money, what would you choose for yourself: a piece of coarse cloth or colourful fine clothes?

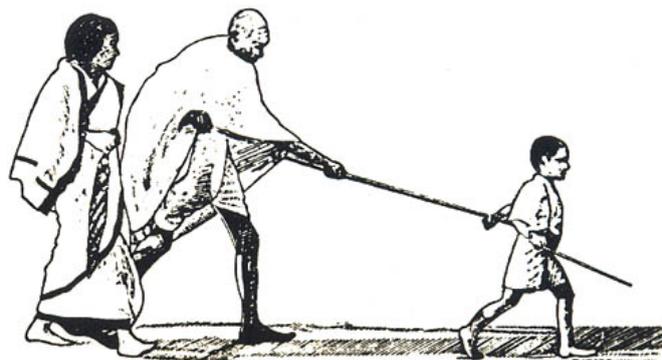
There was a time when Gandhi would have chosen the latter. At school as a child and later as a student of law in England, he bought the best of clothes, in time with the fashion of the time.

How then did the change to a mere loin cloth occur? Well, it did not happen overnight but in phases. The first phase in this shedding began during his stay in South Africa. Having suffered at the hands of the British rulers he came to feel that if Asians and Africans were to win over humiliation, they needed to stop imitating Europeans at once.

At the same time, Gandhi was also influenced by the book *Unto This Last* Real beauty, he learnt from this book, comes from within rather than from that which is outside. In Africa, therefore, his western clothes gave way to his native Kathiawari dress: dhoti, kurta and a turban.

It was in this elaborate Indian dress that Gandhi returned to India in 1915. Soon after, he went on an extensive tour of India. It was during this tour that he came to realise what poverty meant.

Once, in Madurai, he addressed a public meeting attended by a large number of men and women. That night, the picture of those half clad men and women filled his thoughts.



Next morning, Mr. Rajan who was translating Gandhiji's English speeches into Tamil, came to fetch him. Finding Gandhi in a loin cloth, Mr Rajan said, "It is time for the meeting. Please get ready soon."

"I'm ready," said Gandhi.

Surprised, Mr. Rajan asked again, "Are you not getting dressed to go?"

At which Gandhi said, "From today, this is what I am going to wear – the dress that every Indian wears."

S. N. Subba Rao

An Old Goat Talks

(A play for children)

[Ms Nada Awar, from war-torn Beirut, had sent us some interesting plays for the column. It was not possible to publish all of them, so we decided to use one. Since the entire play was a little too long, we published a portion and asked the readers to complete the rest. This is the play.]

- Cast : A Goat A Shepherd
- (The goat is faying to run away from the shepherd, who follows her with a stick in his hand.)
- Shepherd : (running after goat) I'll give you the thrashing of your life.
Just you wait till I catch you.
- Goat : (Suddenly stopping) Will you please stop abusing me?
- Shepherd : (Surprised, drops his stick to the ground) How can a goat talk?
- Goat : It is better for me to talk than to keep giving in to pain. You have tortured me long enough without bothering to see how important I am to you.
- Shepherd : (Still surprised) What do you mean?
- Goat : You use my milk to live on. My manure fertilises vegetables in your fields. You use my hair ito weave your tent, your clothes and your rugs. The skin of my ancestors was turned into drums and tablas. Can't you see, your life depends on my willingness to support you.
- Shepherd : Ha, look at our great philosopher talk. I'm the one who is strong: I'll beat you to pulp if you stop supporting my life.
- Goat : How wrong you are my friend. I am stronger than you think. From now on, whenever you treat me badly, I will fast to death.

Shepherd : You can't do that. You would not be able to control your hunger.

Goat : Well, Mahatma Gandhi could. His fasts were successful. I will be able to do the same too.

Shepherd : Did he go on fasts? Why? Was he also abused? And who told you about him anyway?

Goat : My great grandmother was his best friend. She gave him milk daily and he was really nice to her. And he fasted to resist both the foreign rule and the internal division among the people of his country.

Shepherd : (Seems interested): Was he successful?

* * *

Ms Hima Bindu of Siddhartha Residential School Edupugallu, Vijaywada, completes the play thus:

Goat : Yes, he was successful. Moreover his fasting was peculiar.

Shepherd : Peculiar? In what sense?

Goat : Gandhiji's fasts consisted of three delicious meals.

Shepherd : Oh! you are talking about fast and then again about meals? Are you mad?

Goat : Oh God! The meals that I am referring to are not those meals which you have in your house. But, the meals which later became the steps for achieving our Independence.

Shepherd : Now do tell me what were those three meals?

Goat : They were "*Willpower*", "*Peace*" and "*Simplicity*".

Shepherd : But let me know what was the success?

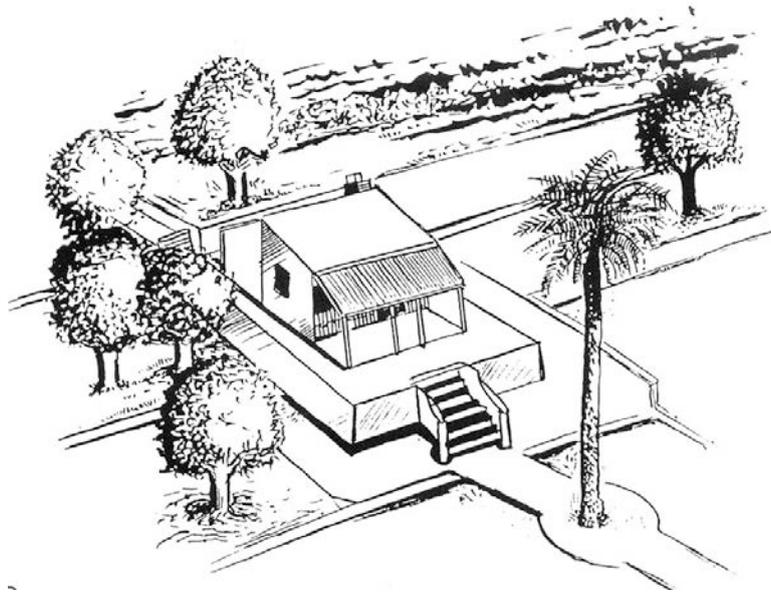
Goat : Don't you know? Gandhiji, due to his will power, won the favour of millions of people. But, he never turned violent. He always embraced *Ahimsa* which was his greatest friend.

Due to that my great grandmother spent her life in a bed of roses. She always used to say that the father of the nation was *A Man of Letters* and his name would be remembered until this world exists. Now don't you agree that the fasts are the peaceful ways of opposition.

Shepherd : Yes, that's true. Due to my ignorance I have given you many tortures. But from now onwards I'll never bring you in contact with my stick. Moreover I am going to preach to my fellow companions about the importance of you and other animals and will request that to be at peace rather than stormy.

(Then they went away happily.)

The Phoenix Settlement



When Gandhi decided that the *Indian Opinion*, his weekly paper, should be printed at a farm away from the city, he purchased an estate in Natal province, fourteen miles from Durban. This would be a place where everyone would labour, and draw the same salary. He called this the Phoenix Settlement. (Look up the word phoenix in the dictionary to find out it's interesting meaning.)

It was desolate, overgrown with grass and trees, snake infested and suffered from severe winters as well as water scarcity. In this inhospitable area came and settled some Englishmen, a few Tamil and Hindi speaking people, one or two Zulus, and six Gujaratis.

Gandhi could not actually live on the land for long, but would visit it at frequent intervals. His visits were special occasions which the children of the Settlement eagerly looked forward to. He would laugh and play with them. The settlers would prepare special dishes, Gandhi relishing good food in those days, and eat together on Sundays.

The press-workers did all the work in the press themselves, bringing out the *Indian Opinion*. On nights when the final printing was done, they would need to stay up all night. To encourage them, kheer would be served!

Gandhi at a School in Amsterdam

[Far from India lies Amsterdam, a major city of the Netherlands. How far do you think is Amsterdam? Well, if a cyclist were to travel a hundred kilometres a day and follow a straight route, it would take her a little over 10 weeks!

In this far-away city is a school where children have 'adopted' Gandhi. This is how their teacher describes their relationship.]

In front of me sit some forty children, all from the higher grades of a primary school in Amsterdam. Half of them are Dutch, the other half is of various descent – some from North Africa (mostly Morocco or Turkey) but the majority from Surinam, a former Dutch colony in the West Indies. Their grandfathers or great-grandfathers had come as contract or even bonded labour from certain areas in India or the former Dutch East Indies to work on Surinamese sugar plantations. In fact, many of their parents still speak Hindi, though the children speak Dutch at school.

The whole class knows about Gandhi. Just a few hundred metres away stands the Gandhi Monument. Some five years ago, people from Surinam took the initiative to establish and inaugurate this monument. And it is this school that has adopted the Gandhi Monument.

Adoption in this case means that the pupils of the school have the task of keeping clean the pedestal of the statue and the cobbles around the monument. Of course, the municipality gives them the material for this. The cleaning is done at regular intervals and, in particular, before the commemoration of Gandhi's birthday on 2nd October.

While Gandhi is not unknown to them, before the 2nd October the children always request to have specific lessons on Gandhi at school. India and Gandhi are at the centre of their interest then.

Compared with Holland, India is an enormous country. We start therefore with a lesson on geography of India. When a map of India is placed on a map of Europe, we find that the Himalayas fall on the North of Norway while the South

of India lies in the Mediterranean! Every year, almost the same number of children are born in India as there are people living in the Netherlands.

A great difference with India is its many languages. The children certainly will all know about the differences in religion: some go to mosques, others to temples or churches. From here, we move on to talk about their relationships. Why do they look different and why are they equals? Is it nice to be different or should there be no difference?

The lesson on Gandhi then starts with a brief video on his work and his activities. Of course he is the Father of the Indian Nation. But more important is what he did on relations between human beings. We tie in with children's own experiences and what they feel about others. Do they fight now and then? Do they call names and why? Is it right to behave in a violent way?

A few of the children have heard about nonviolence from their parents at home. We go a step forward, talking about how much nicer it might be to cooperate with each other than to fight. It is explained how Gandhi wanted to raise the self-esteem of every Indian individually and of the Indian nation as a whole. How he tried to improve relations between the various communities in India and how he gave an example himself. And finally, what could they do themselves so that persons of various descent, creed and colour can live together without acting against each other in a violent way?

Piet Dijkstra

Something to be Shy about?

Now, I'm going to ask you an embarrassing question, OK?

How do you pass urine?

Oh..I can see, most of you seem to be shy at my question...

Why?

All the excretions from the body, whether it is sweat, urine, etc...are ugly in our eyes. (Though whatever we eat, are delicious, sweet, etc.) We have to realise everything has got its own merit and reverence. And one incident from the Dandi March brings this out very well indeed.

The seventy-eight members who took part in the Dandi March each carried nothing more than a shoulder bag containing the bare minimum necessities for their journey. They also had a regular routine for every day. One strict condition Gandhi laid down was that once the yatra started at 6.30 in the morning, it would not be disturbed or stopped in between till it reached the next halt. And this is how it was every day.

But one day the system broke down. Alas, Gandhi himself was the lawbreaker. But what could have happened?

A few minutes later came the news that Gandhi himself had stopped the yatra because he had an urgent need to relieve himself. He told his colleagues at the yatra that this was very unusual for him, that he would be back very soon and that not one of them was to follow him.

A few minutes passed...Before long fifteen minutes had passed. The yatris became restless. Could something have happened to Gandhi as he went into the jungle? Uneasy and anxious, a group of friends followed the path they had seen him take.

At a distance they could see Gandhi digging the earth with the root of a tree, taking handfuls of soil and spraying it on the open land. Not able to understand

his action, the friends advanced upon him. Catching sight of them Gandhi was at once shy as well as angry.

But the friends explained to Gandhi that they were worried for him. In reply, a self-conscious Gandhi told them that he was feeling guilty at passing urine in the open ground, as if he had done a great crime. So he had sprayed the soil and covered the place to a great height.

Every one of his friends was struck at his reverence to the mother earth.

(Nine or ten years ago, I met Shri Raghava Padhuval, who was one of the 78 colleagues in the Dandi March. It is from him that I learnt of the above incident. Shri Raghava Padhuval is no more now.)

S. Kulaindaswamy

Gandhi the Matchmaker

Gandhi has, of course, been regarded as a 'good man' and a 'great soul' (Mahatma). But there was also a time when he was the 'Best Man' in quite another way.

It was his friend Henry Polak who was responsible for this. Polak was in love with an English girl called Millie. But he was not sure whether he should marry her, as it would mean that she might have to settle in a place like South Africa. When Gandhi came to know about this, he wrote a letter to Millie and her father explaining the situation to them. On reading Gandhi's letter, Millie, who loved Polak dearly, decided to go to Africa and get married over there.

Now, in western weddings, the bridegroom chooses from among his friends and relatives one man he considers closest, to be with him during the ceremony, as the 'Best Man'.

Gandhi was Polak's 'Best Man' at his wedding to Millie. Since Millie was a Christian and Henry a Jew, the marriage had to be registered with the registrar of marriages. But a problem arose. Gandhi was an Indian and the English registrar would not accept him. Henry, on the other hand, refused to name any other man as his best man. Gandhi then had a talk with the magistrate. This gentleman was a good friend of his and readily agreed to register the marriage. And that is how, despite initial difficulties, Gandhi the good man became the best man.

K.S. Narayanaswam

Who was Henry Polak?

Gandhi's South Africa days were titled with struggles of all kinds. But along the way, he made many friends who, interestingly enough turned out to be white men. Henry Polak was one such English friend of Gandhi.

While working in Johannesburg as a sub-editor of an English newspaper called 'Critic', Polak fearlessly wrote against all social injustices around him. Later on, he joined Gandhi in his office after passing the necessary tests to become a practising lawyer. Polak soon became a member of Gandhi's family and was an affectionate uncle to his children.

Gandhi's Army

Have you ever wondered how the hundreds and thousands who went on Satyagraha against the British were fed, clothed and housed? After all, most of them were in no position to earn money when they struggled against the rulers of the land. It was no small problem and the following piece gives some idea of how the nitty-gritties were managed. This was when Gandhi the nonviolent actually went ahead and set up an "army" in South Africa.

It was October 1913 and a small town called Newcastle in the Natal Province of South Africa was overflowing with a crowd of Indian miners, their wives and children. They were mostly miners from Northern Natal who now had no homes of their own – for they were on strike and had given up the quarters provided by their masters. The strike was in protest against the unfair and crushing tax of three pounds that had been levied on them.

The miners and their families had no worldly goods except the clothes they wore and a few sundry blankets. A middle class Indian who had a small plot of land and a small house came forward to offer shelter. The house became a caravanserai and the kitchen fire knew no rest day and night. More and more people came trudging along the muddy roads in weather that had been bad. Soon the crowd increased to thousands.

How were they to be housed and fed? There seemed a way out. Why not turn these pilgrims of faith into soldiers of Satyagraha? Why not take this "army" into the Transvaal and see them deposited in jails or settled at Tolstoy Farm where good Kallenbach would make the necessary arrangements? But the strength of the army was now about 5,000; there was no money for railway fare and the Transvaal border was distant indeed. Gandhiji decided to march on foot.

The miners had their wives and children with them but none of them would go back to the mines. "I had no alternative....," writes Gandhiji of that historic decision. The rules of the march were read out. There was to be a daily ration of only a pound and a half of bread and an ounce of sugar for each "soldier".

They were not to keep more clothes than* necessary, nor touch any one's property on the way. They were to welcome arrest, bear patiently with abuse, and even flogging.

On 28 October the caravan started on its march and safely reached Charlestown, a small border town of 1,000 people, where only the women and children could be lodged. The rest camped in the open and did their scavenging and sweeping. More labourers arrived from Newcastle and the kitchen was active all the twenty-four hours. The ration now consisted of rice and dal. But there were hungry looks and the organisers had their limitations. Gandhiji was the leader among the cooks and assumed the thankless task of serving the food. There was either too much water in the dal or the food was insufficiently cooked but the army gulped it down cheerfully.

from Tours and Marches by M. Chalapathi Rao

Dandi Snippet

Did you know that the then Viceroy did not bother to stop the Dandi March because, as he remarked, he was sure that Gandhi would drop dead on the way with the strain? He was confident that Gandhi's blood pressure would reach dangerous levels, his pulse race madly to keep with his extraordinarily brisk walk. Moreover, even his horoscope had foretold that Gandhi would die that year!



Yet the 61-year-old Gandhi, striding at the head of the 78-member march, set a blistering, punishing pace for the 24-day march and was none the worse for it.

Hiding Something

It's a few decades ago. Outside the gates of the Aga Khan Palace, the shrubbery moves a little. Stealthily, a little boy peeps out from behind a bush. He has just been hiding something in it, something he does not want anyone to find.

This little boy is Kanha Ramdas Gandhi, the eldest grandson of Gandhi. He has been spending some of his vacations with his grandfather and his dear grandmother Kasturba and is now with them during their jail tenure at the Aga Khan Palace.

Ba is so attached to him that if he is not near her she misses him dearly. Kanha feels, too, that he has a special right over her, more than even Bapu himself.

Now, Ba has given Kanha a pen which he treasures more than anything else. It is also precious because she has promised to teach him how to write with it. But, as happens all the time, Kanha's sister Sumi has taken a liking to this very pen.

Sumi had asked Kanha to give her the pen. Naturally Kanha refused. At which Sumi went and complained to her grandfather, who simply took the pen away and kept it with himself.

Wasn't Bapu misusing his power over Kanha to take away the pen? Yes, feels Kanha. That is why he has stolen the pen from Bapu's room. He knows that his bags will be searched thoroughly when the pen is missed. And that is why he is here, in the shrubbery outside the Aga Khan Palace, hiding his precious pen.

Nirmal Chandra

The Image-Maker?

Every month Gandhi faced a host of meetings, a barrage of visitors, a flood of letters. How on earth was he to manage his time? How was he to decide from among these hundreds of visitors and meetings which really needed his time and which did not?

If Gandhi was able to find his way through this maze of appointments successfully, it was largely because of one man: Mahadev Desai. Mahadev was officially his secretary, but he was much more than that.

A highly educated man, Mahadev had a B.A. and LL.B in days when it was not so common. It was at the time of the Champaran Satyagraha in 1918 that he threw in his lot with Gandhi. Soon he was at home in the office, the guest house and the kitchen. He looked after the many guests and, at the same time, must have saved ten years of Gandhi's time by diverting from him unwanted visitors. #

In all this, he also found time to write week after week in papers such as *Young India* and the *Harijan*. His writings showed the people something of what the freedom struggle really meant. Few writers can have commanded so many regular readers of Mahadev's stories that made Gandhi real to millions. In them, readers all over the world came to see Gandhi as a lovable human being.

Perhaps the affection showered on Gandhi owes much to this portrayal. Mahadev always stressed on the human, witty personality of Gandhi. He depicted the Mahatma as one who reached out effectively to common people from all parts of the country and even the world.

But then, as Verrier Elwin questioned himself while writing on Mahadev, "Was the Gandhi that Mahadev showed us week by week the true Gandhi, or was he a Gandhi sentimentalized, romanticized, tidied- up as it were for presentation to the public?" Elwin, of course, goes ahead to answer this question. But in the meantime, what do *you* think?

Creative Reader?

Gandhi was no book worm. Yet, such reading as he did, affected him greatly. In one instance, it even changed him almost overnight. Look at what he says:

During the days of my education I had read practically nothing outside textbooks, and after I launched into active life I had very little time for reading. I cannot therefore claim much book knowledge. However, I believe I have not lost much because of this enforced restraint. On die contrary, the limited reading may be said to have enabled me thoroughly to digest what I did read. Of these books, the one that brought about an instantaneous and practical transformation in my life was *Unto This Last*.....

This book came into Gandhi's hands in curious circumstances. In 1903 he was leaving for Durban on a business trip. His friend Henry Polak came to see him off at the railway station in Johannesburg and gave him a book to read during the long journey. This was John Ruskin's *Unto This Last: Four Essays on the First Principles of Political Economy*, published in 1860.

The 34-year old Gandhi read the work all through the journey of twenty- four hours. As he reached the last page, deeply reflecting all the while, he had come to a firm decision: he would change his entire outward life in accordance with the ideals set forth by John Ruskin. (Not that John Ruskin himself could have translated his ideas into the action he prescribed.)

Many years after, stressing what he owed to Great Britain, Gandhi wrote: "Great Britain gave me Ruskin, whose *Unto This Last* transformed me overnight from a lawyer and city-dweller into a rustic living away from Durban on a farm, three miles from the nearest railway station."

So who was John Ruskin, and what was the true secret of the extraordinary spell that he cast upon an unknown Indian?

John Ruskin (1819-1900) was a British essayist and art critic, thinker on sociology and economics and had written a number of books. He also gave much of his fortune to social causes and wrote about social justice and education for

working people. Incidentally, he also wrote the following: "How much do you think we spend on libraries...as compared with what we spend on our horses?"

Of course, Gandhi did not accept all the ideas in Ruskin's book. He did not share the more conservative view of Ruskin which held the common man inferior, erected an aristocratic hierarchy, and denied the masses any political control on grounds of incompetence. What appealed to Gandhi most in Ruskin's works was the set of economic principles which supported his own concept of an ashram organisation. Both sought the conversion of the dominant classes by a change of heart.

But despite disagreements, how did Gandhi take to the book to this extent? A point Louis Fischer has made is of much interest in this context. Nothing that Gandhi read in Ruskin's works, says he, need have suggested the drastic course decided upon. The plain fact was that Gandhi himself was ready at this point for a back-to-nature move. Comments Fischer: "He frequently read into texts what he wanted them to say. A creative reader, he co-authored the impression the book played on him. He put things into it..." "It was a habit with me," Gandhi once wrote, "to forget what I did not like and to carry out in practice what I liked."

Obviously, Gandhi kept the wheat and threw the chaff.

Postcards to the Rescue

There were many phases in Gandhi's life when he was travelling all the time. Yet, wherever he was, he would write letters to his friends and relatives giving them interesting tid-bits on his adventures and encounters. Naturally, he found himself spending a great deal of time and money in all this.

Now, being a practical man he soon found a solution to this problem- postcards. And here are the reasons he gave his relatives for this change in postal communication.

1. it cost much less, yet
2. the quality of paper was thick, therefore long-lasting;
3. everyone could see what was written on it (and Gandhi had nothing to hide);
4. there was no hassle about finding, keeping and pasting stamps; and finally,
5. there being very little space, the writer could hardly afford to waste any words, and had therefore to express himself concisely.

No wonder a postcard served his purpose admirably.

As told by Tara Bhattacharya

A Non-violent Satyagraha: 214 Years Ago

Non-violent struggles are nothing new in India. As Gandhi himself said, these ideas are as old as the hills. In fact, from olden days people have been familiar with certain non-violent methods of resisting injustice and evil: *Prayopaveshana* (fasting unto death), *dharna* (squatting at the doors of the oppressor), *ajnahanga* (civil disobedience) and *desh tyaga* (leaving the country).

Among the many recorded instances of such resistance in India is one that occurred in 1781, not far from the birthplace of Gandhi. This was in the city of Bhuj, which came under the state of Kutch and was ruled by an oppressive tyrant named Raja Raighana. Now, with the help of some Arab soldiers, Raja Raighana abducted the young and beautiful daughter of a businessman named Harijivan.

Helpless against the might of the Raja, Harijivan decided on a nonviolent mode of resistance—he would embrace *samadhi* in protest against this injustice. The news of his decision spread like wild fire all over the city. People thronged to his house in sympathy, begging him not to take any hasty step.

