

# Mahatma Gandhi 100 Years

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The Present volume is a reprint of its original edition published in 1968 on the occasion of the celebrations of the birth centenary of Mahatma Gandhi. It was prepared under the guidance of the National Committee for the the Gandhi Centenary consisting of such eminent persons as Dr. Zakir Husain, Mr. V. V. Giri, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Jaiprakash Narayan, Acharya, J.B. Kripalani and Mr. R.R. Diwakar.

The coverage of Gandhi's life, work, and thought in this book, which is now out of print, is so comprehensive that it has been in demand for quite sometime.

It was therefore decided by the Gandhi Peace Foundation to bring out second reprint of this book containing essays of eternal values which would be found helpful not only in proper appreciation of the continued relevance of Gandhi's ideas but also in dispelling doubts being currently raised by some quarters about its relevance.

GANDHI PEACE FOUNDATION

20 July, 2009

## **PUBLISHERS' PREFACE**

Nearly thirty years ago Dr S. Radhakrishnan edited a volume of essays and reflections on the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi for presentation to him on his seventieth birthday. This present volume, also edited by him, follows the general pattern of the earlier one and brings together a new collection of essays and reflections on Gandhi, written in honour of his birth centenary by some of the eminent men and women of our time. Two of the essays—by B.N. Rau and Herbert Read—are being published posthumously.

Our thanks are due primarily to the rich array of contributors, without whose prompt cooperation this volume could not have been brought out at such short notice. To Dr S. Radhakrishnan, who despite his preoccupations willingly took upon himself the strenuous task of organizing and editing the volume, we are very much indebted. We must also thank Dr R.R. Diwakar and Professor K. Swaminathan who ably assisted Dr Radhakrishnan in the editing; and to Shri T.K. Mahadevan we offer special thanks for reading the manuscript and giving helpful Suggestions.

The volume has been published with the help of a subvention from the National Committee for the Gandhi Centenary and is being released for sale throughout India on the first day of the Gandhi Centenary Year—2 October 1968.

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**S. RADHAKRISHNAN**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The centenary of the birth of Gandhiji falls on the 2nd of October, 1969, more than 20 years after his death by assassination on the 30th of January, 1948. The occasion provides an opportunity to consider the impact of his life and thought on India and the world. This volume brings together the reflections on the subject by some of his close associates and by eminent thinkers of our time to whom we owe a special debt of gratitude.

Gandhi was a revolutionary thinker. He worked for a major change in human nature. His is the voice of the age to come, and not that which is fading and should fade away. We must give a new purpose and direction to the future and not acquiesce in things as they are. Revolutions are based on intensity of purpose and not inertia or indifference.

We are at the crossroads of history. Man's greatest enemy is not disease or famine or demographic explosion, but nuclear weapons which in war may completely destroy civilization and in peace inflict grievous and lasting damage on the human race.

Gandhi sought to prepare us for life in a disarmed world. We must pull out of the world of strife and hatred and get ready to work on the basis of cooperation and harmony. Satyagraha is his substitute for war and is based on an absolute adherence to truth, practice of love and self-suffering by the resister in cases of conflict.

The will to revolution is strongest when conditions are at their worst. Intelligent, informed people and men of goodwill are acutely aware of the greatest threat to human survival posed by a nuclear war. Though no sane person would vote for such a war, we are doing everything in our power to bring it about! Such is the paradox of human nature that while we do not consciously want a thing, yet unconsciously and irrationally we happen to work for it. The arms race with devastating weapons is growing apace and not

slowing down. So long as we do not have complete nuclear disarmament, the temptation for the use of nuclear weapons is very real.

We are not able to develop a firm attitude of purposeful hostility to the danger of universal destruction. We are courting it by our attitudes and actions. We seem to be moving towards a world catastrophe with our eyes wide open and our ears deaf to the voice of truth.

punyasya phalam icchanti punyam necchanti mānavāh

na pāpaphalam icchanti pāpam kurvanti yatnatah



There is a fatal imbalance between what man is and what he wishes to be. This discord is responsible for our unrest. We talk like wise men but act like lunatics. We cannot prepare for war and at the same time for a world community. Cavour exclaimed, "If we did for ourselves what we do for our country— what rascals we should be!" We are tormented by inner uneasiness and pangs of conscience. The warring sides of our nature require to be reconciled if we are to defeat fratricidal tendencies in us. We must break our self-will, the pride of egoism which is widespread in all sides of our life. In man there is always an urge to self-transcendence, but until it becomes absolute unselfishness, narrow loyalties and destructive rivalries will prevail. The unrest in the world is a reflection of our inner disharmony.

A people are saved not by their military leaders or industrial magnates, or by their priests and politicians but by their saints of implacable integrity. Religion is the discipline by which we are helped to overcome the discord in our nature and integrate our personality. Gandhi was essentially a religious person. By the practice of spiritual exercises, by fasts and prayers, he aimed at the production of a new type of human being, fearless, greedless and hateless. Man is still evolving.

If we reflect on the history of religious development, we will be surprised at the amount of intellectual ingenuity, passion and zeal spent on the task of defining the Supreme to which silence or poetry would seem to be the most

appropriate response. Self-righteousness breeds fanaticism. None but fools and fanatics are quite certain of their views of God. With crusaders there is no arguing.

Before God there is neither Greek nor barbarian, neither rich nor poor, neither master nor slave. They are all citizens of the one commonwealth, members of one family. For Gandhi religion is a personal encounter with the Divine. He struggled hard to get that insight into reality for over 40 years. In the spirit of Hindu religion he looked upon the Divine not only as a transcendental Absolute but as a personal God. He was truly a *bhakta* with an unflinching faith in God.

The light of truth manifests itself in holy living. A truly religious person cannot hold back but should lead. He cannot remain silent when he should speak up. He should not compromise when he should stand fast. Gandhi's faith in brotherhood is not a transcendental absolute but a call to make it immanent in the facts of life. His demand is not a counsel of defeat and despair. Ethical values have relevance to social facts. We must face up to the ugly facts of sin, pride and greed. Human nature is essentially good and it is opposed to tyranny, injustice and authoritarianism. Gandhi appeals to the hearts of men to root out fear, guilt and faith in force. He tried to make his religion a vital part of his life and applied it to the different problems he faced.

The tradition of tolerance, not merely in a negative, but in a positive sense, that is an appreciation of other faiths, has been with us for centuries. Tolerance is not apathy, but is conviction without condescension. Distances in space and time are abridged through the devices of technology. Humanity is intimately united though deeply divided. Responsible leaders of different faiths insist on the converging concern of the people for the welfare of humanity. The convergence of common purpose is the hope of the future.

### III

Many of the tensions that exist in the world today grow out of important conflicts of interest. They result from a lack of understanding of the feelings, needs, purposes and objectives of people and governments.

Peace is not the absence of conflict but it is the ability to cope with it. Satyagraha is based on love, not on hate: on loving one's opponents and suffering to convert them. It is resistance to sin and not to the sinner. Aggressiveness is not an essential part of human nature. Combativeness can be replaced by meekness and gentleness. Satyagraha demands discipline and may entail self-sacrifice, suffering, fasting, imprisonment, and death, yet it has the supreme virtue of providing means consonant with the highest ends. The Cross indicates that the love which suffers is more powerful than the force which inflicts suffering.

#### IV

The greatest problem we face today is that of racial conflict. Different races have come together as they never did before. Gandhi had to face racial antagonism early in his career in South Africa. He tried to rouse his neighbours to a higher sense of humanity—the reconciliation of the peoples of different races. He sought to overcome prejudices and asked for the surrender of privileges. Race prejudice and discrimination are social phenomena.

Race problems are man-made. Race prejudice is not an innate phenomenon. It is the result of social training. The division of races into superior and inferior is of recent history. The universal declaration of human rights pleads for equality among races. It stresses the dignity of man and the value of the individual.

On the 5th of April, Friday, the world was shocked to hear of the tragic assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. He tried to work for social justice and racial equality through methods of non-violence. He spoke in March, 1963, from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial of a dream he had:

So even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed...that all men are created equal. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of

their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today. And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

If we deny victory to violence and adopt the methods sanctified by the life and death of Martin Luther King Jr. America will recover her soul and become a great nation, and humanity will move up many steps towards real freedom.

In India Gandhi struggled hard to achieve communal harmony. In spite of his earnest efforts he did not succeed to the extent he desired. The partition of India was an admission of failure to achieve communal harmony. In December, 1947, when I last met Gandhi, I asked him about his feelings on the partition of the country which he condemned in very strong terms. "It is not a question of details but of principle. So no compromise is permissible on fundamental principles." His answer was, "I am too old to start a campaign now and my trusted lieutenants have agreed to it."<sup>1</sup>

Towards the end of his life he was a lonely and frustrated man. Deep disillusion entered his soul before the assassin's bullet entered his body.<sup>2</sup> Even now we have unfortunately communal disturbances. It only shows that we have a long way to go.

Inequalities between the rich and the poor nations are a source of disquiet. Poverty, disease, ignorance and illiteracy in the poorer nations are constant sources of discontent. The poor and new nations are increasingly aware of their position and are anxious to improve it. Nobody is willing to live in poverty and nobody believes that it is something to which we are destined. If the poor are not to die of hunger, they will be obliged to take by force what others have. The violence will call for counter-violence. Society must so organize that the disparities between the rich and the poor are diminished. Gandhi asked for freedom for the starving millions of India. His aim was complete identification with the poorest of mankind, longing to live no better than they. Economic development of all parts of mankind is essential if we are to remove a sense of humiliation and resentment.

Political conflicts are among the most formidable. Gandhi tried to plead with the British Government by his method of satyagraha.

Nationalism is more a state of emotion than a rational thesis. While Gandhi believed in some good qualities of the Indian people he also said that he would let India disappear if thereby the world could be saved. Speaking to the Rotarians of Calcutta on August 18, 1925, Gandhi said:

We want freedom for our country, but not at the expense or exploitation of others, not so as to degrade other countries. For my own part I do not want the freedom of India if it means extinction of England or the disappearance of Englishmen. I want the freedom of my country so that other countries may learn something from my free country, so that the resources of my country might be utilized for the benefit of mankind. Just as the cult of patriotism teaches us today that the individual has to die for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province, and the province for the country, even so a country has to be free in order that it may die, if necessary for the benefit of the world. My love, therefore, of nationalism is that my country may become free, that if need be, the whole country may die, so that the human race may live.<sup>3</sup>

The British thought he was a trouble-maker. In St. Mary's at Oxford, in the panelling on the ceiling, the architect in accordance with medieval traditions put in a reference to contemporary events which would help to determine the date. There over the staircase on the farther side of the High Street, we have the British lion putting its tongue out, a wild Irishman, the Russian bear and Gandhi in his loin-cloth with his glasses on. These are some of the people who gave a great deal of trouble to the British in those days. The movements of non-violent non-cooperation hurt the pride of the British. The transfer of power to India and Pakistan took place in the middle of August, 1947.<sup>4</sup> This was followed by the achievement of independence by many other States. But still we have parts of Africa under colonial rule.

Political ideologies divide the world today. Man is inclined to regard his own principles as wholly right and the opposing ones as wholly wrong. From the time of the Greeks and the barbarians, the Romans and the Carthaginians down till

today, these conflicts assume a religious character. The main problem is to overcome the distrust in others as well as in ourselves. It is not possible to believe what others say if we are convinced that what we hold is absolutely true. We must be able to discriminate between truth and propaganda.

Gandhi tried by raising the status of Harijans and the poor and treating men and women as equals to develop an integrated society in India. This integration is still at work and not complete. Innocent people distrust one another and are indulging in looting, arson, pillage and damage to property. The difficulties are ignorance, mutual distrust, discrimination, and lack of employment. These must be attacked if the situation is to improve. It is not the time for angry reactions. By indulging in violence we hurt ourselves. There can be no freedom, no equal opportunity, no social justice in an environment of mob rule and lawless behaviour.

Unfortunately the so-called youth movements, student behaviour, strikes and demonstrations do not lay sufficient stress on the need for self-discipline. In the name of grievances, which some people seem to enjoy, they encourage self-indulgence and defiance of established authority. They are symbolic of the spirit of dissent in an aroused nation. If nations are to preserve their spiritual health they must check the increasing tendency to dishonesty in public life, corruption in business, etc. Whatever religion we may profess, self-restraint is its primary demand. Enjoyment is through renunciation, says the *Upanishad*. We must work for a revolutionary social order in a spirit of dedication.

We should realize from history that great cultures are the results of intercourse with other cultures. Christian civilization arose from an intercourse of Jewish heritage with Greek thought and Roman organization. Today the great cultures have come together and we must look upon man in his diversity and as a whole. The authority of the spirit can bring about unity and salvation of mankind.

## V

In this rapidly changing world where there are changes in communication, transport and space travel, the human being is getting eliminated. He becomes a thing, a mere object. His hopes and visions yield to the material ends of

increased production and consumption. He finds it difficult, if not impossible, to exercise independent judgment. We have no personal dimension. We have lost our desire for private life. We become helpless pawns with no freedom or choice of action. We become parts of a huge machine and we sacrifice ourselves in an ecstasy of enthusiasm for the good of the machine.

When conflicts occur between races, nations and religions, they have to be overcome by a great loyalty to the human race which should supersede all other subordinate loyalties—racial, national or credal.

Gandhi's non-violence is based on the higher aspects of human nature, which rebel against tyranny, injustice and authoritarianism. The values derive from the hearts and wills of men. Gandhi believes in the tremendous urge in human nature for peace and freedom. The society which he aims at is already universally present in the hearts of men though it may lie submerged. We have to bring it to the surface by fighting the evil forces, political, social and psychological. For Gandhi, nonviolence involves an inner war, which requires us to defeat fear, greed, anger and guilt. Whenever a great personality arises he challenges the spirit in us and reminds us that we are not just animals but human beings. Gandhi's purpose was to advance man's progress towards a rational world order. Education is the means by which we can build a democratic world community. It assumes that man has freedom to shape his own future. We must direct the evolutionary process towards the goal of a world without fear, without hate and without war. This ambition was too high to succeed. The God of the *Gita* suggests, "Bring me thy failure." Judged by the death on the Cross, Jesus' mission was a failure but it has changed history.

We are familiar with the age-old question: What would happen if an irresistible force met an immovable body? The result would be an inconceivable disturbance until the force of the spirit subdues the environment to its own pattern. The tumult would become a travail. Gandhi's "failure" brought nearer the goal of a world based on sanity and peace.

We must act as though the ideal is attainable. We must try for the impossible to realize whatever is possible. Peace is not a possession but a perpetual aspiration.

Gandhi had great faith, in spite of appearances to the contrary, that a period of peace and freedom is within the realm of the possible and within our reach. The Kingdom of God is near at hand. Men of faith and dedication, conviction and sanity are the followers of Gandhi's ideals and creators of the future. They are the hope, the promise: we have to work for the fulfilment of the new social order. Gandhi is the immortal symbol of love and understanding in a world wild with hatred and torn by misunderstanding. He belongs to the ages, to history.

1. July 14, 1947; Prayer Meeting. He said "I do not agree with what my closest friends have done or are doing."
2. October 2, 1947. On his last birthday, in reply to felicitations, he said, "Where do congratulations come in? It will be more appropriate to say condolences. There is nothing but anguish in my heart"
3. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, Vol. II, p. 263.
4. Lord Attlee took the final steps in the grant of independence to India. An American journalist said to Attlee, "I agree in principle with your policy in India and Burma but I cannot help thinking you have pushed on too fast. Would it not have been better to delay a few years and make such great changes more slowly?" To this Lord Attlee replied, "No doubt we could have held India and Burma for two or three years longer. But we could have done so only at the cost of a great expenditure of men and money and in doing so we should have made certain that when they achieved independence they did so in bitterness and in a determination to break clear of Britain for ever. You cannot build or maintain a commonwealth on a foundation of bitterness and distrust. The only safe foundation is friendship and common interest. We have turned nations who might have been enemies into friends. That is worth taking risks for."

**HORACE ALEXANDER**

### **MAHATMA GANDHI'S LEGACY OF NON-VIOLENCE**

As the centenary of Gandhiji's birth draws near, we must ask ourselves: "What legacy did this great man leave to us? Are we learning the lessons he was trying to teach us?" In a world that is in peril of destroying itself in an orgy of violence, the man who tried throughout his long public life to demonstrate the efficacy of non-violent methods for securing right and justice would surely say: "No, you have not learnt-what I tried to teach."

So it is appropriate to examine his teaching on non-violence again, and to estimate whether it is relevant and adequate as a means of achieving the ends that men suffering from oppression are striving after.

As I write these lines, the war in Vietnam is still in full blast, bringing devastation and misery to the people both sides are trying to save from some allegedly greater misery. In the Middle East Arabs and Jews are apparently rearming for a fresh conflict. Several parts of Africa are engaged in armed conflict or are in imminent danger of fresh outbreaks of violence. In the United States, where I am writing, it is widely assumed that the coming summer will witness violent outbreaks of race conflict far greater than those of last summer. The list of places where violence is either openly practised or latent could be greatly extended. And in any case, almost every one of the hundred and more sovereign States into which the world is divided arms itself for possible war, and spends on what is called "national defence" vast sums of money that are needed everywhere for the fight against poverty and destitution. In such a world, it might be supposed that Gandhiji's insistence that all social and national wrongs could be righted by non-violent action would be eagerly studied by all thoughtful men and women, as providing the best hope for saving the world from destruction. But this is not so. Why?

The answer must surely be that his way is too hard for most of us. We are so deeply committed to old ways of thought that we cannot make the effort to

break away from them. We find all manner of excuses. Non-violent resistance to the mighty entrenched forces of oppression, we tell ourselves, is too difficult. Only men of extraordinary courage and discipline, like Gandhi himself, can rise to such heights. But the answer to that is that some of Gandhi's most impressive non-violent campaigns were carried through in South Africa, where his non-violent armies were composed of very ordinary, humble men and women.

Or we excuse ourselves by recalling that Gandhi said it was better to fight violently than to run away from oppression as cowards. So let us at least prove that we are not cowards. Alas, this hardly needs to be proved. There is almost too great willingness on the part of young men everywhere to offer their lives in some violent conflict on behalf of their nation or ideology. Man's readiness to die for a cause hardly needs to be demonstrated any further. But to die with a smile on your face, with love in your heart for the oppressor, that no doubt is still very rare; and if this generation is to be called to some great new adventure, then here is a road that very few have yet chosen, but it may be the only road of salvation for the human race. Yet there are men in many lands today who have the courage and independence to break away from the fixed stereotypes of traditional behaviour, and who have seen through the illusions of "armed defence". Thus, in America, young men are burning their draft cards and cheerfully accepting the repeated imprisonments and other penalties, which their refusal to be conscripted leads to.

It is also suggested that the British were unusually humane in their treatment of the leaders of non-violent resistance. Many Governments would have cheerfully shot Gandhi, Nehru and the rest. If we look only at the southern States of the American Union, such a contrast might seem to be justified. Within recent years numbers of civil rights workers, both black and white, have been killed, and none of the guilty have been brought to justice. It would seem that many southern Whites believe that the only good Negro is a dead Negro, just as there are men in various western lands who seem to think that the only good Communist is a dead Communist. Yet, however warped the mentality of the

Southern whites may be, Rev. Martin Luther King,<sup>1</sup> in his recently published book, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?*, shows by comparison how much has been achieved in America in the past few years by nonviolent action, and how little by violence.

The 1960 sit-ins desegregated lunch counters in more than 150 cities within a year. The 1961 Freedom Rides put an end to segregation in interstate travel. The 1956 bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, ended segregation on the buses not only of that city but in practically every city of the south. The 1963 Birmingham movement and the climatic March on Washington won passage of the most powerful civil rights law in a century. The Selma movement brought enactment of the Voting Rights Law. Our nonviolent marches in Chicago last summer (1966) brought about a housing agreement which, if implemented, will be the strongest step toward open housing taken in any city in the nation. Most significant is the fact that this progress occurred with minimum sacrifice and loss of life!

On the other hand, as to the violent actions of recent years, "nowhere have the riots won any concrete improvement such as have the protest demonstrations". It is easy to understand the impatience of the younger generation of Negroes, especially those in northern cities who are condemned to live in ghettos, and who face chronic unemployment, so that they have little to lose by throwing themselves in despair against the arrogance of their white overlords. But, of course, the riots only frighten the white population, which is in almost every city the great majority, so that the will to implement reform is undermined.

The struggle between the devotees of non-violence, led by Martin Luther King and others, and the impatient and passionate devotees of "black power", who care nothing for nonviolence, cannot but remind those who recall India in the 1920s and 30s of the struggle between Gandhi and the devotees of violence in the Indian national movement. It is significant that the black cover of King's book shows him standing at his desk with a portrait of Gandhi hanging on the wall behind him. He does not hide the fact that he owes much of his inspiration

to Gandhi. And a reader of his latest book will find in it just the same quiet, cold reasoning that was typical of Gandhi as he reasoned the case for non-violence in the pages of *Young India* and later of *Harijan*, Week by week.

King, like Gandhi, makes it abundantly clear, both by his action and by his words, that the choice is not between sitting still at home and starting a riot; it is a choice between two kinds of action: resisting evil by violence or by non-violence; and the non-violence demands greater courage, greater discipline and greater persistence. It also depends in part on a conviction that non-violent methods are more effective in achieving results.

But there is another element too, which Gandhiji never tired of stressing. He believed that ends and means are closely interdependent. If it is justice and fairplay for all men that you want, then your methods of action today and tomorrow must bear some relation to that end result. Violence is the weapon constantly used by the oppressors to uphold their tyranny. It is an instrument that fits with tyranny. "What can war but endless wars still breed?" wrote the poet of old. Gandhi believed, and brought the long cruel story of history to witness, that violence breeds violence and tyranny. Methods of military force and all other forms of violence tend to perpetuate the rule of force and armed strength. Use peaceful means if you wish to secure peaceful ends.

Gandhiji made it clear again and again that he had no wish to see a free India lording it over any other nation or people, however small. Writing in *Young India* in 1925 he said:

It is not nationalism that is evil. It is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane of modern nations which is evil. Each wants to profit at the expense of, and rise on the ruin of, the other.

And again:

The better mind of the world desires today not absolute independent States warring one against another but a federation of friendly interdependent States. The consummation of that event may be far off. I want to make no grand claim for our country. But I see nothing grand or

impossible about expressing our readiness for universal interdependence rather than independence.

And he went even further:

Just as the cult of patriotism teaches us today that the individual has to die for the family, the family for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province and the province for the country, even so a country has to be free in order that it may die, if necessary, for the benefit of the world. My idea, therefore, of nationalism is that my country may become free, that if need be the whole country may die, so that the human race may live.