"Brothers," said Harijivan, "this is a matter of self-respect of the family and of the city where I dwell. It is true that, being businessmen rather than warriors, we know not to kill. But we do know to die. The cries of my daughter echo in my ear.... and there is no justice at the door of the Raja. It is the hour, therefore, to resist this injustice by self-suffering. That is why I have chosen the way of *samadhi*."

In the foreground of the haveli, Harijivan entered *samadhi* amidst the awed silence of a large crowd. Among his last words were: "I cannot bear to think of the cries of my daughter. Therefore I go. Those who have eyes will see and those who have ears will listen to my humble prayers."

Within minutes, Harijivan had consigned himself to the earth. The next to sacrifice themselves were seven members of Harijivan's family— his wife, two

sons, daughter-in-law, sister, daughter and a grandson who set fire to the haveli and brought an end to themselves.

The news of this incident reached Anjar, a city close to Bhuj. Aroused and inspired by the sacrifice of Harijivan and his family, one young man, named Kora, rose in rebellion against the atrocities of the Raja. He and 400 young men of the city decided to stage a dharna to demonstrate the protest of the people. Having decided to face death rather than continue to bear the oppression of the Raja, the procession reached Darbargadh. There they squatted in the foreground, having vowed not to touch food or water till the Raja stepped down from the throne.

The news of the dharna reached Raja Raighana, but he thought that it would not last beyond a day or two. But two days passed and the young men were still there. Instead of going away, they were praying for the Tigh' to kindle the heart of the Raja.

On the fifth day, the Raja came down and asked their leader Kora what they wanted. "We want you to step down from the throne," said Kora. A furious and insulted Raja ordered him killed immediately. Kora was thrown on a rock nearby, dying instantly. But this was not the end. A second volunteer came forth and repeated the words of his leader. He was ordered to be slain. One by one, the other volunteers came forth in a line. Each repeated the words of his leader, and each was slain under the orders of the Raja.

At last, the Darbargadh was filled with 400 bodies of the young men of Anjar.

The burial ground at Waghasar in Anjar, where they were buried by the king, is today a place of worship.

Ramnikbhai Turakia

Gandhiji and Delhi

Between 1915 and 1948 Gandhiji visited Delhi eighty times and stayed for 720 days in the city. His first stay was on April 12, 1915 at Mr Sushil Kumar Rudra's house, who was the Principal of St. Stephen's College.

In 1918, during one of these visits to Delhi Brij Krishna Chandiwala, a student at St. Stephen's College met Gandhi and was deeply influenced by him. Chandiwala became a close associate of Gandhi and authored many books about his life with Gandhi. He is particularly well known for two works—*At the Feet of Bapu* and *Gandhiji ki Delhi Diary*.

Chandiwala's family had lived in Delhi for many generations and were engaged in the chandi or silver trade. Under the influence of Gandhian ideas Chandiwala gave up his traditional lifestyle and took to wearing 'khadi'. He also decided to change his food habits. He gave up sugar, sweets, rice and dal along with spices and fried foods. He began to follow the Indian system of three meals a day with no tea etc. in between, Chandiwala also took upon himself the task of supplying Gandhiji with goat's milk whenever he was in Delhi. His earnestness in this matter was noticed by Mr Ansari who nicknamed him 'Gwalin' or 'milkmaid'.

In the 1930's Chandiwala organised a union of the stone breakers of Delhi. These stone breakers led a very difficult life—they were taken advantage of by the constructors who paid them less than the scheduled government rates. The workers were required to fill a wooden box of about 100 sq. ft. for a certain wage, but the contractor made them fill larger boxes for less wages. Also the stone breakers were not provided with first aid when they got hurt.

Not only that, even when some of them got seriously injured and some even lost their lives, they were not given any compensation. Chandiwala met the local officer, the District Commissioner or D.C., as he was then known, and saw to it that government regulations were followed. He also took up their cases in the law courts and got compensation for the workers.

Chandiwala narrates an episode of 1924. He was very keen to invite Gandhiji to his house, so he asked Mahadev Bhai (Gandhiji's secretary) who said, "Ask Gandhiji"—Gandhiji agreed. The next morning when Chandiwala went to the house he was informed that Gandhiji had decided to undertake a forty-day fast for communal harmony. This was in response to the communal riots at Kohat, Nagpur, Delhi and Lucknow. He broke the fast after twenty one days. It took him some time to recover his energy after such a long fast, but as soon as he was better he visited Chandiwala with Maulana Muhamamed Ali. It was late evening, time for Maulanaji's evening namaz, so he went to Chandiwala's room to say his prayers. There was a picture in Chandiwala's room which was covered with a sheet before Maulanaji could say the namaz. When it was time to leave Gandhiji searched for the Maulana's shoes in the pile of shoes at the door and brought them for the Maulanaji to wear. Chandiwala says this had a great impact on him because it made him realise how humble Gandhiji was.

Chandiwala also describes the Delhi of the 1920's, 30's and 40's.

- i. He says that the call for boycott of foreign cloth was usually a peaceful affair. The volunteers would go to the shops where foreign cloth was being sold and distribute leaflets. After that, they would sit there with their spinning wheels, spin yarn and carry on a dialogue with the traders. This form of agitation was known as picketing. Picketing had a tremendous impact on women and most of the volunteers were also women. As a result of picketing many of the shopkeepers cancelled their orders for foreign cloth. One of the traders, Mohan Brothers, even donated his bungalow at Okhla, which now houses a girls' school.
- ii. During the nationalist movement, the police used to harass the satyagrahis. The District Superintendent, Mr. Beiden was particularly harsh and frequently ordered lathicharges and arrests. But by the 1930's many of the Indian policemen and C.I.D. informers, in Delhi, were sympathetic to the Congress cause. Chandiwala tells us that the bulletin taken out by the Congress could not be banned because the local police ignored it and did not bring it to the notice of their English officers. Usually a demonstration would

use bullock carts, and sometimes even small tractors were brought in but sometimes to make their point the demonstrators would bring donkeys and camels as well. Once, when the government had banned any loud protest, a procession of camels with placards silently walked the streets of Delhi. On one occasion the police even arrested the camels because of the posters on them.

- iii. Another strategy addressed itself to lawyers as a group because lawyers continued to use foreign cloth for their official outfits. So, the volunteers designed a poster which showed an ass sporting a necktie, a collar and foreign clothes. This was displayed at the Bar Room where the lawyers used to change their clothes. This had the required effect. The lawyers soon passed a resolution saying they would all adopt khadi.

Oral History Documentation, Nehru Memorial Museum Library

Gandhiji's Constructive Programme

Most of us know of Gandhiji as the man who led our struggle for freedom from British rule. But did you also know that while fighting for political independence, he was also wanting to prepare the people for a new and just social order so that Independence, when it came, would be "complete". In other words, his was a struggle for *Pooma* (or complete) *Swaraj* for all irrespective of their caste, class or religion. This meant building up or constructing the nation from its smallest unit (consisting of self reliant individuals living in independent self reliant communities) upwards, through nonviolent and truthful means.

To make political independence more meaningful, there were certain weaknesses in the Indian social structure which needed to be strengthened. Conflicts between different religious groups (mainly Hindus and Muslims), untouchability, fear arising out of ignorance, economic disparities, decaying condition of our villages, the plight of adivasis, kisans and the labourers, and the position of women were areas of major concern. In a small booklet, entitled *Constructive Programme: its meaning and place*, which he wrote on the train from Sevagram to Bardoli, he appealed to all Congressmen and others engaged in the freedom struggle to address these issues. The original thirteen items were: (1) Communal Unity (2) Removal of Untouchability (3) Prohibition (4) Khadi (5) Village Industries (6) Village Sanitation (7) Nai Talim or Basic Education (8) Adult Education (9) Women (10) Knowledge of Health and Hygiene (11) Provincial languages (12) National Language (13) Economic Inequality. To this, he added five more items: (1) Kisans (2) Labour (3) Adivasis (4) Lepers (5) Students.

The 18-point constructive programme thus became his framework for the new India he wished to see after *Swaraj*. Forty seven years after independence, do you think that they still have any meaning for us?

Gandhiji looks at Leprosy

The picture of Gandhiji nursing a patient suffering from leprosy is a well known one. Do you know the name of the patient? He is Parchure Shastri who was in Yeravada Jail in 1932, along with Gandhiji but was placed in a separate ward for leprosy patient prisoners. Gandhiji had requested the Superintendent for permission to see Parchure Shastri but the prevailing prison laws did not allow that. Thus Gandhiji started a chain of correspondence with him. While in prison Gandhiji started his epic fast for Harijans and when the Poona Pact was signed and he ended his fast, he immediately asked for Parchure Shastri to recite Mantras from *Vedas* and *Upanishadas*.



Some years later, in 1939, Parchure Shastri wrote to Gandhiji asking for his permission to come and stay in his Ashram at Sevagram and even before Gandhiji could reply he had arrived. Gandhiji was in a dilemma. Knowing that he was suffering from a highly infectious type of leprosy, he was debating within himself whether to allow him to reside in the Ashram where so many men, women and children were living and for whose health and welfare he was responsible. And yet, by turning him away he would be insincere to his own pronouncements. Gandhiji placed his predicament before the Ashramites at the morning prayers. They rose to the occasion, saying they were prepared to

receive Parchure Shastri in their midst. A neat cottage was hurriedly put up close to Gandhiji's; he personally nursed him and supervised his diet. Parchure Shastri lived there for two years and recovered sufficiently to act as a priest at a marriage ceremony in Sevagram Ashram in 1940, at Gandhiji's special request.

How is it that Gandhiji managed to find so much time, in the midst of all his preoccupations, to devote to the problem of leprosy?

The answer is found in a moving incident, in his own home in Porbandar when he was barely thirteen years old. At that impressionable age he had come into close contact with a man named Ladha Maharaj who used to recite verses from the Ramayana to Gandhiji's sick father. Ladha Maharaj, it was believed, had been completely cured of leprosy by applying *Bilwa* leaves and regular recital of *Ramayana*. Such close contact with a man who had suffered from this dreaded disease had helped him overcome his fear of the same and instilled in him a lifelong concern for those suffering from this.

Even while in South Africa, a beggar had come to his door in a highly advanced state of the disease. Gandhiji had dressed his wounds, given him food and made him stay as his guest.

There are many such incidents throughout his life which express his compassion and tenderness towards leprosy patients.

Courtesy: Gandhi Memorial Leprosy Foundation, Wardha

Baba Amte

Like Gandhiji many sensitive men and women felt that more than medicines, it was the solid rehabilitation of leprosy patients that would help them recover not only health but also dignity and self respect.

One such man, who decided to dedicate himself to this cause, was Murlidhar Devidas Amte, better known as Baba Amte. Born on 26th December 1914 in Maharashtra, Amte grew up at a time when Indians were resisting British rule. He too joined the freedom struggle and went to jail for civil disobedience. He became a disciple of Gandhiji and decided to fight the fear of leprosy—it is for this reason that Gandhiji gave him the title of *Abhaysadhak*.

Baba Amte first took a course on care of leprosy patients. Then he decided to settle down in Chandrapur, Maharashtra. Here he acquired two hundred and fifty acres of land. His Ashram became a home for the destitute and homeless, many of whom were leprosy patients. Many of them, who had been cured, had lost their fingers, hands, toes or feet and could not go back to their earlier professions because they were disabled. Baba Amte helped each one of them to acquire skills, despite their handicap. These people under Baba Amte's guidance transformed this rocky and barren land into a model farm. This farm now produces vegetables and dairy products for neighbouring villages and is economically self sufficient. But most important of all, it is a place which has become an 'Abode of Joy' or 'Anandvan'.

Vasudha Pande

They Gave Peace a Chance

While traversing the country from north to south you would have passed through a land criss-crossed by deep ravines and dense jungles, set in the very heart of India, in Madhya Pradesh. This is the Chambal Valley—a place you must have heard or read about, even if you have never seen it. The name is enough to strike terror in one's heart—for this area has, through the ages, been an ideal sanctuary for people who, for various reasons, have turned outlaws. The martial background of the people, their fight against alien invaders and rulers, and the immense socio-economic disparities, have combined to produce rebels or "baghis"—a name also given to the dacoits.

Our story goes back to the 1960's when Tehsildar Singh, son of legendary dacoit Man Singh wrote a letter to Vinoba Bhave from his cell in Naini Jail. He was serving a death sentence and wanted to see Vinoba once to discuss the problem of dacoity in Chambal and how to rid it of the curse. Although Vinoba was on a padyatra in Kashmir at that time, Tehsildar Singh's letter drew him to the Chambal. In May 1960, he went round the valley, spreading his message of truth, love and compassion with the active co-operation of one Major General Yadunath Singh. Twenty dacoits surrendered their arms before him: it was a triumph of nonviolence and human good sense. The dacoits were prepared to face the law courts and jail sentences courageously. The specially constituted Chambal Valley Peace Committee helped them in their efforts. After their release, they were given Bhoodan lands to lead a simple and peaceful life—they had no ambition of becoming film stars or politicians or gaining cheap publicity.

Legal and administrative wrangles proved to be obstacles to further surrenders, until eleven years later, in 1971, when Jagroop Singh, an emissary of Madho Singh, another notorious dacoit, met Vinoba to request him to come to the Chambal once again. But Vinoba had taken Kshetra Sanyas and expressed his inability to help. He directed them to Shri Jayaprakash Narayan—or JP. Madho Singh himself undertook this task and in the guise and name of one Ram Singh, a contractor, traced JP to Patna. In spite of his preoccupations and ill health,

JP sensing a genuine change of heart and desire to solve the problem of dacoity, agreed to take up the challenge. He wrote to the Chief Ministers and government officials of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan and requested two of his colleagues, Shri Mahavir Bhai and Shri Hem Deo Sharma, to help. After getting encouraging replies, he issued an appeal on 13 December 1971, advising them to surrender, requesting the community to open its doors for their peaceful return to normal life and the government—to consider their cases sympathetically. For six months, JP conducted his "Operation Persuasion" not as a spiritual leader but as a social worker. Except for the dare-devil Madho Singh, his contacts with the dacoits were through the Chambal Ghati Shanti Mission. Assisted by Pandit Lokman Dikshit, and Tehsildar Singh (ex-dacoits) and Madho Singh, they worked day and night, not caring about their personal safety. The dacoits had to be traced in their hideouts, deep in the jungles and ravines. The Madhya Pradesh police had created an undeclared peace zone to make mobilization easier. JP came into personal contact with the dacoits when he camped at the Pagara Dak Bungalow 70 kms. away from Gwalior and situated atop a hill. The dacoits with their families had been camping in the village of Dhorera down the hill. Dhorera, an otherwise sleepy village, won world-wide fame almost overnight. The first to come to meet JP was Mohar Singh who carried the highest reward of Rs 2 lakh on his head. The government was sceptical about his desire to surrender because, unlike Madho Singh's, his gang was intact and he was equipped with most modern arms. He told JP that his only condition for surrender was that he should be the first!

The dacoits formally surrendered in batches at the Mahatma Gandhi Seva Ashram in Jaura, on 14 and 16 April 1972. Thousands watched them lay down their arms in front of a portrait of Gandhiji, and cheered them as they shouted "Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai", "Vinobaji ki Jai", "Jaiprakashji ki Jai." A wave of relief seemed to sweep the Valley of Terror.

Adapted from Chambal ke Bandooke, Gandhi ke Charanon me by Prabhash Joshi, Anupam Mishra and Shravan Kumar Garg

From Mahatma to God

If Gandhi had to pay a price for being just himself, then it certainly was in the form of absurd and sometimes funny situations. One such situation came up when he was staying in a village called Karadi during his satyagraha days.

One morning Gandhi was rudely woken up by sounds of loud musical instruments that were getting louder by the minute. When he peered out of the window he spotted a large procession of villagers with the women walking ahead holding national flags. For a moment he thought that these people were going on satyagraha, but at the next instant when he saw the men carrying flowers, fruits and money in their hands, he changed his mind. Deep in the thought Gandhi emerged out of his hut where he was greeted by loud cheers and the villagers wished him with great reverence. They placed all the flowers, fruits and money at his feet. Thoroughly puzzled by their actions he said, "What brings all of you here and why is the band playing music?"

The leader of the procession stepped forward and explained, "Mahatmaji, there has always been an acute shortage of water in our village, with the wells drying up at the onset of summer. But this time, just the reverse has happened. As soon as you stepped into our village the wells are flowing with water. It is due to this reason that we have come to express our faith and devotion for you."

Gandhi's voice hardened as he said, "Have you people gone mad?"

What is the connection between the water and my presence? I have no special right over God. Your prayers have as much value as mine do/' When he saw the ashamed look on their faces he said, "If a crow is perched on a tree and by chance the branch breaks, will you say that the crow has broken the tree. The reason why there is water in your wells is probably because of certain disturbances in the earth. We should not make childlike fantasies."

Customs are out of Fashion

Gandhi was not one of those people who blindly followed meaningless customs and traditions. This little anecdote clearly explains this statement.

Gandhiji visited Bihar mainly to ease the tension that had arisen due to communal violence. He would go from one village to another to listen to the troubles of the victims. He was accompanied by Manuben. She took care of him and side by side she would get to learn a lot from him. Throughout the day there would be a steady stream of visitors, eager to meet Bapu.

One afternoon, at about 3 p.m. a newly-married couple came to seek Gandhi's blessings. Mehboob, Dr Sayyid Mehmood's son and his bride were the newlyweds. The bride touched Gandhiji's feet and gave him Rs. 100. Manu, who had been watching all the proceedings, could not control herself from asking Gandhi, "Bapuji, this is a strange custom. Over here the bride is giving money whereas according to the known and accepted tradition it is the bride who receives gifts from the elders after she greets them."

To this he said, "Our customs and traditions are a load of rubbish. After all, it is the parents who raise their son, educate him and get him married, now it is his turn to give them."

The Man 'Charlie' Wanted to Meet

If you have found it difficult to control your laughter while watching his films then the name 'Charlie Chaplin/' must be very familiar to you. Chaplin had the inimitable quality of putting a smile even on a sad face. People of all ages would lovingly call him 'Charlie'. He would himself write the story of his films apart from directing and acting in them. Charlie had lived a major part of his life in poverty. He had achieved stardom after a tough struggle. Despite his British origin Charlie admired Gandhi a great deal. He supported Gandhi's cause wholeheartedly, and genuinely felt that the 'British' should leave India.

In those days London was abuzz with tension and excitement. It was because of the Round Table Conference organised by the British Government. The conference was attended by leaders of all the important political parties of India which included both minority and majority parties and representatives of various castes and religions. A group of bejewelled Rajas, Maharajas and Nawabs of princely states was present for the conference. Gandhi too was present there. All the important newspapers had sent their correspondents to cover this important event.

Charlie too was in London at that time. He decided to make use of this opportunity to meet Gandhi. He wrote a letter to Bapu expressing a keen desire to see him. Gandhi was a very busy man. It was not humanly possible for him to meet everybody. And the situation was such that everybody wanted a few minutes of his time.

After reading Chaplin's letter he asked one of his companions, "Who is this Charlie Chaplin?" He said, "Bapuji he is a well known film actor." To this, Gandhi laughed and said, "Films are not my cup of tea so what could I have in common with films and film actors? Please write a letter to him explaining my inability to meet him due to lack of time." Bapu's companion then said, "Charlie Chaplin is sympathetic towards our freedom movement. He believes that the British should free India." After hearing this, Gandhi replied, "In that case I would certainly like to meet him."



Bapu was staying in a two storeyed house in one of the localities of the East End of London. A meeting had been arranged for Charlie and Gandhi. This was the moment that Chaplin had been waiting for. Finally, he had got a chance to meet Gandhi and talk to him. His heart was pounding as he climbed the stairs. "But what would I say to him," thought Charlie. He knew that Gandhi would not have watched his films. Therefore it was useless talking to him on that subject. Rehearsing his lines like an actor (which he already was) he entered Gandhi's room. After enquiring about his health Charlie said to Gandhi, "I am all for the freedom of your country and its people. But there is one thing that I don't understand. Why do you oppose the use of machines? Don't you think that a lot of work would come to a standstill if machines are not used." Gandhi, then replied, "I am not against machines but I cannot bear it when these very machines take away a man's work from him. Today we are your slaves because we cannot overcome our attraction for your goods. Freedom will surely be ours if we learn to free ourselves from this attraction."

Harish Chandra Pant

It Came "Naturally" to Him

It was probably in the month of August. Another year in Gandhi's life. He was visiting Anand Niketan Hostel which was being run by Mr Pandey, Gandhi also met Ram Singh who was suffering from typhoid fever. On his way out of Ram Singh's room he noticed a drum full of water. When he asked Mr Pandey what it was for, he was told that the water was used for washing hands after visiting the patient.

Bapu was visibly annoyed at this. He said, "What if we kept this drum full of water underneath that tree over there?" Mr Pandey answered, "The tree would get the water."

Kusum Tai Pandey

Crossing the Sea of Narrow-Mindedness

Around 5 p.m. on 4 September, 1888, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi boarded the P & O, liner S.S. *Clyde*, to begin his tryst with London. But the journey that he had to undertake from his home to his ship was quite a long and arduous one, which involved many obstacles.

When Gandhi went to Bombay to set sail for England, little did he realise what was in store for him. Most Modh Baniyas lived in Bombay and they were determined to let Gandhi know, in no uncertain terms, how much they disapproved of his decision. "I could not go out without being pointed and stared at by someone or the other," he was later to tell *The Vegetarian*. "At one time, while I was walking near the Town Hall, I was surrounded and hooted by them, and my poor brother had to look at the scene in silence." Gandhi's caste-fellows even managed to delay his departure by a fortnight.

They prevailed upon the captain of the P & O steamship which Gandhi was to board, to say that "it would be unwise for him to leave during that time – August – because of the rough weather in the sea."

Then came the final test. All Modh Baniyas were summoned for a general body meeting to determine young Mohandas' fate. The fine for absence was five annas. The meeting was presided over by the head Patel, who said: "We are positively informed that you will have to eat flesh and drink wine in England; moreover, you have to cross the waters; all this you must know is against our caste rule."

A gutsy Mohandas replied: "I am sorry that I cannot alter my decision. What I heard about England is quite different from what you say; one need not take meat and wine there. As for crossing the waters, if our brethren can go as far as Aden, why could not I go to England? I am deeply convinced that malice is at the root of all these objections." The incensed head Patel shot back: "This boy has lost his sense, and we command everyone not to have anything to do with him. He who will support him in any way or go to see him off will be treated

as an outcaste, and if the boy ever returns, let him know that he shall never be taken into the caste."

History is a witness to the fact that Gandhi did return to India from England and the kind of change that he and his country underwent is known to one and all.

Extracts from Gandhiji's First Satyagraha by Souresh Bhattacharya

Wear Clothes as they Should be Worn

This episode occurred during Gandhi's visit to Anand Niketan Hostel in Sevagram Ashram. In those days Shri Pandey was in charge of the hostel. Once, when Gandhiji was on a visit, his gaze was immediately directed towards Pandeyji's clothes. He felt very odd when he noticed his shirt buttons which were open to quite an extent. He at once commented "Pandey, you have wasted so much cloth for nothing." "How is that?" Pandey asked Gandhi. To this Bapu replied, "You see, it is usually the case that people wear clothes to cover their bodies but here I can clearly see half of your body. Either you wear just a *Dhoti* like I do or at least take the trouble of buttoning up your shirt properly." The next morning saw Pandeyji in a coarse loin cloth.

Kusum Tai Pandey

Education: For Life, Through Life

Mahatma Gandhi led the struggle for India's freedom so that a new social order could be established in our country. He had no quarrel with individual Englishmen but he was totally opposed to the British system of education and administration imposed in our country. While strengthening the Indian National Congress as a political instrument for achieving Indian Independence, he established a number of institutions to build up a new society. One of the last such institutions was the Hindustani Talimi Sangh (The All-India Basic Education Society) to promote education based on a socially useful productive craft. It was meant to replace the mere book-centred system of education introduced by Lord Macaulay to produce only clerks for British Indian Companies.

When Gandhiji looked out for a suitable person to carry out the scheme of Nai Talim (Basic Education), his eyes fell on a couple who had been working at Tagore's Vishwabharati in Santiniketan. Shri E.W. Aryanayakam and his wife Smt. Asha Devi responded enthusiastically to Gandhiji's invitation to come to Sevagram.

Aryanayakam was a Jaffna Tamil from Sri Lanka, who had had his early education in what was then known as Ceylon and later in England. His wife, Asha Devi was a highly educated Bengali lady from Santiniketan. 'Nayakamji', as he was affectionately known, agreed with Bapu that unless the skills in some useful craft were acquired by the children and academic subjects were correlated to the craft, mere book-centred or play-based education would neither help the child to realize his full potential nor make him grow to be a good citizen.

Nayakamji's mother-tongue was Tamil. But he had mastered English language and had also picked up Bengali well enough in Santiniketan to feel at home there. He studied Hindustani and could communicate in the 'Rashtrabhasha' without difficulty. He was able to acquire a working knowledge of Marathi as well. He had an all-India perspective and felt as much at home in any part of

India as in Sri Lanka; nay, nowhere in the world did he feel that he was a stranger.

Nayakamji followed a strict code of conduct in his personal life and was a strict disciplinarian. He and his wife led a simple life on a grand monthly allowance of Rs 75 each. It was a pleasure to watch him handle a teachers' training class or a class of small boys and girls. Like his Master, he would go on spinning while talking to visitors or giving directions to his staff. The couple brought to the austere atmosphere of Sevagram a touch of the aesthetic sense of Santiniketan.

Nayakamji and Asha Devi had to face a great personal tragedy when they lost their only son Anandmohan in Sevagram. However, the couple overcame their grief and sorrow by moving closer to the two hundred children that were then studying in the Basic School in Sevagram.

N. Krishnaswamy

The Abode of Joy

It may not be out of place to describe here, the activities in the school which was set up in Sevagram to put these ideas into practice. Under the guidance of a band of dedicated teachers, "Anand Niketan" or "Abode of Joy", as the school was aptly called, survived, even when all other Nai Talim institutions were closed down during the Quit India movement and most of the active workers were in jail. It was a residential school where students and teachers lived together.

Shri Devi Prasad, who first joined as the art teacher in the Institute and who had been a student of Shri Nand Lai Bose at Shantiniketan, recalls those days with nostalgia.

Awaking early in the morning, the entire school community, consisting of its students and teachers, would undertake an hour's *safai* of the entire premises, including class rooms, dormitories, buildings, grounds, latrines. Time for bathing, washing clothes, and attending to personal cleanliness followed. The community then assembled for prayers, after which there was breakfast. Three hours of *Sharir Shram* (manual labour) formed an integral and perhaps the most important part of the curriculum. Here too, students and teachers worked together whether in the fields, or the spinning shed, or later, when the subject was introduced, in the mechanical engineering shed.

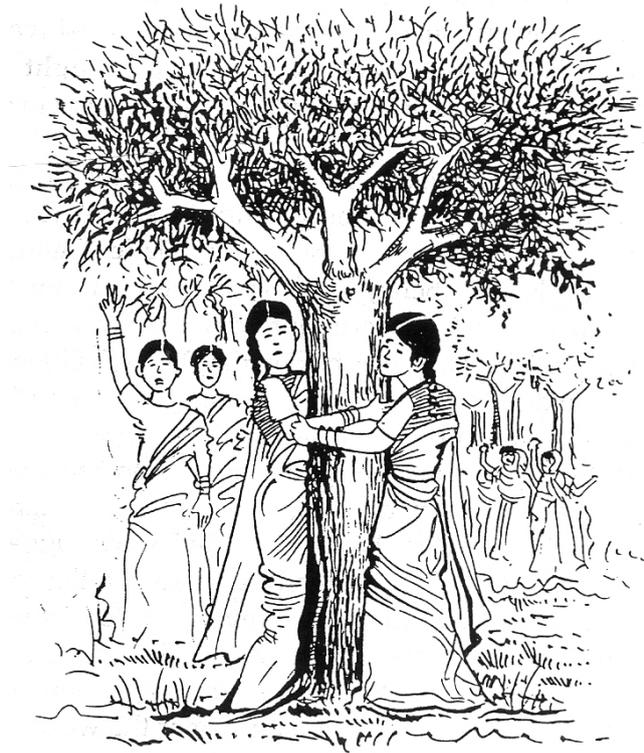
Study periods would be in the afternoons, after lunch and rest. No textbooks were followed, but all that was taught was related to the work done in the morning—not just maths or economics, but science, social studies, language, literature, also, would be based on the work done. A session of games, in which students and teachers participated, helped to build up an atmosphere of harmony and co-operation. At about 6.30 p.m. the whole Ashram community would meet for prayers. When Gandhiji was there he would always attend and on occasions, he would give a talk after prayers.

At times music and drama after dinner rounded off the day providing the children with opportunities of self-expression. Mention must be made of the Kala Bhavan at Sevagram where every effort was made to link art with life and for the child to be able to express himself.—

The school functioned on a democratic pattern with students taking decisions on day to day functioning. Not only was there an *aam sabha* (general assembly) in the class, there was one in the school as well. The functioning school democracy provided students ample opportunity to learn through real life situations. Devi Bhai recounts one occasion when the children were determined to punish a habitual late-comer to the class and meetings, and were unanimous in their decision to 'execute' him, thus placing the teacher in charge in a quandary. He had no desire to impose his views on the children, nor did he wish that they go ahead with their horrifying decision. So, he suggested that he too face the same punishment, as he was often guilty of being late. Agitated discussions led the students to realize the enormity of the consequences of the punishment they had so innocently meted out and students came to the conclusion that he should be forgiven this time.

Safai too, in the way it was done at the Anand Niketan School, was raised to an artistic experience. In a special class entitled *Safai Vigyan*, *safai* became a fine art. Techniques of how to make sweeping more effective by a mere twist of the hands, was taught. Simple implements were designed to scoop up the dirt so that not a trace of it remained. The sparkling cleanliness of the place led Shri Kishorilal Mashruwalla to once remark: "At this rate, we'd be putting flower vases in the latrines."

To Cling to a Belief



As the world prepares to observe yet another Environment Day, our thoughts turn to Mahatma Gandhi, who, without ever using any of the modern jargons, was perhaps the greatest 'environmentalists' of our times. Gandhi knew that unless man lived in harmony with nature and unless he stopped exploiting nature he would certainly tread the path of destruction. In his own way, he talked of conservation and sustainability. His frame of nonviolence comprehended nonviolence to nature as much as to man.

In this column, we would like to take you twenty two years back in time, to a little village called Gopeshwar nestling in the Himalayas which saw the birth of a great movement – the Chipko.

Chipko! When the District Magistrate first heard the word, he smirked. But he could not laugh it away, knowing the strength of the Dashauli Gram Swarajya Sangh of Gopeshwar. The chief aim and objective of the Sangh was to stop the abuse of forests of Uttarakhand by contractors from plains and instead, use the forest resources for giving productive job opportunities to the local people.

It is no surprise that Chipko should be inspired by Gandhian ideals. The leader of the Chipko movement was Chandi Prasad Bhatt who belongs to the Gandhian school of thought.

The Symon Company of Allahabad, a manufacturer of sports goods, had been allotted some ash trees from the Mandal Forest which was barely 13 kilometers away from Gopeshwar. The Sangh resolved to fight for the rights of the people. Each passing day brought near the confrontation when the agents of the Symon Company were to come and take away the sanctioned trees.

In spite of warnings from the top, the policies and plans being pursued in the forests remained the same. After reading newspaper reports of the Indian floods due to rapid felling of trees, Miss Slade (Gandhiji's well known British disciple Mira Behn) wrote an article in an English daily of New Delhi expressing her concern. But who was there to listen?

In April 1973, a public meeting was held in the Dashauli Gram Swarajya Sangh's courtyard to decide on direct action against the Symon Company. The question was the same in every village, "How can we save the trees from being axed?" That was the moment Chandi Prasad had been waiting for. "You can save the forest by clinging to the trees, and dare them to let their axes fall on your backs," he said. Startled at his suggestion one of the villagers exclaimed, "Can we really save such a big forest from being felled?" Chandi Prasad did not say anything. He was well aware that ultimately the success of the Chipko action depended on them. It took a while, but the meeting finally accepted the suggestion, though the village women sitting in the back kept laughing at the word "Chipko". Little did they know then that, one day, they the women, would have a great hand in saving the trees by holding them in their protective embrace.

Adapted from Chipko Movement by Anupam Mishra and Satyendra Tripathi



The Fruit of a Child's Labour

After his release from the Aga Khan Palace, Gandhi had gone to Juhu, a suburb of Bombay city, for rest. Gandhiji would not therefore see anyone as a rule. One day, a boy aged 10 or 12 years came to see Gandhi. He was carrying in his hand fruit worth about two or three rupees. He insisted on handing over the fruit to Gandhi. One could explain things to adults, but how can it be done in the case of children?

Sarojini Naidu was standing nearby. She smilingly took the boy to Gandhi. The boy placed the fruit at the feet of Gandhi and stood there. He had nothing to say, but his desire was that Bapu should eat the fruit he had brought. Gandhi's companions were talking among themselves about it. Someone said he was probably a beggar. The boy's self-respect was badly hurt when he heard this. He said at once, "No Mahatmaji, I'm not a beggar. I bought this fruit out of the money earned with my labour."

Gandhi's heart was touched by the boy's words which expressed his sense of self-respect. He used to receive baskets of fruits from wealthy friends. But the boy's present was priceless because, it had behind it a child's devotion and hard work. How could he ignore such a present? Gandhi picked up a fruit and placed it before the boy and said, "Take child, you eat first the fruit of your labour."

The boy replied, "No, Mahatmaji, I would have the satisfaction of having eaten when you eat it." He went away after reverently saluting Gandhi.

The child had certainly earned self-respect by his labour. But do you think he missed out on anything in life?

An Ideal Prisoner

In the year 1930, Acharya Kaka Kalelkar was Gandhiji's companion during their Yeravda Jail tenure. Let us open one of the windows of this year and see how they spent their time in a 'jail house'. Even in jail, Gandhiji always believed in keeping himself occupied throughout the day. A typical day in the jail was something like this. Kaka Kalelkar and Gandhiji would rise and shine at four o'clock in the morning when the stars would shine in all their glory. By 4.20 a.m. their morning prayers began. After prayers came the recitation of the Gita. The recitation finished, Kakasaheb would go for his morning walk and Gandhiji would spend half an hour in reading and writing and then join Kakasaheb for the rest of the walk. The Gita, the Ashram's ideal, food problems, the wheel, Kaka's laxity, such were the usual topics during the walk. Exactly at 6 a.m. they would sit for breakfast. Gandhiji's breakfast consisted of curds, and dates soaked in water. By the time they finished breakfast, the goats would come to be milked. The milking done, Gandhiji would, without further delay, sit at the spinning wheel, and the wheel would begin to recount the tale of India's woes, and the sure hope of deliverance. Have you ever heard the pensive notes of a spinning wheel? With the wheel humming by his side Gandhi never felt lonely. With one or two necessary breaks the things would go on till half past ten. At about seven, Bapu would take a cup of hot water with lime juice and salt. Apart from this every morning Gandhi spent some time with the carding bow with its rhythmic twang. Half an hour's work gave him more slivers than he would consume during the day. Sardar Vallabhbhai once ran short of slivers and he sent for some through the superintendent. Kalelkar's stock of slivers used to be rather poor. Gandhi would then double his time at the bow and send the much needed slivers to Sardar.

At about 11 o'clock they took their midday meal. Again it used to be curd, mixed with a pinch of soda bicarb, dates or raisins and boiled vegetables. The newspapers came at about the same time. Kakasaheb would read out the latest news about the lathi charges and the ladies hoisting the national flags aloft.

They rarely discussed the news. That was reserved for the evening walk. Dietetics and nature cure used to be the main topics at dinner time, because Gandhiji had read deeply and experimented in this field. The wheel must follow the meal immediately; after it the newspapers and then the midday siesta. At half past one Bapu took a cupful of water with sour lemon juice, neutralized it with soda bicarb. Then came the reading and writing of letters. Hymns from the Ashram prayer book would be translated into English for the benefit of Mirabehn. At four the jail inmates would spot Gandhiji with the *Takli* a thing of his making out of a broken tile and a bamboo stick— walking in the sun and pulling the milk-white yarn.

At the stroke of five would begin their evening meal—curds, dates and some vegetables. Again the goats would come and the kids wagging their wee little tails. Meals over, Kakasaheb washed the utensils while Gandhiji would prepare the dates for the next day by soaking them in water. Then the evening walk. The weird shapes of the fat grey clouds were a peculiar attraction for Gandhiji. Sometimes, he would call Kakasaheb hurriedly to see some unusual beauty of the skies.

Acharya Kakasaheb Kalelkar was an educationist and journalist. He was a member of the Sabarmati Ashram and played an active role in establishing the Gujrat Vidyapith at Ahmedabad. In 1930, he was Gandhiji's only companion in the Yeravda Jail, Poona.

Kaka Kalelkar remembers the Jail Superintendent telling Gandhiji that he had represented to the authorities that one hundred and fifty rupees a month was too little for an illustrious 'guest' of the government like him. Gandhiji had smiled and said, "But you're not going to get the money from England, you are going to spend it out

of the pockets of my own people I don't want you to spend more than thirty five rupees on me. The money that you spend is my country's money."

Once Gandhiji was asked to roll out chapatis as part of his duties in Yeravda Prison. No rolling pin was available. The Jail Warden suggested sarcastically, "Why don't you use a bottle instead." Gandhiji did just that. This was an experiment he had tried out several times at the Phoenix Ashram.

How a Film Became Something More

The story of how Mahatma Gandhi has come to be remembered in the West today I think is an interesting and inspiring one. Stephen Murphy from Australia, who is the co-ordinator, International Gandhian Movement, tells you a little about it here:

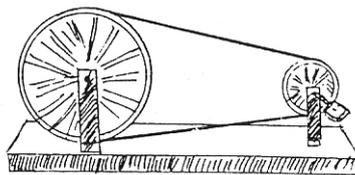
You know that Gandhi's life was ended in 1948, but as the years passed, people's memories of him began to dim. This happened only slowly, for the Mahatma had been as famous in the West as in India, and had made a deep impact. So much had been written about him in newspapers and books published in Western countries for many years. In fact, his death led to the publishing of many new biographies. One of these became a very popular book—The life of Mahatma Gandhi by an American, Louis Fischer, which was published in 1951. But slowly, memories of the small, bespectacled old man did fade.

As this was occurring, something happened which would one day make Gandhi live again for a whole new generation. Back in 1962, a Gujarati man living in Britain, Motilal Kothari, telephoned the British actor and film producer, Richard Attenborough. He wanted to speak to Mr. Attenborough urgently about making a motion picture on Mahatma Gandhi. Mr. Attenborough agreed to meet his mysterious caller a couple of days later. At that meeting Mr. Kothari asked Mr Attenborough to read Fischer's biography. Mr Kothari knew Louis Fischer personally. Mr. Attenborough said he would be delighted to read the book. He said doing so would help him decide whether he felt able to make the film. Mr. Attenborough did read the book, and says, "I must admit to being totally enthralled from the word go." Although aware of the scale of the project, he decided he did want to make a film about Gandhi.

Some great tasks that people set themselves take many years to accomplish. About 20 years were to pass before Mr Attenborough could show his film "Gandhi" to the world. There was delay and problem after problem. Finally, in late 1980 production of the film began.

It was this beautiful motion picture which, about 35 years after Gandhi's death, introduced "the little brown man in a loin cloth" to a new generation in the West. The film won no fewer than eight Academy Awards in 1982 and was seen by millions upon millions of people in North America, Europe, Australia and elsewhere. I am sure you have seen the film as well.

Being so successful, the film had a huge impact. As had occurred during many dramatic periods in Gandhi's life, the impact led to a new wave of books. New editions of his autobiography, of other previously published books and many new titles, appeared during the 1980s. Through the film and books, the present generation of social reform activists became influenced by Gandhi as well. So strong was the interest that had been sparked by the film, several new organisations were formed in the West to promote awareness of Gandhi's life and message. In fact, Mr Attenborough, who has become Sir Richard Attenborough, is the President of a new British organisation, The Gandhi Foundation, in London.



Gandhi: Beyond India

But even before this, in fact in his own life time, Gandhi had made an impact in other countries. The outbreak of the First World War led peace activists to openly and resolutely oppose war and war efforts. A group of people known as "Conscientious Objectors" objected to a war conducted by his or her nation, on grounds of principles. They objected to "Conscription" or compulsory enlistment in the army as the most extreme form of coercion.

Out of the war came groups such as International Fellowship of Reconciliation, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, War Resisters' League and Quaker Service Groups – all of which tried to carry forward the idea of peace in political and international life. The leaders were committed to peace and social justice and objected to war and violence as tools of injustice.

These movements received powerful impetus from Gandhiji and his followers who, from 1919 challenged British rule with innovative forms of action, without violence, programmes for economic self sufficiency and mass civil disobedience.

Later, African leaders fighting against colonial rulers were inspired by Gandhiji – Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, also known as Gandhi of Ghana, used his techniques of nonviolent satyagraha. Gandhiji's views on rural development and decentralization inspired the concept of *Ujaama* villages in Tanzania, introduced by Dr Julius Nyrere. Dr Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia too, was deeply influenced by Gandhi's concept of Satyagraha, and nonviolent resistance. Dr Nelson Mandela is a living example of one who was deeply influenced by Mahatma Gandhi.

In the USA, even though slavery was abolished in 1861, Jim Crow laws and segregation had reduced negroes to second class citizens. By 1930s, Gandhian techniques had begun to attract negro ministers involved in the struggle for racial equality and justice. Gandhi had predicted: "It may be through negroes that the unadulterated message of nonviolence will be delivered to the world."

It was the dynamic personality of Martin Luther King (about whom we shall tell you more in forthcoming pages) that gave it practical shape in the American Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s.

Gandhi's Life-Saving Medicine

[One of our young readers, 16-year old P. Anand of Coimbatore had been inspired by the Gandhi Column appearing in "The Young World" (Hindu), to write this article.]

Apart from keeping the freedom struggle alive Gandhiji also kept his inimitable sense of humour alive by breathing fresh air into it now and then. In fact he himself had said on one occasion, "If it was not for my sense of humour, I would have died long back." Here are few examples of his unique ability.

A reporter asked Gandhiji, "Why do you always choose to travel by third class in a train." He replied "Simply, because there is no fourth class as yet."

When Gandhiji was going to attend the Round Table Conference in England, a newsman asked, "Mr Gandhi do you think you are properly dressed to meet the King." Gandhiji said, "Do not worry about my clothes. The King has enough clothes on for both of us."

Once again, a reporter asked Gandhiji, "Is it true that one's food habits affect one's character. For example, you drink only goat's milk. Does it affect your character? Gandhiji retorted, "My dear young man, just now I had a glass of goat's milk. Now I feel an itching sensation at my temples. May be horns are about to emerge. So pack off and run for your safety."⁵

Speaking of goat's milk, Gandhiji, even while travelling always preferred to have goat's milk. Now, cow's milk and buffalo's milk is easily available at railway stations. But the milk of a goat was quite an uncommon commodity. Obviously Gandhi's infectious sense of humour had rubbed off on people who were close to him. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu remarked on this goat's milk habit of Bapu by saying, "It is becoming a costly affair to keep Gandhiji in poor conditions."

Understanding the Mechanics of Life with Gandhi

In our hi-tech, state-of-the-art age, one often tends to question Gandhiji's views on industrialization and use of machinery and dismiss him as an eccentric faddist. But let us see what he had to say on the subject and then pass our judgement.

Once, during an interview on this very theme, Bapu pointed to his spinning wheel and said, "It is quite wrong to say I don't believe in machinery. This spinning wheel is a beautiful piece of machinery." But he judged all machines and in fact he judged every form of material progress by what it contributed or took away from life.



Ahmedabad, the city of mills, was the place where Gandhi chose to make his ashram. The ashram was a sort of a collection of huts built very simply and without any sense of architectural design or anything like that; and yet, there were so many trees around, so many fruit trees, so many flowers, that the place looked extraordinarily beautiful. And it was on a very high river bank. If the factories of Ahmedabad had a disturbing influence on the lives of the people then the ashram provided them with a natural instinctive beauty. The hum of his spinning wheel on one side of the river, was so different from the dark, gaunt mills on the other. There was a great contrast between the industrial life in India which the English brought into the country, and the very simple rural life, which Gandhi wanted his people to live.

"I want simple machines, not big monsters which nobody can possess," said Gandhi. "My ideal is a machine which anybody can have. With me man comes first. What is good for man is good for Gandhiji; what is not good for man is not good for Gandhi. But how is one to judge as to what is good and what is not?"

In the course of a discussion with late G. Ramachandran, Gandhiji was asked many questions on his views about machinery and industrialization. One such question was "When you exclude the sewing machine, you will have to make exceptions of the bicycle, the motor car etc.?" "No, I don't," said Bapu, "because they do not satisfy any of the primary wants of man, for it is not the primary need of man to travel with the rapidity of a motor car. The needle on the other hand, happens to be an important thing in life – a primary need."

The Mahatma's classic answer is even now taken as an original approach of Gandhiji for eliminating poverty. A question related to this was put forth to him, "Are you against machinery as such?" Replied the Mahatma, "How can I be against machinery? This body itself is a most delicate machine," and proceeded, "What I object to, is the 'craze' for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour-saving machinery. Men go on 'saving labour' till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of hunger. The force behind it all is not the feeling or intention of doing good to others by saving them from doing work, but greed. I am a determined enemy of all machinery that is designed for exploitation of people."

Gandhi's idea was not to finish off all machinery but to keep a control on its use instead of abusing it. Further it was man, and not the machine, that should be the master and should dictate the terms. Besides, for him, human labour was all important. Bapu says that he would welcome an improved form of a plough. "But if by any chance one man could plough up by some mechanical invention of his, the whole of the land of India and control all the agricultural produce and if millions had no other jobs, then they would starve, and being idle, they would become dunces." Did this mean that he opposed all the great inventions? Gandhiji's response was, "I would prize every invention of science made for the benefit of all. There is a difference between one invention and another. I should not care for poisonous gases capable of killing masses of men at a time. I also have no consideration for machinery which is meant either to enrich a few at the expense of the many, or without reason to displace the labour of the people. The machine should not be allowed to cripple the limbs of man."

The Romance Behind the Singer Sewing Machine

Take the case of the Singer Sewing Machine. It is one of the few useful things ever invented and there is a romance about the device itself. Singer saw his wife labouring over the tedious process of sewing and seaming with her own hands and simply out of his love for her he devised the sewing machine, in order to save her from unnecessary labour. He, however, saved not only her labour but also the labour of everyone who could purchase a sewing machine.

M.K. Gandhi

The Lokmanya and the Mahatma

As we pay homage to Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak on his 75th death anniversary, it would be an apt occasion to recall how, and at what point, the paths of these two colossal figures of the national movement – Tilak and Gandhi – crossed each other.

It was the night of 31st July, 1920. At the Sardargriha in Bombay, the Lokmanya's illness had taken a serious turn and all the prominent doctors of Bombay had gathered around his bed in an effort to save him, knowing full well that these were practically his last moments. That night he breathed his last.