With this as his view of life, he was ready for free India to dispense with all armed force, to become the first country to disarm itself. When the time came, he knew that the people of India were not ready for this; but it remained his ideal. Nor was he alone in this. The late Dr. Rajendra Prasad, while he was President of India, openly declared that he believed that this would be the best contribution India could make to world peace, and the quickest way to win the hearts of the people of Pakistan. He regretfully admitted that the people of India were not ready for it, and no doubt this is still true. But the world is still waiting, almost in despair, for the nation that will take the lead along this line. Declarations of "peace-lovingness" mean nothing at all; the addition of one soldier to the national defence outweighs to the outside world any number of speeches declaring the nation's love of peace. Which nation, in fact, does not love peace? The proof of a genuine, passionate love for peace will come when some nation is willing to risk all, in the face of a seemingly hostile world, by abandoning its faith in armed defence. If we take the life work of Gandhiji seriously, and believe with him that the way of trust in the "matchless weapon of truth", which he identified with trust in non-violent strength, is the way the world must find if it is to save itself from disaster, then we must try to persuade our fellow-countrymen, wherever we may live, to take this step, resolutely, into the glorious unknown.

<sup>1</sup> The article was written before the assassination of Dr. King on April 5, 1968.

## MULK RAJ AHAND

### A CONVERSATION

During the year 1929, I came from London, specially to rewrite my novel *Untouchable* under the advice of Mahatma Gandhi. I had read some articles by him in *Young India* on the question of the outcastes. I was given an appointment to see Gandhiji in Ahmedabad on the day after my arrival in Bombay. When I met him the following dialogue ensued.

GANDHUI: One thing you have learnt in London—punctuality. In fact, I am late, as I was spinning.

AUTHOR: As I wrote and told you, I have written a novel about an untouchable—

GANDHUI: We call them Harijans here.

AUTHOR: And I felt, after writing it, that it lacks depth, although it is based on actual experience about the life of the outcastes in Northern India.

GANDHUI: "Outcastes"?—we prefer to use the word "Harijan", I told you.

AUTHOR: "Harijan" means son of God. And I am sorry I do not see that our society gives them the status of sons, of God.... Besides I don't believe in God.

GANDHUI: Then you are not a Hindu.

AUTHOR: No—a religion which tolerates the caste system is not the kind of faith that I would like to subscribe to. In fact, I have been thinking of joining the Christian church, because at least Christianity does not enjoin caste. My only difficulty is that even the Christians require their followers to believe in God.

GANDHIJI: So you prefer to be an atheist?

AUTHOR: Yes! I am a socialist.

GANDHIJI: I don't agree with you that Hinduism tolerates caste. The orthodox Hindus discriminate against the lower castes, but not the good Hindus.

AUTHOR: I think you are very generous to the Hindu faith and ignore the fact that caste has been the basis of Hinduism for more than a thousand years.

GANDHIJI: I would not belong to the Hindu faith if I thought that caste was the basis of Hinduism.

AUTHOR: At any rate, I am convinced that it is so and that is why I have written my novel—as a kind of protest.

GANDHIJI: It is important to write about this question. But why not write a straightforward book attacking caste, The straight book is truthful and you can reform people by saying things frankly.

AUTHOR: I wish to write a novel and not a propaganda tract. In a novel you state a problem but do not solve it. You leave that to the reformers. Though I do want to reform people, I believe in posing the question rather than answering it.

GANDHUI: People are not likely to read your book in the English language—so it is for your own glory that you may wish to write this novel. AUTHOR: Perhaps you are right. Because in Europe the artist has tended to become a hero. But I have come to you merely because I wish to curb my egotism and learn from you to love the untouchables. I try to translate the thoughts and feelings of my characters from the original Panjabi and Hindustani into English. There are no publishers in Panjabi who will put out a novel. So I am forced to write in English.

GANDHIJI: Of course, there is no time to lose. And one must say one's say in any language that comes to hand. So there is no reason why your book should not be in English.

AUTHOR: Except that many Indians say that it is wrong to expose India's bad things to the outside world.

GANDHIJI: The truth must be told—never mind whom it hurts. It is truth, even if it hurts.

AUTHOR: The Russians said the same to Gogol, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, when these writers showed the evils of their country.

GANDHIJI: YOU have read Tolstoy.

AUTHOR: Almost everything that he has written—also what Countess Tolstoy says about him.

GANDHUI: I hear that she was not very kind to him.

AUTHOR: Have I your permission to stay in the Ashram?

GANDHUI: You can stay. . . . And we shall not be too hard on you. And now it is time for my prayer.

## VERA BRITTAIN

### GANDHI IN BRITAIN

I saw Mahatma Gandhi only once, when I was still a young woman who had never visited India, although—inspired by Agatha Harrison, Fenner Brockway, and Amiya Chakravarty— I was already a worker for Indian independence. This unique opportunity occurred during Gandhiji's visit to the Round Table Conference in 1931.

My invitation to attend a fruitarian luncheon at an unfashionable Victoria Street restaurant must have come from one of the organizations dedicated to India's freedom with which I was associated. I had seen pictures of the Mahatma and knew what to expect, but the scantiness of his clothing on one of those cold, damp November days in which London specializes was nevertheless a shock. The unforgettable impression made by his personality had, however, little to do with his attire.

When Lord Attlee, to whom India owed so much, died in October 1967, the New York *Herald Tribune* commented that Churchill's famous description of the late Labour Prime Minister as a "a sheep in sheep's clothing" was one of the most wildly inaccurate of his slapdash judgments on his opponents. Even wilder and more inaccurate was his contemptuous dismissal of Gandhiji as "a half-naked fakir". I have often wondered whether Churchill actually met Gandhi, for I must be only one of the many individuals who saw him only once but were influenced by him for the rest of their lives. He is now so much a part of the epoch which he helped to create, that it is surprising to reflect that no more than a hundred years have passed since his birth.

When I read recently in Krishna Kripalani's biography of Rabindranath Tagore that Gandhi, though so close to Tagore in spirit, was moved on one visit to Santiniketan to reprimand the poet for maintaining special seats for Brahmin boys in the ashram refectory, I recalled the deliberate repudiation of snobbery during Gandhi's weeks in England.

The finest hotels with their external splendours and creature comforts were all at his disposal, but he chose to stay on the top floor of a modest East End settlement run in Bow by Muriel and Doris Lester as a centre of education and spiritual refreshment for the then impoverished citizens of working-class London. If the Press and the distinguished officials who wanted to see Gandhi found Bow inconveniently far from the centre of the metropolis, that was their misfortune. Dr. Kripalani appropriately quotes a comment by C.F. Andrews: "Tagore is essentially a modern. Mahatma Gandhi is the St. Francis of Assisi of our days."

In 1949-501 was one of the small group of British delegates who by request of the Mahatma's disciples joined the remarkable international gathering which visited Santiniketan and Seva- gram to honour his memory. This famous Conference came to be known as "the World Pacifist Meeting". It had been Gandhi's own idea that a few individuals from many lands should meet him in his own country and stay at two of his best-known ashrams to acquire a deeper understanding of his message. But before the date fixed for the unique meeting had arrived, he had already been assassinated by a political fanatic, Nathuram Vinayak Godse.

It is worth remembering that the first delegates to reach India unsuccessfully endeavoured, in reverence for Gandhi's own views on capital punishment, to save his murderer from execution.

Thirteen years afterwards, in 1963, I returned to Santiniketan though not to Sevagram, and made another tour of some of the places associated with Gandhiji's leadership. Jawaharlal Nehru was then reaching the end of his reign over the heart and mind of India, and this new invitation to my husband and myself sprang from the hospitable impulse of his Government. The second tour was totally different from the first. Instead of "living rough" in huts and camps, we were treated as honoured guests and accommodated in some of the fine mansions, with magnificent rooms and gardens, left by the British when they departed. One of the many changes that I noted in now independent India since

my previous visit were the many fine statues of Gandhi which had sprung up all over the country.

In spite of the statues and the generous hospitality, I think I understood the spirit of non-violent non-cooperation better from the first visit than the second, but I also perceived that the realization of a warless world was not the vision of Gandhiji alone. On this hundredth anniversary of his birth he would be the first to recognize that Rabindranath Tagore and Jawaharlal Nehru had their part in it also. The West may congratulate India that she gave birth to three Titans just when her own independence required them, and gratefully recognize the part that each played in the spiritual development of mankind's journey towards non-violence.

## LORD CASEY

### AN OUTSTANDING PERSONALITY

When I left India in 1946, I wrote a small book that I called *An Australian in India*. In it I said: "By far the most outstanding and interesting individual I met in India was Mahatma Gandhi"—and then I went on to describe him and the impact he made on my mind.

I had a great many hours of meeting and discussion with him in Calcutta in late 1945. These many meetings were spread over a fortnight or so. We met so many times, and for so long, that one day when we did not meet, one of the Calcutta newspapers reported the next day: "Mr. Casey did *not* meet Mr. Gandhi yesterday."

We had a great deal to talk about. He had a number of things he wanted me to do as Governor of undivided Bengal, and I had a number of things on which I wanted him to exert his undoubted influence to help *me* to do—each of us being convinced that what we wanted the other to do was in the interests of the people of Bengal. However, although we agreed on most things, we did not always agree as to what the interests of the people of Bengal entailed, and so there was some room for discussion. But it was always friendly discussion—as I am glad to say that each of us, after we'd got to know each other<sup>1</sup> a bit, recognized that the other was objective and fair and wanted to do the right thing.

Mahatma Gandhi's personality was real and lively and endearing. He was regarded with very great affection and respect by all sections of the Indian community. Immense crowds assembled and followed him wherever and whenever he appeared. His personality, integrity, sincerity and warm humanity had a tremendous effect on the hearts and minds of his countrymen, as well as on my wife and myself.

During my talks with him, my wife would come in on each of our meetings towards the end, which enlivened the talks and sometimes diverted them into other channels. She was as fascinated by him as I was.

In between our meetings, we exchanged a good deal of correspondence. After we got to know each other a bit, he used to start his letters "Dear friend". When he wrote in a hurry, it sometimes looked like "Dear fiend".

In the course of our many talks together, I got to realize fairly soon that there were certain subjects on which it was no use my trying to convince him, as his mind was made up. Although he was always most courteous, he could be quite positive. One of these subjects on which he seemed to have fixed views was about cottage industries against which he would hear no arguments. I tried to make out a case for the employment of people in more modern and larger scale industry, but he would hear none of it. I also used to put forward the case for some degree of taxation or excise however small, on the people, to create public revenues to be spent for the good of the people as a whole—but he was against it

Another admirable and unusual thing about him in my experience was his practice of never making any harsh or critical comment on other individuals, even on those who had said hard things about him. When I brought up their names, he would always find some good to say about them, and no ill.

At the end of my references to Mahatma Gandhi in my book, I said: "Of this I am sure—that he is the most important figure in India today and I believe he will continue to be."

However this was not to be—and he was killed in January, 1948. And when this dreadful thing happened, a particular sort of light went out in India.

**SYBIL THORNDIKE CASSON**

### **GANDHI THE SAINT**

I never met Mahatma Gandhi personally, yet he has been a great influence in my life. The nearest I ever came to him was when I slept in the room he had just vacated at Kingsley Hall, Bow (the Settlement he loved) after his challenging visit to England. I am sure something of his personal influence was even then in that little simple room where he stayed. My husband Lewis Casson met him at Bow when I was away on tour, and he wrote me his impression of a saint. That is how he impressed himself on those fortunate enough to meet him, and a most original saint. I did receive a message from him passed on by that other saintly person, the head of the community at Kingsley Hall, Muriel Lester, telling me to go on believing and working for good. This inspiration he gave to so many of us who were trying to follow the way of peace, and in times of stress one would think quietly, "What would he do in these circumstances?" and always a way would be shown. Something of this truth was passed on to me by that splendid woman Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, who lived and worked with him and his family. Through her I came to know very well his attitude to family life and the larger family life of the community, which one believes if followed might help to regenerate the difficult world in which we live. By knowing him through his work, one's own faith in the Christian Church has been enlarged and deepened. One does realize somehow that where there is true saintliness there are no barriers of denominational differences. Like our Lord Christ he saw to the heart of things personal and national, and he is a never-failing source of help when one is in difficulties in one's relationship with one's fellow men, with one's fellow nations. Mahatma Gandhi has many disciples in the world of today, and one has a strong belief that because of him and his fellow saints the world will move into an enlightenment which seems sometimes very far off, but which we know must prevail.

"Lord, increase our Faith"—that is what one feels when one thinks of Mahatma Gandhi and the Power is there to help us.

**GEORGE CATLIN**

### **MORE THAN A STATESMAN**

Mahatma Gandhi was, beyond serious challenge, one of the half dozen outstanding men of this century. This could be true even if one included the villains of our recent history. This is a high claim. Why should we think it to be true? He was a food faddist; was full of obstinate idiosyncrasies; and could be exceedingly brusque with his devotees. Is it that, rather inappropriately, we cast him as the Yogi, opposing him to the rule of the Commissar? To the end a pacifist, in whose pacifism there were yet ambiguities, was he a kind of the common man's Bertrand Russell? Was he, again, just the outstanding representative, the symbol, of the eternal Indian village? Was he another Ramakrishna?

None of these descriptions fit, nor do they explain the man. First, he was one of the founders of today's Free India—and of them the greatest. Secondly, as with Nehru and Tagore India had the transcendent advantage of finding in Mohandas Gandhi a great national leader who was also, in this age of the continuing international anarchy, a great internationalist. Only Italy, in Mazzini, had been so fortunate. Again, although he was abused as just a Middle Temple lawyer (when he was not being accused of being no more than a sadhu from Gujarat), he was indeed a statesman capable and in the habit of rising high above both the special pleading of the lawyer and the short-range calculations of the politician. It was precisely because he was primarily a Mahatma, a "great soul", that he was consequently a great statesman, well suited to the occasion of his times.

I had the honour of meeting him no less than five times, in London, in Simla, in Delhi. Once when he wished to talk to me alone, at a time when he was pressed by the obligation to meet delegations from as far afield as Tibet, carrying gifts from the Dalai Lama, we talked as he took his bath. Chiefly we talked—it was my prime concern—about the principles of pacifism. It has recently been suggested that his pacifism was solely a principle in matters of

home affairs. This is not true. But he was a rational pacifist, capable of arranging his priorities. He stated to me that, did indeed an International Tribunal give an impartial decision, he would support police action in the implementing of it. Only, with a certain worldly wisdom, he expressed a doubt about the likelihood of achieving such impartiality. Others campaigned against slavery. He campaigned against the caste system. But above all he was a great leader, indeed *the* great leader, in the world campaign against war. And it is as such that, by a grateful humanity, he will be remembered. Before the claims of Caesar and of *Kaiser-i-Hind*, he placed the claims of God and of love. That is why a common language could be found between him and the best of the Viceroy, such as Halifax. Unlike the "great men", such as Stalin and Hitler, he was entirely human and spoke with the human voice of the lowly and the just. And so he "put down the mighty under his feet".

Gandhi was, as world figure, more than a statesman and more even than a secular campaigner against war. He loved both man and God and each indissolubly because of the other. What it choked such journals as the *New Statesman*, under Kingsley Martin, to recognize was that he was a great religious leader; and the word "reactionary" was freely used. In some matters admittedly he was not as liberal as Tagore. The Mahatma yet held fast to the view that "religion cannot be divorced from politics; and he who thinks that they can does not understand either." The close bond between his ecumenical religion and his humanity was the very source of his inspiration, the factor that prevented him from ever leading mankind as "the Commissar". It did not mean that he wished to be an avatar or to underwrite a superstition he condemned. What it did mean was that a divinity indwelling in a pure heart gave him grandeur, the grandeur of a suffering and compassionate man. His soul will be accounted among the peacemakers. Of such is the Kingdom of heaven, and so high his throne.

M. C. CHAGLA

## GANDHI TODAY

The Bible has said that he who lives by the sword shall perish by the sword. It is one of the tragedies of history that the greatest exponents of non-violence, the most powerful opponents of the cult of the sword have died as a result of the sword succeeding over the principle of *ahimsa*. Christ died on the Cross. Gandhiji was assassinated and the latest instance is the death of Dr. Martin Luther King. Is non-violence then an empty dream? A mere dialectic in philosophy which seeks to conceal the seething passions which sway both the individual and the nation?

That is not true. Caesar dead is more powerful than Caesar alive. The crucifixion of Christ resulted in a great religion coming to birth which has moulded the thoughts and ideas of billions of people. The death of Gandhiji has brought into existence a philosophy which is not only the basis of statecraft in our own country but has influenced people all over the world and for ought we know the murder of Dr. King may hasten the removal of the blot of apartheid from the face of the world.

There is always one great danger every prophet runs—his sayings and his message taking on the fixed mould of immutability. A prophet must be judged in the context of the times he lived in and the problems that he had to face. Times change and old problems get solved and new ones present their challenge. But we refuse to give dynamism to the prophet's thoughts. We convert his preachings into empty slogans and refuse to permit any deviation from what he wanted his followers to do however meaningless such an action might have become and however divorced it might be from the true essence of his philosophy.

Gandhiji has suffered and is suffering the same fate. There is hardly a platform where his name is not uttered and, I am afraid, very often in vain. The most dishonest, the most disreputable and the most corrupt politicians capitalize on

his name and every day he is being assassinated again not in the body but in the spirit.

Undoubtedly Gandhiji's greatest contribution to political philosophy is his doctrine of non-violence. But it is a mistake to think that he merely preached physical non-violence. He was equally, if not more, concerned with spiritual non-violence. It has become abundantly clear now that unless the minds and spirits of men are cleansed wars will not be abolished and the menace of destruction will hang dangerously over the head of mankind. But the threat of spiritual violence is no less. In South Africa, in Rhodesia, in U.S.A., racial arrogance and racial divisiveness is getting more and more marked. In our own country the upsurge of regionalism and communalism emphasizes spiritual intolerance. Even in Government there is a marked tendency towards a monolithic society. Independent and autonomous organs are under constant attack and nonconformity can only be practised at the risk of political and even social ostracism. The age-old tradition of our society has been tolerance and compassion. The great Buddha preached it and Gandhiji worked on it to make it a world creed and to give it a name and a flag.

The second great contribution of Gandhiji was the application of the doctrine of the dignity of man to Indian society. For centuries we had treated a large section of our fellow citizens as sub-human denying them elementary human rights. No one did more than Gandhiji to wipe out this blot from our society. If our Constitution proudly proclaims the abolition of un-touchability it is largely due to the awakening that Gandhiji brought about in the minds of caste Hindus. He himself performed all kinds of labour in order to prove that no shame attached to any kind of work however menial.

Gandhiji's secularism was in a sense a part of the same philosophy. In respecting all religions he respected all human beings without attaching any labels to them. Unlike Nehru whose secularism was the result of an inborn rationalism, Gandhiji's secularism emanated from a deep religious nature. He genuinely believed that all religions aimed at the same goal, though the paths for reaching it may be different. This explains the readings from different

scriptures at his prayer meetings. Being a devout Hindu himself he respected devout men of other religions. He believed that there was an unbreakable bond between truly religious men and religion should not divide men, as unfortunately it so often has done, but should act as a bridge.

The secularism that we profess to practise is not in accordance with the tenets of Gandhiji but is more akin to the communal policy of the British Government. We still look upon minorities as something separate from and outside the main national stream. We want to give them special representation and often make appointments on the basis of the community of the person appointed rather than on merits treating all citizens alike. True secularism consists in not disqualifying a person because of his caste or community, in not looking for communal qualifications. This was the *divide et impera* policy of our erstwhile British masters which sowed seeds of dissatisfaction among the majority at inferior persons being selected because they belonged to the minority community and did no good to that community because they could rely on their communal label rather than on their merits. Gandhiji preached unity on the basis of oneness of man and much more so on the oneness of the Indian. The partition of the country, a tragedy and a blunder which he resisted to the last, was a great blow to his political philosophy. But even after partition he continued to work for communal unity and ultimately gave his life for that cause. The minorities in our country sometimes do not realize that if today they have the same fundamental rights as members of the majority community and the highest office in the land is open to them, it is largely, if not wholly, due to the martyrdom of Gandhiji. I am aware of the chauvinism and fanaticism that prevail among some Congressmen, but even the worst among them is shamed into silence when he thinks that these cost the life of one of the greatest sons of India.

No one can anticipate the verdict of history—the final judgment against which there is no appeal. But I have no doubt that Gandhiji will live in the hearts not only of those who knew him and worked with him but also of succeeding generations who will find his name imprinted on the pages of history and whose

teachings have moved men to noble deeds and have improved the quality of life and brought humanity nearer to the goal of peace and universal brotherhood.

SUNITI KUMAR CHATTERJI

### REMINISCENCES

I do not remember the date, but the incident is more important than the date. It was some time about the middle of the second decade of this century when Gandhiji visited Calcutta. His great name and fame had preceded his visit—how he was fighting for the self-respect and human rights of his fellow-countrymen in South Africa, and how he was suffering without any ill-will to uphold his principle of non-violence. His arrival in Calcutta had been announced in the papers and people were very eager to see him and receive inspiration and guidance from him.

I was just out of college at the time and was, like other young men of my age, anxious to have a glimpse of Mahatmaji, even though from a distance. A committee had been formed in Calcutta to receive Mahatmaji, and a public meeting by way of a reception had been arranged at the residence of the late Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandi of Kasimbazar, which is situated on the Upper Circular Road, now renamed Acharya Praphulla Chandra Road. At the time fixed for the meeting, in the afternoon, I was there. We were all expecting him to arrive in a grand carriage and pair. Mr. Gandhi—at that time he was not known as Mahatmaji—did not want anybody to go to fetch him. While we were waiting for his arrival somebody gave a shout and pointed his finger at a short gentleman dressed in a pure *white dhoti and kurta and chaddar*, bare-footed, but with a *Gujarati pagri on his head*, walking stick in hand along the *foot-path and coming in* quick steps towards the main gate *where his hosts were waiting for him*. At once everybody rushed to meet him, as he *raised his hands in namaskar*. He was taken *inside the house* where an

address was presented to him, and *he spoke in English*. This was my first glimpse of this great man.