On hearing the news, Bapu was lost in serious thought. He spent the whole night sitting on his bed, thinking. A lamp was burning by his side. He remained with his eyes fixed on it. Mahadevbhai awoke from his sleep in the latter part of the night and saw Bapu sitting up. He went to Bapu, who spoke, almost involuntarily: "To whom shall I go for advice now in moments of difficulty? And when the time comes to seek help from the whole of Maharashtra to whom shall I turn?" He continued, "I have been working for Swaraj all along, but I have avoided uttering that word. But now it devolves upon me to keep Lokmanya's slogan alive and effective. It must not be allowed to sink into silence. The banner of Swaraj which this brave warrior raised must not be lowered for a moment."

In 1916 when the Lokmanya returned from deportation at Mandalay, he decided to rejoin the Congress. Gandhiji had not yet entered the political arena, nor had he become a *Mahatma*. At that time the Lokmanya was a much respected and popular leader. The masses reposed immense faith in him.

The Congress Provincial Conference was to meet in Ahmedabad in the same year. In those days this Conference was run by the Moderates. The Reception Committee had sent an invitation to Lokmanya Tilak which he accepted. Some young men wanted to have a procession in his honour but the idea was rejected by the men at the top who argued that if there was a procession for Lokmanya,

they must have a procession for other leaders. As a result, a public welcome could not be arranged, and the young men were greatly disappointed. When Gandhiji who was not yet a member of the conference heard that there was going to be no public welcome, for the Lokmanya, he had a leaflet printed with his own signature, and thousands of copies were distributed to the citizens of Ahmedabad. It said, "We are being honoured by the visit of such a great leader as Lokmanya, so I am going to the station to receive him. It is the duty of the citizens of Ahmedabad to be present there to welcome him. The effect of the leaflet was magical. Tremendous crowds at the station and on the roads ensured that the Lokmanya received a magnificent welcome.

Tilak was born in 1856. He was thirteen years senior to Gandhiji. Their goal was the same – namely, attainment of Swaraj and resurgence of India as a great nation. It was only after Gandhiji finally entered Indian politics and public affairs in 1915 that Tilak and Gandhi became contemporaries in the real sense of the term, although they remained that way only for a brief period.

At the instance of friends, a meeting had been arranged between him and Bapu, during which they were left alone. After the meeting the Lokmanya remarked to a friend Gangadhar Rao, "This man is not one of us. He follows a different path altogether but he is true in every sense of the term. No harm can ever come to Bharat through him. We must be careful to avoid any conflict with him—on the contrary we must help him whenever we can."

It was an open secret that they differed and both of them expressed this fact without any reserve. But their real greatness lay in not allowing the conflict of ideas to lead to a split between them. Each realised the importance of joint efforts for the common goal. Despite their differences they held each other in high esteem. Gandhiji referred to him as Tilak Maharaj. Both drew their inspiration from Indian culture and the spiritual basis of Indian life.

It was Tilak who had given us the dream of Swaraj. Gandhiji worked and lived to see that dream fulfilled. In fact Gandhiji himself had once remarked, "If there is any man who meditates night and day, with untiring fervour, on how to achieve freedom for Hind, it is he... I am perfectly sure that, if Lokmanya is not

asleep at this moment, he must be thinking of something or the other in connection with Swaraj; or he must be discussing that particular topic with someone. His loyalty to the ideal of Swaraj is something wonderful."

Adapted from Stray Glimpses of Bapu by Kaka Kalelkar

Man's Gift to Nature

Fifty years ago when the war ended and the first atomic bomb was dropped over Hiroshima, Gandhiji said that while he was not condoning Japan, the bomb had brought only "an empty victory to the Allied arms," which "resulted in destroying the soul of Japan. . . . The moral to be legitimately drawn from the supreme tragedy of the bomb is that it will not be destroyed by counter bombs."

At a time when people would think that the atom bomb was a figment of every scientist's imagination, it had already become a painful reality for the people of Japan especially those who lived in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. An atom bomb was just a mass of complicated mathematical and physics equation for a scientist. But did he really feel or come to know a little of the pain that the effect of the bomb had given to innocent people?

On the day of 6 August 1945 the first atomic weapon was dropped. The creators of this bomb were J. Robert Oppenheimer and his team of scientists who worked at the Los Alamos Laboratory. This team has contributed a great deal in the making of the weapon for a period of three years. The bomb was first tested in the Almagordo region of United States. This was the first time that the scientists saw what they had worked so hard for. Some of the men in their excitement, having had three years to get ready for it, at the last minute forget their instruments for measuring the explosion and stumbled out of the cars where they were sitting. They were distinctly blinded for two or three seconds. In that time they lost the view of what they had been waiting for over three years to see. The unexpectedly powerful explosion had destroyed all the observation instruments. Even Oppenheimer himself was reminded of a line from the Bhagvad Gita: "I am become death"—the destroyer of the world. A senior military official remarked, "The war's over. One or two of those things, and Japan will be finished." Everybody was in a state of shock and there was a marked silence for a few moments. How had it happened that people who had embarked upon their careers in order to ascertain a more comprehensive truth

were in the end obliged to spend the best years of their lives in the search for more and more comprehensive means of destruction?

Seldom can celebration induce such sadness as they did in Robert Oppenheimer, when he watched the delight with which his countrymen greeted the end of the Second World War. He suddenly came to be an object of admiration by the masses. He was also called 'father of the atomic bomb.' He was not only regarded as the man whose miraculous weapon had spared the country the dreaded prospect of war but also as a new type of bringer of peace to the world whose amazing discovery made all armies and wars unnecessary for the future. He watched the people with a pensive sadness for he knew that with the dropping of these bombs a beginning of a new arms technique would come into play to which no bounds could be foreseen.

Oppenheimer was later charge-sheeted and put on trial. For three weeks he was put through a rigorous inquisition. The inquisitor was one Roger Robb.

Robb : You mean you argued against dropping the bomb?

Oppenheimer : I set forth arguments against dropping it.

Robb : Dropping the atom-bomb?

Oppenheimer : Yes. But I did not endorse them.

Robb : You mean having worked, as you put it, in your answer, rather excellently, by night and by day for three or four years to develop the atom bomb, you then argued it should not be used?

Oppenheimer : No, I didn't argue that it should not be used. I was asked to say by the Secretary of War what the views of scientists were. I gave the views against and the views for.

Robb : But you supported the dropping of the bomb on

Japan, didn't you?

Oppenheimer : What do you mean, support?

Robb : You helped pick the target, didn't you?

Oppenheimer : I did my job, which was the job I was supposed to do.

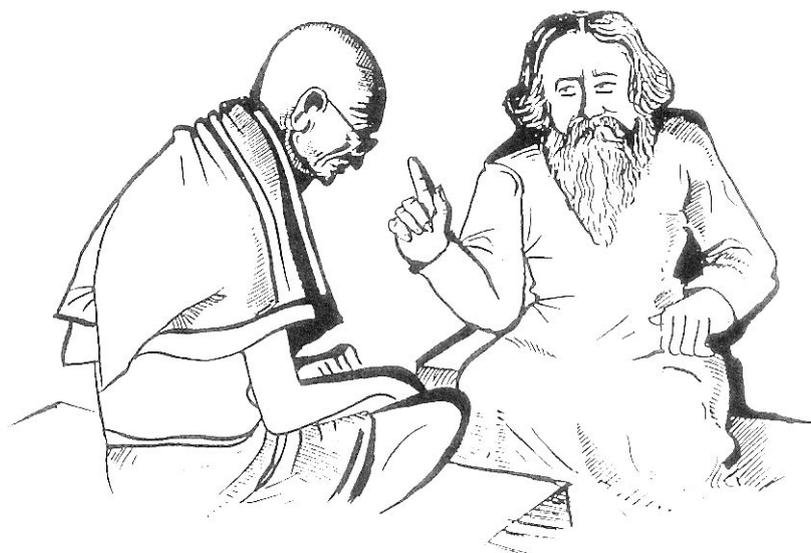
I was not in a policy-making position at Los Alamos. I

would have done anything that I was asked to do.

On 21 August 1945 a scientist called Dagnian was exposed to radiation while performing an experiment. His right hand was very badly affected. After a painful 24 days Dagnian died of cancer. For the first time death by radiation, which the men of Los Alamos had inflicted upon thousands of Japanese by constructing their weapon had overtaken one of themselves. For the first time the dangerous effects of the new power had been brought to their notice, not in the form of impersonal statistics from a distance but as the suffering, pain and fatal sickness of one of their own group.

Gandhi had called the atomic bomb as a 'devilish use of science'. Does science have this to offer us as a present for the future?

Gurudev and his Mahatma



As we remember Rabindra Nath Tagore on his death anniversary, let us recall the relationship between the two great representatives of Modern India — Tagore and Gandhi.

Strangely enough, it was an Englishman, Charles Freer Andrews, who was the link between these two men. Tagore was the first notable contemporary to refer to Gandhi as *Mahatma*. Gandhiji also called him *Gurudev*, a term of respect by which many others called the poet. Even before the two actually met, a mutual regard existed between them.

When Gandhiji returned from South Africa, it was Andrews who suggested that Tagore extend his invitation to the members of Gandhiji's "Phoenix family" (inmates of his Phoenix Ashram in South Africa), and arranged their temporary lodging in Santiniketan. Although Tagore was not in Santiniketan when Gandhiji went there to meet the members, a simple yet warm reception was arranged for him by the teachers and students. He stayed for a week only and so completely won over the community that they were prepared to dispense with cooks and servants and do all the work themselves. Although this experiment did not last, its memory still survives in the form of a symbolic "Gandhi Day"

observed on 10 March when servants and cooks enjoy a holiday and students and teachers do all the work.

Tagore and Gandhi met for the first time in March 1915 at Santiniketan. Kaka Kalelkar, a close associate of Gandhiji, describes this meeting thus:

"All the teachers, including me, were consumed with a great desire to see how these two sons of Bharat-Mata would conduct themselves at the first meeting. So... we went into the drawing room with Bapu. Ravibabu rose from the sofa on which he had been sitting. His tall stately figure, his silvery hair, his long beard, his impressive choga (gown)—all this went to make a magnificent picture. And there, in almost comical contrast, stood Gandhiji, in his skimpy dhoti, his simple kurta, and his Kashmiri cap. It was like a lion confronting a mouse.

We knew that both men had a heartfelt respect for each other. Ravibabu made a gesture inviting Gandhiji to sit beside him on the sofa. But as long as there was a carpet on the floor to sit on, Gandhiji was not going to sit on any couch. He settled himself on the floor, Ravibabu had to follow suit.

They met many times after that.... They used to discuss food and diet among other things. Gandhiji being a strict fruitarian, said "To fry bread in ghee or oil to make puris is to turn good grain into poison." "It must be a slow poison/' Ravibabu answered gravely. "I have been eating puris all my life and it has not done me any harm so far."

The two seers, Tagore and Gandhi had their ideological differences. It is well-known that Tagore did not see eye to eye with Gandhiji in the matter of the Non-cooperation Movement launched by the latter; nor did he agree with the position of eminence which Gandhiji gave to the Charkha; he criticized Gandhi when he linked the Bihar earthquake to the sin of untouchability.

Despite these differences, however, their mutual respect for each other did not diminish and Gandhiji accepted Gurudev's criticism positively.

Gandhiji's way of atoning for a "public offence" through fast, penance and suffering, had won Tagore's admiration. With regard to his experiments in South Africa, Gandhiji's appeal of soul force against brute force, had won Tagore's approval. In fact, long before Gandhiji came to be known in Indian politics, Tagore had upheld the cause of "spiritual force" in the anti-partition movement of Bengal in 1905-1906.

When Gandhiji threatened 'to go on fast' to allow entry of Harijans into Guruvayur Temple, Tagore wrote a letter to the Zamorin of Calicut asking him to give the right to the untouchables so that Gandhiji's life could be saved.

When Gandhiji went on his 'epic fast' in Yeravda Jail against Ramsay Macdonald's Communal Award, he had sought Tagore's blessings—and received it. When the Poona Pact was signed and Gandhiji called off his fast, the poet was present and sang a hymn from the Gitanjali on the occasion.

Gandhi himself has said, of his supposed differences with Tagore, "I started with a disposition to detect a conflict between Gurudev and myself, but ended with a glorious discovery that there was none."

In 1940 Gandhi and Kasturba visited Santiniketan; it was to be his last meeting with the poet. Worried about his institution, he requested Gandhi to take this institution under his protection. Gandhiji replied "Who am I to take this institution under my protection?... It carries God's protection because it is the creation of an earnest soul." Rabindranath died on 7 August 1941.

Gandhiji visited Santiniketan for the last time in his life in 1945. His dear Gurudev was no longer there to welcome him. In his address to the Santiniketan community he said, "It is my conviction arrived at after a long and laborious struggle that Gurudev as a person was much bigger than his works; bigger even than this institution."

One-man Boundary Force

Not only was the idea of Partition repugnant to Gandhiji's faith in the unity of his country, he could also foresee the rivers of blood flowing in its aftermath.

So much so that when shouts of "Mahatma Gandhi ki jai" rent the air on 15 August 1947, Gandhi was not there in New Delhi. He was in Calcutta and he was not rejoicing. He spent the day in prayer and fasting.

"My independence has not yet come unless this terrible poverty is banished, there is no room for merriment..." he had remarked. In fact when he was approached by the emissaries of the Government for a message to be broadcast on Independence Day, his brusque reply, "There is no message at all" spoke his mind amply. A similar request from BBC was also turned down.

Gandhiji had originally planned to go to Noakhali after Partition but he could not leave Calcutta without pouring, as he put it "a pot of water over the fire that was burning." H.S. Suhrawardy, the Prime Minister of undivided Bengal requested Gandhiji to stay on in the city till peace returned. Gandhiji agreed—on the condition that Suhrawardy should join him in his mission and live under the same roof. Suhrawardy whom most Hindus held responsible for the killing of their brethren, a year earlier, would face considerable danger to his life. So Gandhiji asked him to take permission of his father and daughter.

The house selected for the purpose belonged to an old Muslim lady. It was a place vulnerable to attack. Hindu youths were angry that he had come to protect Muslims, having failed to come to the rescue of Hindus who were mercilessly butchered a year earlier. Gandhiji was aware of all this—yet refused to have any armed guard for protection.

When he moved into this house on the afternoon of 13 August, he was met at the gate by a band of hostile young men shouting "Gandhi go back." Suhrawardy's car was surrounded and when he was finally allowed to enter, stones were pelted through the glass windows. Gandhi sent for the demonstrators and calmly explained to them the purpose of his mission, and his

determination to 'do or die' at his post. His words had a calming effect and after one more session with the still half-angry young men the following day, the tempest of hatred subsided. On the second day he even asked Suhrawardy to address the Hindu crowd after the prayer meeting.

Suddenly, a transformation took place. On 14 and 15 August, days which all were dreading, the frenzy of hatred seemed to give way to an outpouring of affection and cordiality, described by the poet Sudhindranath Datta as "the only miracle I have seen." Hindus and Muslims gathered in the streets to celebrate jointly the eve of Independence.

But Gandhiji was not unduly elated. He had doubts whether the transformation was real enough to last long. So, on Independence Day, when all around—Hindus and Muslims—were rejoicing together, Gandhiji observed fast for the day.

What happened subsequently in Calcutta is well known. Riots broke out again on 31 August. Gandhiji went on a fast to "end only when conflagration ends." It did end. The "one-man boundary force" had brought peace to Bengal.

Adapted from Gandhi: A Life by Krishna Kripalani

What does Mahatma Gandhi's Message Mean to Me?

[Does Mahatma Gandhi's message have any relevance for young people in the modern industrialized West today? To commemorate the 125th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi an essay competition was organised for high school students in Germany. This is the prize winning essay.]

Six months ago a good friend of mine was murdered. Daniel was brutally stabbed 35 times by two boys of his age simply for the fun of it. The murder was committed without any motive whatsoever, not because the boys felt threatened or had had a quarrel; no, it was a totally arbitrary act.

After the two culprits had been caught my first thought was simply hatred. Pure hatred and the feeling that the bloody deed should be avenged in an equally bloody manner. In my mind hatred almost prevailed over grief, and my anger knew no limits. My sister, Sonja, then gave me Mahatma Gandhi's book "Worte des Friedens" (Words of Peace). I had often heard the name of Gandhi. After all, the man who liberated India is well known, but I had never really taken an interest in Gandhi. I thought the film about him was very good and I was impressed by the way he "fought" against the British, but it all seemed so remote to me: he was an exemplary historic figure.

However, in the days following the murder I got to know quite a different aspect of Gandhi. A few sentences of his made me think: "I hold myself to be incapable of hating any being on earth. By a long course of prayerful discipline, I have ceased for over forty years to hate anybody/ I know this is a big claim. Nevertheless, I make it in all humility. To see the universal and all-pervading spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself." I was familiar with such sentences from the Bible, but Mahatma Gandhi made them more vivid and relevant to my life than ever before. From his life one can learn that it is indeed possible to love even one's worst enemy. Gandhi had to suffer humiliation in both South Africa and India. In South Africa he was insulted, abused, spat at and beaten by officials. He did not even try to resist, but bore everything with a smile and an iron will to change this

misconduct by non-violent means. Despite all the humiliation, Gandhi remained in South Africa in order to use his legal knowledge to champion the cause of the Indian immigrants in South Africa. "It has always been a mystery to me how men can feel themselves honoured by humiliation of their fellow-beings." Gandhi remained in South Africa to uncover the secret, to stop people from making life difficult for one another by making cruel and taunting remarks.

If I apply Mahatma Gandhi's behaviour, the way he dealt with his enemies, to my situation today, it would mean not hating Daniel's murderers but persuading them to mend their ways. Thoughts of revenge would be taboo. I do not succeed in doing this, however often I hear Mahatma's words and concentrate on them.

I would like to be able to live as he lived. I would like to renounce violence and always be kind to everyone. It is not possible. In this situation in particular I have had to concede time and again that it is not possible. Not yet possible?

I feel hatred and want to pay the culprits back two or threefold for the thirty-five stab wounds they inflicted on Daniel.

Martin Luther King once said that Gandhi was inevitable, if humanity was to make progress. He had lived, taught and acted, inspired by a vision of humanity which was developing into a world living in freedom and harmony. We could ignore him, King continued, at our peril.

I agree: Gandhi was inevitable so that the idea of non-violent resistance could be put into practice at least once. Yet today it seems as if Mahatma had never lived, as if scenes like the demonstration in front of Dharasana saltworks had never occurred.

If today one imagines 2,500 men, supporters of one man's ideas, enduring such brutality without even trying to resist their tormentors with force, one has some idea of what Gandhi set in motion in people's hearts and minds at that time. In today's world it is no doubt more the principle of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" which prevails.

So should we ignore Mahatma Gandhi? Or is it simply not possible to live together peacefully in this age of competition and rivalry?

However, in my view many people do have a vision of humanity which is developing into a world living in harmony and peace. Yet is it very difficult to lead a nonviolent life. Incidents occur time and again at demonstrations which are intended to be peaceful. Suddenly tension escalates. People begin to panic, stones are thrown, policemen attack the crowd with truncheons. And afterwards there is nobody who goes from village to village, like Mahatma Gandhi, to calm the people down and plan campaigns better in future. There is nobody who fasts until they are willing to live together peacefully again.

However, Mahatma Gandhi's message also means strict self-discipline in one's personal life. He persuaded the Indians to burn their clothes imported from Britain. The Indians were to spin their clothes themselves in future. Does Gandhi's teaching mean that we should not wear any clothes made in Thailand, India or Mexico because their textiles are produced by exploited workers? Whom do we support by buying them, if the workers receive only low wages which are hardly enough to live on, whereas the big money lines the pockets of the landowners, merchants and managers? Should not we too grow our food ourselves and do without cheap coffee and bananas? Living in accordance with Gandhi's teaching would be a great sacrifice for us all. We could no longer consume thoughtlessly but would have to live consciously and make do with only what was absolutely necessary.

What is far more important for me today is the way Gandhi treated the untouchables. Gandhi considered the caste system and, in particular, the treatment of the untouchables to be the worst aspect of Hinduism. He championed their cause and nearly died while fasting to improve the quality of their lives. Gandhi called the untouchables *Harijans* or "children of God".

Who are the untouchables in our country? The groups on the margins of society, such as gypsies, dropouts, the homeless and the handicapped?

According to Gandhi's teaching, we should regard all these people as our equals and treat them as such. We should show them all the same respect and

champion their cause, as Gandhi did. This is frequently not the case. We often treat such people as the dregs of our society, as what is left over when we have all passed through the sieve of what is "normal".

In this field too, Mahatma Gandhi's message is of great importance to me. Yet here too I find it hard to live in line with his teaching, to live as he lived. Many young people have no difficulties in their dealings with the handicapped, but many find it hard to regard tramps as equals. "I wouldn't have to sit around in the street." Mahatma Gandhi showed us through his example that it is quite normal to live in such groups on the margins of society and that it is possible to consider everyone to be equal.

My reflections probably show that I have understood Mahatma Gandhi's message, at least in part. Yet I often lose hope when I try to follow his example at least in some respects. After all, we are not called upon to achieve independence for a whole country like Gandhi, but can put his message into practice in parts of our own lives. If I have understood Gandhi correctly, then this is what is important to him: acting in a nonviolent way in one's everyday life and treating all people equally. It is difficult to do. Yet Gandhi gives me courage and hope when he says: "I have not the shadow of a doubt that any man or woman can achieve what I have, if he or she would make the same effort and cultivate the same hope and faith."

Susanne Schweitzer

Let's Play Together

"If we are to reach peace in the world we shall have to begin with children," said Mahatma Gandhi.

Today, a vast majority of games and sports that are played have the overruling factor of competition. A desire to win is the main objective. Winning, of course, has the feeling of being great, glowing with the achievement of having won. But losing, on the other hand, gives the loser a feeling of inadequacy and failure. The number of players who can win, compared to the number of losers, is small. The contrast with this is the way of playing where everyone can win.

A few years ago the Gandhi Foundation in London published an Educational Pack: *Let's Cooperate, an introduction to cooperative games*. The pack consists of two books and a video film *Let's Cooperate*. The author of this invaluable pack is Ms. Mildred Masheded.

This provides a wealth of information about cooperative games as well as activities for peaceful conflict resolution. The Gandhi Foundation was attracted to these two elements: cooperation and peaceful conflict resolution.

Why cooperative games? Well, all players find it mutually beneficial to help one another. The pleasure comes from working together, rather than being the only winner. Seeing the world in turmoil, the Foundation believed that citizens of tomorrow should work cooperating with others in a nonviolent and peaceful way.

When attending one of the Gandhi Summer Schools in the U.K. the author first explained the ideas behind the method; then showed the video-film, but most important, put us all, children and adults to play themselves. It was a real hit and both kids and adults enjoyed it greatly.

The two books contain about 400 games that rely on collaborative efforts of the players to achieve a joint aim. Besides that, the author has avoided being exclusively western in choosing games. There are games from other parts of the world, making the effort really international, such as *Takraw*, a game played in

Thailand, *Dithwai* from Lesotho in South Africa, *Shash na Pani* from Afghanistan, *Guli danda* known in many Asian countries, *Dalpauay* from the Philippines.

The games are lessons of sharing and give and take.

Piet Dijkstra

Children's Creative Response to Conflict

Despite availability of co-operative games it becomes extremely difficult and almost impossible to avoid a violent solution of conflict. Is it possible to save ourselves from this unpleasantness?

In the USA there is a small movement aimed at helping children learn that they can solve their conflicts in creative rather than hurtful ways. This programme is called "Children's Creative Response to Conflict" (CCRC). Nonviolent Alternatives, the organization I work with at Brookings, SD, uses this programme to teach adults, especially teachers and parents, how they can teach children to resolve conflicts creatively.

It offers specially designed activities that enable children to build a sense of community, know their worth as individuals, and develop the skills of creative conflict resolution. Through these activities children and adults experience new ways to examine conflicts and develop solutions. They allow the participants to have fun while developing skills in one or more of the programme's central themes.

Cooperation activities provide a structured setting that allows individuals to work together toward a common goal; an experience often lacking in our competitive society.

Honest communication about one's needs and feelings is often necessary in order to discover the heart of conflict. Activities that helps improve listening, observing, speaking and perceiving skills are important in preparing for successful conflict management.

If people do not feel positive about themselves, it is difficult to feel positive about others. *Affirmation* activities demonstrate that everyone's ideas and feelings are valued, thus opening the way to creative conflict resolution. One of the main goals of this is to show many alternative solutions to conflict and therefore there is an attempt to produce situations in which participants find themselves, and thus practise creative conflict resolution.

Sessions begin by inviting everyone to sit in a circle to emphasize equality and encourage participation.

Gandhi understood that for power to be used in a mutually creative way it must be grounded in love, rather than in fear of punishment. Conflicts are usually resolved by the use of power. When resolved creatively, the power is grounded in love and shared in a mutually beneficial way; when resolved in hurtful and destructive ways, the power is often derived from the fear of punishment and/or threat of the use of force.

Chris Klug

Beggar by Choice

In the history of begging for a public cause, Gandhiji created a world record. He discovered this capacity in himself in South Africa when he was in charge of collection of subscriptions from the members of the Natal Indian Congress. Late in the evening, he went to a wealthy donor and expected him to pay Rs. 80. All persuasion failed and he was offered only Rs. 40. Gandhiji was hungry, tired yet he did not give up. He sat up there the whole night and at daybreak received Rs. 80. He certainly was a very stubborn beggar.

During his travels, Gandhiji played the role of an accomplished beggar. He was welcomed by crowds at almost every station. People flocked towards his compartment to catch a fleeting glimpse of the Mahatma. Gandhi, the national beggar, knew that he could not let this golden opportunity slip by without charging the 'price' for his 'darshan' and so his begging hand was immediately stretched out of the window. The people experienced a glow of joy and satisfaction in placing copper coins in his palm. When an ordinary beggar receives any coin he feels delighted; but in the case of this strange 'Prince of Beggars', people felt obliged in placing coins in his hands. Sometimes, an old woman, in torn and tattered clothes would make her way through the crowds, put a pice in Gandhiji's palm, look at him intently with devotion for a while and tread her way back. In this way, Gandhi smartly collected a decent amount at every station, even during nights. As clever and experienced a beggar as he was, Gandhi took special care to learn at least the word for 'pice' in every language. He did not fret or fume at the crowds if they woke him up with loud cries of 'Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai'. This was a small price he gladly paid



for obtaining money to achieve Swaraj. And so he quietly got up, opened the window if it were closed, and started his work of collection. There were times when being unusually tired, Gandhi would not wake up at a certain station. A few persons would then enter his compartment and shake him to awake him despite protests from the members of his party, and after placing some coins in his hands walk away shouting "Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai". Gandhiji would smile and again be down on the berth and fall into deep sleep. On one occasion when a journalist stepped forward to ask him some questions, Gandhi asked him in return, "Will you please let me use your hat as my begging bowl?" Of course, the hat was immediately surrendered and Gandhiji instantaneously stretched it before the owner himself to begin with. The journalist had to surrender with a laugh, a few silver coins too.

Gandhi was very particular about the spending of public money. He sent a receipt of all the gifts and submitted a detailed account of all expenditure. If money was given only to feed the needy, he refused to accept it. He felt that the real hunger of a person was not for a morsel of food, but for decent living as a self-respecting human being. He disapproved of the custom of giving alms instead of work to the poor.

It is said that beggars cannot be choosers. But this rule did not apply to Gandhiji. With him, in fact, it was just the reverse. If you were wealthy, he would demand gold and silver; if poor, an honest penny; if you could spare no coins, he would ask you to pay in hand-spun yarn, if you could not do even that you have to fast and save and pay. Gandhiji was one beggar from whom none could hide or run away.

Adapted from This was Bapu edited by R.K. Prabhu

The Better Half

The recently concluded UN Women's Conference in Beijing has turned the spotlight on women once again. Many radical views have been propounded by "feminists". Many ambitious schemes have been drawn up. Our country too, was represented by a sizeable, vocal delegation. But in this age of radical "feminism" we often tend to overlook Gandhiji, who to most of us today, would seem to be a most unlikely champion of the women's cause. However, few of us know that in this matter as in most others, he was far ahead of his time, and if there was anyone who was responsible for drawing women out in such large numbers, to join the freedom movement, it was he. Ela Bhatt, the Magsaysay Award Winner described how she was inspired by Gandhiji in her work....

Women participated in mass movements led by him in a natural course. And this made a big breakthrough in Indian women's lives. I would say I would not have been what I am today, if Gandhiji had not made this breakthrough. His deep faith in women's *shakti* (power) came from his experience of his mother and wife. He observed and studied women in his own home because he had respect for them as human beings and he observed them as equal partners in the home and society. He says: "Women is the companion of man gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in the minutest details of the activities of man, and she has the same right of freedom and liberty as he. She is entitled to a supreme place in her own sphere of activity as man is in his." No wonder, being the super strategist that he was, he sought their participation in the freedom struggle. In fact he had more faith in his women soldiers than his men. The weapons in his struggle being love and non-violence, he considered women to be superior to men, because, as mothers, qualities of love and peace were more ingrained in them. "To call a woman a member of 'the weaker sex' is a libel. In what way is woman the weaker sex I do not know. If the implication is that she lacks the brute instinct of man or does not possess it in the same measure as men, the charge may be admitted.

But then woman becomes, as she is, the nobler sex. If she is weak in striking, she is strong in suffering. "I have described woman as the embodiment of sacrifice and *ahimsa*" are his words on the issue. He realised a very strong need for support and participation from women in creating a society based on justice, in his struggle.

Gandhiji saw the exploitation of women in and outside their home. I have always been moved by his statement that no one can be exploited without his/her will or participation. I find it Gandhiji's most valid statement. He had observed his wife and mother quietly resisting their exploitation at home. He learnt the method of Satyagraha from them and put it into practice as a major strategy to rebel against exploitation by the British.

Gujarat is the land of Gandhiji and in the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Union he experimented his principle of trusteeship. He called it a "laboratory of human relations". I worked in this union for seventeen years dealing with women's problems. It is here that I took lessons on trade union work, settling disputes by conciliation and co-operation, the theory that demand must always be minimum and just. Here I learnt the methods of civil disobedience in our struggles and in these struggles, realised women's strength in fighting for justice.

I feel the most relevant and urgent struggle of women today is that of swadeshi. I am a great believer in self-reliance, particularly self-employment, and therefore, his call for 'Swadeshi' rings bells in my ears. I am of the opinion that in our country, historically and traditionally, self-employment has been the form of work. Indian economy was localised at the village level and in this economy women played a major role. But with the advent of industrialisation, the modes of work changed. Women were thrown out from their traditional employment, without providing them suitable alternative means of work. Certainly, Gandhiji thought unemployment to be a women's issue and therefore, symbolically, as well as practically, he introduced charkha as an instrument of the freedom movement. The propagation of khadi was to protect the employment for the poorest women.

Once, Gandhiji's colleague in the Ashram asked him to write a primer for the children of primary schools. This primer or *Balpothi* is in the form of a mother teaching the child. In a chapter on housework, the mother asks her son, "Dear son, you should also help in the housework as your sister does."

The son answers : But she is a girl. I am a boy. A boy plays and studies.

The sister says : How come! I also love to play and study.

Brother : I do not deny that, but, dear sister, you have to do housework as well.

Mother : Why should a boy not do housework?

Son : Because the boy has to earn money when he grows up, therefore he must study well.

Mother : You are wrong, my son. Women also make an earnings for the family. And, there is a lot to learn in housework—house cleaning, cooking, laundry. By doing housework you will develop various skills of the body and will feel self-reliant. In good housework you need to use your eyes, hands and brain. Therefore these activities are educative and they build your character. Men and women both need to be educated equally in housework because the home belongs to both.

Gandhiji expounds this theme further. "More often than not a woman's time is taken up, not by the performance of essential domestic duties, but in catering for the egoistic pleasure of her lord and master and for her own vanities. To me this domestic slavery of woman is the symbol of our barbarism. In my opinion the slavery of the kitchen is a remnant of barbarism mainly. It is high time that our womankind was freed from this incubus. Domestic work ought not to take the whole of a woman's time."

He also states: "A daughter's share must be equal to that of a son. The husband's earnings are the joint property of husband and wife as he makes money by her assistance; if only as a cook.

If a husband is unjust to his wife, she has the right to live separately.

Both have equal rights to the children. Each would forfeit these rights after they have grown up, and even before that if he or she is unfit for them.

In short, I admit no distinction between men and women except such as has been made by nature and can be seen with human eyes."

Revolutionary ideas for his time indeed!

*Courtesy: Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi
and Navajivan Trust, Ahmedabad*

Uncle Gandhi

The title is certainly likely to surprise readers. Well, it was the children living in Bow in the 'East-End, of London who chose to address Gandhiji as 'Uncle'. When in September 1931, Gandhiji went to England to attend the Second Round Table Conference many friends offered their luxurious homes to him. But he preferred to stay in Kingsley Hall because the poor of London lived in this area.

The children of the locality were quite curious to know more about the 'man from India' living in their neighbourhood. For example, a child would ask his mother, "who is this man whom so many people visit the whole day long?" and the mother would answer, "He is the leader of Indian National Movement, and his name is Mahatma Gandhi." Some children would ask, "What does Gandhi eat?" Another asked, "Now, tell me mummy, why does Gandhi not wear shoes?" and so on and so forth. One day a mother told her three-year old son, "Now look here, you mustn't say 'Gandhi' but 'Mr. Gandhi'. You know Mr. Gandhi is a very good man and a great man." "I am sorry mummy," said the tiny tot making amends, "I will call him Uncle Gandhi..." So 'Uncle Gandhi' caught on.

Children loved talking to Gandhi, joking with him. So did Gandhi. During his walks he would look forward to meeting his little friends. On his birthday, these little friends sent him a packet addressed to 'Dear Uncle Gandhi', containing two woolly toy goods, sweets and candles. Gandhiji cherished and valued these gifts very much.

On 5 December, he left London. As he got into the train, he turned anxiously to his hostess Muriel Lester, "Are the toys alright?" Gandhi was enquiring about the woolly animals, coloured candles and chalk drawings that the children of Bow had presented him. "They are the only things I am taking back to India," he said, "except what I came with." He had given away all the other costly gifts that the English people showered on him.

Soon after returning home Gandhiji was arrested. It was from the Yervada Prison he wrote later, on 20 January 1932, to these kids, thanking them, "Isn't it

funny," he wrote, "that they should receive a letter from a prison?" and added, "I am not aware of having done anything wrong." Conveying his love to all, he signed the letter, "Yours, whom you call Uncle Gandhi".

The Watch—An Instrument for Regulating Life

You see many types of watches, some with coloured pictures on the dial made for children; some for ladies, very delicately designed and for men—pocket as well as wrist watches. Some of these cost a fortune which look very ornamental and are worn as part of the dress.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi acquired a watch for the first time as part of his dress. In the early days of his stay as a student of law in London, he spent a good amount of money to look like an English gentleman who was immaculately dressed. He wore a morning coat,

a double-breasted vest, a necktie, dark striped trousers, a silk top hat, patent leather shoes with spats; carried a pair of gloves and a silver mounted cane and to complete the attire, he obtained a double watch-chain of gold from India—courtesy elder brother's generosity.

Later on, when he had taken to wearing only a loin cloth, the only thing he retained from the 'gentleman's attire was the watch'.

The little piece of nickel hanging by the left side of his waist, that you see in pictures of him, was a metre regulating his life. He could not think of a better gift than a watch for the two detectives in London attached to him during his stay in 1931. He sent them each a pocket watch with the inscription "With love from M.K.Gandhi."

Gandhiji utilized every minute of his time purposefully. One morning his twelve-year old son Manilal heard him murmuring standing before the wash basin. The son curiously asked, "Father what are you doing, mumbling to yourself?" "I'm learning verses from the Gita," replied Gandhi.



In April 1921, Gandhiji was to give a talk at the Gujarat Vidyapith. The car that had to take him there was late. Gandhiji immediately took the bicycle from Prof. Malkani and rode off to be in time for the academic appointment.

Once his grandson Kantilal made a slight error of one minute in telling the time. The young man was scolded, "Don't keep a watch unless you have a sense of time." Even Lokmanya Tilak was not spared. He had reached the Political Conference at Godhra half an hour late. Gandhiji commented, "If we are half an hour late in winning Swaraj then the blame will be on Lokmanyaji's head."

Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose recalls, "As Gandhiji prepared to go to bed, we had to keep every little thing that he might require in the night or early in the morning in its proper place. The twig had to be thrashed and split from his tooth brush and kept immersed in a wide mouthed bottle in exactly the same height of water; his pocket watch with the alarm set at 4 a.m. had to be kept under pillow." This was done because he did not wish to waste a single moment in hunting for anything.

The only time Gandhiji forgot his watch was a few minutes before he died. Till 4.55 p.m. on Friday, 30 January 1948 Gandhiji was deeply absorbed in an important discussion with Sardar Patel. His prayer meeting was to start at 5 p.m. Abha was hesitant to interrupt but knowing his commitment to punctuality, picked up the nickel plated watch and pointed out that he was getting latp. On the way to the prayer ground Abha said, "Bapu, your watch must be feeling very neglected, you did not even look at it today!"

Contributed by Dr (Mrs) Rashmi-Sudha Puri, Director, Gandhi Bhavan
Panjab University, Chandigarh

Light the Lamp of your Mind!

During Gandhiji's tenure in the Sevagram Ashram he had occasion to spend his birthday with the people over there. After the evening prayers Gandhiji was going to have a discussion in the Ashram. Many people from nearby villages had come to attend the discourse. Gandhiji immediately noticed the lamp filled with 'ghee' (oil) burning in the hall. This was a new occurrence. He gazed at it for some time in silence.

After the prayers Gandhiji asked aloud, "Who has brought this lamp?" Kasturba, who was sitting nearby said, "I have brought it."

Bapu asked her, "From where did you bring it?"

Ba replied, "From the village. It's your birthday, that's why."

After remaining silent for some time Bapu said, "Today, if anybody has done a wrong thing it is Ba who has lighted this oil lamp and it is because of my birthday. I have seen how the villagers live their lives. They do not even have enough oil to spread on their daily 'roti' (bread) and today there is an oil lamp burning in my Ashram. How can we waste something the poor farmers cannot afford to have?"

Gandhi's Bet!

The students of Sabarmati Ashram were assigned various other jobs besides studies. After doing their personal work they would do various kinds of work which was of vocational importance like stitching clothes or knitting the rfcps of a 'charpoi'. The boys would bet on who was the fastest in completing his work.

Once, a boy called Parthasarthy had to stitch a shirt and Prabhudas Gandhi had to knit a charpoi. Both of them had a bet on who would finish the work first. Prabhudas said that he would complete his work by Saturday. Gandhiji while eating his food, had overheard the entire conversation that took place between the two boys.

It was Saturday afternoon and Gandhiji who remembered all about the bet asked Prabhudas if he had finished making the charpoi. Prabhudas said that he had completed only half of it as yet. Gandhiji then asked him, "Don't you have any plans of completing it by today?" "How can I do it?" said Prabhudas. Bapu said, "You will not study today. Instead you will make the other half of the charpoi which you have left." In the evening Bapu again asked Prabhudas about the charpoi. Prabhudas said that he hadn't finished it as yet. "After your dinner you will not go out to play but you will make the charpoi until your work is done."

Prabhudas sat alone and carried on with his work while all the other children went out for a walk with Bapu. His fingers had started aching as he had been working since morning. Everybody was now preparing to go to sleep and Prabhudas was still working. Bapu asked him if he had finished. Prabhudas said that he had only five more yards to knit. Gandhi stayed back with him and encouraged Prabhudas while he read a book.

It was 11 o'clock in the night and the work was still not over. Prabhudas was very tired and finally his fingers stopped functioning. He started crying.

It was then that Bapu went up to Prabhudas and said: "One should do as one says: You had placed a bet that you will finish your work by today but you did not."

Gandhi: Feeling at Home in the Kitchen



Gandhi simplified the highly complicated and difficult art of cooking. He first tried his hand at cooking at the age of eighteen, when he was in England. He was a strict vegetarian. Vegetarianism was then comparatively a new trend in England. He was generally served with bread, butter and jam and boiled vegetables. Everything tasted bland to Gandhi who was used to tasty spicy Indian dishes prepared by his mother. After taking meals in a vegetarian restaurant for some months, he decided to live thriftily. He hired a room, and a stove and cooked his breakfast and dinner himself. He took scarcely more than 20 minutes to cook the food costing about 12 annas a day.

After his return to India as an enrolled barrister, he hired a small flat in Bombay and engaged a Brahmin cook. He did half the cooking and taught the cook some English vegetarian dishes. He was rather particular about orderliness and cleanliness especially in the kitchen, and taught the cook to wash his clothes and to bathe regularly.

A book called *Return to Nature by Salt* convinced Gandhi that one should not eat to please the palate but just to keep the body fit. Mahadev Bhai once asked Gandhi, "Bapuji, did you have a cook before you joined the Phoenix Settlement?" Gandhi replied: "No, I got rid of him earlier. We had a fine cook but he said that he won't be able to cook without spices and condiments. Immediately, I granted him leave and did not appoint a cook anymore." This incident took place when Gandhi was nearly thirty-five years old.

Hired cooks were never employed in his ashrams in South Africa or India. Gandhi believed that it was sheer waste of time and labour to cook various dishes for one meal. He was not prepared to cater to the differing tastes of the different members of the ashram. He prescribed a simple menu for all. The meals were cooked in a common kitchen. In his ashram, rice with gruel, bread, raw salad, boiled vegetables without spices, fruits and milk or curd were served. Sweets and milk preparations were substituted by fresh gur and honey. Gandhi began to make experiments, with diet which remained a lifetime hobby with him. Some of the experiments needed no cooking and some landed him in trouble. He was a fruitarian for five years. Once for four months he lived on germinated seeds and uncooked food and developed dysentery.

Some old examples of Gandhi's menu were fresh neem leaf chutney, bitter as quinine, mixture of fresh nutritive oil-cake from an oil-press adjoining the ashram and curd, sweet sherbat made of tamarind and gur, boiled and mashed soyabeans served without any seasoning, salad made out of any fresh edible green leaves, a sort of pudding made from finely powdered baked chapatis, porridge of coarsely ground wheat and whenatan coffee made from baked wheat powder. He could prepare cake rice, dal, vegetable soup, salads, marmalade both of oranges and orange skins, bread without using yeast or baking powder, chapatis and fine *Khakras*. He introduced loaf-making and biscuit-making in the ashram kitchen. A special type of oven was used in Sevagram for cooking rice for hundreds of persons, for making bread and boiling vegetables at a low cost. One of Bapu's associate once remarked: "Lately it was reported that grass had plenty of vitamins. Fortunately the discovery was not made when Gandhiji was in the ashram, for then he would have decided to wind up the "kitchen and ask us to graze on the lawn."

Gandhi once visited a model residential school. He did not like the kitchen arrangements there and told the teachers: "You will make your institution ideal if, besides giving them a literary education, you make finished cooks and sweepers of them."

What Worried Gandhi No End !

The Students' World Federation was holding a session in Mysore city. Reverend Mott who had worked for the welfare of students was the Chairman of the session. After his arrival in India he felt it necessary to meet Bapu. Therefore he requested Gandhiji for a meeting whenever it was convenient for him.

Gandhiji, of course, was a very busy man and every minute of his was of the utmost importance to the country. However, he managed to take some time out of his schedule for the Reverend. The Reverend in his turn had thought of what he would ask Gandhiji.

Reverend Mott arrived at the specified time and found Gandhiji sitting in the verandah on his cot doing his work. He saw that another cot had been kept nearby for him. The conversation between them bordered around the Harijan movement and the missionary community in India. He finally asked Gandhiji two questions.

Rev. Mott : A life like yours must be full of ups and downs, of hopes and disappointments. Amongst all the things you have to face and experience, will you tell me what comforts and sustains you the most?

Gandhiji : The thing that comforts and sustains me the most is the nonviolence of our masses, in spite of the gravest provocation.

Rev. Mott : And what is it that causes you the most concern and keeps you restless night and day?

Gandhiji : A hardness of heart of the educated is a constant source of worry to me.

What is Simplicity?

K.S. Acharlu, from Bangalore, who is now over ninety years of age, and had spent considerable time in Gandhiji's ashram and worked actively in the Hindustani Talimi Sangh, writes:

"After my M.A. Degree in Philosophy, I was appointed as a teacher in the Government High School at Davanagere in Mysore State. I had faith in Gandhian values, Khadi in particular. I used to wash all my clothes, at home without seeking the help of a washerman. As for ironing clothes, the sun dried apparel were neatly folded and placed under my pillow for being ironed. In many other ways my wife and I were leading lives of simplicity.

Though I considered myself to be leading a life of *simplicity*, I was not satisfied until I sought Gandhiji's advice on the meaning of simplicity.

Gandhiji readily replied on 26 March 1928 "Simplicity is a matter of the heart. But lest we deceive ourselves, the ideal is not to possess anything which the poorest on earth does not."

The Power of Quality

The struggle against the African government had reached its final stage. The government had broken its promise to Gokhale. By disregarding the agreement with Gokhale in the Indian context the African government had made him a very sad and disappointed man. At that time Gandhi was residing in the Phoenix farm in South Africa.

In those difficult and trying times a close friend and follower of Gandhi's Raajibhai Patel asked him, "Bapu! I have roamed the entire city of Durban but I did not see anybody showing any enthusiasm for the Satyagraha. In fact, people went as far as to say that Gandhiji is just taking on the botheration of Satyagraha for nothing." Raajibhai informed Bapu about all the talk that was doing the rounds of the city. In the end he expressed his views in a grave tone by saying, "We really don't have much of mass following to boast of, and start a Satyagraha. How much of following have we been able to gather with our collective Satyagrahas till today? It is not sufficient to fight such a powerful government. Have you ever thought of that Gandhiji?" Bapu laughed and said, "That is what I keep calculating day in and day out. You too can calculate and get the exact number. You know all the workers working with you, don't you?" Raajibhai made a list of all the workers. The number turned out to be only forty.

Gandhi then asked Raajibhai, "How are these forty workers in your opinion?" Raaji understood Bapu's line of questioning and replied, "These forty will support you till the very end." Gandhi was touched deeply and after a while he said, "Then, for me these forty people are equivalent to four thousand, and when even these forty will not be there, I shall fight with the government single handed, however mighty be their strength. I will definitely pay them back for the insult that they have caused to Gokhale.