*During this visit to Calcutta, Mahatmaji addressed a public meeting at College Square (Gol Dighi Tank Square) in front of the University building. He was dressed in the same white dhoti and kurta and turban, but on this occasion he spoke in Hindi. His language was a Gujarati's Hindi with a liberal sprinkling of Gujarati words and expressions, and an accent also Gujarati. He spoke of "Sanskrit bhasha-ki dikri hamare uttar bharat-ki bhashao"—("our North Indian languages, which are daughters of Sanskrit"). The audience was not very big, and there was a posse of Calcutta police near by. But everybody listened to him with great respect and interest.*

*Subsequently I heard that Mahatma Gandhi was invited by Rabindranath Tagore to witness the performance of his mystic play *Dak Ghar (or The Post Office)*, in which Rabindranath himself and his nephews, Gaganendranath, Samarendranath and Abanindranath, took part along with the students of Santiniketan. Mahatmaji was profoundly impressed by the performance and so also was Kasturba.*

*During 1921-22 we read in the papers about the non-cooperation movement, satyagraha and ahimsa and Mahatmaji's new plan of campaign for national rehabilitation and freedom. All this was quite different from the earlier tactics in our national struggle for we had only known before this the self-sacrifice of the "Anarchist" and "Terrorist"<sup>99</sup> freedom-fighters from Bengal, Maharashtra and Punjab. There were some misgivings about the final success of this new method of satyagraha and ahimsa. But ultimately the new idea caught on. With regard to some of the details of the programme, there was a difference of opinion between Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore. The charkha, as an instrument for fighting British Imperialism and for raising the spirit of the masses, had little appeal for Rabindranath, although the poet's elder brother Dwijendranath Tagore became quite convinced about its value. Nevertheless there was no loss of esteem and respect on either side. Mahatmaji entertained the greatest reverence for Dwijendranath, calling him, like Rabindranath*

himself, his *Boro-Dada* or Elder Brother. Rabindranath had given the freedom of Santiniketan to Mahatmaji when he left South Africa for good and came to work among his own people in India. There was considerable support for Mahatmaji both among Bengali and non-Bengali students at Santiniketan. Nandalal Bose also became a convert to some of the ideas of Gandhiji, and sought to give expression to them through his art.

The next occasion when I met Gandhiji was some time after 1930, during his visit to the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad. On that occasion he expressed a desire to meet the late Nagendranath Basu, who had brought out single-handed the great encyclopaedia in Bengali, the *Visva-Kosha*. Gandhiji's cordial appreciation of Basu's work started a movement for having encyclopaedias like the Bengali *Visva-Kosha* in every Indian language. When Gandhiji came to visit the Sahitya Parishad, I was also present as a member of the Governing Body to receive him, and as I spoke a little Hindi, I was expected to serve as an interpreter to Mahatmaji. At that time Mahatmaji had discarded his *kurta* and turban and was attired in a loin-cloth, a *chaddar*, a pair of sandals, and a little khaddar bag hanging from his left shoulder, his watch dangling from a black thread tucked into his *dhoti* at the waist. On his arrival, we were all introduced to him. He was asked whether he could understand Bengali. He said that though he could not speak it he understood it perfectly, and loved some of the songs of Rabindranath and others. So there was no need for an interpreter, and I was relieved that my knowledge of Hindi was not to be put to the test. We followed him through the different galleries and rooms talking mostly about the welfare of the masses and the importance of the charkha and khaddar and so forth. Mahatmaji was austere of temperament and evinced little interest in matters like history and antiquities, art and archaeology. When some very fine pieces of ancient Indian sculpture in the Parishad museum were pointed out to him he gave a polite glance and that was all. But he was interested in the way in which we tried to preserve the memory of our literary men, with their portraits hanging in a gallery and reprints of their works and studies of them. Practical things interested him more than scholarly speculation. A moral or philosophical principle, something to guide our life, interested him more than the study of

origins and development with which our scholars generally busy themselves. We saw the same preference demonstrated when he was leaving the premises of the Sahitya Parishad at the end of his visit after signing our Visitors' Book and receiving our publications. The crowd outside, most of them with their hands folded, began to shout "*Mahatma Gandhi-ki Jai*". He made a little speech in bazaar Hindi or Hindustani. He said: "You appear to be, most of you, *mazdoors* or labourers in Calcutta. You are simple people, and you must try to remain simple and good and honest. At the same time you ought to help your poor brothers and sisters and try to bring about swaraj for your country. All of you must wear khaddar (i.e., coarse cotton cloth made by village weavers on their looms from yarn spun on *taklis*). Then, as you are in Calcutta, far away from home, you must never drink grog or toddy, you must live clean lives, and, above all, try to be honest,- and repeat Ramanama; never forget to repeat Ramanama." The speech was very simple and the simple people gathered there were quite touched by it; I could see tears in the eyes of some and they were now saying in a subdued voice: "*Mahatma Gandhi-ki Jai*".

I was deeply impressed by the gentle personality of Mahatmaji and its impact on our working classes as he appealed to the best in them, their love of peace and readiness for friendship and cooperation, as opposed to strife and conflict.

In 1935 *en route* to Europe I had to take a train to Bombay where I was to catch a boat to Genoa. It was, I think, at Wardha that Mahatma Gandhi got into this train as he too was going to Bombay. In my compartment there was an Anglo-Indian gentleman who said that at the next stop he was going to see Mr. Gandhi. And he put on his coat, for instinctively he felt he should be in formal dress when he went to see Gandhiji. I was in my *dhoti* and *kurta*, and at the next station I went to the third-class compartment in which Mahatmaji and his companions were travelling. I found Mahatmaji reclining on one of the middle benches, not by the window. On the platform along the windows of the carriage, there was a crowd shouting slogans. Gandhiji looked tired, but mechanically he spoke to them. One of his attendants was taking offerings of money and putting them in a cloth bag. I managed somehow to get inside.

When the train started I was able to have a word-with him. I reminded him of his visit to the Sahitya Parishad in Calcutta and my having met him, and I told him that I was going to London, for the Second International Congress of Phonetic Sciences, where I was to preside over its Indian Section. But on my way to London I would be passing through the Continent and meeting among others, Subhas Bose who had gone to Europe for the sake of his health and was staying in Vienna. He told me in Hindi: "I am glad you are going to see Subhas. Give him my best wishes and tell him it won't do his being ill continually; he must get well quickly because the country needs him."

Some years after when Gandhiji went to Calcutta again, Shrimati Aparna Roy, elder daughter of Deshbandhu Chitta Ranjan Das, who was well known to Gandhiji and Kasturba, invited Mahatmaji and party to come to her home and listen to Bengali *Vaishnava kirtans* sung by herself and the members of Braja-Madhuri Sangha, the society she had founded for the development and dissemination of Bengali *kirtans*. She had made me a member of the committee of the Sangha. Mahatmaji gladly agreed, and a day was fixed for this. My wife and I were asked to be present. Only some 200 people could be accommodated. Shrimati Aparna Devi had warned the ladies not to come to the function with costly jewellery on. She knew that Mahatmaji would ask for contributions for Harijan work, and they without thinking would offer to him whatever jewels they had on—and later perhaps repent. In this connexion Shrimati Aparna Devi told us about a little incident in her own life. It happened when her first child, Shri Siddhartha Sankar Roy, was a baby. Her father, the Deshbandhu, who was still practising as a Barrister, had given to his first grandchild a complete set of costly gold jewellery covering the whole body from top to toe. Once when Mahatmaji came to see the Deshbandhu at his residence, the proud young mother decked her child with all the ornaments given by the fond grandfather and brought him to Mahatmaji for his blessings. Kasturba was also there. Mahatmaji took the child in his arms, fondled him and then said: "You don't know how to adorn a child." Then he put the child on the bed and began to take off all the jewellery on his person and pile it on a piece of cloth. Kasturba protested: "How cruel of you to take off these jewels from the sweet little

child!" Gandhiji smiled and said, "You don't understand. So just see what I am doing." After this when the baby had not a single ornament on his person, he put him on a bed and said: "Now he looks, in his own natural beauty, like a king in all his glory." Then he continued, "In the name of the child I am taking this heap as his gift to the Harijan cause. Now please bring me your jewellery box." Shrimati Aparna Devi told us that tears were almost bursting out of her eyes. But she restrained herself and brought her jewellery boxes to Mahatmaji as she had been asked to do. Mahatmaji examined the contents and then selected a few big pieces, some of which he weighed in his hand. Then he took these and said, "Look here, you will understand as the daughter of a great man. These I take from you as your contribution to the Harijan movement, and make a promise to me that you will never replace the pieces which I am taking from you today." Shrimati Aparna Devi told me that somehow she felt a deep sense of relief and joy and peace at the end of it all.

But she did not know how others would take a similar experience. So the women invitees who came to the *kirtan* party wore no extra jewellery—they had the minimum and nothing more.

When Mahatmaji expressed a desire to come and listen to *kirtan* songs in archaic Bengali, I proposed to write out in Nagari the dozen songs which Shrimati Aparna Devi and others had selected to sing and to provide a Hindi translation and the *ankhars*, improvised refrains which singers bring in. Shrimati Aparna Devi was very pleased at the idea, and I took some pains over preparing such a manuscript of the songs.

On the appointed day when Mahatmaji and his party arrived, Shrimati Aparna Devi and her husband, the late Shri Sudhir Roy, a distinguished Barrister, received the guests. But there was some difficulty as the entire road was filled with a seething mass of humanity, all eager to have a sight of Mahatmaji. Somehow we managed to get him inside the house (the gates of which had to be closed) and then he was taken upstairs to listen to the music. The singing started immediately, but to my dismay I found that the Bengali texts in my Nagari transcription and Hindi translation were not there! On enquiry I learnt

from his secretary that by some mistake the MS. had been left at Mahatmaji's residence. Shri Sudhir Roy immediately sent someone in his car, and half an hour later the missing manuscript was brought and handed to him. I was very happy, and so were my friends, that Mahatmaji was now closely following both the text and the translation, understanding and enjoying it all. He patiently sat and listened to all the songs. The performance went on for some two hours.

Then came a tense moment. Mahatmaji said in Hindi— "*Kirtan to sunaya. Bahut achchha. Ab Harijan-ke liye kuchh dan to do*" (So you have made me listen to the *kirtans*: it is well done. Now offer some gifts for, the Harijans). Currency notes and coins began to come in from every side—Rs. 10, Rs. 5, sometimes less. In this way quite a good amount was collected. Then another game started. One young lady took off from her ears two ear-rings and placed them at the feet of Gandhiji, who thanked her and put them in his *jholi*. Others followed, and quite a number of pairs of ear-rings were in this way "bagged". Then a lady offered two of her gold bangles, and so on. Mahatmaji was quite pleased with his takings for the Harijan cause.

In the meanwhile the crowd outside had become restive. They broke through the iron gate of the house and filled the grass plots and flower beds in the compound. Mahatmaji had to come out twice on to the open verandah and request the crowd to behave and to remain quiet—his repeated requests "*aap-log shant ho jaiye*" (Please be quiet, all of you) were not heeded and his voice was drowned in cries of "*Mahatmaji-ki Jai*". It was with great difficulty that he could be taken through the crowd to his car.

I had other occasions to meet him, and these were at the time of his visit to Calcutta in connexion with the question of a national language. Mahatmaji thought that a simple form of Hindustani—a kind of bazaar Hindustani, retaining all the naturalised Arabic and Persian words—would be the best language for the masses of North India; and this he proposed as the national language of India. At that time sufficient thought was not given to the question of the difficulties which might be encountered by speakers of Indian languages outside the Hindi area, e.g., Bengal, Assam and Orissa in the East, Kashmir, Sindh, and

the great language areas of the South where we have Telugu, Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam. But the problem was quite simple in the eyes of Mahatmaji. Even this simple problem he found difficult to solve in North India itself. In order to win over Urdu-using Muslims to the national cause, Mahatmaji suggested that the national language of India should be written in two scripts, the Nagari and the Persian, and in its vocabulary there should be both Sanskrit and Perso-Arabic words. But the solution he suggested did not appeal to many persons, including myself. So in connexion with this I had to see Mahatmaji twice or thrice in Calcutta, and I very humbly brought to his notice the difficulties of those who were not attuned to the Urdu script. I told him that I personally did not feel any difficulty because I had learnt to write the Arabic script almost as fluently as that of my own language, Bengali. But Mahatmaji with his ardent and unflinching faith in an idea brushed aside my objection with some impatience, and said to me: "Do please give a trial to what I say. I am firmly of the belief that this will be quite practical. You must only set your will to achieve this."

The sum-total of my experiences of Mahatmaji's personality was that he was a great man who had faith in himself and in his ideas; and he had a real love for our masses who he wished should live a good life, prospering in this world and with health in their souls. He had no trust in the various scientific gadgets which would bring mere creature comforts, and he was anxious that man should develop his body, his mind and his soul at the same time. Such was Mahatmaji, the sort of man who makes his advent in the world only once in many generations. In India we have been exceedingly fortunate in having had such a great lover of humanity, such a man of vision who tried to lead us along the right path.

KAMALADEVI CHATTOPADHYAY

## GANDHIJI AND INDIAN SOCIALISTS

Gandhiji subscribed from the earliest days of his public career to the principle of social justice and practised it according to his own lights, though he may not have exactly called himself a socialist in the academic sense. By founding the Tolstoy Farm and the building up of a colony on certain stern principles, abjuring private property, striving towards community ownership and responsibility, he laid claim "to be one of the early founder-members of the peasants' and workers' republic". This may be challenged by those who claim to be scientific socialists. Gandhiji pointed to his own Ashram and allied institutions run under his guidance under the ruling principle of "To each according to his needs, from each according to his capacity". The one basic difference lay in their being founded on nonviolence. Somebody who once ate in the common kitchen of Talimi Sangh in Sevagram remarked humorously: "Gandhiji calls this (common kitchen) *rasoda* and it sounds commonplace. The Communists would call it 'Commune' and everybody would be impressed." Gandhiji was essentially a humanist and to him the substance and quality of the content was of supreme importance, not so much the jargon, though he was meticulously precise in the use of his vocabulary. In his own novel fashion he explains:

Socialism was not born with the discovery of the misuse of capital by capitalists. As I have contended socialism, even communism, is explicit in the first verse of the *Isopanishad*. What is true is that when some reformers lost faith in the method of conversion, the technique of what is known as scientific socialism was born. I am engaged in solving the same problems that face the scientific socialists. It is true however that my approach is through unadulterated non-violence.

All these professions of his were recorded in the thirties. In his inimitable manner he summed it all up in a homely but vivid fashion:

Socialism is a beautiful word, and so far as I am aware, in socialism all the members of the society are equal—none low, none high. In the individual body the head is not high because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as parts of the body are equal, so are the members of society. This is socialism.

Translating them in terms of Indian independence, "the swaraj of my dream" as he picturesquely termed it, "it meant the creation of a state where the necessities of life would be enjoyed by all." He said:

I have not the slightest doubt that swaraj is not *puma* swaraj until these amenities are guaranteed to all under it.

On the eve of the Salt Satyagraha, he made a direct reference to vested interests, without mincing words:

The greatest obstacle in the path of non-violence is the presence in our midst of the indigenous interests that have sprung up from British rule, the interests of moneyed men, speculators, scrip-holders, landholders, factory- owners and the like. All these do not always realize that they are living on the blood of the masses, and when they do, they become as callous as the British principals whose tools and agents they are. If they could but realize that they must give up their blood-stained gains, the battle is won for non-violence. . . . But non-violence has to be patient with these as with the British principals. The aim of the non-violent worker must ever be to convert.

These utterances may more or less be taken as the bedrock of his faith, the bare essence. In defining individual aspects, however, great variations emerged. This was inevitable. For his was a living, moving, thinking mind, in constant ferment, revolution and appraisal. There could be nothing static about his thinking. If that had happened he would have lost his dynamism. Drawing attention to this, Ram Manohar Lohia says:

A great man, if he is connected for half a century or more with public life, must have made contradictory statements. Mahatma Gandhi, with

his rare insight, made nevertheless certain conflicting assertions. From his belief that the caste system was a part of religion, he went on to say that it was a sin. From his belief that the sum-total of the British Empire tended to act for good, he went on to say that it was Satanic, and from a certain underlying belief in the sanctity of private property, he went on to demand its confiscation without compensation and termination of land ownership.

It has, however, to be remembered that though Gandhiji did write voluminously, writing was not a mental exercise for him. It was only a corollary to action. His life, his way of living, his programme of action to meet a situation or a challenge, those were his true expressions. They were not treatises for mental stimulation. They were inextricably related to what he was engaged in doing and only in that context do they fall into the proper perspective and become meaningful. Gandhiji was therefore more specific than any of our religious leaders in the past had been. For his life was the book of faith, open to anyone to read. That is how countless people the world over found in him their spokesman, the solace and the cure for their griefs, almost an answer to their yearnings and cries.

Nevertheless there were batches of young people rising out of the growing ferment with irrepressible questions, for which they could not find ready answers in Gandhiji. The predominant element that influenced the incipient socialists was Marxism and the Russian Revolution.

Socialism did not come to the national Congress only after the formation of the Socialist Party inside it. A growing trend had already begun to make itself felt even in the late twenties, expressing radical views and socialist principles in a general way through the youth and the younger leaders, which finally matured into an organized party. In *Why Socialism?* Jayaprakash Narayan has tried to answer that moot question and the several wide differences between Gandhiji and socialists at the time. These socialists asserted that capturing the national state machinery was a prerequisite to the implementation of a socialist programme. For this the national Congress had to be made into an effective

revolutionary vehicle for direct action. With all their wider differences, Gandhiji and the Congress socialists did touch at a point somewhere deep in the depths. He was a revolutionary though not cast in the conventionally accepted mould; he was wedded to direct action as revolutionaries must be. In spite of temporary variations, the touching points grew and met more and more. Gandhiji had said:

Above all, Congress represents, in its essence, the dumb semi-starved millions scattered over the length and breadth of India... if there is a genuine clash of interests I have no hesitation in saying on behalf of the Congress that it will sacrifice every interest for the sake of the interests of these dumb millions.

Nevertheless the Congress lacked a clear-cut socio-economic programme to draw the enthusiasm of the masses. Acharya Narendra Dev as the President of the first Conference of the Congress Socialist Party clearly stated:

The national struggle is coming more and more to be identified with the struggle of the oppressed classes and a full recognition of this fact alone will enable us to formulate correct policies for the future.

While the older Congress leadership in a way resented the emergence of this young militant group, regarding it as a disruptive force, they also did not see the need for building up workers' and peasants' organizations, as for them their existing machinery was good enough. Gandhiji's reaction was, however, totally different. He said he welcomed the socialists but did not favour some of the planks of their programme, such as class war; but if the socialists agreed to adhere to non-violence, he had no objection to Congressmen joining such a struggle.

As a matter of fact Gandhiji's endeavour to lift the economic battle to a political plane began as far back as 1918 when, during the peasant struggle in Kaira for suspension of land revenue, he declared:

The Kaira ryots are solving an imperial problem of the first magnitude..  
.this is a struggle for self-government.

There were however other thorny problems, such as Gandhiji's adherence to Trusteeship, of which the socialists were highly critical. According to them it should either be acknowledged that the wealth of the wealthy was unjustly acquired and its expropriation should be demanded or we should accept it as rightfully theirs to do what they liked with. Property they held had to be scientifically analyzed according to the method of its production and distribution and not treated as a question of ethics or morality, in a sentimental sense. Because to them this was not a matter that a change of heart could set right. It was a social and economic set-up which had to be overthrown and substituted by another, more equitable and conforming to justice. The socialist solution therefore lay in a social revolution, which-alone would create the proper environment for a different human relationship and behaviour and not something which concerned just a few individuals.

Though everybody is familiar with Gandhiji's concept of Trusteeship, I would like to quote a few of his expressions on it. We must however begin at the beginning and it is this: He was not only a humanist, he also leaned towards austerity. Thus while one may believe in socialism and also an affluent society by increasing production through science and technology, and expanding our needs proportionately, Gandhiji believed in a simple life as one believes in aesthetics. To him wanting or possessing anything over and above one's minimum needs was stealing. He went even further: "A thing not originally stolen must nevertheless be classified as stolen property, if we possess it without needing it." Apparently those who styled themselves scientific socialists had no meeting point with an ascetic principle; for logically, as Gandhiji himself admitted, this must ultimately lead to "total renunciation and learning to use the body for the purpose of service alone".

The theory of Trusteeship is devised because non-violence is incompatible with a feudalistic and capitalistic society. Gandhiji admits that accumulation and preservation of wealth inevitably involve violence, and Trusteeship was conceived to avoid confiscation. But Gandhiji did not leave it as a pious wish. He gave a very stern warning through the *Harijan* of 25-5-1947.

If the present owning class did not of its own accord become trustees, force of circumstance would compel the reform, or the alternative would be utter destruction. The present power of the zemindars, the capitalists and the Rajas can hold sway only so long as the common people do not realize their own strength. If the people non-cooperate with the evil of zemindari and capitalism it must die of inanition. . . .

The argument that when one possesses more than what one strictly needs one deprives someone else of it, is today largely fallacious. True, we are still in a transitional stage in the developing countries where production lags behind. Even so, man holds the key to unlimited wealth. He has found the "open sesame" to the treasure trove. Modern science and technology can easily wipe off poverty and want, and fill mankind with abundance. That this is not happening is due to other causes, not because it is physically impossible. The world has woken up to this realization. It is impossible to preach to such a world self-denial which would have to be on a colossal scale. For today we live in intimate contact with another way of life which seems so overwhelmingly full of promise of what may be called the good things of life. As someone has said, such a life of self-denial could only be possible in a monastery.

Another point of difference that Gandhiji had with the socialists was the nature of the movement in the "Indian States" which existed at the time. For while the socialists were for full and integrated participation of the people of these States in the national freedom struggle, Gandhiji had certain strong reservations. In April 1940 Jayaprakash Narayan submitted a resolution to the Congress Working Committee on the Socialist Party's picture of an independent India, covering every important sector of the national life, which Gandhiji admitted he liked and reproduced in full in the *Harijan* under the caption: "Jayaprakash's Picture", with his own comments. The socialist proposition on land and the cultivator was that the former should belong to the latter, and none should own more land than is necessary to support his family. On this Gandhiji wrote:

Shri Jayaprakash's propositions may appear frightful. In reality they are not. No man should have more land than he needs for dignified sustenance. Who can dispute the fact that the grinding poverty of the masses is due to their having no land that they can call their own?

He however declined to endorse the proposition on the Indian States. He seemed to accept the substance but not the procedure. He was optimistic that the Princes would surrender their autocracy when the time came. He laid the ultimate responsibility for realization of this transformation on ourselves. In conclusion he said:

The Princes and all others will be true and amenable when we have become true to ourselves, to our faith, if we have it, and to the nation. At present we are halfhearted. The way to freedom will never be through half-heartedness.

World War II was a crucial event in world politics, particularly to the colonial countries. In our domestic scene it marked a serious shift in the Congress when it resolved to offer conditional cooperation in the war effort in spite of Gandhiji's opposition. One may say that this was perhaps the beginning of a long chain of changes in Congress-Gandhi relations. The old ties were really never re-forged. In fact they became looser.