Bapu and the Sardar

In June 1916, Vallabhbhai Patel was playing bridge and smoking cigars —his favourite pastime at that time—at the Barrister's club along with his friend Chimanlal Thakore, when somebody invited the members of the club to meet and listen to one M.K. Gandhi who had come to expound his ideas about an Ashram and a national school. As Patel went on with his game, he remarked " I have been told he (Gandhi) comes from South Africa. Honestly I think he is a crank, and as you know, I have no use for such people." Gandhiji talked — and Patel smoked. But slowly Patel got interested as he realized that "this man was not a mere windbag — he was out for action." Patel himself says that in those early days "I was not concerned with his principles or with *himsa* and *ahimsa*. All that mattered to me was that he was sincere; that he had dedicated his whole life, and all he had, to the cause he served, that he was possessed with a desire to free his country from bondage, and that he knew his job thoroughly. I wanted nothing more." This marked the beginning of a relationship that not only brought a revolutionary change in Vallabhbhai's life, but was perhaps the greatest single factor responsible for the success of our political struggle.



Gandhi and Patel made a strong team as the Chairman and Secretary of the Gujarat Sabha and they undertook many programmes for the welfare of the masses in Gujarat – whether it was to provide relief to the plague affected, or abolition of forced labour or in the no-tax campaign when crops were destroyed in Kaira District. It was at this point that Vallabhbhai gave up his European dress for the dhoti/kurta outfit and toured the villages of Kaira District along with Gandhiji.

Although he has often been accused of being a "yes" man of Gandhi, he differed from his *Guru* in approach. He was earthy and practical and a strict disciplinarian. He never expected the impossible from his people. He differed from Gandhiji in his views on industrialisation in that he did not see it as a harbinger of destruction in the same way that Gandhi did. He also knew that industrialists and private enterprise must co-exist.

After the historic trial and imprisonment of Gandhiji in 1922 the leadership of the Congress fell on Patel and the way he reorganised Gujarat was marvellous. The Bardoli Satyagraha in 1928 resulted in success for the people because of the great fight under the leadership of Patel. The letters of Gandhiji to Patel during that historic Bardoli struggle speak volumes of his great love and regard for him. A letter dated 3 June 1928 says, "The battle in Bardoli is going on very well. Long live the Sardar to fight many a good fight."

But perhaps the high water mark of their relationship was the period spent in Yeravda Jail for 16 months from January 1932 to May 1933- Mahadev Desai who was also with them in jail recounts in his Diary, in his inimitable style, the point-counter-point banter and repartees that the two leaders always indulged in.

Patel served Gandhi like a true disciple. He would prepare his *datan*, lemon and honey water and did other odd jobs for him. He tried to identify his life with that of Gandhi. He gave up tea, as well as rice and took to boiled vegetables and milk and bread twice a day.

The man who was later to become the Iron Man of India, regaled Gandhi with his cheerful talks and pungent sense of humour. He did not even hesitate to

make fun of him. Once while preparing his *datan* he commented "Bapu has only very few teeth left, nevertheless he keeps on brushing them." Gandhiji once dictated a long letter in reply to Lord Sankey's mischievous article published in Newsletter. Patel simply said at the end "Why do you write such a long letter? Why not simply tell him that he is an utter liar?" About Gandhiji's habit of complaining to the Government, Patel commented, "Every few days Bapu must send some complaint or other to the Government. I suppose he does this lest they begin to think that he is a spent force." On one occasion when Gandhiji threatened to go on fast a second time on the Harijan issue, Vallabhbhai got angry and said, "I wish you would let people have some peace. Let those who have gathered there do what their wisdom tells them to do. Why do you want to hold a pistol again to their head and worry them. People will feel that this man has nothing to do and he keeps on talking of fasting in season and out of season." Patel was sorry to learn that the Government had decided to sell Bardoli Ashram. But he overcame his depression and said, "When we assume Government, these buildings will anyhow be returned to us. Until, then, have we not taken possession of their properties i.e. jails, instead?"

On his release on 8 May 1933, Gandhiji said, "One of the greatest joys of my life was that I had the opportunity of staying in prison with the Sardar. I knew of his invincible courage and his burning love for the country but never before had I the good fortune of spending so much time with him as I was able to do during these sixteen months. His affection and love overwhelmed me and reminded me of my dear mother. I would never have imagined he possessed such qualities of maternal affection. If I was in the slightest degree indisposed, he would immediately be by my side and would pay personal attention to the smallest of my needs... I hope the Government will believe me when I say that whenever we discussed political matters, he was one person who realized the difficulties of the Government."

Gandhi: the Teenager!

Like all teenagers Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was curious and loved to dabble with new experiences. While he was in High School he had a number of experiences – not always pleasant – from which he learned much.

Mohan had a friend in school who had rather a bad reputation. Both Putlibai and Kasturba disliked him, but Mohan said, "Let me be his friend; I know he has weaknesses but he also has virtues." This friend had told Mohan many stories about the benefits of eating meat. "Some of our teachers eat meat secretly," he said. "So do some of our leading men." "I did not know that," said Mohan. "Why do they do it?" "Meat eaters grow strong and healthy," said his friend. "Look at me ! I can run long distances. I can do any hard work. And look at you! You are weak, you have no courage."

"That is true" thought Mohan. "I am a coward. I am afraid of darkness and ghosts and thieves. Even Kasturba is bolder than I am."

"Do you know why the English rule over us?" his friend went on. "It's because they are meat-eaters. If we want to fight them and drive them out we too must eat meat and grow strong."

Mohan's mind was divided. If he ate meat, he would have to hide it from his parents. They were Vaishnavas and would be greatly shocked and grieved. Surely it was wrong to deceive them. Yet, on the other hand, it was his duty to help drive the British out of India. Finally he agreed that he would try meat-eating and his friend secretly brought some goat's meat for him. How terrible it tasted! He could not sleep that night; he felt as if a live goat was bleating inside him. But he did not give up. His friend brought good tasty meat dishes and soon he began to enjoy them. So it went on for a year.

But there was a difficulty. After eating meat secretly Mohan did not feel hungry when he got home. His mother noticed it. "Why don't you eat well, Mohan?" she asked. "I don't feel like it, mother," he replied. "My stomach is bad," As he said

the words, his conscience pricked him: "I am lying to my mother — No, I can't do it. I won't lie to my parents. I will take no more meat while they are alive."

Another school friend encouraged Mohan to smoke. They enjoyed the experience and saw nothing wrong in it. Adult men smoked, why not we do the same? But soon they were not satisfied to collect half-smoked cigarettes which other people threw away. They wanted their own, and cigarettes cost money. They began to steal coppers from servants' pockets, but that was not sufficient. Mohan was too proud to ask his wife for money. Finally he stole a bit of gold from his brother's armlet and sold it.

Once more his conscience pricked him. Stealing was wrong, he knew it. He decided he must confess to his father, but he could not speak out openly. He wrote on a piece of paper all that he had done, and asked for punishment. His father was sick, lying in bed, and Mohan went to him and gave him the paper. Kaba Gandhi read it; tears of love and compassion flowed from his eyes, then he tore up the paper and lay down. His father's tears were Mohan's first lesson in the meaning of *Ahimsa*. The father suffered because the son had done wrong, and the father was happy because the son had confessed.

K. S. Acharlu

Kasturba: A Many Splendoured Life

Kasturba (or "Ba", the mother as she was commonly called) has often been described as simple and illiterate—a devoted wife who was content to live in the shadow of her illustrious husband. However, people close to her reveal that she had a many-sided personality and Kasturba, married to Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi at the young age of 13, was a fiercely independent woman (Gandhi himself vouches for that in his Autobiography). Even while being totally devoted to her husband, she retained her individuality, and the hardships and ordeals that life had in store for her did not diminish her zest for life. Gandhiji in fact came to regard her as a trusted colleague — an equal partner.

The anecdotes given below are by three people who lived in Gandhi's Ashram and had intimate glimpses into Ba's personal life—Narayan Desai, son of Mahadev Desai, who spent his childhood in Gandhi's ashrams, Dr Sushila Nayar, Gandhiji's personal physician who was with Kasturba in jail and noted Gujarati writer, Mukulbhai Kalarthi.

* * *

Although Ba changed her life style, it was of her own free will. She would join sincerely in Bapu's prayers taken from different religions. But she remained devoted to the customs of traditional Hinduism she had been raised in

The members of Bapu's extended family saw in Ba the reflection of their own mother. But unlike Bapu's, Ba's larger family never made her care less for her own blood relations. Their eldest son Harilal had resented Bapu's denying him a formal education and therefore had been in revolt against Bapu ever since. He had taken to bad company and converted his religion. And though he had left the family, deep in his heart, Harilal had warm feelings for Ba. Once when our train stopped at a station on our way back to Wardha, we heard a cry from the crowd that was different: "Mata Kasturba Ki Jai." We realized that this cry was from an emaciated Harilal. From a pocket of his ragged clothes he took an orange and said, "Ba, I've brought this for you." Breaking in, Bapu said, "Didn't

you bring anything for me?" Said Harilal, "No, nothing for you. I only want to tell you that all the greatness you have achieved is only because of Ba. Don't forget that!"

Usually Bapu took the job of serving meals. He would explain to the guests about various dietary experiments. Ba would help Bapu serve. But she would serve things like butter, raw sugar pieces, and other sweets. We children were more interested in what Ba served than Bapu, and she too most enjoyed serving us children.

Narayan Desai

Ba was the one central attraction of the Ashram. This was due to the fact that she looked after visitors and inmates very affectionately and attended to their particular, personal needs. She often disregarded some of the Ashram rules for the comfort of the guests, for example serving tea to Mr C.F. Andrews and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, coffee to Rajaji, when such drinks were generally not permitted. And if any time Bapu gently protested all this on the plea that she was spoiling them, she would retort, "You have no right to lord it over the others"

In Sabarmati, Ba was in charge of the Ashram kitchen. In addition to the inmates, there would be a number of visitors and guests. Once, just after the kitchen had been cleaned and Ba had gone to rest, Pandit Motilal Nehru and a few other visitors arrived. Since Ba had just retired, Bapu quietly called the kitchen boy and asked him to prepare lunch with Kusumbehn's help. Ba was to be awakened only if the need arose. Accidentally, a plate fell down and Ba was aroused by the noise. Fearing that a cat might have toppled the milk pot, she got up to see – and found the whole kitchen functioning. She was angry that she had not been called to help when all the others must have been just as tired as her. She too joined them in their work. Later, in the evening she took Bapu to task, saying, "Why did you entrust the task of preparing the mid-day meal to the young people? Am I such an idler?" "To tell you the truth," Bapu said, "I am at such times afraid of you."

Ba had varied interests and we discovered in jail that games were also amongst them. In jail we had made a court and used to play badminton or tennequoit more or less regularly. Ba and Bapu had inaugurated the court with rackets in their hands, tossing the shuttle cock over the net to each other. When ill, she would sit in a chair on the verandah and watch the game with interest. At night Mirabehn, Dr Gilder and Mr Kateli used to play carrom. Ba would watch and slowly began to play herself. She and Mirabehn would usually be partners. Ping pong was also introduced.

Ba tried to take part in that also, but exercise made her breathless...

* * *

Ba was as active and involved as Bapu in the national movement. She had been to jail on several occasions. During the Quit India Movement, after Gandhiji had been arrested, Ba announced that she would address a public meeting at Shivaji Park, that Bapu was to address. In anticipation of her arrest, she dictated two messages: one to the women of India and one for the people in general. Her ideas were clear and the right words came without an effort. At quarter to five in the evening Ba and I came out to go to the meeting. A police officer was standing at the doorsteps. He pleaded with Ba, "Mother you are too old for these things. At your age you should rest at home." Ba paid no heed and proceeded to enter the car and was eventually arrested.

* * *

After Mahadev Bhai's death, Bapu suggested that, in order to overcome the sense of loss, each one should draw up a full day's work programme. Accordingly he started to teach Ba the Gita, Gujarati, Geography and History. Even at the age of seventy four, Ba too, took great interest in her studies though she found it difficult to retain facts. Earlier she had asked the fifteen-year old Babla (Narayan Desai) to teach her the Ramayana and whenever her grandson Kanha was taught new things, she also wanted to learn.

* * *

When Ba died in captivity, her body was cremated in the premises of the Aga Khan Palace. Illness had made her body waterlogged and cremation took a long time. Friends suggested that Bapu should go inside to rest but he refused. "How can I leave her like this after sixty two years of companionship? I am sure she won't forgive me for that," he replied laughingly. But he was experiencing deep pain at the parting. He remarked "I cannot imagine life without Ba. I had always wished her to go in my hands so that I would not have to worry as to what will become of her when I am no more. But she was an indivisible part of me. Her passing away has left a vacuum which will never be filled."

Sushila Nayar

Why Harijan?

Several correspondents have asked me why I have adopted the name 'Harijan' for 'untouchable'. Some English friends have asked me for its meaning. It is not a name of my coining. Some years ago, several 'untouchable' correspondents complained that I used the word *asprishya* in the pages of *Navajivan*. *Asprishya* means literally untouchable. I then invited them to suggest a better name and one of the 'untouchable' correspondents suggested the adoption of the name 'Harijan', on the strength of its having been used by the first known poet-saint of Gujarat (Narsingh Mehta). Though the quotation he sent me did not exactly fit the case he wanted to make out for the adoption, I thought that it was a good word. 'Harijan' means 'a man of God'. All the religions of the world described God pre-eminently as the Friend of the friendless, Help of the helpless and Protector of the weak. The rest of the world apart, in India who can be more friendless, helpless or weaker than the forty million or more Hindus of India who are classified as untouchables? If, therefore, anybody of people can be fitly described as men of God, they are surely these helpless, friendless and despised people... Hence, in the pages of *Navajivan* since the correspondence, I have always adopted Harijan as the name signifying untouchables... Not that the change of name brings about any change of status, but one may at least be spared the use of a term which is itself one of reproach. When caste Hindus have of their own inner conviction and, therefore, voluntarily, got rid of the present-day untouchability, we shall all be called Harijans, for, according to my humble opinion, caste Hindus will then have found favour with God and may, therefore, be fitly described as His men.

M.K. Gandhi Harijan, 112.1933

Satyagraha in Vykom

The State of Travancore (present-day Kerala) was as beautiful in the 1920's as it is now. However the picturesque surroundings was in sharp contrast to its ugly social system: a rigid caste system which rendered areas and roads around sacred temples unapproachable to certain sections of the community. It was believed that if the so-called untouchables walked on the roads round the temples, the temples and those going to them would be polluted.

These were the circumstances under which a Satyagraha was launched in Vykom, a village in the north of Travancore. An ancient Siva temple in the centre of the village formed the focus of the Satyagraha. A public road along the brahmin quarters passed by the temple as well. For centuries the priests and brahmins would not allow the lower castes to pass that way. Some enthusiastic reformers set their hearts on getting the roads open to all and launched a satyagraha. Three brave people — Madhavan, Krishnaswami and Kelappan, started the campaign early in 1924.

Gandhiji, just out of jail and still recovering from an appendicitis operation, guided the satyagrahis and cheered them through the columns of his journal *Young India*. The Travancore Government supported the orthodox community with police aid, barricades were erected and the police threw a cordon around the temple. The volunteers started satyagraha by defying the orders of the local magistracy, forbidding entry on certain roads around the temples. When the first batch tried to pass by the road, it was severely beaten by priests and brahmins. Some members of the group were hurt. The batch was a mixed one and consisted of some reformers and some untouchables. The reformers were undeterred. Ungrudgingly and without harbouring any thought of retaliation or violence, they persisted in their efforts daily. Several of them were arrested and imprisoned for trespassing.

The story of their struggle spread far and wide. Volunteers began to pour in from distant places to take the place of those arrested. The State authorities then stopped the arrests and ordered barricades to be erected across the roads

and asked the police to form cordons there. Gandhiji instructed the volunteers not to rush through the barricades but to stand in front of them in prayer and keep vigil day and night. Volunteers erected a small hut nearby, organising shifts of six hours. In spare hours they took to spinning. No violence was contemplated to any person at any time – nor did they think of rushing or destroying the barricades.

This state of affairs continued – till the monsoons. The heavy Kerala rains flooded the roads where the satyagrahis were keeping vigil. But they did not flinch. Sometimes they stood in shoulder-deep water. They changed their shifts every two to three hours but still continued their watch. The "police had to form cordons in small boats. This prolonged Satyagraha and silent suffering of the volunteers made the issue an all-India one. Gandhi himself interviewed the orthodox Namboodris (Brahmins of Kerala) and had talks with the Travancore authorities when he toured the area in March 1925. Ultimately they were persuaded to withdraw the police pickets and remove the barricades. In the autumn of 1925, after a year and four months, the road was cleared and the opposition of the Brahmins broke down.

Later, in 1937 the Maharaja of Travancore by a Royal Proclamation, threw open the doors of all state temples to all Hindu citizens, irrespective of caste and creed.

Adapted from Saga of Satyagraha

by R.R. Diwakar

The Lonesome Pilgrim

[The period prior to Independence witnessed some of the most poignant moments in Gandhiji's life. These stand out in vivid contrast to the hectic political moves being made in New Delhi in those tumultuous months. And when that much awaited day finally dawned, where was Gandhiji? What was he feeling and doing? As we celebrate another Independence Day, let us leaf through the pages of the history of those days and find out.]

Killings of Hindus, forcible conversions and arson had drawn Gandhiji to Noakhali, a remote village in Bengal in January-February 1947. Sudhir Ghosh who was Gandhiji's young emissary for the negotiations with the Labour Government during 1945-47, gives a graphic description of Gandhi's mission there.



He walked with him from village to village. Gandhiji had discarded even his leather sandals and walked bare-foot and did not stop for more than one night in one village. He slept in any hut where the villagers gave him shelter. He ate

whatever food they gave him. It was heartbreaking to see a man of his age, physically not a very strong man, living in the midst of greatest hardships, not even getting the kind of food he was used to, and the little physical comforts which the members of his entourage provided him. Only his young grand niece Manu and a Bengali interpreter was with him, the others having been assigned other tasks. His meetings with the villagers were very moving: their response reminded one of Lord Buddha on his pilgrimage, walking from village to village, with his stick in hand, preaching the gospel of tolerance and compassion. At one point an old woman waiting for him by the roadside said, "My son, I am a blind woman. I cannot see you. I want to touch you." Gandhiji touched the old woman's head and said something to her and she cried. Visiting village after village with Gandhiji, Sudhir Ghosh saw hundreds of burnt homesteads and heard the same story of brother taking brother's life. Gandhiji's concern here was to heal the wounds, to restore confidence in men and women who were afraid, and to persuade Hindus and Muslims to live together as good neighbours. During his talks with Sudhir Ghosh, which were more whispers (because physically he was very weak) he surveyed the whole Indian scene and his work to free India. At the end of a long journey he had reached a point where he felt he was alone. He felt that even his own colleagues did not fully appreciate what he was trying to do. He saw the coming division of his beloved India into two states. The very idea tormented him. In a voice that broke one's heart he said, at the end of his long survey, "Don't you see the loneliness of it all?"

Adapted from Gandhi's Emissary by Sudhir Ghosh

More Beautiful than Ornaments

While touring South India in connection with the anti-untouchability movement, an incident took place at Badagara in Malabar which visibly moved Gandhiji. In response to his appeal at the public meeting, a girl named Kaumidi came forward and gave up her bangles. Although Gandhiji was satisfied, the girl was not. She then took out her gold chain from her neck and gave it to him. Gandhiji thought that the presentation would end there but it did not. The girl next pulled out from her ears a pair of beautiful jewelled ear-rings.

This incident, said Bapu later, moved him immensely. All that the girl asked for in return, was an autograph. On a piece of paper, Gandhiji scribbled in Hindi a sentence to the effect that more beautiful than all the ornaments she had given up was her willingness to sacrifice – and signed under it!

Adapted from This was Bapu by R.K. Prabhu

'Rishi' Tolstoy

"The longer I live, and especially now, when I vividly feel the nearness of death, I want to tell others what I feel so particularly dearly, and what to my mind is of great importance—namely that which is called passive resistance, but which, in reality is nothing else then the teaching of love... That love ... is the highest and only law of human life and in the depths of his soul every human being (as we see most clearly in children) feels and knows this... unless he is entangled by the false teachings of the world...

"In reality, as soon as force was admitted into love, there was no more, and there could be no more, love as the law of life, and as there was no law of love, there was no law at all, except violence... Thus Christian mankind has lived for centuries..."

These words were penned by a very old man on the brink of death writing to a very young man. The old man was none other than Count Leo Tolstoy, the famous Russian novelist and the young man was a young Indian barrister in South Africa struggling to secure a basic human dignified existence for his people — Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. What were the forces that bound together these two individuals, so diverse in age, background, and living in different continents?

Strangely enough, Gandhi's earliest reference to Tolstoy was when, as a student, he had visited the Eiffel Tower in Paris. He agreed with Tolstoy that the Tower was a monument to man's folly! Later, drawn to India by her philosophy and religion, and the struggle against the British, Tolstoy had written an article entitled "Letter to a Hindoo" in which he gave the implicit message of civil disobedience and passive resistance. Gandhi was attracted by this. He had also read and been overwhelmed by Tolstoy's *Kingdom of God is Within You*.

In all his writings, Tolstoy spoke of the discrepancy between the message of Christianity and the actual practice of Christianity. He preached peaceful refusal to serve or obey evil governments. An aristocrat by birth, Tolstoy had achieved fame by his powerful novels like *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina* and

Resurrection. Yet his soul was in torment. Born in 1828, he abandoned high society at the age of fifty-seven for a simple life of poverty: he walked barefoot, wore a plain muzhick smock (loose shirt worn by peasants) and trousers, ploughed land like peasants, gave up smoking, meat-eating, and hunting and began to take cross country walks and bicycle rides. He gave away his property to his wife and children and devoted himself to village education, famine relief and writing about spiritual affairs and philosophy. He attempted to create his own way of life – to put into practise what he preached. This involved manual labour, minimum needs, no holding of property, no killing. He condemned military conscription, defended conscientious objection and refused the Nobel Prize because he did not accept money. It was little wonder, that Gandhi in his own quest for a different life style should be drawn to Tolstoy... A series of intense letters were exchanged between these two men in which Gandhi acquainted the Russian writer with the Civil Disobedience movement in Transvaal, and he gave him a copy of his book *Hind Swaraj*. To Gandhi, he was like a rishi! Tolstoy's last letter dated 7 September 1910 (portions of which we quoted in the beginning) unfortunately reached Gandhi after the writer had passed away. This long letter was a landmark in the relationship of these two men who never met. He commended Gandhi's work in Transvaal, as "the most essential work."

Many years after the death of Tolstoy, Gandhi stated "Russia gave me in Tolstoy a teacher who furnished a reasoned basis for my non-violence. Tolstoy blessed my movement in South Africa when it was still in its infancy and of whose wonderful possibilities I had yet to learn."

On the Tolstoy Farm

It was but natural that when Gandhi's "white brother" Herman Kallenbach gifted him eleven hundred acres of land, near Johannesburg, Gandhi should set up a community named after Tolstoy. Here he lived with his family and co-workers to prepare them for the Satyagraha—to build up a nonviolent army who would live as a community in a rural surrounding— in harmony with one another. He duly informed Tolstoy of this decision.

Gandhi has given very vivid descriptions of the life of the Satyagrahis on the Tolstoy Farm. The settlers hailed from Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Andhra and North India and belonged to different religions. It was a mixed age group and comprised both sexes.

There were no servants on the farm. Everything from cooking to scavenging was done by the members of the community — even the farming and building operations. It was obligatory for all young and old, to give time to gardening. The children had the main share of this work which included digging pits, felling timber and lifting loads. They took delight in work and did not require other exercise or games. Every youngster was taught a manual vocation. Mr Kallenbach went to a Trappist monastery and learnt shoe making which was in turn taught to the boys. Carpentry was another vocation. Cooking almost everyone knew. This was done not only with an idea to save money but to eventually make the families self-supporting.