Similarly a shift also came over the Socialist Party's postures *vis-a-vis* the Congress and this marked the beginning of a new relationship at least amongst the leaders who were shaping it. The socialists not only dissociated themselves from the Congress resolution on the War, but called upon it to start a nationwide fight against the British regime. The Party decided to rally fully round the Congress to make it an effective instrument for the final struggle. In fact the first anti-war resolution of the Congress at the Lucknow session had come originally from the Socialists, which was reaffirmed subsequently at other Congress sessions. The Socialist Party now took its stand on the Ramgarh Congress resolution calling it an "imperialist war" and saying that a national struggle was inevitable. The Party dissociated itself from other Left groups which kept attacking the Congress, particularly calling for a change in the

leadership. On the contrary the Socialists emphasized the need for unity and for strengthening the hands of the leaders, particularly Gandhiji, arguing that raising the issue of Socialism v. Gandhism was at the moment irrelevant. The original thesis that without a mass base and composition and programmatic transformations the Congress could not become a proper vehicle of struggle was by implication played down. The Socialists accepted the fact that no one but Gandhiji could lead a national struggle, and its content and technique could be determined by him alone; and they were pretty confident he would not compromise on the issue of war and national freedom. They were right. Here the Socialists stood with Gandhiji firmly eye while the Congress wavered. In a matter of weeks with the failure of the Cripps Mission, Gandhiji began to electrify the people with the "Quit India" slogan. The Socialist Party's complete identification with this brought into sharp relief the new role of the Communist Party, now made legal as a war-time ally by the British rulers, which had set itself to work against this national struggle.

The period following the Quit India movement marked a new phase in Indian politics and Congress-Gandhi relations. The crack which had started during the War period became wider. The British proposals to India did not meet with Gandhiji's approval. Later, on the partition question he took a strong stand. But the Congress chose to ignore his views.

Once more the Congress Socialists and Gandhiji stood together. The Socialists tried to prevail upon him to lead once more the struggle until India could be free on her own terms of integrity and self-respect. He was obviously in great mental agony. As he confessed, he saw nothing but darkness before him. One can imagine Gandhiji's distress when he saw this painful end to his life's work. This situation brought some of the important Socialists and him together, as never before. There was growing a closer kinship between these few Socialists and Gandhiji. They discussed the alternatives. There was really only one, a mass struggle, and the Socialists were very confident that even if he could not carry the Congress, the people would certainly rally round Gandhiji. Gandhiji, however, decided otherwise. Why he did so is anybody's guess. What is more,

he wanted the Congress to present a united front, so he prevailed upon the Socialists not to oppose the Congress resolution on the British proposals. So sensitive was the Socialist leadership to Gandhiji's feelings and wishes that the Socialist AICC members could only abstain from voting. From then on a new era seemed to have begun in this relationship, more in a personal way perhaps, but reflected nevertheless in other spheres too.

The post-Quit-India period opened a new phase for the Socialist Party. While the new Party thesis professed the Party's adherence to the revolutionary path, it declared also its belief that where democracy and civil liberties operated, the transition to Socialism must be peaceful and through democratic means which included civil resistance, satyagraha and strikes. This was a definite departure from the old pronouncedly Marxian Socialism though- the Party reiterated that it was still based on Marxism, largely perhaps because the rank and file would not be able to conceive of Socialism away from Marxism. The Indian Socialists could not any more find their identity with the Western Socialists in the democratic countries because of their failure to support the colonial struggle whole-heartedly, their attitude in some cases being pretty dubious. The Communists had become wholly discredited after the record of the Indian Communists during war. Socialist thought itself was in a ferment in the country and much rethinking had started in The Socialist Party though it was some time before concrete signs could become visible.

Gandhiji's martyrdom intensified the emotional ties. The compulsion became more and more pressing to take on and complete the good work he had left undone, the legacy we had inherited. The shake-up that resulted seemed to put things in their proper perspective. From then on the image of Gandhi was a portent to reckon with. There had been a large influx of new elements into the Socialist Party after the 1942 struggle. They had no political background, particularly of the Congress and Gandhiji's leadership. They had been drawn by the freedom struggle which fired youthful imagination. While they showed fervour and enthusiasm, they had no political maturity or Socialist discipline

and they often struck impossible postures and made impractical demands which generally led to confusion in the Party.

Gradually the leadership seemed to melt away. Two vigorous stalwarts, Yusuf Meherally and Acharya Narendra Dev passed away. Jayaprakash Narayan, who became firmly convinced that the present rigid party governments could not solve India's problems, turned to the Gandhian path of Sarvodaya and Bhoodan with Bhave and others of Gandhiji's close colleagues. Some quit politics and turned to what Gandhiji had termed constructive work. Some wrote on the new thinking in Socialism and Gandhism. Dr. Lohia has written voluminously on this, as on the incompleteness and fallacies of Marxism.

On re-examination several of Gandhiji's assertions and beliefs seemed to reveal themselves in a different light, freed from political trappings.

Let us begin with his emphasis on simplicity and not affluence. Self-denial and detachment as the key to happiness is an old Indian precept. Today we see something strange yet not so strange. While the development of science and technology has brought untold wealth, it has not brought happiness, Hippyism being one of the symptoms of a mankind troubled by a new hunger which wealth cannot satisfy. Here we see a queer spectacle of young people turning away from the affluence which is theirs. Obviously what we should aim at is not a higher standard of living but a normal one, to meet necessities and wipe out the penury that degrades and the slavery that demoralizes. Perhaps a mean has to be found. As Dr. Lohia put it so concisely and effectively: "The good and the beautiful must find a meeting place other than the one fashioned by Buddha." He illustrated it by reproducing a young American student's picturesque phrasing: "Once we have the materialist bull by the horns, how do we ever let him go—how to live relaxed if one had to keep the wheel turning faster and faster?" Truly did Gandhiji say: "A man who has no money wants to become a millionaire, a millionaire wants to become a billionaire and so it goes on...."

The Western man of affluence seems no longer at peace with himself, he is like an exile from home. "The long pilgrimage of Socialism must end this as also the socialist's self- alienation. It asks of us men of today a new direction," so said

Dr. Lohia addressing the Socialists. Perhaps Gandhiji could have helped us to do it had the Socialists established earlier the rapport which came on the eve of his death, or had he lived to 125 years as he once wished to.

Gandhiji's concepts of Trusteeship and change of heart are inextricably linked together. In fact his entire philosophy is based on the belief in the essential goodness of man. Where one failed to bring about a change of heart he did not take it as refuting his faith but rather as something wanting in oneself. It would need much more use of this technique and under very diverse conditions and with different sets of people to evolve any firm precepts. Nevertheless there is our own experience when millions of people did undergo a remarkable transformation, showing courage, discipline and generosity, instead of the age-old fear, lethargy and pettiness, that seemed so ingrained in us for centuries. According to one of the older Socialists, what does stand out in all this is Gandhiji's assumption that man can be good even though he is almost certain to be bad in certain situations. Against the success of the Indian experiment, there is the failure of the Negro struggle against colour-bar. But such telling experiments are few and far between. Perhaps if the physical area of operation could be widened by larger numbers of adherents to this faith it could get a better trial. In any event while avoiding getting enmeshed in sentimental social illusions, one need not view sections of humanity as black and white, good and bad. It is the kind of thinking which must ultimately decide that kingship is bad therefore the king's head should be chopped off or that as the proletariat is down-trodden and exploited, it must be right and should be indulged. What Gandhiji wanted done in the end was to break the concentration of power by entrusting it to society as a whole. What he pleaded was that the weapons used in all these struggles should be of love and non-violence, not of fear and hate. The outcome of such struggles might be different. Because once again one is handicapped from want of adequate data. Now we start with a negative mental block, never with faith. Maybe if we accepted, even if it was not a 100 per cent success, even a shred of faith, like a spark out of dying fire, it would be rewarding—it would urge even if only a few, to forge ahead and see if a new effective weapon could not be evolved.

Gandhiji was unique in that he dealt with matters of the spirit, soul and conscience together with social and political affairs in the most natural and unconscious manner. Systems such as Socialism enjoined on its followers social codes, but most of all collective behaviour. But Gandhiji, like Moses, put out whole tabernacles of commandments for each individual, obligations to himself as to his fellow beings.

Here Gandhiji recognizes that a mass is composed of individuals and, while a system may deal with the mass, the core of it is the individual and the quality of each individual that comprises it is what is precious and the individual should not lose that identity. It was only by rescuing this precious individual which an overbearing mass must corrode, that Gandhiji evolved and bequeathed to mankind the invaluable instrument of satyagraha—civil resistance—that enables any single individual who is aggrieved to stand up to resist tyranny and oppression.

One could pick up Gandhiji's thoughts and precepts and study them each afresh and seek to assess and evaluate each facet with its intrinsic characteristic. For this one has to put away the shibboleths and cliches so dear to those who do not wish to make the effort to think. Was Gandhiji a revolutionary? Was he a Socialist? When we fling these familiar phrases around, we do so as though each had a standard measurement and weight, height and colour. To some confirmed Marxists Gandhiji's political struggle was not a revolution because military weapons, the familiar feature of an upheaval, were missing. There was not even a *danda* to flourish.

Let us remind ourselves that, while Gandhiji was a consistent non-conformist even when he talked of God and Conscience in a startlingly unconventional manner, in one thing he conformed to the sages of yore. He refused to accept the world as he found it when he was born. He shook it and tried to reorient it. But he never gave up the quest, it went on, it had to go on. It began with the first man and is eternal. For if man gave up the quest, he would decay and perish. As one travels round in India, in towns and in villages one comes across stone and cement figures trying desperately to look like him. But one

characteristic is common to all, be they fine or ugly, they invariably show him walking, on his march, the eternal quest. The Dandi March was more than symbolic. It typified the nation swung onto its feet to begin the long march to the far-off goal that we cannot yet see. But the quest is still on. That is what exhilarates one while the feet move forward—our senses are astir, expectant to catch new sights, new sounds, to breathe new perfumes and let the skin tingle with experience. That is the joy of a quest. Pensively and picturesquely Jawaharlal Nehru has painted this picture in his vivid language, offering his tribute to this unique man when he started his historic salt march:

Today the pilgrim marches onward on his long trek, staff in hand he goes along the dusty roads, clear eyed and firm of step with his faithful band trudging along behind him. The fire of a great resolve is in him and surpassing love of his miserable countrymen and love of truth that scorches and love of freedom that inspires.

**MARGARET COLE**

### **GANDHI THE MAN**

I never, to my sorrow, met Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, whose birth centenary is to be celebrated next year; and when Dr. S. Radhakrishnan did me the honour of inviting me to contribute to this symposium, I felt that the letter ought really to have been addressed to my husband, the late G.D.H. Cole, who knew so much more than I can ever claim to do about India's problems and India's leaders—and who, if his health had permitted, would have gone to India twenty years ago as the only Englishman on the Commission on India's Universities. I have always deeply regretted that this prevented me from meeting leaders of Indian education in Gandhiji's own country. Though I knew Pandit Nehru and others, of course —and once was introduced to Mrs. Annie Besant in her impressive old age!—that is not the same thing; and in writing now, therefore, I have to rely upon impressions left by his own life and writings and (very much) by the effect of his life upon others.

So my mind goes back, beyond the fearful shock of that assassination twenty years ago, beyond Independence, beyond the war-time days when for a short while English socialists had such high hopes that the visit of Sir Stafford Cripps might result in the freeing of India in spite of Churchill's vehement opposition—back to the thirties, back to the Salt Tax, Gandhiji's fasts and the thousands of Indians who went to jail along with him, to Independence Day in 1930, and the Round Table Conferences; back again—I know I am mixing up my dates, but this is how the memories came up in my mind—to the Meerut trials, to the first non-cooperation and the beginnings of Satyagraha, to Amritsar—and back still further, to South Africa in 1908, with a prosperous middle-class barrister, to everyone's astonishment and admiration, risking everything to organize a passive resistance campaign to secure just treatment for the Indians living there. I was too young and too ignorant to appreciate that struggle at the time—I wonder whether there is anyone in Kenya today who remembers it! —but I do recollect the news coming through (in 1914, I think it was) that Smuts

had given in; and I read in Nehru's own autobiography how, when two years later he met Gandhiji for the first time in Lucknow, he was "full of admiration for the heroic fight in South Africa".

I doubt very much whether the ordinary Englishman or woman, however admiring and sympathetic and however strong the desire to understand, can really get his or her mind *alongside* Gandhiji's; the cross is too wide. I know my husband tried and failed; I have tried and failed too. I am thinking here of his fundamental personal philosophy—not just what is commonly called asceticism, but the value attached to personal purity, in thought as in action; witness his extraordinary (to Europeans) advice to the British miners locked out in 1926 to the effect that "if the owners win, it will be because the miners have not learnt the lesson of restraint all along the line". We could not go along with that; and we do not feel we know quite what he meant by "the beauty of voluntary poverty" which he urged upon Congressmen, or by the policy of khadi itself. That it was intended to bring the middle and upper classes nearer to the peasant masses—and that it did do so—is of course obvious; but it seems to have borne a deeper meaning; and we do not know quite what it was. Even in the case of "non-violence"—so very relevant to the problems of today all over the world—we do not feel, at least I do not feel, that I really understand Gandhiji's intention. It clearly does not mean just "non-resistance"; he said that himself. Nor does it mean that violence is the ultimate evil, to be abjured at all costs; as long ago as 1920 Gandhiji wrote (in "The Doctrine of the Sword") that he would rather have India defend her honour with violence than lapse into cowardly inertia. This does not *sound* so very different from "Better die on your feet than live on your knees"—yet it is a world away.

The purpose of non-violence is, it seems, to compel the opposition, or the oppressor, to change his mind and his action, but how that is to come about is nowhere perfectly clear; and the ordinary Western explanation, that it is to come through the awakening of his conscience seems to me too facile. Rather, non-violence is expected to have its effect in changing the oppressed themselves. As Nehru wrote in 1935:

He had instilled courage and manhood into the peoples of India, and disciplined endurance, and the power of joyful discipline for a cause, and, with all his humility, pride.

He did do all this; and the effect upon his own people was manifest; of the effect on the British oppressor I am less sure, for I am not as certain as some are that our long-delayed quitting of India was due to pangs of conscience rather than to a realization that the subcontinent, once roused, could not possibly be held down by force. But India did not become "non-violent" after Gandhi's death—far from it. So the answer remains doubtful—unless this is just Western stupidity on my part.

Whatever the answer, there is no question at all that he was one of the greatest men of our time—a miracle, if you like, with a miraculous power over others. Ironically, one of the most striking tributes to him was given unwittingly by Churchill, when he talked angrily and insolently of "a half naked fakir" sitting on a step and putting the great British Raj into a flap. Set alongside of that the experience of Fenner Brockway, who found him not a formidable ascetic, as he had half expected, but "a lively old man with a suggestion of whimsical mischief", who nevertheless, on one of his silent days, calmed Brockway's fever into sleep with the pressure of his hand; and the testimony of Nehru, who loved him so much and disagreed with him so often, that whether or not he was a democrat in the Western sense, he unquestionably represented to the full the peasant masses of India. Add the picture of him journeying through India (at the time of the Lahore conference, for example) and finding in village after village, often only a few miles apart, crowds of ten and twenty thousand gathered just in the hope of seeing and hearing— and you may get some impression of the kind of man he was, such as we shall never—and I mean this literally—never see again.

**MORARJI DESAI**

### **GANDHIJI AND THE DESTINY OF MAN**

Within two decades of Gandhiji's death, we find that most men are seized with fatigue towards idealism in life and do not attach the same value and validity to his teachings. While some feel that we have deviated from the path shown by him, others apprehend that there might be a swing of the pendulum in the other direction in the near future. It is essential to consider the basis on which fundamental values of life depend for their acceptance by the common man. While most people look forward to a prospect of material rewards, a few do observe these values for their own sake. I am one of those who believe that we cannot forget, except at our own peril, the life and teachings of Gandhiji which are in essence so fundamental, so noble and so basic to our way of life. Whatever method we may adopt to develop the strength and prosperity and happiness of India, we must, for our own sake, pursue our ideals in terms of his message.

What Gandhiji said and did was not for an age or for the people of India alone; his message has relevance for all time and for all mankind. We have to view in this perspective the phenomenon that Gandhiji was. A hundred years in the history of a nation may not add up to much; but the last one hundred years in the history of India have significance not only because these years saw the rise of Indian nationalism which culminated in the achievement of independence after centuries of bondage but because Gandhiji lived and worked for it in a manner which gave content and credibility to the hopes of mankind during this period.

In 1869 when Gandhiji was born, India was an exploited and poor country; Indians were weak, submissive, superstitious and timid; and Indian society was parochial, lacking in patriotism and hopelessly divided. When Gandhiji sailed for England in 1888, university education was slowly spreading, movements for social reform were becoming popular and political consciousness was growing in urban areas. The Indian National Congress was established in 1885. At the time

of his return in 1915 from South Africa after successfully fighting for the cause of indentured Indians there, Gandhiji noticed a great deal of political consciousness and a number of political parties— liberal, radical, anarchist—in the field. He observed at the same time that the average Indian was as timid and submissive, Indian society as divided and superstitious, the country as poor and exploited and the villages as neglected and desolate as before.

Gandhiji saw that the problem of India was not only political or economic but many-sided, People needed courage and a sense of self-respect to come out of the slavish mentality developed over centuries of bondage. He saw that if these conditions were to be changed, education, social reform, economic and politics had to suit the genius of the soil. In the next three decades Gandhiji strove ceaselessly and brought about a silent revolution in the country. He gave a practical way for winning swaraj in place of the terrorist way which was followed till then, and as a result political consciousness permeated even remote villages. This gave a very broad base to the struggle for freedom; education acquired a new meaning and purpose; social life became freer and less inhibited. There was moral fervour in the air. He lifted us up from dust and made men of us. Until then while the desire for swaraj was becoming stronger, the way to attain it was not shown by anybody. Gandhiji had forged the instrument of Non-cooperation and Civil Disobedience in South Africa and presented it to the nation through the Indian National Congress as the new weapon to attain swaraj.

During this period Gandhiji rose to the noblest moral and spiritual height to which a human being can hope to rise. From a timid mediocre child he became the greatest man of his age. His devotion to the service of his fellow-men led him to make a few discoveries. The first was "*satya*" or Truth. "*Sat*" means "being", "*satya*" means "that which exists". Logically, therefore, nothing exists except *satya*. He learnt very early in life, first from his mother and then after deep thinking as a young seeker, that *satya* should be the basis of all activity.

His next discovery was *ahimsa* or love for all living things. As he strove, Gandhiji saw that *ahimsa* was the only effective mode of interaction between

human beings and it could provide a solution for almost any problem of human relationship. *Ahimsa* is a positive concept and as a force it is superior to the force of violence; it implies love and respect for all living creatures and gives equal status to all. Gandhiji applied the concept of truth and non-violence to all situations and sought to conquer hatred and suspicion in others. His life thus became a profound source of inspiration to his fellow-men in all walks of life.

It was easy for the masses to understand Gandhiji because he spoke in their language. He lived as they lived—a life of utter simplicity—and succeeded in enlisting their participation in the struggle for freedom. He gathered workers and created leaders and was influenced by them. Through such dialogue he brought about a broad unanimity in the struggle for freedom which was not there before.

It is true that partition of the country was the price we were required to pay for the attainment of freedom. We accepted the division of the country against his wish, for we felt that in the circumstances there was no choice. He was a sad man when we became free. The atrocities perpetrated by Pakistan on Hindus and Sikhs and the retaliation in some parts of India were too much for him to bear and caused him agony of heart. He wanted us to face the atrocities in a non-violent manner, but we had not enough moral courage.

Winning freedom for India is but an outward manifestation of his success; his real success lay in rekindling our soul, enlightening our hearts and giving us moral courage. Material progress we may secure, but it will have no meaning if it stifles the moral fervour within us. We see many affluent societies but we see few happy societies. Material well-being alone is not happiness. Happiness comes from inner contentment for which one has to live without conflicts of desire a life based on moral values and pursued as a spiritual quest.

Gandhiji measured progress in terms of human happiness. He endorsed neither the utilitarian view of the greatest good of the greatest number nor the modern view of an affluent society in which material development is the sole criterion of progress. He wanted a social order which would secure the greatest good of *all*, i.e., SARVODAYA. He wanted a society in which every man would have equal

status, opportunity and freedom to develop. He wanted a simple society in which economic progress and social justice would go together. He wanted us to control the pleasures of the senses because sensual pleasures have no known bounds.

Gandhiji demonstrated to the world the strength of man's invincible, soul when it was pitted against physical force or military might; of moral values as against material ones; and of service and sacrifice as against selfishness and acquisitiveness. He taught us the beauty of truth and the sublimity of the human spirit.

Gandhiji was not opposed to material prosperity nor did he reject the use of machines in all circumstances. He felt that machinery should save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind but *for all*. He did not want man to become a slave of machines and lose his identity altogether; he wanted machines to be for man, not man for machines.

His sense of social justice did not permit any concentration of wealth and power. At the same time he knew that there cannot be equal distribution of wealth and power. He therefore advocated equitable distribution so as to narrow down economic disparities and political disabilities. He evolved the doctrine of "Trusteeship", through which he contemplated the transformation of a capitalist society into a socialist one. His doctrine of trusteeship does not approve of capitalism but instead of crushing capitalists it gives them an opportunity to improve their outlook. Gandhiji wanted them to hold their wealth in trust for the people and use it for social good and not for personal enjoyment alone.

While on the one hand it is recognized that poverty is inconsistent with affluence, there is on the other hand evidence to show that man is inclined to earn money anyhow to make a success of life, because success or failure of an individual is now measured by the amount of wealth he possesses or does not possess. By this measure most advanced countries have certainly progressed. But has wealth improved the happiness of man? Mankind is exposed to a far greater threat to its existence today than it was ever before. With the

development of nuclear weapons, mankind faces a threat of complete annihilation. Massive industrialization may lead to dangerous centralization of economic power in the hands of a few and reduce man to an economic tool. The threat is: Man may lose his existence or he may lose his human identity. These threats have to be removed if human happiness is to be ensured. We cannot therefore continue to grope in darkness. We have to use such light as we have to remove the darkness.

In material well-being a point of satiation is reached when man ceases to be thrilled or excited by further accretions to enjoyment. Men in the West are no longer excited when they hear of more convenient appliances or development of new gadgets to promote household comforts. Life is thus exposed to boredom and the zest for living is diminished. We should be careful that we do not pursue material pleasures alone and in the process lose our identity as human beings. We have to avoid the tensions inherent in a complex industrial life. For human happiness one has to create and maintain peace within and without, not as a symbol but as a way of life. Modern society may find it difficult to reconcile and coordinate the complexities of modern life but we, a developing nation, must not fall into the same error. We must keep the Gandhian concept of happiness in view while planning our future.

Gandhiji said that man must pursue truth and non-violence in life if he wants inner contentment. He would not take to any course of action which could not be morally justified, however expedient it might be. The achievement of the end was not the criterion of success for him; purity of means was more important than the desirability of the end. The attitude that the end justifies the means has unfortunately persisted, and Gandhiji was perhaps alone in insisting on the purity of means much more, than the achievement of an end. He realized the need for purity of means early in life during his struggles in South Africa and emphasized it with greater vigour as he grew. He always insisted that no impure means should be used in our struggle for freedom. Insistence on the purity of means may not immediately seem to pay, but ultimately it is only through pure means that we can achieve real happiness;

immoral means cannot achieve a moral end. Gandhiji felt that even if we failed to achieve the end, the mere use of pure means would ennoble man and give him contentment. He believed that if the means were pure, one was bound to reach the goal.

This teaching and practice of Gandhiji should strengthen all new democracies as they seek to establish democratic traditions and develop healthy norms of public life. They can thus build a new social order on moral foundations.

Gandhiji did not leave any set doctrine of Gandhism behind him, but his life reflects his philosophy which is so basic that it appeals to every human heart. For generations to come it will continue to guide mankind. It is possible that urban intellectuals may not subscribe to his economic theory or constructive programme but all common people will draw inspiration from his life and philosophy, which remain enshrined in the hearts of millions, transcending the limits of time and space.

In my view mankind has no better alternative. The development of nuclear weapons holds terror for man on this planet, and the lack of a sense of opportunity for creative expression has bewildered him. Man will, therefore, do well to look to Gandhiji for his own survival.

**U.N. DHEBAR**

### **A HEALTHY BASIS FOR A HEALTHY SOCIAL ORDER**

While one aspect of Gandhiji's life has been acclaimed by all, that is, his role as the liberator of India and while his contribution to the cause of peaceful evolution of human society in so far as he gave to mankind a new weapon for achieving social, political and economic justice has also been duly acknowledged, his contribution in two other fields is practically being by-passed even by some of those who otherwise revere his memory. These two fields are his economic approach and his approach in the sphere of the socio-spiritual remaking of society.

I propose to confine myself in this article to his contribution to the evolution or presentation of a new approach to the remaking of society. To me it is fundamental to everything that he did in his life, more so as it offers a singular remedy to the deep-seated malaise that human society is suffering from.

Writing in *Young India* in 1931, he said:

I have found that life persists in the midst of destruction and, therefore, there must be a higher law than that of destruction. Only under the law would a well-ordered society be intelligible and life worth living. And if that is the law of life, we have-to work it out in daily life. Wherever there are jars, wherever you are confronted with an opponent, conquer him with love. In this crude manner, I have worked it out in my life. That does not mean that all my difficulties are solved. Only, I have found that this law of love has answered as the law of destruction has never done....

All the teachers that ever lived have preached that law with more or less vigour. If love was not the law of life, life would not have persisted in the midst of death. Life is a perpetual triumph over the grave. If there is a fundamental distinction between man and beast, it is the former's progressive recognition of the law and its application in practice to his

own personal life. All the saints of the world, ancient and modern, were each according to his lights and capacity a living illustration of that supreme law of our Being. That the brute in us seems so often to gain an easy triumph is true enough. That, however, does not disprove the law. It shows the difficulty of practice. How should it be otherwise with a law which is as high as truth itself? When the practice of the law becomes universal, God will reign on earth as He does in Heaven. I need not be reminded that earth and Heaven are in us. We know the earth, we are strangers to the Heaven within us. If it is allowed that for some the practice of love is possible, it is arrogance not to allow even the possibility of its practice in all the others. Not very remote ancestors of ours indulged in cannibalism and many other practices which we would today call loathsome. No doubt in those days too there were Dick Sheppards who must have been laughed at and possibly pilloried for preaching the strange doctrine of refusing to eat fellow-men.

That life persists in the midst of destruction hardly requires any special proof. As we enter into the world there is pure rich mother's milk ready for us. There are parents to protect us and care for us. There is the great creative treasure of the universe at our disposal, viz., the sun, water, wind, sky and above all Mother Earth. There are ready for us at every step also opportunities of life to develop and grow. All this effort on the part of the Invisible Creator would have been meaningless if it were not intended that life should persist in the midst of death. No doubt there is destruction. Perhaps it may some day be proved and established to our satisfaction that the destruction that takes place at the instance of Nature has a deeper meaning and is creative.

Similarly longing for love, care, attention, recognition—with its apex in longing for family life; desire for development and growth, and knowledge with its apex in desire for self-realization; urge for freedom and concern for dignity are all an essential part of human nature, whatever the colour of our skin, the region in which we are born, whatever our race and whatever our religion. At least a few of these urges seem to be unknown in the lower animals.

And yet where are we? There is incontestable testimony that we have got so accustomed to hatred that we have almost lost our sensitivity to personal and group hatred and lack of cooperation. We are engaged in building up a social system that is daily coming into clash with our longing for freedom and dignity. We are committed to an economic system that is rapidly replacing men in millions and converting men into machines. The whole system created to fulfil man's desire for peace, freedom, dignity and happiness is threatening to defeat its central purpose.

No wonder Erich Fromm writing an 'Afterword' in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four* says:

The question is a philosophical, anthropological and psychological one, and perhaps also a religious one. It is: Can human nature be changed in such a way that man will forget his longing for freedom, for dignity, for integrity, for love—that is to say, can man forget that he is human? Or does human nature have a dynamism which will react to the violation of these basic human needs by attempting to change an inhuman society into a human one?

Gandhiji was engaged all his life in answering this question and demonstrating through actual experimentation at the grass-roots of society its practical effect. His morning prayers began with the *sloka* of *Isopanisad*:

isavasyam idam sarvam yat kimca jagatyam jagat

and ended with Rantidev's motto of life:

kamaye dukkha taptanam praninam arti nasanam

The first *sloka* expressed the principle of the uninterrupted continuity or conterminous character of the relationship between the Creator and His creation, including mankind. Rantidev's *sloka* expresses the purpose of all human existence. This relationship is best expressed in Gandhiji's own words:

God may be called by any name so long as it connotes the living Law of life—in other words the Law and the Lawgiver are rolled into one.

If we were to look at life as a whole, we shall, even with our limited understanding, observe this principle of uninterrupted continuity at work—the relationship of the sun, our eyes and the forms that we see; of the sky, vibrations, words and our ears; of the wind, touch and skin; of the water, taste and tongue; and of the earth, smell and nose. We in our ignorance or out of unconcern isolate these objects and treat them as independent having no relationship. This relationship nevertheless percolates through every act of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling. The same is the case with conscious mind, sub-conscious mind, intuition and universal consciousness. No less a person than William James has this to say about it:

He [the developed individual] becomes conscious that this higher part is conterminous and continuous with a MORE of the same quality, which is operative in the universe outside of him, and which he can keep in working touch with, and in a fashion get on board of and save himself when all his lower being has gone to pieces in the wreck.

The Great Weaver has woven every little thing in his creation so skilfully. We, however, miss this sense of oneness and ever-present unity in action simply because of the wrong type of training we have received and the wrong type of environment we live in. Individual ego and personal interests; group, caste or class or national egos and interests, are all aberrations of our own creation. What is more, failing to carry society with us on the basis of conversion or persuasion, we have evolved methods for subjugation, exploitation and persecution in the name of patriotism, religion and all kinds of other isms and erected an ugly system based upon violent contradictions between our innate nature and character as human beings and our distorted, twisted and vitiated conception of the purposes and goals of our existence.

Gandhiji's greatness lay in this that he was not prepared to be swayed by these limited approaches or awed by the existing social system. Once convinced about the unbreakable link between the Creator and life's purpose, he was prepared to go directly to the root of the matter and that root was a way of life in consonance with the purpose of creation as evidenced by the basic human

urges. In the course of his search for self-realization, he had found that Truth is the only single ultimate reality. He cut asunder the dispute between the theist and the atheist by naming God as Truth:

I call that great power not by the name of Allah, not by the name of Khuda or God, but by the name of Truth, for in Truth is God and Truth overrides all our names.

Having reached the depth of Truth, he found that mankind was but one family and could prosper only to the extent it conformed to the demands of Truth. He was concerned with its prosperity. But the practical idealist that he was realized that replacement of name of God by Truth was not enough. He knew that man would quarrel even over Truth as he had been quarrelling about God. He therefore prescribed the manner and method of settling those quarrels. If untruth degenerated into evil, he would not take up arms; but he would not associate with evil under any circumstances; he would non-co-operate. If there was any effort on the part of the other to force that evil or untruth upon him, he would resort to passive resistance. If the former were a public authority he would offer civil disobedience. Failing to convert the other side through talks, discussions and negotiations, he would resort to satyagraha, which meant civil and dignified resistance accompanied by self-suffering. He advocated revolutionary changes in our ways of thinking, in the relationship between man and man, in the educational system, the social set-up and the world economy, because he recognized the ungodly and untruthful and therefore unnatural course of life human society had adopted. He wanted to provide an alternative mode or way of life and satyagraha was the chief weapon for creating conditions for it. He wanted to generate an environment rooted in man's essential nature as a human being through means that would not compromise ends but strengthen them and bring them nearer. Satyagraha was a way of life based upon the only Truth, the sound foundation of the essential goodness of man. Again and again he came to the root of his faith. He said:

Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute.  
The spirit lies dormant in the brute and he knows no law but that of

physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law—to the strength of the spirit.

Resistance anywhere which did not originate from loyalty to the values of such a way of life was at least not satyagraha— whatever else it might be called and whatever the justification behind it. Resistance however—that originates from loyalty to the values of such a way of life was the very breath of human life and its purpose. Relentless effort to change the existing order of things, which was seething with contradictions was by itself to lead to a real, genuine, honest, straight-forward human life. Life and its purpose here coalesced.

In Gandhiji's plan there was no contradiction, no 'mobile truth', no 'double-think'. Here man wanted to serve and not to rule. In his plan politics had a place, which was to serve and not to dominate. Economics had a place, to provide opportunities for work, livelihood and development in terms of equality and not to usurp or exploit. Relentless resistance, by means iri keeping with human dignity, i.e., by non-violence, to a State that served to dominate, to politics that used man as a battering ram, to the economics of usurpation and exploitation and to a social structure based upon hatred and violence was an inescapable duty. The two were parts of an indivisible process wanting life to serve life's purpose in keeping with the Creator's design.

His constructive work programme, like his various struggles, was intended to awaken the dormant spirit of man. In this, first came courage. Champaran, Jallianwala Bagh, Kaira Satyagraha, Salt Satyagraha, Individual Civil Disobedience and Quit-India struggles were all lessons to a sullen and down-hearted people to shake off their inferiority complex and stand up in defence of their dignity and status as free men. Khadi was the livery of freedom during the struggle. After independence it became the symbol of swadeshi. It was also a symbol of identification with the sweated, exploited, labouring rural masses. The Anti-untouchability movement was a vehicle for caste Hindus to expiate for the heinous offence of discrimination and for the Harijans to secure a place of honour and dignity in the great human family. Women had to be given a place of honour in society as equals of men. Village industries were intended to

provide means of livelihood and an economic status to the unemployed and underemployed in the countryside. Agriculture, cattle development, cottage industries and basic education were to provide a lever to the national economy without making it dependent upon others. Work among labour and peasantry was not to create divisions but to reconcile the conflicts of interest between haves and have-nots, while at the same time men with vision, ambition and money were allowed opportunities to serve mankind as trustees. The State was not to dominate but to serve. International disputes should be resolved through arbitration as is done in a family, the pre-condition being that arbitration was an act of free will and was not forced upon a party.

I will conclude this picture of a new way of life by quoting Pitirim Sorokin. He puts a question and gives in his inimitable style an answer at the end of his great work, *Reconstruction of Humanity*:

At this point the "tough-minded" reader may be allowed to voice his impatient question: "What assurance is there that this whole scheme is not a mere dream, a mere wishful Utopia devoid of any chance of realization? Is it not too vast and difficult to be practical or even possible? Is there not an easier, more practical way out of the present crisis? Can't we get somewhere by changing certain political or economic conditions, school curricula, divorce laws, or labour management relationships?"

Our tough-minded practical reader deserves a tough-minded practical answer. It is this: No, there is no easier and more practical way! What seems to be such is highly impractical.

There is no other way for India at least. Gandhiji understood India so well. Unless India wants to abandon its Indianness completely, it has to revert to the path he showed.

**R.R.DIWAKAR**

### **TRUTH AND NON-VIOLENCE : NEW DIMENSIONS**

Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills, Gandhi said. What he had done, he added, was only to apply them to life and its problems. There is no end to the repetition of these two words and comments thereon in his speeches and writings. The meanings he read into them and the interpretation he put on them constitute the new dimensions of this dyad of words. They were the *mantra* or key words of his life and philosophy.

Between these two words, of course, truth has priority and predominance. He was not only a ceaseless seeker of truth but also a votary of truth. He described his life as a series of "Experiments with Truth". In saying so, he revealed his scientific outlook about truth. He never, claimed that he had found the truth. His humility was such that he said he was always continuing his search for truth.

Truth was for him the ideal to be striven after; it was always to be approached but it would be ever receding, being infinite. The same was the case with non-violence. Absolute non-violence, he said, is an impossibility for anyone who lives, as even breathing involves the destruction of tiny life.

Now what is the connection between these two words, truth and non-violence? If one goes through Gandhi's life, thought and action, one sees the vital and inseparable nexus between them. I am inclined to express that nexus by saying that, for Gandhi, the passage to truth lay through non-violence. Therefore, it would be quite correct to say that the attainment of truth through non-violence was the aim and effort of Gandhi. If one studies him still further, one finds that Gandhi insists that non-violence is the best way and the shortest cut to truth. One cannot stop even here. He says that for him, non-violence is not only the best but the only way to truth.

Thus the proposition "Truth through non-violence alone" may well represent not only the connection between the two words for Gandhi, but also his basic

attitude so far as his own life and discipline were concerned. This extreme attitude marks him off from other votaries of truth.

In the beginning, Gandhi believed in God, the ultimate Reality or Supreme Power. He said, "God is Truth." But ultimately he said, "Truth is God." While God was denied by many, he observed, none dared deny truth. The truth of one's own perception and experience could not be denied; to deny it would be to deny oneself and one's existence and powers of perception.

Now what is truth? What was it that Gandhi sought after every moment of his life and what was it that he wanted to realize when he used expressions like self-realization, seeing God face to face, and so on? Obviously he was not satisfied only with the perception of truth; he was intensely eager to know the truth, to realize it, to attain it, and to establish it. He wanted the reign of truth, the reign of the Law of Being and Becoming.

Gandhi seemed to believe in the totality of truth, the one transcendent Reality along with its simultaneous dynamic manifestation. Since Reality had manifested itself, there was no question of the transcendental being higher and the manifestation lower. In fact, truth and unity with truth or identity with it could be realized by man with his limited powers not through abstract thinking but only through love, selfless service of the manifested universe and particularly of living beings. Sacrifice involving even death could be the last and irrevocable step in such service. To Gandhi that was the way of realizing truth. There was no other way.

His humanism was rooted in the realization and spiritual experience of his whole being that all life was one and that life was but the manifestation and reflection of the Reality itself. , Unity with truth, the realization of oneness by the individual with the universal was the *summum bonum* of life and was also the highest fulfilment and the source of supreme happiness and bliss.

Now what did all this mean concretely for Gandhi, day in and day out? While unity with Reality, with the transcendental truth, was something to be experienced and realized within one's own inner being, the unity with the manifested Reality, especially with the manifestation in the form of living

beings and man can be experienced only through love, which is another name for the experience of identity, identity of being and identity of interest. This identity can be expressed only in terms of a relationship with living beings and with man on the basis of love. The least that a man in search of truth can and ought to do is to abstain, in thought, speech and action (*imanasa vacha karmana*) from injury to living beings and man. That is the beginning *oiahimsa* (non-injury). But the utmost step and form of love or *ahimsa* would be not only selfless service but sacrifice of oneself if need be. This means that love, spelt as identity of interests, involves something far more than what a man can do for himself. He can die if need be for others whom he loves, which he cannot do for himself, except to save his own honour.

For Gandhi, the transcendental aspect of Reality was a truth of inner experience, no doubt. But its realization in everyday life was of immediate and paramount importance to him; that is why the truth of daily life, its experience through his own perception, observation, contemplation, and empathy were his preoccupation. The individual had no other way of realizing the truth of the totality of Reality (transcendental-cum-immanent) except through social life and relationship with others. Therefore, whether it was the suffering of labourers in South Africa or peasants in Kaira or the insult of one nation exploiting another through imposition of slavery, they all evoked the utmost effort on the part of Gandhi to serve the cause of suffering humanity.

There was evil, there was injustice, there was tyranny, there was poverty, there was misery. In the words of Rousseau with a slight change, Gandhi could have declared, Man is born happy but he is everywhere in misery. Man must not only be free but also be happy. It is only by being free and by self-effort that man can attain his highest stature.

Gandhi identified himself with humanity, its joys and sorrows, its aspirations and inner seekings. He saw that it was through love alone he could serve it.

But what if there were obstacles in the way? What if others did not see the truth of a certain situation as he saw it and experienced it? There he must try not only to see truth but establish it in spite of all opposition. It is this positive

attitude of fighting for the truth of his perception and experience against all odds which distinguishes him as a moral genius and a man of action. Where others would be satisfied with knowing the truth and sympathizing with the sufferers, he would jump into the fray and join issue with the opposing forces. In this matter he was a true Kshatriya, a warrior, for whom "danger itself was lure alone".

Another very important element distinguishes Gandhi from others who fight for good causes and that is his *ahimsa*. Evil and injustice, exploitation and tyranny must be fought, but he insisted that the weapons must be non-violent, pure and moral. He said, our perception and experience of a particular situation might be very truthful to us. But one cannot always vouch for its truthfulness to others. So, he said, if there is a question of convincing the opponents, it must always be by non-violent means. No human being has a right to impose by violence, by physical force, by coercion on another human being anything that he believes, even if it be a truth of his own perception and conviction. That is why he declared that violence is the law of the jungle and love is the law of the human species. On questions or problems of life, he would invite a dialogue, which would lead to truth, to find which ought to be the common object of all human beings.

Thus his non-violence or love has a double derivation: one is on account of identity with all life; the other is positive disinclination to use violence even for imposing truth on others. The latter was the root of his principle of self-suffering. The inner experience of the unity of life (all life is one) and identity of interests cannot and ought not to mean anything but the relationship of love between individuals as well as groups and nations. Mutual respect, friendliness, cooperation have to be the forms which love would take. Love has to be the law of human beings as that alone can ensure a rational and moral relationship between them. Even when there is seeming conflict of interests, it can and ought to be resolved only by a non-violent approach as that is the way which is consistent with mutual love and search for the common good.

Seen in the above perspective, the truth of daily experience and mundane life assumes as much importance as abstract or transcendent truth. The border line between spiritual life and our daily life is wiped out and man is invited through a rational, moral life to attempt the spiritualization of all life and raise it to a higher level. There is no scope for escapism into abstraction or other-worldliness or only individual salvation. Gandhi has also given a call not to surrender to evil and injustice, whatever may happen. Because surrender to evil for any reason whatsoever is moral and spiritual death. He does not allow us to plead even want of numbers or lack of strength to fight evil and injustice because he wants man to fight evil not by evil or violence but by developing inner strength and the power to suffer.

It is in these directions that Gandhi seems to add new dimensions to truth and non-violence, by offering his own experiments as examples of "truth through non-violence alone".

**LOUIS FISCHER**

### **WHERE IS GANDHIJI?**

The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. continues to haunt America's memory and shape America's destiny. He was the most effective, most beloved avowed disciple of Mahatma Gandhi in America. To the last he believed in non-violence and refused to depart from it. "Non-violence is our most potent weapon", he told Negroes in New York's Harlem ten days before he died. At the young age of thirty-nine he met Gandhiji's violent fate. With him a part, the best part, of America was killed. Countries kill their greatest sons.

Martin Luther King engaged—with success—in civil disobedience. He adopted the Gandhian method. Civil disobedience has often been used by Negroes and Whites against colour discrimination and by a mounting number of Americans against U.S. policy in Vietnam. The Reverend Dr. William Sloane Coffin, chaplain of Yale University, under indictment with Dr. Benjamin Spock, the famous child-training specialist, for urging young men to resist being drafted into the armed services, spoke in New York six days before Dr. King's assassination in defence of "radical obedience to conscience". He gave man-made laws a lower priority.

After being Gandhiji's "hut" guest in 1942 and 1946 I tried to explain to American audiences why he fasted. The usual reaction was that fasting for a cause in the United States would be laughable. But fasts for peace are now common in America. In March, 1968, 1,277 women students of Smith College in Massachusetts went on a three-day fast against the Vietnam war. Two hundred and fifty students of Princeton University, including the glamorous captain of the football team, fasted for peace in February, 1968. Students and professors opposed to U.S. intervention in Vietnam have also fasted at Harvard University and elsewhere. They invoke Gandhiji's example.

Young men are going to jail in thousands for refusing to fight in Vietnam. A number of universities have announced that students who do so would be

readmitted without loss of status after serving their sentences. A captain in the U.S. Air Force disobeyed orders to train pilots for Vietnam and has been sent to prison for a year. V

Gandhiji is very much alive in America. Of late, civil disobedience has been practised in Poland and in the Soviet Union. But what of India? On January 30, 1968—the anniversary of Gandhiji's assassination—Jayaprakash Narayan stated that the Congress Party presented itself "for propaganda purposes" as the Gandhi party<sup>1</sup> but it "completely neglected his teachings. This is what we do in India. We defy our great men, put them on a pedestal or in a niche, then turn our backs on them." Asked whether Gandhi's philosophy or the British colonial tradition had the stronger influence on Indian officialdom, J.P. replied sadly, "The colonial tradition". Gandhiji feared just such a development and hoped it would not happen.

Jayaprakash Narayan believes, however, that the peasants and the common people of India have Gandhiji in their hearts. Perhaps this explains the existence of the gulf between the masses and the ruling elite. As for the youth, young Indians I have encountered in Europe and the United States, and earlier in India, know far less than they should about Gandhiji's life and work. They are aware that he led India to national independence. But Gandhiji was far more than the father of his country. His was a philosophy of life that could regenerate India and is relevant to all humanity.