A school was indispensable, the burden of teaching being borne mainly by Kallenbach and Gandhi. Since all were working in the morning hours, the school could be held only in the afternoons. By that time, children and teachers were all exhausted and dozing! They would sprinkle water on the eyes — and play games, to keep awake — but were not always successful. Hindi, Tamil, Gujarati, Urdu, elementary history, geography and arithmetic were taught and tuition was given through the vernaculars of the boys. English was also taught and so was Sanskrit. Textbooks were seldom used. Spiritual training was sought to be imparted through example rather than forcing it down the throats of

children. He also attempted to impart the basic teachings of all religions to the children.

In spite of a large number of settlers, one could not find garbage and dirt anywhere. All rubbish was buried in trenches sunk for the purpose. All waste water was collected and used for watering trees. Leftover food and vegetable peels were used as manure. Night soil was buried in a square pit one foot and a half deep and fully covered with earth and therefore did not smell. This was also converted into manure.

Food was generally rice, dal, vegetable and roti, occasionally with porridge. There were three meals a day. Non-vegetarians too, without coercion, took to vegetarian food. After the evening meal the community met for prayers and this attempted to cater to the needs of all the religious groups present on the farm.

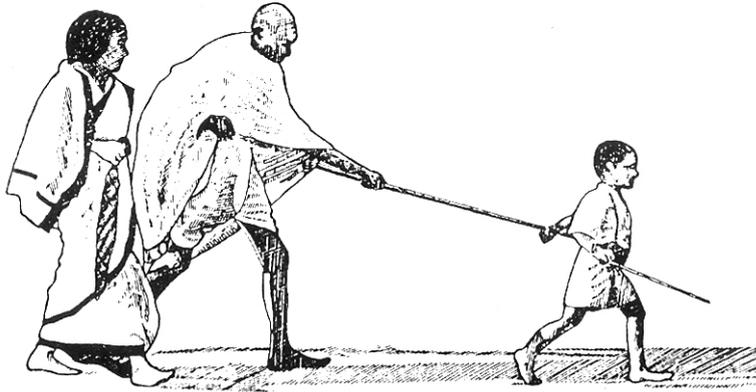
On Tolstoy Farm it was a rule that youngsters should not be asked to do what the teachers did not and therefore a teacher was always working and co-operating with them. All wore cheap simple clothes. The men wore cheap trousers and shirts of coarse blue cloth. The ladies took charge of tailoring the clothes.

There was scarcely any illness on the farm. Perhaps the good air and water and regular food were responsible for this.

The boys and girls met freely: it was an experiment and by and large successful. Corporal punishment was generally avoided. Problems did arise—and difficult ones too, and ways and means to resolve them had to be sought—including a fast by Gandhiji, to "touch the hearts" of the wrong doers. The experiment was a precursor to his later experiments in the field of Nai Talim. Gandhi says,

"Tolstoy Farm proved to be a centre for spiritual purification and penance for the final campaign. I have serious doubts as to whether the struggle could have been prosecuted for eight years, whether we could have secured larger funds, and whether the thousands of men who participated in the last phase of the struggle would have borne their share in it, if there had been no Tolstoy Farm... The Indians saw that Tolstoy Farmers were doing

what they were not prepared to do and what they looked upon in the light of hardship. This public confidence was a great asset to the movement when it was organised afresh on a large scale in 1913."



Gandhiji and Madras : A Unique Association

Gandhiji's relationship with the city of Madras was an intimate and affectionate one. Spanning a period from 1896 when he first visited the city, to 1946, when he made his last visit, he had been there on about 10 occasions, each a memorable one. In his own words, he had "ever felt at home in the South. Thanks to my South African work I felt I had some sort of special rights over the Tamils and Telugus, and the good people of the south have never belied my belief."

On his first ever visit in 1896, the people were "wild with enthusiasm." The story of how Balasundram, a Tamil indentured labour serving an European in Durban and ill treated and severely beaten up by his master, was rescued and taken care of by Gandhiji, had reached Madras. Gandhiji had another kind European re-employ him; so that enthusiastic crowds received him wherever he went. A public meeting was arranged at the Pachaiappa's Hall where copies of his "Green Pamphlet," describing the conditions of Indians in South Africa sold like "hot cakes." Dr Subramaniam of the *Hindu* chaired this meeting.

The second visit to Madras was on 21 April 1915, soon after his return from South Africa. He arrived in the city accompanied by his wife Kasturba. The two alighted from a third class compartment with a bundle of clothes, looking more like peasants — and when a strong contingent of leading citizens garlanded him, the huge appreciative crowd cheered him. Their host, Mr Natesan guided them to their simple but adequate lodgings—a room with two cots, table and desk; but Gandhi was uncomfortable with these vestiges of "luxury" and asked for the removal of these furnitures. The citizens of Madras gave him a huge reception in Victoria Hall. He also addressed a students' meeting at the YMCA.

It was during this visit that, on hearing that an elderly founder member of the Congress was seriously ill with leprosy and almost forgotten by the world, Gandhiji rushed to meet him and spent time with him, wiping his sores and comforting him.

His visit to the city in March 1919 was an eventful one. Invited by Kasturi Ranga Iyer, at the instance of C. Rajagopalachari, Gandhiji was not in good health but decided to undertake the long journey all the same. The Rowlatt Bills had just been passed and Gandhiji was trying to raise public awareness on the issue. Rajaji had just moved to Madras from Salem, to begin legal practice and take more active part in public life. Gandhi and Mahadev Desai who accompanied him were his guests though the house they stayed in, belonged to Kasturi Ranga Iyer, an influential man, and legal adviser and later editor of the *Hindu*. This was the first time that the two great men – Gandhiji and Rajaji – met. The association was later to develop into a closer bond, with the marriage of Gandhiji's son, to Rajaji's daughter. Although they had many discussions on the Rowlatt Bills, Gandhiji was at a loss to work out a suitable method of registering protest, other than holding of meetings. Kasturi Ranga Iyer called a meeting of eminent leaders to discuss the matter – the Bill had by that time, become an act. . . Gandhiji's mind was in turmoil. He says "Towards the small hours of the morning I woke up somewhat earlier than usual. I was still in the twilight condition between sleep and consciousness when suddenly the idea broke upon me – it was as if in a dream... we should call upon the country to observe general hartal. Satyagraha is a process of self-purification and ours is a sacred fight If all the people of India suspend their business on that day and observe the day as one of fasting and prayer." On 20 April he addressed a huge meeting on the beach where he appealed to the people to wake up and serve the people. Kasturi Ranga Iyer chaired the meeting.

During the Khilafat movement he came to Madras with Maulana Shaukat Ali, and again with his wife. On his way to Vykombathur, he halted in the city for a day or two. He paid a brief visit here on 3 September 1927 on his way back from Bangalore.

His most noteworthy visit to the city was during his famous "Harijan tour", in December 1933. The people of Madras virtually sought his blessings and favour by a mere touch of his garment. They showered love and affection on him and he in turn, would put forth his 'beggar's bowl' with the words, "Give me a quarter anna, half anna, anything you can."

On the day of his arrival he was presented with an address at the Ripon Buildings by the Corporation: The Mayor, Mr W.W. Ladden, the Commissioner, Mr D. Warren, and the Councillors received the Mahatma at the entrance.

Madras gave a grand demonstration of its affection for him and his mission at a public meeting at the Beach. The one lakh plus crowd overwhelmed the organisers and it took Gandhiji an hour and quarter to reach the platform! The Bharat Sabha also gave him a reception. As his car could not move up to the platform through the milling crowds, he used the car as a platform to address the vast assembly! His contacts with Tamilians had helped him to learn sufficient Tamil to enable him to crack jokes with the people so that they poured their hearts and souls into the Harijan fund. Besides coins, he received gold taklis, *charkhas*, caskets, fountain pens, silver plates, silver framed photographs, gold ornaments, ivory boxes, shaving sticks, silver cups, framed and unframed addresses which he auctioned on the spot. He was able to collect Rs. 16,708 12 as 3p. During his 3-day visit he travelled 267 miles in the city. It is interesting to note that for a few months from October 1933 till about April 1934, his journal *Harijan* was published from Madras, edited by Shri R.V. Shastri and Mrs Shastri.

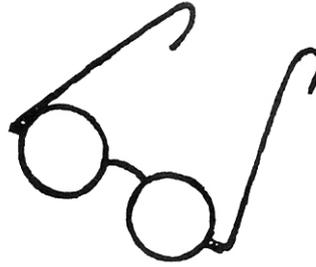
Between 1934 and 1945, Gandhiji paid visits to Madras twice or thrice to deliver the convocation address of the Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha.

The Constructive Workers' Conference and the Silver Jubilee of the Hindi Prachar Sabha brought him to Madras in January 1946. While inaugurating the Constructive Workers' Conference, he rebuked the committee members for publishing the conference papers, programme etc. in English. They should all learn Hindustani, he said. He also participated in the Silver Jubilee of the Hindi Prachar Sabha. At all meetings he appealed to the public to learn Hindustani or Hindi. Besides meeting with a British Parliamentary delegation he visited Mr V.R. Srinivasa Sastri, a freedom fighter who was ill in a nursing home. An unseemly controversy arose when some alleged that his visit was to canvass support for Rajaji for premiership of the state. Gandhiji denied these allegations strongly. On his visit he stayed at the house of one S. Subaiah,

owner of Ganesh and Company, which was responsible for reprinting of books like *Indian Home Rule* and others which no one was willing to print.

This was to be his last visit to the city.

Ramnikbhai Turakbia



The Two Gandhis

If you turn the pages of your atlas—and look at a map of the Indian subcontinent, you will find a small state in the north-east (now in Pakistan), bounded on the north by the Hindu Kush Ranges, south by Baluchistan, east by Kashmir and Punjab, and west by Afghanistan. This is the North West Frontier Province – a harsh and rugged land of steep cliffs, narrow river gorges and deep ravines, an uninviting and inhospitable terrain which is the home of the sturdy, hardy Pathan (or Pakhtun, as they were originally called). Having faced invading armies over the centuries, aggression has become a way of life with them. It was in this area, in Utamazai village in Peshawar District that Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan was born in 1890. A typical Pathan with a majestic, towering figure, broad forehead, deepset eyes and prominent nose, he joined the army but left when he saw a senior Indian Officer being insulted by a British.

In the year 1912 began, his involvement in public life when under the influence of Haji Abdul Wahid Saheb he established schools in Peshawar and Mardan Districts and though the popularity he thus gained, earned him title of *Badshah* (King) it irked the British who ordered closure of the schools and arrest of Abdul Ghaffar.

Despite his comfortable and affluent upbringing, he chose a simple and austere life for himself. He was drawn towards Gandhiji in 1919 whom he met for the first time in Delhi in early 1920 during the Khilafat Conference. In 1920 he also attended the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress. From then on, he took a leading part in the Khilafat (Muslims in India believed that a grievous wrong had been meted out to Muslims by the Treaty of Versailles after the First World War when the Caliph of Turkey was reduced to a figure-head) Movement. At this stage, he was made President of the Khilafat Committee. This led him to renew his contact with the people who in turn made him re-establish the defunct schools. Such activities alarmed the authorities and he was arrested.

Ghaffar Khan attended the Congress sessions and Khilafat Conference in Calcutta in 1928, and the Karachi Congress in 1931, all of which gave him a chance to get closer to Gandhi. A visit to Bardoli Ashram in 1931 further cemented the growing bond of friendship. It was after this that he raised his nonviolent army or *Khudai Khidmatgar* (Servants of God) back in his home province.

Ghaffar Khan's entry into NWFP being banned, he came to stay at Wardha in 1934. At that time there was a move to elect him as Chairman of Congress and he said, "Let me declare, as I have done over and over again that I am only a humble soldier and it is my ambition to end my days not as a general but as a soldier." He immersed himself in the village reconstruction programme with Gandhiji and only after the formation of Congress Ministries in some provinces including NWFP, did he re-enter his homeland. In 1938 Gandhiji toured the NWFP. Ghaffar Khan accompanied him. Gandhiji sent Mira Behn and Bibi Amtus Salam to help Ghaffar Khan in the work among the women of that area.

By this time Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan had emerged as an esteemed leader of a resurgent nation (The Pakhtuns for whom he wanted to establish Pakhtoonistan). He had taken a leading role in many movements launched by Mahatma Gandhi, including the Individual Civil Disobedience and Quit India Movements. His faith in nonviolence and work among the people of the Frontier earned him the name of "Frontier Gandhi."

The Partition of India left Abdul Ghaffar a sad man. He and his *Khudai Khidmatgars* had cast in their lot with the Congress. And now it seemed as if they would no more belong to India. Nor, owing to their ideological differences with the Muslim League, would they have any place in Pakistan. But Badshah Khan remarked, "I do not worry as long as Mahatmaji is there." The two Gandhis met for the last time on 30 July 1947. Badshah Khan, who was suffering from fever refused to take medicine. Gandhiji left for Kashmir and the Frontier Gandhi returned to his province where he and his *Khudai Khidmatgars* refused to participate in the referendum manipulated by Sir Olaf Caroe (Governor of NWFP) and the Muslim Leaguers. His last words when he left India were:

Mahatmaji has shown us the true path... May God spare him for long to give us inspiration and strength to fight for truth and justice to the last.

The future only held trouble for Badshah Khan. He was, as he says, literally "thrown among wolves." He spent fifteen years in prison in "independent" Pakistan and was always accused of being a stooge of Hindus.

The Servants of God

The Pathans or Pakhtoons were known for their family feuds, intrigues, enmities, evil customs, quarrels and riots. They squandered all their earnings on harmful customs, practices and litigations. The "Khudai Khidmatgar" was formed in 1927 to fulfill a particular purpose. In the words of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, "we wanted to infuse among the Pakhtoons the spirit and consciousness for the service of our community and country in the name of God... The Pakhtoons believed in violence and that too not against aliens but their own brethren. The near and dear ones were the victims of violence. The intrigues and dissensions tore them asunder. Another great drawback was the spirit of vengeance and lack of character and good habits among them." A Khudai Khidmatgar had to swear an oath never to use violence, nor retaliate or take revenge. He would be forgiving. He would not be party to intrigue or family feuds. Every Pakhtoon would be a brother and comrade, give up evil customs and lead a simple life. He would be fearless and prepared for any sacrifice. Abdul Ghaffar Khan went from village to village talking to the Pakhtoons. His companions found that their white clothes got easily dirty, so they went to a local tannery, and dipped them in a "dye" of pine bark. The result was a dark, brown red. When the group went out the unusual colour attracted immediate attention. The people in the fields left their ploughs to look at those men. That is why they came to be known as "Red Shirts" also. The volunteers had their own flags—red initially, and later, the tri-colour—and bands: bagpipe and drums. They maintained order in public meetings. They helped villagers in need. They even cleaned houses of people who were very much against them.' They decided disputes relating to land nonviolently. Women were also active workers from behind the scenes. They bore no arms, carried no weapons, not even a lathi. The movement aimed at teaching the Pakhtuns industry, economy and self-reliance, by inculcating in them self-reliance and fear of God "which banishes all fear."

The British named the organisation "Red Shirts" and made the colour of their uniform an excuse to dub them as 'Communists' connected with Russia and therefore tried to suppress and destroy it. They tried their best to provoke them to be violent but failed. Even in the face of sufferings, indignities and humiliation, the *Khudai Khidmatgar* remained nonviolent and peaceful.

Gandhi: The Writer

In his life time itself, Gandhi had earned the reputation of being a very good writer. He had a forceful, inimitable style of his own that mirrored his hopes and beliefs, his sorrows and disappointments and his dreams of a free India. His style of writing was simple, precise, clear as was the life of its author.

He was a man of the masses and wrote about their problems, feelings and aspirations. His human approach gave his writings a unique character. His idea was to educate the people through his writings about the significance of independence – political, economic and social.

Prof. Arnold Martin of Oxford University who assisted Gandhi in drafting some of his statements, says: "Gandhi's urge to write made him scribble on running trains and rocking ships. He prepared the whole of the *Green Pamphlet* on his voyage home in 1896. *Hind Swaraj*, a severe criticism of modern civilisation, was written at a stretch during his voyage from England to South Africa in 1909. He used the steamer stationery. When he got tired of writing with his right hand, he used the left and finished the book in ten days." According to another account of Prof. Martin, *Constructive Programme*, a book on nation building, was written on a train. His manuscripts had few marks of correction and seldom needed any change.

Gandhi's aptitude for selecting suitable words for translating an idea into another language was remarkable. Ruskin's *Unto the Last* was named *Sarvodaya* in Gujarati. He translated some of Carlyle's writings in Gujarati. *Ashram Bahjanawali* was deftly translated into English. Besides, while in prison, he translated many classical Sanskrit poets into English, entitled, *Songs from the Prison*.

As far as his literary as well as journalistic works were concerned, Gandhi often referred to incidents, examples and morals found in the Indian epics and in the lives of Jesus, Rama, Mohammed, Krishna and Guru Nanak. This made his idea lucid to the masses and gave him that amazing power of touching their hearts.

At the age of thirty-five, Gandhi took the charge of *Indian Opinion* as editor and through it he unified and guided the Indians in the African continent. A Gujarati edition of the same was printed at Phoenix. Gandhi knew well that newspapers were a strong medium of spreading ideas. He wrote its first editorial, "Ourselves", the second leading article, "The British Indians in South Africa" and several short notes. All his work was unsigned. *Indian Opinion*, mirrored Gandhi's life. After accepting the editorship of *Young India*, he was keen on publishing a paper in Gujarati as a vernacular paper was needed. This materialised in the form of *Navajivan*.

Editing a journal was no light task for a busy person like Gandhi. Even at the age of seventy, he would get up as early as 1.30 a.m. and complete editing *Harijan*. Most of his articles in the journals carried the byline: "On the train"! Even while recuperating from illness, he used to write two to three articles per day and his friends said that Gandhi could live without medicine but not without writing!

Firoz Bakht Ahmed

Worth their Weight in Gold

Once, while on a tour of Orissa, Gandhiji halted at a small, isolated village, by the name of Angul. This was situated in a "No regulated" zone, amidst dense jungles where only the District Magistrate's writ ran. Gandhiji was not granted permission to stay at the public Dharamshala so he had no option but to pitch a tent and camp there.

The prohibitory orders of the Government, however, did not deter Adivasis, in their thousands, from trudging long distances for a *Darshan* of Gandhiji. They were extremely poor but each carried with them a pice or two, an anna or two, which they wished to place directly in Gandhiji's hand.

Gandhiji was only too happy and sat for three hours on a hastily erected dais about seven feet high stretching out his hands to accept each of these gifts. When the last anna had been donated, he said "To me, each paisa has the value of gold – not copper. They have scrimped and saved it with so much effort and love, and have walked such great distances just to give it to me. This is their contribution to the country's cause. I just had to sit through for so many hours and take each offering myself: would they not be hurt, otherwise?"

Adapted from Prabhu hi Mera Rakshak Hai

Money is a Sacred Trust

The party was travelling from Delhi to Wardha. Gandhiji said that he wanted to take his evening meal on the train. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur who was in charge of this service found that one of her thermos was broken. She had to take hot milk as well as hot water for him. It was difficult to manage with one thermos. G.D. Birla, seeing this difficulty gave her a brand new one which he had bought very recently. When she poured out the milk from it in the train Gandhiji's eagle eye saw that it was a new one. Had she bought it? The story was then told. Gandhiji was angry at her accepting the gift so-readily. Said he, "Am I a pauper that I should make anyone spend money for me? It does not matter that the friend who gave it could afford to do so, but you should have known better. Money is a sacred trust with those to whom God has given it, and not a penny should be spent on him who has no need of it nor on anything that is not needed."

The thermos flask was returned to the donor.

Howzzat, Mr Gandhi?

Very few people know that Gandhiji evinced avid interest in cricket and that he was a good batsman. His classmate at the Alfred High School, Rajkot, Ratilal Gelabhai Mehta recalls in the *Free Press Journal* of 24 January 1941, "Gandhiji was deeply interested in cricket. He was a good bowler as well as a batsman. He had strong legs and would run about on the field very vigorously. He would generally field in the covers. His favourite player was Douglas Jardine. In 1933-34 when Gandhiji was in England the MCC had organised a friendly match with people of Indian origin in London. Gandhi, who had naturally, wished to play as a member of the Indian' team, was requested to play on behalf of the MCC! Even at that age Gandhi scored 27 runs which included three fours! He even managed to take one wicket having clean bowled the batsman. For the match he wore only one white shirt and a pair of trousers. He wore neither pad nor gloves. The MCC won the match. Gandhiji signed on a bat as the 17th player of the MCC! He had even signed in an autograph book. Both bat and autograph book are now among the prized possession of the MCC and kept in their headquarters in London.

Feroz Bakht Ahmad

On the last occasion when the Nawab of Pataudi went to pay his respects to Gandhiji, the latter, says the Nawab, "wanting a change from discussions on general topics of the day, suddenly decided to pull my leg by telling me that he had made up his mind to challenge me at a single wicket cricket match. Would I accept the challenge? I replied that I would, on condition that when the match was over he would allow me to challenge him in Politics. My proposal having been accepted, I proceeded to tell him with a serious face that whereas I was certain he would beat me at cricket, I was equally certain I would beat him in Politics. Gandhiji laughed like a happy child and thumping me affectionately on the back said, 'Nawab Sahib, apne to abhi se mujhe bowled kar dia' ("Nawab Sahib, you have bowled me out already').

From This was Bapu by R.K. Prabhu

No Cause is too Small

"Fasting" is a concept with which most of us in India are familiar. We have all grown up seeing our mothers or grandmothers keep a fast on particular days of the week or month—for religious reasons. The modern among us may even keep a fast, for health reasons! But have you ever fasted for a cause? A cause that is beyond yourself?

It was Gandhi who used fasting as an effective weapon during his nonviolent struggle against the British. Gandhi's fasts were undertaken either for self purification or self-restraint, or for appealing to the better nature of the opposite party, in order to make him reconsider his stand and realize his wrongs. They were undertaken to check acts of violence, to remove bitterness, or even to purify the political atmosphere. Gandhi however cautioned that fasting should be undertaken by an individual according to his capacity to fast.

As is well-known "repetition kills art" – so too with the art of fasting: it should be undertaken only on rare occasions and only as a last resort, in obedience to the call of one's conscience, never on the dictate of anyone else.

In the course of his Satyagraha movements, Gandhi made use of this method on as many as seventeen different occasions.

Of these, three were against official injustice, four against the institution and practice of untouchability, three against Hindu-Muslim riots, four against other acts of violence. Three of his fasts were for self purification and penance, and one to encourage the Ahmedabad Mill workers in their strike.

The penitential (performed as penance) fasts were a novel experiment in which Gandhi took upon himself the task of atoning for moral lapses of his inmates at Phoenix and once at Sabarmati.

Gandhi to whom means were as important as the ends, could never tolerate any violence in what he called a nonviolent struggle. Therefore, whenever his followers indulged in violence he was most unhappy, and one of his methods of expressing his dismay was to go on fast. He had fasted for three days when

some anarchists attempted to derail a train at Nadiad in 1919 and again when they were planning disruptive activities against the visit of Prince of Wales. The most notable of his fasts against violence was that against the Chauri Chaura incident when a violent mob lynched policemen and burnt down a police station, in February 1922.

The Ahmedabad fast of 1918 deserves special mention because, though it did not aim at coercing the opposite party with whom Gandhi had very close and cordial relations, that, inadvertently, was the result.

The most remarkable of his fasts against untouchability, another issue of great concern to Gandhi, was his "epic fast" of 1932, undertaken while he was in Yervada jail, as a protest against the British Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald's Award creating separate electorates for depressed classes. The fast was broken when the Yervada Pact was accepted in place of the Macdonald Award. The poet Tagore was present and sang a hymn from the Gitanjali on the occasion.

Another of his fasts which deserves special mention is the Rajkot fast in 1939. The issue this time was the Rajkot Thakore's (ruler) refusal to honour his agreement with the people to release Satyagrahi prisoners and to withdraw repressive ordinances. The Viceroy suggested, with the ruler's assent, arbitration by the Chief Justice of India, Sir Maurice Gwyer.

In 1943 he was on fast for 21 days in the Aga Khan Palace as a protest against the Viceroy's refusal to release him from prison so that he did not remain a helpless spectator to the happenings in the country.

In the last days of his life, the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity agitated him greatly. The two fasts, undertaken after independence were for this cause. Pained by the Hindu-Muslim riots in Bengal and Punjab, he undertook a fast unto death in Calcutta in September 1947. The fast was terminated when peace was restored and a pledge signed by representatives of Hindus and Muslims and a car-load of hand grenades and arms were surrendered to him as a token of repentance, on the part of those who had taken part in reprisals and counter reprisals.

His last fast, again a fast unto death was to prevent Hindu-Muslim riots in Delhi, and particularly to protect Muslims from being forcibly evicted from Delhi. Lasting five days, Gandhiji broke his fast on 18 January 1948, when peace was restored and a pledge was signed by representatives of various communities to prevent further outbreak.

Unconcerned about his own life, seven of his fasts were undertaken unto death. All his fasts lasted for a total duration of 138 days.

Adapted from Gandhi's Concept of Political Organisation by Ram Rattan

Doctor Gandhi

When Gandhi matriculated from the Alfred High School at Rajkot, he expressed a desire to be trained for the medical profession. He eventually did not undergo the training, owing to objections from the family. How could a Vaishnava have anything to do with dissection?

However, this did not come in the way of Gandhi's great interest in healing the sick. Although he disliked western medicine and showed no particular fascination for Ayurveda and Homeopathy, he had great faith in nature and use of natural resources as a treatment for all ills. He read Kuhne's book and was influenced by his use of water in curing the sick. After making experiments on himself and his family members, he stuck to a treatment based on the right use of elements – water, earth, fresh air and sun's rays. He did not believe in poisoning the body with pills and powders but laid stress on fasting, change of diet and herbs.

Even when his son was down with typhoid, Gandhi did not give him the prescribed egg and chicken broth, but kept him on water and orange juice. He put him in wet-sheet-packs. Gandhi was, admittedly a little nervous when the boy was delirious, but stuck to his nature cure methods in curing him. Gandhi's stress was on keeping the system clean. He believed that headaches, indigestion, diarrhoea and constipation resulted from over-eating and lack of regular physical exercise. He prescribed long walks and regular breathing exercises. To him, even Ramanam was a remedy for all ills. He applied earth treatment in cases of plague, enteric fever, malaria, dyspepsia, jaundice, blood pressure, severe burns, small pox and fractures.

When Gandhi himself was attacked by a Pathan in South Africa, he applied clear earth poultice on his bruised mouth, forehead and ribs. The swelling subsided. When his son broke his arms during a voyage, Gandhi tied an earth bandage on it and the wound healed.

Yet he warned people not to take his experiments as Gospel truth.

He laid stress on teaching people cleanliness and healthy ways of living rather than on opening a few maternity homes, hospitals and dispensaries. He firmly believed in the old adage "Prevention is better than cure."

Even though he was against allopathic medicines, they were not altogether taboo. During a cholera epidemic in Sevagram he allowed the villagers and ashramites to get vaccinated. He himself was operated in jail for appendicitis and was flooded with unkind letters from the public!

The main reason for Gandhi's advocating naturopathy (Nature Cure) was that it was within easy reach of the poor masses of India. It was cent per cent swadeshi. At the age of seventy seven he established a nature- cure centre in a village called Uruli Kanchan.

To Gandhi, the ideal doctor was one who had good knowledge of medicine and shared that knowledge with the public free of charge. He wanted to fix a yearly allowance for doctors so that they did not expect anything from their patients – rich or poor.

In the ashram, the common joke was: "If you want Bapu to be near you, fall ill." Gandhi knew the detail of every sick person. He gave instructions on the diet, how he was to be sponged and massaged. His advice to patients was: "Bhaji khao, chach pio, mitti lagao." (Eat vegetables, drink butter-milk and apply mud poultices).

In 1925 Gandhi was affected by high blood pressure. Dr B.C. Roy recalls that when Gandhi was asked to take medicine that would ensure rest and sleep, Gandhi just replied "Oh! you want me to sleep? Very well, give me two minutes' time." So he just turned round and within two minutes he was asleep. Gandhi's general prescription to a blood pressure patient was "Whenever you feel a higher pressure, walk it off."

A co-worker suffering from asthma sought his help. Gandhi asked him to stop smoking and he agreed. Three days passed without any improvement for he was secretly continuing to smoke two or three cigarettes in a day. One night as he struck a match to light a cigarette, a torch flashed on his face. He saw Gandhi

standing in front' of him! He eventually gave up smoking. When Badshah Khan had some scalp trouble Gandhi suggested a home remedy that pained him more than the disease. A thorn once entered Vallabhbhai's foot. Gandhi used burnt bibba, a marking-nut as a substitute, to which Vallabhbhai remarked, "I prefer the pain of the thorn to this biting cure."

Adapted from Bahuroopee Gandhi by Anu Bandopadhyaya

We Shall Overcome

Gandhi had once predicted, "It may be through negroes that the unadulterated message of nonviolence will be delivered to the world."

On his 67th birth anniversary on 15 January let us recall the life and struggle of the man whose voice delivered that message to the world—the American Civil Rights leader, Martin Luther King, who himself drew inspiration from Gandhi, and was like him, assassinated. In fact in 1959 he had come to India on (as he called it) a pilgrimage.

Martin Luther King Jr., was the middle child in his family who lived and grew up in his grandfather's house in Atlanta. The house was situated on a street called Auburn Avenue, which together with the few adjacent streets, made up the Atlanta "Ghetto" (the section in which the negroes or so called coloured people lived). Most of them had menial jobs — but a few, like Martin's father, had worked their way up against terrible odds, to join professions.

To Martin, the church was his second home. His father was a priest. He grew up with the Bible and the words of Christ ringing in his ears. Soon after he started school he began to spell out the signs in his neighbourhood and around the city. One of the first things he learned to read was "For Whites Only." Later, when he travelled in buses, there were more signs to read, "Coloured seat from the rear," "Coloured exit by the rear door." Little by little, he was becoming more aware of what it meant to be a Negro living in the deep South. One of his roughest childhood experiences occurred when he was six. A white shopkeeper on Auburn Avenue told her two sons they could no longer play with Martin "because he's coloured." The three boys had been firm friends and Martin did not forget this.

His father always insisted that if the children wanted to spend money, they had better work for it! So Martin began selling Atlanta's evening newspaper, *The Atlanta Journal*, as soon as he was big enough to lift huge bundles of newspapers. One of the things he liked to do best with the money he earned

was to buy books — special books. Since school history books had very little about Negro history, he was determined to find out more about his own people. This he did, not only from these books, but also in a special "laboratory" school which was being conducted by the Atlanta University — to prove that "Negro" children could learn just as quickly as white children, if given an equal opportunity. He made such good progress at this school, that at fifteen he was ready to enter college. He entered Moorehouse College in Atlanta, a famous "negro" institution, whose students were all coloured. When it came to choosing a career he felt he wanted to do something that would help his people the most.

In the end, it was an essay that helped him to make up his mind — Henry David Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience*. Eighty years before this, Thoreau had refused to cooperate with unjust laws, in Concord, Massachusetts. He had felt that the poll tax law which required him to pay for the right to vote, was unjust. So he did not pay his poll tax for six years, but insisted upon his right to vote, anyway. He was arrested and jailed! Martin read and re-read this essay and slowly, it dawned on him that Thoreau's technique of civil disobedience, might be used to help the Blacks gain their rights. Why not simply refuse to obey the unjust laws that abused and mistreated them? He also realized that he would have to try to get his ideas to many negroes, and felt that only as a minister (priest in a church) — a man of God, could he succeed — and therefore followed his father into the profession. After graduating from Moorehouse, the nineteen year-old Martin, entered the Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania.

At Crozer, he devoted his time to studying the teachings of Jesus and other great leaders of all faiths. He also became acquainted with the life and work of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and how he had freed his people through nonviolent methods. Like Thoreau, Gandhi (who was also deeply inspired by Thoreau) rebelled at laws which he considered unjust. But he went a step further — to *break* these laws — and to pay the price and be arrested. Why not combine the teachings and ideas of Jesus Christ, Thoreau and Mahatma Gandhi?

After his marriage to Coretta Scott, and obtaining a doctorate degree, he decided to become a pastor in a Baptist Church, in Montgomery, Alabama, in the deep South. As a pastor, he began speaking out against injustices to 'blacks' in his Sunday sermons. He also began talking to other leaders in the community about Gandhi's programme of civil disobedience. As a beginning they thought of stopping riding buses in protest against the law of separate entrances for whites and coloureds, in buses.

Then one day, after Dr King had been in Montgomery for over a year and there was still only talk of doing something, a middle-aged Negro seamstress, Ms. Rosa Parks, did something. After work, she took a bus, paid her fare, and took the first seat behind a sign reading "Reserved for Whites." Three other negroes followed her. As the bus began to fill up with white passengers, the driver ordered the Negroes to stand up and make room for the whites. Mrs. Parks refused to do so. She was arrested! This incident gave the necessary "spark" to the movement, and the famous Montgomery bus boycott where the blacks decided to stop using buses, was planned!

The first few days of the boycott gave it added momentum and provided the black community with a new sense of pride, dignity and spirit of working together. They all walked to work great distances, sometimes even in rain. Old men and women as well as young children walked. Some rode mules or drove horse-driven carriages. Soon it was obvious that the 'negroes' were not going to ride the buses unless their terms were met. They wanted only three things: courteous treatment from drivers, seating on a first come, first serve basis, and employment of "Negro" bus drivers. The bus company would not agree to these terms, so the boycott continued. Dr King himself was arrested on a "trumped up" charge. Even though violent methods were used to force Negroes to end their boycott which was soon declared illegal and its leaders were arrested. Ultimately, however, the segregation laws on government city buses were declared unconstitutional.

From this time onward, there was no turning back for Dr King. Other groups, including whites, joined the fight for freedom. "Freedom rides"; in which groups

of whites and blacks, from all over the country boarded buses in the South and sat together in the "white" section, became common. They insisted that blacks also be served in bus stations and highway restaurants. They were all carted off to jail where they went on hunger strikes and sang freedom songs.

"We shall Overcome" became the freedom fighters' song. It was sung during picketing of buses and on protest marches. People joined hands at rallies in the lonesome fields of rural South and sang it by the light of flickering torches. Dr King spoke at rallies of thousands and at small gatherings in the fields.

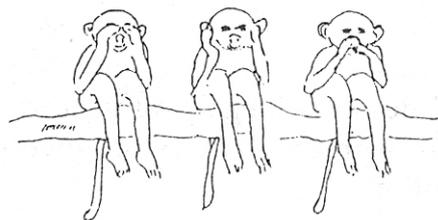
On 28 August 1963, a huge civil rights demonstration, "The March on Washington" was held. Young and old, Negro and white, Gentile and Jew—housewives, sharecroppers, students, teachers, ministers, actors, singers, servants and statesmen, gathered on the slopes of Washington Monument. Shoulder to shoulder, they marched to the Lincoln memorial. Martin Luther King addressed the huge gathering: "I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood..."

This March gave the civil rights movement a new importance. Dr King and other leaders were asked to draft a bill that would give the Negro equal rights.

Before he was assassinated on 22 November 1963, President Kennedy presented a Civil Rights Bill to Congress. The bill was passed by the House of Representatives but held up by the senate.

With the passage of the Civil Rights Bill, the American Negro at last set his foot on the road to freedom.

from Martin Luther King: *The Peaceful Warrior* by Ed Clayton



Bose and Gandhi: A Complex Relationship

As we are about to observe the birth centenary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose it may be apt to recall, in these columns, the complex relationship between these two stalwarts of the freedom struggle — Bose and Gandhi.

Subhas Bose, born on 23 January 1897, at Cuttack, in a well-to-do middle class Bengali family, was educated first at a missionary school in Cuttack and later at Ravenshaw College in the same city. Proceeding to Calcutta for higher studies, he faced rustication from Presidency College when he protested against the history Professor, E.F. Oaten's man-handling of Indian students, and calling a strike by students to express the same. Later, after completing his studies in India he left for England to appear for the Indian Civil Service Examination which he easily passed — but the very thought of "serving an alien bureaucracy" was repugnant to him and he resigned, to dedicate himself to a cause which was far more pressing — India's freedom.

It is ironical that both these men — Gandhi and Bose — who sacrificed their all for the country's freedom — should have walked such divergent paths. When Bose landed in Bombay in 1921 after his return from England, he made a bee-line for Mani Bhavan on Laburnum Road, where Gandhi was residing. Bose wanted to pay his respect to the undeclared leader of the Indian freedom struggle and seek from him "a clear conception of his plan of action." But although Gandhi patiently answered all his questions, the interview was disastrous because Bose remained unsatisfied. He felt that Gandhi had no "clear idea of the successive stages of the campaign which would bring India to her cherished goal of freedom." While parting, Gandhi advised Bose to report to Chittaranjan Das in Calcutta — which Bose did and found in him the political "guru" that he had been looking for.

The differences between Subhas and Gandhi came to the fore in 1928 when the Calcutta Session of the Congress was going to be held in December. Bengal wanted Motilal Nehru to be the President of the Congress, both Gandhi and Motilal wanted Jawaharlal to be the President: but on Subhas's insistence,

Motilal agreed to become the President. At the session, when Gandhi moved the main resolution aiming at Dominion Status, both Subhash and Jawaharlal opposed it. When the Subhash- Jawaharlal amendment secured 45% of the votes, Gandhi was alarmed and decided to win back Jawaharlal by making him President of the Congress in 1929. Jawaharlal could not pull on with the majority of the Working Committee and offered his resignation. Gandhi however, persuaded him to continue. This apparent "surrender" by Nehru upset Bose.

In 1938 Bose himself was elected President of the Indian National Congress and presided at the Haripura Congress. Bose did not try to hide his differences with Gandhi's means of winning Swaraj. He could not agree with his insistence on nonviolence, nor with his regard for the 3ftteans with which to achieve the ends. He failed to see the wisdom of Gandhi's patience and perserverance in his efforts to conquer his opponents by love for he felt that brute force could not be conquered by soul force. He wanted to widen the scope and quicken the tempo of Gandhi's non- cooperation movements, and felt angry and frustrated whenever these were halted or withdrawn. He was not entirely in agreement with Gandhi's adoption of village life and negation of scientific methods. He stressed the need of science and scientists and co-operation between science and politics, if India was to take its place among the advanced countries of the world. He maintained that "Economic planning for India should mean largely planning for industrialisation of India." He was the first leader to stress the need for comprehensive economic planning for India.

When Bose's term of Presidentship was about to expire, he expressed his desire to contest again. Gandhi opposed the idea and sponsored Dr Pattabhi Sitaramayya's candidature for the post. Despite Gandhi's opposition Bose defeated Dr Sitaramayya, which Gandhi admitted, as his own defeat. A number of leaders resigned from the Working Committee and Gandhi did not attend the Congress session at Tripuri in March 1939. Sardar Patel and other old stalwarts of the Congress imposed terms on Bose in the formation of the Working Committee. Bose wrote a number of times to Gandhi for a frank talk — but to

no effect. His replies were brief and to the point. A stalemate resulted, and ultimately Bose had to resign.

But their political differences did not affect their personal relations. He only emphasized that "Bose's ways are not my ways." He also assured that whenever Bose "leads in a nonviolent battle, he will find me following him." Gandhi had the same to say to him when he called on him at Sevagram in June 1940, which was to be their last meeting. Gandhi said, "Subhas, I have always loved you. You are keen on launching a mass movement. You thrive when there is a fight. You are terribly emotional. But I have to think of several factors. I am an old man now and must not do anything in haste. I have greatest admiration for you. Regarding your love for the country and determination to achieve its freedom, you are second to none. Your sincerity is transparent. Your spirit of suffering and self-sacrifice cannot be surpassed by anybody. But I would like these qualities to be used at a more opportune moment." Bose however believed, that this, when Britain was involved in war, was that moment. When Gandhi did not agree, he fled to Germany to fight against Britain, and although Gandhi did not agree, he secretly admired his courage and determination.

On Gandhi's 75th birthday Bose broadcast a homage to him as "India's greatest leader" and also paid a touching tribute to Kasturba who had passed away in detention at Aga Khan Palace. But the most significant message he addressed to Gandhi was on 6 July 1944 when he laid his soul bare before him in a memorable broadcast from abroad. After explaining the attitude of overseas Indians to Gandhiji and then explaining the circumstances under which he left the country, he said "India's last war of independence has begun. Troops of the Azad Hind Foj (founded by Bose) are now fighting bravely on the soil of India.. .. This armed struggle will go on until the last Britisher is thrown out of India. . . . Father of our nation! In this holy war of India's liberation we ask for your blessings and good wishes. Jai Hind!"

It is unlikely that Gandhi heard this broadcast but one feels that his blessings were always with Bose. He always acclaimed the achievements of Bose and his Indian National Army. He hailed Netaji's achievement in abolishing all

distinctions of caste, creed and class, and the fact that he was more than a Hindu or a Bengali – he was an Indian, first and last.

On his visit to the INA prisoners in their detention camps, Gandhi observed, "Netaji was like a son to me. I came to know him as a lieutenant full of promise under the late Deshbandhu Das. His last message to the INA was that, whilst on foreign soil they had fought with arms, on their return to India they would have to serve the country as soldiers of nonviolence under the guidance and leadership of the Congress."

30 January 1948

Margaret Bourke-White was an internationally known woman photographer who had "captured" Gandhi in many moods in her photographs of him, taken in 1946-48, when she was assigned to the Indian sub-continent to cover the transfer of power, there. In fact, she had the privilege of interviewing Gandhi shortly before his tragic assassination on 30 January 1948, and has vividly described those grief-stricken moments following this event, in her writings. Let us recapture those poignant scenes in her words:

"I was only a few blocks away when the assassin's bullet was fired, and in a few minutes, I was back at Birla House. The rush was so great that I could hardly reach the door, but the guards recognized me and helped me through. The next moment, I was in the room where Gandhi, dead less than an hour ago, lay on a mattress on the floor. His head was cradled in the lap of his secretary; the devoted little grand nieces clustered around him now as he lay in his sleep. . . . The only sound was the endless chanting of the Gita. Suddenly into the numbness of that grief- filled room came the incongruous tinkle of broken glass. The glass doors and windows were giving way with the pressure of the crowds outside, straining wildly for one last look at their Mahatma, even in death.

I pressed my way through the grief-stricken crowd to the garden path where Gandhiji had met his end. The place was marked off with a humble little line of sticks and a large and very ordinary tin can about the size of a large jam tin had been put down to indicate the exact spot where he fell. Already a radiance hung over the spot. Someone had marked the place with a candle. And kneeling around it were men and women of all religions, just as Gandhiji would have had it. United in deepest sorrow, they were reverently scooping up into their handkerchiefs, small handfuls of blood stained earth to carry away and preserve.

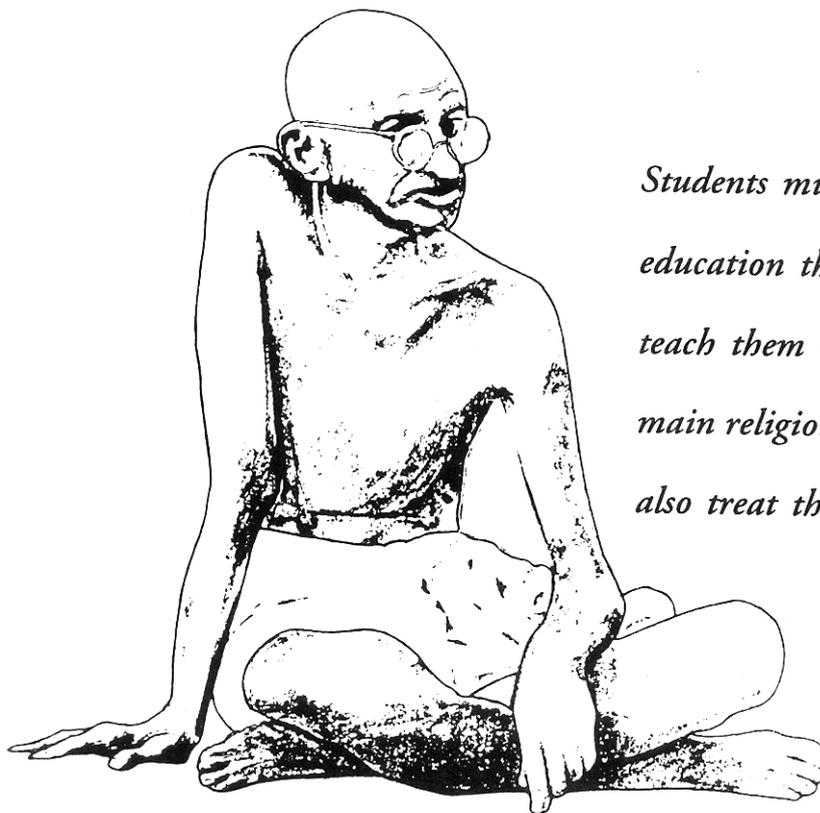
I was swept by the crowd back to the gates, and there I found Nehru speaking. At one point, he broke down and wept openly on the gatepost, and the crowd wept with him.

All through that terrible night, people gathered in hushed groups in the streets. This night I gave myself over to walking the streets, sharing the shock and sorrow of the crowds. Within hours the police had captured the assassin... but to those masses of bereaved people it was not one misguided individual who had murdered their Gandhiji, but an impersonal force who had dealt out death.

By dawn the lawns and gardens of Birla House and all streets leading to it were flooded with people. By the thousands they swirled through the Birla gates until they crushed in an indivisible mass against the house... and still they came. The house, with its concrete terraces appeared like a rocky island, holding its precious burden high above the sea of grief-stricken humanity, below. Laid out on the roof of the terrace was the figure of Gandhi, tranquil and serene. The morning sunlight lent a special radiance to the coarsely woven khadi which draped his body. He was carried down, placed on a flower-laden bier and covered with the saffron, white and green flag of the new free India. Then, that greatest of all processions began to move towards the sacred burning ground on the bank of the river Yamuna. The human stream gathered to itself all the tributaries of the countryside. It grew and grew until it was a mighty river, miles long, and a mile wide, draining towards the shore of the sacred river. People covered the entire landscape until they reached the sacred banks. I never before had photographed or even imagined such an ocean of human beings.

Somehow I managed to get to the centre of the dense, mourning throng, where the funeral pyre of sandalwood logs had been lighted. Occasionally I could catch a glimpse of the three Hindu priests kindling the fire and scattering perfumed chips on the blaze. Then a glimpse of Nehru's haggard face as he stood by the edge of the bier. Twilight was coming. The flames were rising high into the sky. All through the night, the people would watch until the flames burned down to embers.

The curtain was falling on the tragic last act. The drama I had come to India to record had run its course. I had shared some of India's greatest moments. Nothing in all my life has affected me more deeply, and the memory will never leave me. I had seen men die on the battlefield for what they believed in, but I had never seen anything like this: one Christlike man giving his life to bring unity to his people."



Students must be imparted an education that will not only teach them about all the main religions of the world, but also treat them with respect.

Gandhi