We live in an era of violence. The globe is wreathed in violent death, with America, at the moment, a major offender. Truth suffers; hate triumphs; love is a waif.

Even those Indians who appreciate Gandhiji's services to the cause of India's national freedom and understand his philosophy delight in scoffing at his economics. No one can deny, however, that he knew India. He knew it with his eyes and ears, he knew it with his feet and skin, with his heart and his instincts. India, to him, was its hundreds of thousands of villages, its hundreds of millions of villagers—80 per cent or more of the population. They would be, he hoped, the primary concern of a liberated India. But it is now generally

conceded that the first and second five-year plans subordinated agricultural development to industrial development. This happened in Red China too and in Soviet Russia. The glamour and glory of building the roof and facade turned officials' heads. They forgot the foundation, the village that produced food and fibre. India's economic growth, like China's, like Russia's, was thereby retarded. People suffered. Some starved. Grains had to be imported for money or as a gift.

Field and factory and dam are all necessary for national development. But Gandhiji would have built from the soil up. In every system of planning, the first consideration is the priorities. The Indian village did not enjoy priority. The Indian people have paid for the neglect.

Beyond anything so concrete as peasant welfare or nonviolence Gandhiji stood, and stands, for a certain kind of public purity. Means were all to him. Ends never arrive, for all ends are means to further ends which are again means. Public purity is not, it seems, a distinguishing characteristic of Indian politics. Anti-communists form coalitions with communists, socialists and communists join with religious nationalists and other extreme conservatives to drive an administration from power and supplant it. Office takes precedence over ideals. In foreign affairs, non-alignment, which should permit loyalty to principle and resistance to outside pressures, is bereft of morality. Expediency is king. Does the Government of India always resist foreign pressures? Are principles bartered for illusory benefits? Is the Indian state different from, better than, other countries because Gandhiji gently rocked its cradle?

India has impoverished itself by exporting its finest treasures. It gave birth to Buddha. Now hundreds of millions follow him outside India and only a handful inside. India's earth and air nurtured Gandhiji. How many Gandhians can be counted in his native country? How much influence do those Gandhians exercise? Is Gandhiji to become the lost Mahatma? Is the prophet to be without honour in his homeland?

## INDIRA GANDHI

### LEGACIES OF GANDHI

Each person's understanding of Gandhiji is a measure of his own change and growth. Whilst Gandhiji was alive,, many of my age group found it difficult to understand him. Some of us were impatient with what we considered to be his fads, and we found some of his formulations obscure. We took his Mahatmahood for granted, but quarrelled with him for bringing mysticism into politics.

This applied not only to my generation. In his *Autobiography*, my father describes the difficulty which he and others of his generation felt in integrating Gandhian ideas into their own thought structure. But little by little, the experience of the ebb and flow of our national movement enabled my father to arrive at a fuller understanding of Gandhiji and to weave the essential elements of Gandhiji's thinking into his own. He called him a "magician" and devotedly attempted to translate Gandhian thought into contemporary terms, to make it more comprehensible and to extend its influence to young people and intellectuals.

Gandhiji himself did not demand unquestioning obedience. He did not want acceptance of his ends and means without a full examination. He encouraged discussion. How many times have I not argued with him, even when a mere girl? He regarded no honest opinion as trivial and always found time for those who dissented from him—a quality rare in teachers in our country or in prophets anywhere. He was an un-typical prophet also in that he did not lay claim to revelation. He held forth neither blandishment of reward nor fear of punishment. Nor was he weighed down by the burden of his mission. He was a saint who quipped and had use for laughter.

The centenary year of Gandhiji's birth also marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. Those who confuse rigidity or harshness with strength would do well to ponder over the effect of this so-called strong-handed action

on the future of the British Empire. Seldom has a single event so moved an entire nation, shocking it into a reappraisal of values and aims. It made a powerful impact on men like Motilal Nehru and the poet Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore gave up his knighthood and wrote passionately and understandingly on the problems of colonialism. My grandfather was drawn, along with the entire family, into Gandhiji's circle. Our lives changed. The mood of the entire country changed. It was the year which brought Gandhiji to the helm of our political movement. Looking back on this half century, we are better able to realize the full impact of his personality and of his teaching, though a total assessment is still beyond us. We are too near to him, and still in a state of transition. Not for decades will we be able to wholly measure the extent of his work for India and for all mankind. Even so, one cannot but marvel at the turn Gandhiji gave to our history in that one year. It was as though with his two thin hands he lifted up a whole people. What changes he brought about in the personal lives of such a vast number of people, eminent and humble alike! To be the prime mover of politics is not a greater achievement than to influence so profoundly the inner lives of people. Gandhiji differs from his fore-runners on the national scene in that he rejected the politics of the elite and found the key to mass action. He was a leader, closely in tune with the mass mind, interpreting it and at the same time moulding it. He was the crest of the wave but they, the people, were the wave itself.

Gandhiji freed us from fear. The political liberation of the country was not the culmination but a mere by-product of this liberation of the spirit. Even more far-reaching was the alteration he brought about in the social climate of India. Gandhiji set us free also from the walls and fetters of our social tradition. It was his axiomatic assumption of the equality of women and men, of the supposedly low-born and high-born, the urban and the rural, that inducted the masses into the Gandhian movement. In the long history of India, every reformer has fought against the hierarchy of caste and the debasement of women but no one succeeded in breaking down discrimination to the extent that Gandhiji did. The women of India owe him a special debt of gratitude. And so do all other groups who suffered from age-old handicaps.

Mahatma Gandhi once wrote:

Let no one say that he is a follower of Gandhi. It is enough that I should be my own follower. I know what an inadequate follower I am of myself, for I cannot live up to the convictions I stand for.

The Gandhians would have us believe that Gandhiji evolved a universal philosophy, analysing everything, reconciling everything and prescribing for every contingency. How unfair this would be to a man who never assumed omniscience and never stopped his experiments with truth and understanding. He was an integrated being but he did not deal in absolutes. Few men were greater idealists than he, but few more practical. He propounded fundamental truths, but in every plan of action that he drew up, he proceeded on the basis of "One step enough for me".

The policy of planned industrial development which we have adopted in the last two decades has sometimes been criticized as a calculated abandonment of Gandhism. Those who level this charge and advocate cottage industries do not themselves refrain from using the products of large industry such as aircraft, automobiles and telephones. Gandhiji did not shun the railways, and he was a punctilious user of watches. And if we use railways and watches, does it make sense not to manufacture them ourselves? Gandhiji's advocacy of cottage industries should therefore be understood in the correct context. He was intensely concerned with poverty. He abhorred waste. He wanted to use the latent energies of the vast army of rural unemployed to produce more goods for the nation and some wealth for themselves. Then again, like other sensitive men before him, he was reacting to the brutal effects of the first phase of industrialization. As a seer concerned with the ultimate condition of man, he wanted to caution us against becoming prisoners of our own devices. In his copious writings on the place of the machine, there are many passages which show that Gandhiji's outlook was broader and more humanely practical than some literalist interpreters would have us believe.

To me, Gandhiji is not a collection of dry thoughts and dicta but a living man who reminds one of the highest level to which a human being can evolve.

Containing the best from the past, he lived in the present, yet for the future. Hence the timelessness of his highest thoughts. Much that he said and wrote was for the solution of immediate problems; some was for the inner guidance of individuals. His intellect did not feed on derived information. He fashioned his ideas as tools in the course of his experiments in the laboratory of his own life.

Speaking of Gandhiji's work in South Africa, Gopal Krishna Gokhale said that he made heroes out of clay. Sometimes I wonder whether we have not become clay again. The exaltation which a truly great teacher produces in his time cannot last very long. But the teaching and thought of such people have a reach farther than their own time and country. We who were born in Gandhiji's own time and country have a special obligation to cherish his image. More than his words, his life was his message.

It is not despite but through his time and place that a man achieves true universality. Gandhiji identified himself totally with the common people of India. For this he even changed his mode of dress. Yet he was receptive to the best thought from other parts of the world. The impact on him of his days in England and South Africa as a student and practitioner of law was evident in his insistence on sanitation and in his habit of examining all that he heard by strictly applying the evidence act. But he assimilated everything he adopted and evolved Indian solutions to Indian problems.

Another of his glorious legacies is the secularism for which he gave his life. Secularism means neither irreligion nor indifference to religion, but equal respect for all religions— not mere tolerance, but positive respect. Secularism demands constant self-examination and unceasing exertion. That great truth is inscribed on rocks by Asoka, that no man reverences his own religion unless he reverences others' religion also. India has been great and has risen high in those periods when this truth was acknowledged and practised by her rulers. In our times Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru made it a living reality for us. Without it there is no future for our nation.

I hesitate to speak of the other great teaching left us by Gandhiji, non-violence. I hesitate not because I find any justification for violence. Mankind

has accumulated such a fearful store of weapons of destruction that I sometimes wonder whether we have any right to hope. Wars still erupt here and there but even more distressing and alarming is the growth in all parts of the world of hatred in thought and violence in action, and the reckless recourse to the agitational approach. Gandhiji said: "In the midst of darkness, light persists." We must have faith. The ultimate justification of Gandhiji is that he showed how armed strength could be matched without arms. If this could happen once, can it not happen again?

Life means struggle, and the higher you aim the more you wish to achieve, the greater is the work and sacrifice demanded of you. Men of all religions have evoked the eternal truths. It is the great good fortune of India that she has given birth to great sons who have again and again revitalized her ancient thought to make it a part of the lives of the people. In our own lives, we were guided through perilous times by Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru who merged themselves in the general good. Each complemented the other. Each taught that every decision should be put to the acid test of its relevance to the welfare of the multitude. More than any "ism", this guiding principle will save us from error. As Jawaharlal Nehru said:

... the greatest prayer that we can offer is to take a pledge to dedicate ourselves to the truth, and to the cause for which this great countryman of ours lived and for which he has died.

**V.V. GIRI**

### **ENLIGHTENED PATH-FINDER**

The Birth Centenary Celebrations of our beloved Bapu have come at a crucial time when the destiny of mankind seems poised at the cross-roads of history. The flame of selfless service and righteous conduct in public life kindled by Gandhiji serves as a beacon illuminating the uphill path which mankind has to traverse for scaling the peak of perpetual peace and world fraternity.

Gandhiji brought the water of exhilaration to a land that was parched and dry and choked with the dust of the ages. He shook India out of her lethargy of centuries. Rooted in the life of his people, he formed an inseparable ingredient of it. No one could fail to be impressed by his awareness of the thought processes of the lowliest of his people, his power to evoke massive endeavour, his single-minded devotion and his imperturbable equanimity.

Never in the history of civilized mankind did one man contribute more to the guiding and moulding of the protracted struggle of a multitudinous people weighed down by so complex a legacy from the past. Gandhiji represented India, more authentically and had a clearer and longer vision than anyone else. He embodied in himself, as few have done in Indian history, the soul of our land. If as Max Muller once said, one finds oneself everywhere in India between an immense past and an immense future, the chasm could be bridged in our age by none other than Mahatma Gandhi.

Bapu influenced our lives for more than half a century and he will continue to guide the destinies of our nation. I am optimistic enough to believe that one day the fundamental doctrines evolved by Gandhiji will come to govern people throughout the world. As one who became a disciple, if I may say so, in July 1914, when I met him for the first time on English soil (he was then only "Mr. Gandhi" and not "Mahatma"), I feel doubly proud to have this opportunity of recounting the sterling qualities and mighty achievements of Mahatma Gandhi.

Never in the history of our country has there been greater need than today to recapture the essence of Gandhiji's teachings. It is high time, I honestly feel, that the youth in our educational institutions and those engaged in other walks of life should endeavour and be enabled to gain an insight into the implications of Bapu's message and so learn to play a constructive role in the country's progress and, more important, find meaning and purpose in their lives.

It is a common belief all over the world that a great personage is born once in a few centuries when sin accumulates, when nations become unjust to each other and when violence and bloodshed become the order of the day. Such a spiritual leader and redeemer brings peace and order and offers guidance and solace to suffering humanity. Such a saviour was Gandhiji.

Gandhiji touched nothing which he did not adorn. With him, social life was an integrated whole and every part of it received the impact of his dynamic personality. As one writer has said, "in every field of social endeavour in which he operated, the quintessence of his effort lay in a kind of humanism, which paradoxically had in it a divine content". This sums up the essence of Gandhism; his approach was "inclusive" and had room in it "even for the humblest of God's creation". He never approached human life in fragments or segments.

Gandhiji was a statesman, a politician, a social reformer, an orator, a writer, a teacher, a humanitarian, a cosmopolitan and seeker after truth, a sage, a saint, and a prophet, all rolled into one. He possessed the courage of his convictions and did only what his conscience dictated. This doughty champion of truth often stood alone, dauntless and fearless, to defy the whole world. Mahatmaji, whose leadership inspired our nation, was able to secure political freedom after a non-violent struggle of a quarter of a century. His success was entirely due to the fact that he never cared to place before the nation precepts and ideals which he himself did not or could not practise.

Bapu was endowed with a profound capacity for foreseeing the great problems confronting human society; he had an uncanny sagacity for devising ways and means of encountering them. Possessing common sense in an uncommon

degree, he valiantly strove to make politically feasible what he reckoned to be best in long-term realities and basic principles. These realities and principles formed the bedrock of Gandhiji's work in South Africa, where he planted the sapling of satyagraha. This trained him for the future leadership of India and the achievement of emancipating his country from political thralldom. In this process, he taught us many things which are of supreme importance. He trained his followers to shed fear and hatred and instilled among the people a spirit of equality and brotherhood. He elevated the suppressed strata of society, the Harijans, who today are assured both under law and reality an equal status and place with the rest of the communities in India.

Ever since my initial meeting with the Father of the Nation as far back as 1914 in England, I have been struck by his transparent sincerity, disarming frankness, breadth of vision, fervour for social service and buoyancy of spirit. It was the Red Cross Movement which brought us together. In Gandhiji I discovered the embodiment of Red Cross ideals—quest for peace, goodwill, compassion, a ceaseless yearning to help and succour those in need.

Bapu did not formulate a systematic philosophy of life. His life was a series of experiments with Truth; and as he himself once proclaimed, his life was his message. Gandhiji's entire philosophy was rooted in the fundamental doctrines of Truth, Non-violence and Democracy, which can be implemented with profit and advantage in all fields of human endeavour to the benefit of one and all.

Gandhiji was not only a master of political action, but also a thinker and observer gifted with a superb capacity to write simply, lucidly and meaningfully. Wielding a facile pen, Gandhiji has left behind for the world a record of his thoughts, activities and dreams embodied in his voluminous writings, letters and speeches.

Bapu was intensely human; essentially a lover of mankind and not of mere ideas. In fact, even when he conceived these basic doctrines he simultaneously devised measures to experiment with his ideas and test their validity and usefulness. In the process, Gandhiji reduced himself and his co-workers to the status of a ceaseless "human laboratory". For example, *Nai Talim* or the new

education that he wanted to introduce in the country had for its basis the doctrine of self-reliance so that everyone could be fully trained not only in the arts but also in some handicraft or other so that they could earn their livelihood by the "sweat of their brow"! The gospel of "bread labour" forms a main element of the Gandhian philosophy.

There is not an area of human activity or relationship—be it economic, political, social, educational, religious or cultural— which has not gained from Gandhiji's magnetic personality. Thus socio-economic emancipation and moral growth and spiritual regeneration of the individual formed the quintessence of Gandhiji's mission in life. Bapu reminds us of the fundamentals of ethics, that love is better than hate, peace is better than war, cooperation is better than conflict, and persuasion is better than force.

## VALERIAN CARDINAL GRACIAS

### MAN OF PEACE

Many years ago, immediately after Independence, I had the privilege of speaking on the occasion of the birthday celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi at the Jinnah Hall. Several tributes were paid to Mahatma Gandhi and one of them read:

Mahatma Gandhi belongs to that rare group of men whose mind and heart have affected the foundations of thought over the world. Respect for his achievement and the unbreakable integrity of his character are a necessary part of the self-respect of our civilization.

Over the years, this respect for and appreciation of his unique role in the history of our century have grown steadily. More and more men are coming to realize that this great man—who blended harmoniously the qualities of philosopher, statesman and ascetic—has an important message for the men of our day— a message that we can ignore only at some peril to the entire fabric of our civilization.

For few men in their lifetime aroused stronger emotions or touched deeper chords of the human heart than Mahatma Gandhi. And to still fewer men has it been given after death to influence mankind as profoundly as the Mahatma. In a world of violence he dared to preach the doctrine of non-violence; in an age of technology and mad rush after material success, he had the courage to proclaim by his example the primacy of the spiritual; in circles of political intrigue and worldly astuteness, this frail man upheld fearlessly the values of simplicity of life, honesty and integrity that were proof against the strongest weapons of the cleverest politician.

In the course of his historic visit to Bombay, Pope Paul paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, "whose lofty character and love of peace are known to all". And in the *Dialogues with Pope Paul VI*. Jean Guitton, the French Academician, makes the Holy Father say:

It is true that my journey to India was a revelation of an unknown world. I saw, as the Apocalypse says, a crowd that none could number, a multitude, and everyone in an attitude of welcome. I read in these millions of eyes something more than curiosity, some inexplicable sympathy. India is a spiritual land. She has naturally the sense of Christian virtues. I said to myself, if there were any country where the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount could one day be lived not just by the elite, but by the entire people, by a unanimous innumerable mass, it was there. What is closer to the heart of Indians than poverty of spirit? What more Hindu than that docility, to such an extent that it expresses itself there in the gaze, in disposition, in word; what is closer to the Indian soul than peace, merciful purity of heart; what closer to this soul than a submission full of hope in suffering for justice' sake? We cannot know what would happen if all these possibilities, all that is in the heart and, I repeat, in the desires and potentialities of this great people, were suddenly brought to light. I have remarked also how the leaders of this people were wise men. In the West there are professional politicians at the helm of affairs. There, they are mystics and sages. Life unfolds itself in contemplation. They speak softly. They have solemn, liturgical gestures. These are countries that are born for the Spirit.

Surely he was thinking of such an Indian as Mahatma Gandhi!

Today, celebrating his birth centenary, we can recall that Mahatma Gandhi was above all the "Father of the Nation". And the thought that, on an occasion like this, comes uppermost to the mind of every sincere Indian is: "O Mahatma, thy country hath need of thee." Today, dissension and strife on all sides threaten the independence for which he laboured so arduously. Today, indiscipline and indiscriminate resorting to violence are rocking the very foundations on which he hoped to build the New India. Today, intolerance and narrow parochialism, like insidious cancerous growths, are destroying the concept of the secular state which he gave his life to achieve.

Mahatma Gandhi was a man of peace: he not only loved peace, he was a creator of peace and he played this role in spite of opposition and indifference on all sides.

Blessed are the peacemakers; they shall be counted the children of God. Blessed are the patient; they shall inherit the land. Blessed are the merciful; they shall obtain mercy. These are words taken from Christ's Sermon on the Mount, to which the Mahatma often made reference in his public addresses and in his writings.

The role of a peacemaker is an exacting one. A peacemaker must have first in his own mind and heart the seeds of peace. The flowers of harmony will not bloom in the land, unless the sower sow thoughts of peace: thoughts of peace, living memories, desires of peace, the outpourings of the human heart that are unmistakably in the interest of peace. Such an outlook is not possible unless a man has the right concept of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man:

To me God is Truth and Love; God is Ethics and Morality; God is fearlessness; God is the source of light and life, and yet He is above and beyond all these.

These are concepts of God to which Mahatma Gandhi has given expression.

Man fundamentally desires peace. Witness the endless conferences and peace talks and diplomatic initiatives all tending towards its achievement. But the great mission of the peacemaker is to touch this responsive chord in the heart of man. This was what the Mahatma did throughout his life: in the speeches he delivered, the prayer meetings he presided over and through the example of his personal life. In the India of his day, the achievement of peace seemed almost a superhuman effort. But we know that in life we must so work as if all depended on ourselves and so pray as if all depended on God. It was in this spirit that Mahatma Gandhi worked and prayed towards the realization of peace among men.

Distinctions there will always be in this world. It is only the unrealist who dreams of a society where there will be no distinctions. We differ in our upbringing, education, religion, etc.; in a word, we differ from one another in our ways of life. A way of life is essential to us. Much has been said and written about religion being the source of division and conflict. Some speak as though religion were an extra, the icing on the cake, a superfluity or a luxury in man's life, little realizing that religion is fundamental to man. Mankind is incurably religious. It was Stuart Sherman who said:

Destroy a man's faith in God and he will worship humanity; destroy his faith in humanity and he will worship science; destroy his faith in science and he will worship himself; destroy his faith in himself and he will worship Samuel Butler (or some demagogue or social panacea). Mahatma Gandhi saw clearly that without the firm basis of religious belief, there was no possibility of peace among men.

Many have been the solutions offered to the growing problems of the country today. Perhaps like children we should, on an occasion like this, hearken back to the testament of our Father, the Father of our Nation. From Mahatma Gandhi we can learn tolerance, for did he not say to Tagore:

I do not want my home to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any of them. Mine is not the religion of the prison house. It has room for the least among God's creatures. But it is proof against insolent pride of race, religion and culture.

Above all, from him we can learn that the only way to stem the present moral deterioration and restore the spiritual vein of our civilization is a return to moral and spiritual values. For this he laboured and for this he finally gave his life. And there can be no better tribute to his memory than to continue to take inspiration from his life, not by mere lip-service, but by striving to put into practice all that he has taught us. The *Mundaka Upartishad* says:

Truth alone triumphs, not falsehood. The divine path to liberation has been laid with truth, which the seers who have overcome desire tread, and wherein also is that supreme treasure to be gained by truth.

**RICHARD B. GREGG**

### **A POSSIBLE AID TO SATYAGRAHIS**

It is well known that Gandhiji believed in the constant presence and guiding power of God, and trusted divine guidance implicitly. Also he frequently said that to be successful, a satyagrahi must also believe in and trust God.

For those of us who have seen and believe in the value and power of satyagraha, the question is, how can we have such strength of belief in God and such active daily trust? There is an analogy that may help. Acquiring the needed faith is like learning how to swim.

Before I learned how to swim, nobody told me that the water displaced by floating objects acts as an upthrusting force upon the floating object. The water, acted on by the force of gravity, always wants to maintain a constant, uniform level. If a floatable object is put into the water, it displaces and pushes up the water at that place and raises the level. In its effort to regain the original level the water pushes up on the floating object.

I was well aware of the weight of my body but had never compared it with the weight of an equivalent volume of water. It had never occurred to me to make such a comparison. I did not know that when my lungs are filled with air so that my trunk fills the largest space possible for it, the total weight of my body is just slightly less than the weight of an equivalent volume of water, and just enough to enable the upthrust of that volume of water, if I displace it by putting my entire body into the water, to make me float barely above the surface, and, if I lie on my back in the water, enable me to breathe.

I had, of course, seen bits of wood and cork and logs and boats floating safely on top of the water, and had been in boats so floating. I had breathed all my life and had seen other people swim. But to combine the familiar breathing with unfamiliar posture and movements and a force I had never before explicitly recognized as applicable to my own body—that was frightening. To trust my own body and life to this new and only faintly recognized force of buoyancy, to lie on my back and sink into the water until I felt it come into my ears and eyes and nose \* and mouth so that at first I could not breathe—that was terrifying. To trust these forces, to try these new motions and positions was contrary to all my instincts.

But other people who were my own age and not in other respects more gifted than I were doing it around me and offered to help. So I regained enough faith and self-confidence to try again. The power of imitation is very great. By its means we all learned to walk and to talk and to practise the skills by which we support ourselves. It would have helped, though, if the other people had explained to me about buoyancy and how and why it worked. I wanted that power and skill and the fun I saw came with it. I wanted to be more of a person than I was. Many times I choked and get water into my lungs, but each time I became more aware of the buoyant power of the water and gradually I learned the new postures and movements that enabled me to use it. Finally I, like the others, learned how to keep my nose and eyes above water. Then with practice I developed skill and self-confidence. Now, even if the water were a mile deep beneath me, yet I can swim safely on top. The margin of safety seems very narrow, but it is sufficient. All life proceeds on very subtle, delicate and complex integrations, balances and margins. Yet despite the risks, swimming is an effective method of attaining safety in the water vastly more effective than the instinctive struggles of a person who does not know how to swim. On such narrow margins, with such delicate balances and integrations, life of all kinds has proceeded all down the ages.

Note that the would-be swimmer, until he trusts his body to the water, is, in his personal feelings, quite unaware of the buoyancy of the water. The

buoyancy is not perceptible to sight, touch, taste, smell, or hearing or any of the other bodily senses. Only when the body is wholly immersed in the water and trusted to die water, does the buoyant power reveal itself, and even then not at first even to the keen observer.

So it is for the satyagrahi. The spark of decency, the awareness of human unity, the spiritual inner nature of the violent opponent does not come into action until it is appealed to, despite the risks. That realization of human unity is like the hidden force or buoyancy of the water when the swimmer trusts himself to it.

When studied still more carefully, this analogy of the swimmer brings out a further aspect of satyagraha.

A large body of water such as a great river, a lake or the ocean, can be regarded as a danger to the learning swimmer. It contains the risk and threat of drowning. In that aspect it can be considered an evil. Danger and safety, evil and good, are pairs of opposites so often mentioned in the *Bhagavad Gita*. The aim of the wise man is to transcend the pairs of opposites. For the beginner swimmer the air he breathes is his means of life; the water is his threat of death. How can he transcend such a pair of opposites?

In order to transcend any pair of opposites, neither of them can be destroyed or thrown away. Both are a part of reality in this world. Both must be taken up into a synthesis at a higher level.

The swimmer transcends these opposites by immersing himself entirely in the water, the danger, the threat to his life. He trusts that this threat of seeming evil, will, because it is a part of reality, have a potentiality for ultimate good in it. By immersing his body, he calls the buoyancy of the water into action and this pushes his body up enough to enable him to breathe. He does not try to prove himself superior to the evil by raising his body way above the level of the water. In like fashion the satyagrahi by putting himself at the mercy of the violent opponent, shows his respect or even love for the opponent. The truth of the satyagrahi in the spark of a sense of human unity in the violent opponent is

a creative force in the situation. It calls forth the spirit in the opponent into action. Both respect and trust are elements in love.

Thus the non-violent resistance of the satyagrahi, with its respect and love for the opponent, results in a true transcending of a pair of opposites. Transcending good and evil gives us wisdom.

**HAILE SELASSIE I**

### **MAHATMA GANDHI AND HUMAN LIBERTY**

Mahatma Gandhi will always be remembered as long as free men and those who love freedom and justice live. It is indeed very rare that mankind produces such great sons as the late Mahatma. Their only rewards are the gratefulness of men in the years to come. In this, Mahatma Gandhi has done much more than expected of mortal man, not only for India but for the world at large.

The name Mahatma Gandhi has become synonymous with right and justice; towards this end it has become an inspiration to millions of oppressed people and has kindled the light of liberty. The world, when remembering his works, on his birthday centenary, stands indebted for his great efforts to make this world a better place to live in.

Today, when world peace is threatened with atomic and nuclear weapons capable of annihilating the human race, Mahatma Gandhi's teachings of love and truth and of respect for others\* rights have become even more meaningful than at any other time. No one can deny the fact that unless the people of the world learn and accept the principle of peaceful coexistence, regardless of colour, creed, and political ideology, there can neither be genuine peace nor progress.

It was in clear understanding of this principle that Mahatma Gandhi once said:

Not to believe in the possibility of permanent peace is to disbelieve in the godliness of human nature. Methods hitherto adopted have failed

because rock-bottom sincerity on the part of those who have striven has been lacking. Not that they have now realized this lack. Peace is unattainable by part performance of conditions even as chemical combination is impossible without complete fulfilment of the conditions of attainment thereof. If recognized leaders of mankind who have control over engines of destruction were wholly to renounce their use with full knowledge of implications, permanent peace can be obtained. This is clearly impossible without the great powers of the earth renouncing their imperialistic designs. This again seems impossible without these great nations ceasing to believe in soul-destroying competition and to desire to multiply wants and therefore increase their material possessions....

We believe that if the world seeks to avoid destruction and to advance the lot of mankind, it must heed the advice and warnings of great men such as the late Mahatma Gandhi.

Mahatma Gandhi was indeed right when he said that "those who want to do good are not selfish" and there could be no better example for this than the late Mahatma Gandhi himself.

Gandhi's struggle for freedom and justice both in India and Africa has borne fruit. His philosophy has also been followed throughout the world and has become the corner-stone as well as the deep foundation of the structure of human liberty.

India should be proud to have had such a great man who loved and did so much for mankind in his lifetime. He was indeed devoted to the principle that "man can only exercise perfect love and be completely dispossessed, if he is prepared to embrace death and renounce his body for the sake of human service".

Great men never die; their work lives on. And so, although Mahatma Gandhi is no more among us, his work and dedication for the welfare of mankind will always be a living memory in our everyday life, alike to big and small, young and old.

**W. K. HANCOCK**

### **A PARADOXICAL FRIENDSHIP**

I shall not repeat the much told story of the Smuts-Gandhi confrontation inside South Africa; but I shall consider briefly some aspects of the subsequent relationship between the two men.<sup>1</sup> In the view of them both, their Agreement of June 1914 contained the promise of progressive reform in South Africa and consequential reconciliation between their two countries. That promise soon withered. Gandhi heaped reproaches on Smuts's head but signed his letters 'Your friend'. How was that possible?

In their personal dealings with each other racial prejudice had no existence. In the early 1920s when India and South Africa were in bitter conflict, Smuts wrote to Gandhi:

When I was about the same time as you studying in England, I had no race prejudice or colour prejudice against your people. In fact, if we had known each other we should have been friends.<sup>2</sup> Why is it then that now we have become rivals, we have conflicting interests? It is not colour prejudice or race prejudice, though some of your people do ignorantly talk in these terms, but then there is one thing which I want you to recognize. It is this. I may have no racial legislation, but how will you solve the difficulty about the fundamental difference of our cultures?<sup>3</sup>

Discriminatory legislation, Gandhi maintained, was no solution; but he knew at first hand the intractable circumstances— economic, social, political, psychological—which Smuts as a South African politician had to cope with. Lord Halifax has put on record an episode of his discussions with Gandhi in 1930. Gandhi was demanding drastic restrictions upon the activities of the police, and the Viceroy was expecting trouble because he had to reject that demand for urgent reasons of public security. But Gandhi surprised him:

"Ah,"he exclaimed,"now Your Excellency treats me like General Smuts treated me in South Africa. You do not deny that I have an equitable

claim but you advance unanswerable reasons from the point of view of Government why you cannot meet it. I drop the demand."<sup>4</sup> Gandhi, no doubt, had read the article in the *Indian Review* which quoted Smuts as having said in London during the First World War that he would be proud to serve under an Indian officer, provided he was professionally competent<sup>5</sup> Not that Gandhi needed any documentary proof. Like everybody else who ever came close to Smuts, he recognized him as that strange phenomenon, a politician free from racial prejudice in a country that was seething with it.

Moreover, Gandhi recognized Smuts as a champion of the freedom of Indians in their own country. During the Round Table Conference of 1931, Gandhi and the Viceroy both sought Smuts's aid, although he was out of office at that time and was in England merely for an academic occasion. In November 1931 the Viceroy appealed to him to "get it into the heads" of British politicians that Great Britain and India simply could not afford the risks to both of them of a failure to reach agreement. A day or two later Gandhi wrote to him:

I duly received your affectionate letter. My observations since our last meeting lead me to the conclusion that you may not withdraw from the friendly intervention you began so happily last week. If necessary, you should postpone your departure to South Africa for a cause you rightly believe to be the world's cause. But duty called Smuts back to his own crisis-stricken country. Before long, the news came to him there that a new Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, had put Gandhi and other Indian leaders into jail.

It seems to me (Smuts wrote in August, 1932) a sheer muddle to put the Congress in jail, to alienate the Moderates, and yet to think of going forward with the grant of a new constitution. Who will work this constitution and who will have any responsibility for its success? I can understand frank Reaction or the Strong Hand. I can also appreciate a more or less liberal policy of trust such as that of Campbell-Bannerman. But what is this monstrosity...? Gandhi is and remains the best friend and should be dealt with as such....What a waste to keep such a power and

influence for good in jail at such a time. And without Gandhi's cooperation the new institutions will never even begin to function properly.<sup>6</sup>

Smuts did not underrate the difficulties of the Government of India. Its problem, as he saw it, was to hasten Indian freedom without endangering Indian unity. He wondered at times whether those two objectives could be reconciled with each other and even asked himself whether Europe might not achieve unity before India did. Nevertheless, he put freedom first and urged British politicians to accept the risks of speeding its advent. He wrote to Lord Linlithgow in August 1941:

Dominion status in its full implications should not be denied them, but rather should be given freely and graciously, as it is in any case inevitable.

A few months later he wrote to an English friend, "Why can't they act swiftly and with Campbell-Bannerman's courage?" That was the spirit of his wartime correspondence on Indian affairs with his friend L.S. Amery, the Secretary of State for India.

Yet he had to face the contradiction which existed between his advocacy of freedom for Indians in India and his endorsement of restrictions upon the freedom of Indians in South Africa. The notorious "Pegging Act" of April 1943 demonstrated that contradiction. I cannot here repeat my analysis of the complex economic, social and psychological circumstances out of which the Act arose.<sup>7</sup> Smuts might possibly have just managed to cope with them had it not been for Hitler. By the narrowest of margins, he had brought South Africa into the war against Hitler. Thereupon the Opposition denounced him as the enemy of his own country. They demanded a separate peace with Hitler, and secession from the Commonwealth of Nations. In mid- 1943 Smuts took up their challenge in a general election. He won it; but the Pegging Act was part of the price that he had to pay. He hated having to pay it, but consoled himself with the thought that the duration of the Act was for two years only. Before then, he hoped, he would achieve an agreed settlement with the Indians and thereby bring South

Africa's domestic policy into line with its external policy. In April 1944, he accepted in full the proposals for settlement put forward by A.I. Kaje, the leader of the Indian community in Natal. These proposals were embodied in a clearly-worded document, the Pretoria Agreement. They never came into force. Rebels in the Smuts camp sabotaged them. Rebels in the Kaje camp followed suit.

In my book I have discussed at some length the tragic sequel to these events; but much more research and thought are still needed. I do not know, for example, how closely Gandhi followed the course of events in South Africa from the collapse of the Pretoria Agreement up to the Indian-South African confrontation at the U.N.O. in December 1946. I know only that his friendship for Smuts proved indestructible. Across the deepening chasm between their two countries he sent Smuts a greeting. Its bearer was Mrs. Pandit, India's counsel for the prosecution against South Africa. Gandhi's parting words to her had been, she told Smuts, "that I should shake your hand and ask your blessing for my cause".<sup>8</sup>

Smuts would have been more than human if he had blest Mrs. Pandit as he listened to her six speeches in the General Assembly attacking his country. He smarted under the attack. All the same, his letters at this time to his friends transcended partisanship. He saw clearly the tragic contradictions which entangled him as a politician. He saw just as clearly the tragedy of a world "reeling between the two poles of White and Colour". Throughout the months that still remained before disaster overwhelmed him, he struggled against the impossible South African odds. He wondered at times how Gandhi was faring in his contemporaneous struggle on the soil of India. When the news reached him of Gandhi's tragic death, he exclaimed: A prince of men has passed away and we grieve with India in her irreparable loss.<sup>9</sup> I look forward to the day when the superb edition of Gandhi's papers has been completed, and when the story of this strange and noble friendship can be told from Gandhi's side.

1. See W.K.Hancock, *Smuts*, Vol. II. *The Fields of Force* (Cambridge 1968) chaps. 7, 26.
2. Actually, Smuts made friends at Cambridge with two Muslim Indians, Aftab Ahmad Khan and his brother Sultan Mohammad.
3. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, III, p. 117.
4. The Earl of Halifax, *Fulness of Days* (London 1957), p. 148.
5. *Indian Review*, Oct. 1919, p. 714.
6. These and the following quotations are taken from chapter 26 of *Smuts: The Fields of Force*, in which the precise references are given.
7. *Op. cit.*, pp. 457.
8. Nayantara Sehgal, *Prison and Chocolate Cake* (London 1954), p. 196.
9. *Smuts Letters*, Vol. 88, no. 217, Henry Cooper to C. Shulka, 11 Dec. 1948.

## W. HEISENBERG

### NON-VIOLENCE IN POLITICS

Looking back to the great work of Gandhi in the history of India, one is tempted to ask the question, whether or to what extent Gandhi's political ideas will contribute to the future structure of our world. Such a question may not do complete justice to Gandhi's enormous effort for the independence of his own country; since, in the future world, independence will be limited and will generally be replaced by some kind of interdependence between all nations. But the answer to this question may give a measure for the influence of Indian thought and Indian philosophy in the general way of thinking in the future state of the world. I cannot doubt that Gandhi's most important contribution in this sense was his idea of non-violence.

While hitherto political disputes between nations have most frequently been settled by force, i.e., by violence against those who had to be considered as a hindrance, the existence of the modern technical weapons will scarcely allow a continuation of this humiliating state of affairs for a long time to come. Therefore in the future world there must be other means to pursue the interests of one group against those of another group. At this point the idea of non-violence may be a decisive help in two ways. First it turns round the old and frequently disputed slogan: "The end justifies the means." The idea of non-violence states, that it is the quality of the means, e.g., the intention to suffer for the good ends but not to inflict suffering upon others, which provides the justification of the ends. And thereby, secondly, it states that it is only by gaining the approval of others, of the majority of men, that we can reasonably pursue our own interests.

It has been a general tendency in our time to create international institutions or law courts, which can be invoked for settling difficult problems between nations. This is certainly a good step in the right direction. But frequently, at least in the near future, the authority of such an institution will be questioned by one of the parties, or a general lack of interest among the other nations in

the problem concerned may frustrate the judgement of such an international institution. In such cases Gandhi's idea of passive resistance, or non-violence, could help to draw the attention of very many people to the problem under dispute and could emphasize the urgency of its solution; because the most intense personal engagement as the basis of Gandhi's idea of non-violence may be stronger than the somewhat impersonal idea of an international court. Hence it seems that Gandhi's way of thinking can lead directly into the political structure of the future world, in which a nation might be much better protected by not possessing atomic weapons than by having them, or might pursue its own interests much more efficiently by participating in the interests of other nations than by ignoring them. It was the unique example given by Gandhi which demonstrated that the most sincere personal engagement combined with complete renunciation of violence can lead to great political success. We all are indebted to him for this example.

## DOROTHY CROWFOOT HODGKIN

### A WRITING FOR MAHATMA GANDHI

Since I was asked to write something for this book to commemorate Gandhi I have found myself thinking a great deal about Gandhi's life and work for India and for the world, about his particular view and way of life, the kind of ideal world he wished to see. And this has made me think about the characteristics of Utopias, and of the ideal worlds of imagination. And I found myself thinking, after all, I am very lucky because one at least of my ideal worlds exists already and I pass into it almost everywhere I go in whatever country in the present world I visit. This ideal world consists of scientists pursuing fascinating problems connected with the structure of molecules, large and small, and their behaviour in living systems. It includes necessarily physicists, chemists and crystallographers, biochemists and biologists, joined in friendship through the intense interest of the subjects they pursue.

I suppose I first became personally aware of the existence of the world of international scientists when I was an undergraduate at Oxford and went to lectures by visitors from abroad—particularly I remember Bohr and Debye. And I first went out into this world myself when I was 21 and went to Heidelberg for part of the summer vacation. I remember the excitement of foreign lands and the lovely city, the great new University buildings given by the Rockefeller Foundation with their inscription "Zu Lebendige Geiste." I got to Heidelberg by the advice of Dr. Mary Porter who was a particular friend of Professor Victor Goldschmidt and his wife, and my aim was to learn there a mixture of German and crystallography. Professor Goldschmidt was already old, a small gnome-like man, very wealthy and very learned. Part of his wealth he was using to build a new crystallographic institute for the University—he said that once it was built he would write over its door "Die Kristallographie ist die Konigin der Wissenschaften". He had spent most of his life measuring crystal faces but he was also very much interested in ancient history and taught the student who

preceded me Greek as well as crystallography. He lived a quiet life with his gentle elderly wife.

The next step I made into this world was in 1936 to attend a meeting of the Dutch Biochemical Society at which J.D. Bernal was to speak on crystallography and the structure of the sterols. It was scientifically an exciting occasion for us—to learn how the first clues from X-ray analytical measurements had led to a rapid reappraisal of the evidence for the structure of cholesterol and the different sex hormones that had just been isolated. It was also an occasion of first meetings with many who have been life-long friends ever since, from Professor Ruzicka and Professor Bijvoet, who were already old and distinguished, to Caroline Macgillavry, still as we might say now a graduate student like myself.

With the research on penicillin in 1939 I was drawn fully into an investigation in which essential parts were played by scientists from different countries. In Oxford, following Fleming's first observations, the isolation of the active molecule and its testing on mice and men was initiated by Florey who came to us from Australia and Chain who came from Germany though of Russian origin. In the middle of the war news came that one of the penicillins had been crystallized in the United States. A sample was flown over to us from which we grew crystals good enough to use to find the structure. At the time this research was carried out we seemed to be constantly frustrated by delays and misunderstandings in communications between the different groups working on the project. Yet afterwards, I found when I visited these groups in America and elsewhere, everyone who had taken part in this research remembered, it seemed, with particular pleasure, the shared experience of that cooperative effort.

By the time, much later, that I came to write an account of the work we did in Oxford on vitamin B<sub>12</sub>, our own laboratory had gathered together workers from far away. The fact that 15 different names appeared on the various papers we published about the X-ray analysis of B<sub>12</sub> and its derivatives suggested to some that a large well-organized team of research workers existed to carry through

the considerable and varied kinds of work required. The reality was quite otherwise. Some of the names were acquired through very welcome cooperation with other universities. But most of them belonged to wandering young research workers, many still students, who came from all over the place—Europe, Australia, America, India and Africa, as well as from England. They spent a year or two playing a serious part in a serious project, paid very often by very inadequate grants. Only those near the end of the time had for themselves the joy of discovery, of the sight of the remarkable molecules on which they were working.

One could describe many aspects of this international scientific community. At present my mind is much taken up with the problem of finding details of the structure of insulin crystals. If I stop for a little and think round the subject, there might come to my mind the many with whom I have talked over these crystals, from Scott in Toronto who discovered that zinc was necessary for their growth, to Schlichtkrull in Denmark who devised the crystallization technique we generally use. I think of Fred Sanger's letters from Cambridge gradually revealing the amino acid sequence and then, in 1959, the young chemists in Peking saying "Do you think we are too bold? We are planning to synthesize insulin." Six years later, in Ghana, I saw news that Katsoyannis had synthesized insulin in America and I found myself irresistibly drawn to return to China, where I found that indeed the research groups in Peking and Shanghai had carried out their synthesis and had obtained crystals from their product with an activity, as Professor Wang said, very close to that of "not very good Boots insulin". Together we talked over their experiences and compared them with those of Zahn in Aachen and Katsoyannis in Pittsburg.

There have been black moments for our scientific community over the years. In Holland at that long ago Biochemical Society meeting we listened -between scientific discussions for news of Madrid, still holding out after days of attack. Later we heard that old Professor Goldschmidt had had to leave Heidelberg when Hitler came to power and had died in exile: his wife committed suicide in Czechoslovakia, when the Nazis took over. War followed, cutting many of our

connections. For a brief moment, when peace came, it seemed that international friendship also was restored. All too soon fighting again broke out in different regions and there were threats of more terrible things to come. There was deep suspicion between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. A few openly said that a "preventive" war involving a nuclear attack by the U.S. was desirable.

Some of the terrible events threatened in the late 1940s did not actually happen. One can see this as partly a consequence of the positive efforts made by a few who tried to keep a thread of the war-time contact and friendship continuing between the Soviet Union and the Western world. Among them was Dr. Radhakrishnan who was particularly well-placed for the purpose, for half the year a professor in Oxford and for the other half his country's ambassador in Moscow. I met him first in Oxford in Christopher Hill's rooms in Balliol where we were expecting a visit from Soviet historians. I had recently refused an invitation to visit the U.S.S.R. and was discussing my reasons—wanting to work, not to be involved in politics. Radhakrishnan overheard and spoke to me: "You should go. They are good people and no one is helping them very much."

So I said I would go next time.

It is curious how much one is a victim of propaganda, against one's judgment. I hesitated to go to the U.S.S.R. lest I should find it an unhappy fear-torn place. The first view across the "iron curtain" in Prague changed all that. There were three friends, biochemists, hatless, leaning over the fence around the air-field, waving to us as we flew in. After that all sorts of gay, improbable events took place and Russia was never again to seem a closed or hostile land.

When, once again, I saw Dr. Radhakrishnan in Delhi it was many years later. Friendship with Russia we now took for granted; our minds turned inevitably to China. Again troubling reports were reaching us and again we had to set against them our own experiences of the goodness of the people we had known in China and of their aims. Nothing we know could possibly justify a preventive, "protective" war of the kind being waged by the United States in Vietnam. It was difficult not to feel at that moment, in 1967, great unhappiness at the state of the world as we saw it. Man-made devastation in Vietnam seemed all

the more terrible in the presence of famine in India. Later, in Madras, the news came through that a large area in South Vietnam had been laid waste in a special operation by U.S. forces. In my mind's eye I could see the rice fields of southern India as the fields of Vietnam, obliterated. For a moment it seemed impossible to discuss the structure of insulin.

In India, and particularly in the south, one is reminded constantly of Gandhiji. One cannot anywhere now discuss problems of war and peace, violence and non-violence, without considering his life and work. Here, in the peaceful countryside his influence appears most profound in its effects on people's lives. One can see this most clearly in a community such as that at Gandhigram, which seems in many ways an ideal community. It is difficult to think Gandhigram is properly to be described by the ordinary words now used, "a rural university", "a federation of institutions for the countryside concerned with teaching, agriculture, medical aid and health". It is a very beautiful place, with low buildings, set in a little plain at the foothills of the blue Simulai and Kodai hills. The buildings are very simple, many still roofed with bamboo branches and palm leaves. Students and teachers together learn about the practice and seek to develop agriculture and village crafts, and also to take part in the life of the countryside. Gradually too they are developing serious scientific work, as laboratories can be built and equipped. The founders set out, under Gandhi's influence, 'to work for the reconstruction of the social order of our country... the building up of a classless and casteless society.. And Gandhi sent them a message for their inauguration: "Success attends where truth reigns." It was more of a challenge, they said, than a mere blessing.

I found myself telling the students of Gandhigram first about scientific work and then, proudly, that I, as a student, had myself seen Gandhi. I went to hear him preach in a London church in 1931.<sup>1</sup> I can see him still although I am ashamed that I cannot remember what he said. I also told them of a much later incident in my life. My husband was travelling round Northern Nigeria, giving lectures for the extra-mural department of Ibadan University in 1953 and I went with him. After the lecture educational films were shown, and one, from the

*March of Time*, gave the story of Indian Independence. In one village there was a great crowd of men, women and children, gathered in the open air to watch the film. As the climax was reached and Gandhi fell dead there was a great groan from all the watchers – as if they had not known till that moment that Gandhi had died, as if they had lost their own friend and leader.

Here is our problem. Gandhi is dead already the lessons he taught are being forgotten. We need to think again about his words and actions and example, if we are to solve the problems of the world today. He was all his life a nationalist, who worked for the independence of India. He would surely have understood the feelings of those belonging to small nations today fighting for independence. He also believed in non-violence and somehow persuaded millions successfully to follow his way. Today the most terribly violent methods are being used by the most powerful nation with least to fear from others. Somehow we need to find a way, Gandhi's way or another, for the millions who want an end to war to achieve their ends, which are so like Gandhi's ends, without it. Gandhi also believed in the happiness of a very simple life. We should surely be able to make it possible for everyone in the world to enjoy at least this simple life. It will need a great deal of scientific hard work, more than that required to solve protein structures. But the necessary hands and brains are available among the young all over the world if only they can join together. Friendship is not difficult. It is very easy for those who are working with one another on projects for which they greatly care.

**ZAKIR HUSAIN**

### **MORAL AWARENESS**

It was a morning in June, 1926. Three of my colleagues of the Jamia Millia Islamia and I had come to Sabarmati Ashram to meet Gandhiji. We had arrived rather late the previous night and arrangements had been hastily made to put us up. We were told that we would have breakfast in Gandhiji's hut, and were now seated there, four in a row, facing the kitchen, with Ba serving out food. Suddenly we heard a voice behind us: "How lovely!"

We all turned, to see Gandhiji striding towards us. He came and sat on his cot, gracious and smiling, and talked and laughed as if he had known us for years.

Gandhiji was much talked about in Germany, where the translation of Romain Rolland's book had a record sale. I had brought out a book on him myself while I was there and also delivered speeches on his message of non-violence. But this was the first time I met him. During the two or three days I was at the Ashram, I had fairly long talks with him. I was already committed to working in the J<sup>^</sup>nia Millia. This commitment had brought me into close personal contact with many eminent men, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. Ansari, Maulana Mohammad Ali, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, and I was naturally anxious to find out how much guidance and support I would get from them, and which method of approach would yield the best results. My motive in coming to see Gandhiji was the same. I did not need persuasion, I had had enough of eloquence. I wanted to know what Gandhiji thought and felt about the Jamia Millia and in what way he would be willing and able to help in its maintenance and expansion. He had saved it once, in 1924, when quite a number of its influential supporters had declared or implied that its continuation was no longer necessary or possible. What would he do for it now?

It seemed he could do very little, because of the prevailing suspicions and tensions. But I was more deeply moved and inspired with a greater confidence than I would have been if he had expressed himself in a different way and

promised liberal financial assistance. I would have got money, but I would also have felt that it was money that would make the Jamia Millia and not men. It was just the way he said things, the way he looked when saying them, that impressed me. I was not carried away. I did not feel that life would be easier for the Jamia Millia or for me. But I became more determined to do what I had decided to do.

What was this due to?

It seemed quite clear from the way Gandhiji talked that he was searching for the truth, the truth that would govern his relationship with the Jamia Millia. There was no uncertainty. Gandhiji wanted the Jamia Millia to take root, to grow strong, to represent an idea that was clear in his mind. But it would have to make itself, and not be made by him. He would be deeply concerned, he would watch, he would hope. But he would do nothing by way of help that would involve risk of the Jamia Millia losing its freedom to develop its own identity. Institutions, like men, must make themselves into what they want to become. I was profoundly impressed by what Gandhiji said. And I could see why. His thought and speech expressed his whole personality, and his personality was not an accident of nature, or a product of inherited culture; it had been fashioned by himself, in accordance with a moral design. He had worked on it like a craftsman, long and patiently, and was still far from satisfied. He had worked, not in seclusion or solitude, but, as it were, in the market-place of life, where all could see the unwavering determination and tireless energy with which he gave it the form that he desired and could test its strength. His smile, his laughter, his charm were essential elements of the design; so were his sincerity and humility. He did not talk like one who thought he had finished what he had set out to do, but like one who was still engaged in it, who could still commit mistakes, lose his grip over his tools, or falter in his resolve. Perfect accord between principle and practice is not achieved once for all. It requires continuous effort, continuous self-examination and in this process sincerity and humility acquire a certain rare quality. Gandhiji's sincerity was not only obvious; it was a challenge to me to be equally sincere. And I also

felt that I had to approach my task with a spirit of reverence, to be humble because the greater the task, the more exacting would be its demands. One had to be worthy of one's task in every way and all the time.

The specific activities through which a man seeks to serve his fellow men are naturally conditioned by time and circumstances. The methods he adopts are not to be taken by themselves, apart from the situation in which they are adopted. With great men it is all the more necessary to bear this in mind. Gandhiji's fasts, for instance, were an aspect of his belief that purity of aims depended on the purity of the heart, and that if he failed in an important objective, it was because he himself was not pure enough. As a method he would recommend it only to those individuals who desired fuller control over themselves; as a means for the attainment of ends he reserved it for himself, because of the obvious danger of its misuse. Today, those who wish to keep Gandhiji's memory alive need to remember not so much the occasions or the reasons for his fasts, but the plain truth that power will corrupt those who are not pure enough to exercise it justly and for the ends for which it should be exercised. Those who aspire to power must strive to attain, and those who bring them to power must demand, that purity of motive of which Gandhiji set such an exalted example.

We pay lip-service to the non-violence he preached so fervently and practised so steadfastly, and also pose questions that make it appear impracticable. But even if we are agreed that it would be ineffective against an enemy bent upon fighting against us with murderous weapons, can it not be practised by us in our relations with one another? Must we forget that non-violence is the external aspect of benevolence, large-heartedness, courage and moral strength? These virtues must be cultivated everywhere and at all times, so long as the supremacy of the moral law is acknowledged. In a country such as ours, where peace and cooperation depend almost entirely upon a generous tolerance of diversities of religion, language and culture, the cultivation of these virtues is necessary not only to maintain the dignity of life but to ensure survival.

We know that Gandhiji believed in the supremacy of the moral law, and satyagraha was his means of expressing and propagating this belief. Racism in South Africa and British rule in India gave a historic form to his satyagraha, but we must also look beyond its particular political expressions if we wish to understand how it can be applied in different circumstances. The basic principle is that truth and justice can be established only by continuously intensifying moral awareness. Moral awareness is created not by the exercise of power, but by inducing men to regard themselves as free agents, acting in accordance with a moral law which they recognize as binding on themselves. This appears to be simple, almost elementary in theory, but the moment we begin to reflect on its practical implications, we are overawed by their magnitude. The free moral agent, anxious to awaken in others an equal sensitiveness to the demands of the moral law, has to eradicate within himself the desire to use force or authority for the attainment of his end. Impatient with himself, he has to practise almost limitless patience with others. He has to consider all the time the most appropriate means of creating genuine moral awareness, of strengthening it where it exists, and making it more and more consciously and effectively operative by providing opportunities for its self-expression. This may appear possible only through a kind of abdication, through the leader being willing to be guided by those whom he had to lead. All thought of prestige may have to be removed in a continuing self-examination where the first always puts himself last.

We all agree, too easily perhaps, that practice must be in accord with principle. But how many possess the degree of sincerity required to make their whole life an example of identity between practice and principle? Gandhiji strove to make this identity absolute. We can look at the details of his life, his dress, his food, his daily routine. We can look at the more fundamental things, most important of all, his attitude towards his fellow workers. For it is this that we are most liable to overlook, because it demands the highest degree of commitment. The sincere are not satisfied with words, they wish to do things, to engage themselves in what Gandhiji called "constructive" work. One aspect of this is the work itself, the other, on which the quality of the performance

depends, is the worker. Every detail, every minute of Gandhiji's adult life is an eloquent witness to his endeavour to practise what he believed. He knew that the only means of creating sincerity in others is to be sincere oneself. Whatever devotion I have had to my work is a reflection of Gandhiji's dedication to his work, and many others would have been influenced in the same way. They must have exercised their capabilities to the limit because apart from setting an edifying example Gandhiji challenged them to exercise their freedom as moral beings, acknowledging the supremacy of the moral law, and obeying it as a demand of their own nature. Gandhiji's specific "constructive" work may become a matter of history. His building up of men will always have a vital contemporary significance.

This is what needs most to be remembered now. As a free people, with a government that has to exercise authority, we must have a leadership relying not on power but on the prestige of its sincerity, its dedication to constructive work, and to the building up of men who carry on the work from generation to generation.

**HOMER A. JACK**

### **MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI AND MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.**

The world can best observe the centenary of the birth of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi by promoting those values for which he lived and died. The chief legacy of Gandhi is satyagraha, through which he led the successful campaign for the political freedom of the Indian subcontinent. Satyagraha (or soul-force or non-violent direct action) is a continuing legacy being used and developed around the work in the post-Gandhian era. One of the most spectacular embodiments of this legacy has been in the person and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The assassination of Dr. King, occurring on the eve of the centenary of Gandhi's birth, provides the stimulus for discussing the relation between these two world leaders.

There are obvious parallels in the lives of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. Both were Coloured men. Both came out of the middle class of their people. Both were well educated. Both married and had four children (all sons for Gandhi, two for King). Both led large political movements, using the method of satyagraha. Both held no public office, yet both exerted more power and gained more adulation than most elected statesmen of their time. Both were charismatic. Votaries of non-violence, both ironically died by the bullet. Both were acknowledged in death, and even in life, as the greatest humanitarians of their time. The world truly grieved at the passing of both. Both died in the very midst of battle, both feeling a sense of disappointment and not of victory.

Yet the parallels in the lives of Gandhi and King are not complete. Gandhi was an Asian, although he spent several decades in Africa. He never visited America. King was an American, of African ancestry. He visited both Africa and India. Gandhi was forward-looking, but distinctly a nineteenth-century man. King was twentieth-century. Their lives overlapped by 20 years: 1929—when King was born—to 1948. They never met and they never corresponded. They had several mutual friends (Stuart Nelson and Amiya Chakravarty), although

Gandhi could not have known, even at his death, that the 20-year-old King existed. Gandhi was a Hindu and King was a Christian. Gandhi was a lawyer and King was a clergyman. Gandhi lived to 78 years; King was cut down at 39. Gandhi was the leader of the majority in his nation; King was the leader of a minority. Gandhi was revered the world over, yet only King received the Nobel Peace Prize. While neither man could have a successor, Gandhi had groomed none. A decade later Vinoba Bhave emerged as a kind of successor to Gandhi. King had provided for succession in the office of president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Dr. Ralph David Abernathy immediately assumed this presidency on King's death.

### "THROUGH THE NEGROES"

A number of American Negroes at various times visited Gandhi in India. In 1937, Dr. Channing Tobias, director of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, and Dr. Benjamin Mays, then president of Morehouse College (who was to give the funeral oration for King) visited Gandhi. Their long interview was printed verbatim in Gandhi's paper, *Harijem*. They asked Gandhi what word he could give them as to the future of the American Negro. Gandhi replied:

With right which is on their side and the choice of nonviolence as their only weapon, if they will make it such, a bright future is assured.

A year earlier, Dr. and Mrs. Howard Thurman also visited Gandhi and their interview was also recorded. They asked Gandhi to visit America, "not for White America, but for the Negroes; we have many a problem that cries for solution, and we need you badly." Gandhi replied:

How I wish I could, but I would have nothing to give you unless I had given an ocular demonstration here of all that I have been saying. I must make good the message here before I bring it to you.

Then Gandhi added:

You may be sure that the moment I feel the call within me I shall not hesitate.

Dr. Thurman replied that his fellow Negroes were ready to receive Gandhi's message, since "much of the peculiar background of our own life in America is our own interpretation of the Christian religion". Bidding the Thurmans goodbye, Gandhi, concluded:

It may be through the Negroes that the unadulterated message of non-violence will be delivered to the world.

That was in 1936. Martin Luther King, Jr., was seven years old. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), an organization intentionally using Gandhian technique in American race relations, was not established for another six years. King did not use these techniques for almost another twenty years.

As CORE began to experiment with Gandhian techniques in American race relations in Chicago in the early 1940s, King as a freshman at Morehouse College in Atlanta read for the first time Henry David Thoreau's *Essay on Civil Disobedience*. King later wrote that he was "fascinated by the idea of refusing to cooperate with an evil system". He reread the essay several times since he was "so deeply moved". In 1948—the year of Gandhi's death— King entered Crozer Theological Seminary and there began "a serious intellectual quest for a method to eliminate social evil". He read Walter Rauschenbusch, Karl Marx, and Reinhold Niebuhr. He heard a lecture by the American pacifist, A. J. Muste. However, King was "far from convinced of the practicability" of Muste's position. While at Crozer, King went to near-by Philadelphia one Sunday afternoon to hear Dr. Mordecai Johnson, president of Howard University, preach for Fellowship House. Having just returned from a trip to India, Dr. Johnson spoke of the life and teachings of Gandhi. King later wrote of this experience: "His message was so profound and electrifying that I left the meeting and bought a half-dozen books on Gandhi's life and work."

King "like most people" had "heard of Gandhi", but heretofore he had not studied him seriously. As he read these books, King "became deeply fascinated by his campaigns of non-violent resistance". As he delved more deeply into Gandhi's philosophy, King's "scepticism concerning the power of love gradually diminished". He came to see for the first time "its potency in the area of social

reform". Indeed, it was "in this Gandhian emphasis on love and non-violence" that King discovered the method of social reform which he had been seeking for so many months. The intellectual and moral satisfaction that he had failed to gain from Bentham, Mill, Marx, Lenin, Hobbes, Rousseau, and Nietzsche, he found "in the non-violent resistance philosophy of Gandhi". He came to feel that "this was the only morally and practically sound method open to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom". On further reading, he was not convinced by the anti-pacifist writings of Reinhold Niebuhr, but found them containing a "serious distortion" since his study of Gandhi convinced him that "true pacifism is not non-resistance to evil, but non-violent resistance to evil". Gandhi, King concluded, resisted evil with as much vigour and power as the violent resister, but he resisted with love instead of hate.

Transferring to Boston University School of Theology, King continued his formal training, influenced by such teachers as Dean Walter Muelder and Professor L. Harold DeWolf (who also gave a tribute at his funeral). When King ended his formal university post-graduate training at Boston University, he felt that he possessed a positive social philosophy, one of the main tenets of which was "the conviction that non-violent resistance was one of the most potent weapons available to oppressed people in their quest for social justice". Looking back, however, King realized that he had "merely an intellectual understanding and appreciation of this position, with no firm determination to organize it in a socially effective situation".

King was called to be minister of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, in the spring of 1954. In December, 1955, he was named head of the Montgomery Improvement Association, which encompassed a group of Negroes who walked the streets in dignity rather than ride the segregated buses in humiliation. While the Montgomery Movement was later labelled as embodying passive resistance, non-cooperation, and non-violent action, King wrote that "in the first days of the protest none of these expressions was mentioned—the phrase most often heard was 'Christian Love'". It was, he said, "Jesus of Nazareth that stirred the Negroes to protest with the creative weapon

of love". However, as the campaign unfolded, "the inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi began to exert its influence". King had come to "see early that the Christian doctrine of love operating through the Gandhian method of non-violence was one of the most potent weapons available to the Negro in his struggle for freedom".

About a week after the Montgomery protest started, King recalled that "a white woman who understood and sympathized with the Negroes' efforts wrote a letter to the editor of *The Montgomery Advertiser* comparing the bus protest with the Gandhian movement in India". She was Miss Juliette Mprgan, a "sensitive and frail" woman who "did not long survive the rejection and condemnation of the white community, but long before she died in the summer of 1957 the name of Mahatma Gandhi was well known in Montgomery". King asserted that "people who had never heard of the little brown saint of India were now saying his name with an air of familiarity" and "non-violent resistance had emerged as the technique of the movement, while love stood as the regulating ideal". King concluded: "In other words, Christ furnished the spirit and motivation, while Gandhi furnished the method." Elsewhere King wrote that:

the experience in Montgomery did more to clarify my thinking in regard to the question of non-violence than all the books that I had read.

He revealed that "as the days unfolded, I became more and more convinced of the power of non-violence". To him, "non-violence became more than a method" to which he gave intellectual consent. It "became a commitment to a way of life".

### **"ANOTHER GANDHI"**

W.E.B. Du Bois, the American Negro leader who was a contemporary of Gandhi, wrote in *Gandhi Marg* how he first became conscious of the work of Gandhi—and King. He learned of Gandhi after World War I and through Lajpat Rai, Sarojini Naidu, and John Haynes Holmes. Du Bois was a leader of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) and he wrote that "indeed, the 'Coloured people', referred to in our name was not originally

confined to America". He added that "I remember the discussion we had on inviting Gandhi to visit America and how we were forced to conclude that this land was not civilized enough to receive a Coloured man as an honoured guest". Later Du Bois asked Gandhi to write a message to the American Negroes for *Crisis* magazine which Du Bois was editing for NAACP. Gandhi in 1929 wrote:

Let not the 12 million Negroes be ashamed of the fact that they are the grandchildren of slaves. There is dishonour in being slave-owners. But let us not think of honour or dishonour in connection with the past. Let us realize that the future is with those who would be pure, truthful, and loving. For as the old wise men have said, 'Truth ever is, untruth never was\*. Love alone binds and truth and love accrue only to the truly humble.

After World War II, Du Bois began to realize how, out of war, a "new Coloured world" was arising free from the control of Europe and America. He began to "realize" the role of Gandhi and to evaluate his work as a guide for the Black people of the United States. Writing in *Gandhi Marg* early in 1957, Du Bois asserted: "Only in the last year have American Negroes begun to see the possibility of this (Gandhian) programme being applied to the Negro problems in the United States." He described the Montgomery Movement. He called "extraordinary" the "unbending front of non-violence to the murderous mob which hitherto has ruled the South". He added:

It was not based on any first-hand knowledge of Gandhi and his work. Their leaders like Martin Luther King knew of non-resistance in India; many of the educated teachers, business and professional men had heard of Gandhi. But the rise and spread of this movement was due to the truth of its underlying principles and not to direct teaching or propaganda. In this aspect it is a most interesting proof of the truth of the Gandhian philosophy.

Du Bois predicted that:

it may well be that... real human equality and brotherhood in the United States will come only under the leadership of another Gandhi.

Martin Luther King freely acknowledged all who helped his associates and himself to walk the Gandhian way. One of his chief aides was the pacifist organization, the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR). It worked closely with him. One of its secretaries, the Rev. Glenn Smiley, spent many weeks in Montgomery, often leading workshops on Gandhian nonviolence. The Fellowship published a Coloured comic book for children on King. Its first panel showed King preaching from his pulpit: "Years before our walk to freedom, a country of 300,000,000 people won its independence by the same methods we used." Bayard Rustin, one of the founders of CORE and an early staff member of the Fellowship, counselled closely with King also in this period.

King visited India. He later wrote that:

My privilege of travelling to India had a great impact on me personally, for it was invigorating to see first hand the amazing results of a non-violent struggle to achieve independence.

King increasingly became linked to Gandhi in the world mind and he took an interest in all things Gandhian. Indeed, one of the most widely-known pictures of King shows him in his study with but one picture on his wall—that of Mohandas Gandhi.

In 1960 Southern Negro students began a movement to open lunch-counters for their use. The campaign began, spontaneously in Greensboro, North Carolina. The student leader, Ezell Blair, Jr., said that the non-violent method was agreed upon, since a year before he had seen a documentary film on television depicting Gandhi leaving jail and thus revealing the price the Indian leader was willing to pay for India's freedom. The students also remembered the successful Montgomery bus boycott led by King. Hundreds of students all over the American South went to jail in this campaign. One woman student wrote from prison: "We could be out on appeal, but we all strongly believe that Martin Luther King was right when he said, 'We've got to fill the jails in order to win our equal rights'." One of the leaders of this student effort was the Rev. James M. Lawsori, Jr., a young divinity student in Nashville. For three years he was a Methodist missionary in India and, during this experience, became a devotee to

the Gandhian tradition. It was Lawson who, as a clergyman in Memphis, led the strike of the Negro garbage workers which King was helping when he was assassinated.

In 1961, in the midst of the world atomic crisis, *Gandhi Marg* asked several world leaders how Gandhian techniques could be applied to compel governments to commit themselves to disarmament without delay. King responded as follows:

The civilized world stands on the brink of nuclear annihilation. No longer can any sensible person talk glibly about preparation for war. The present crisis calls for sober thinking, reasonable negotiation, and moral commitment. More than ever before the Gandhian method of non-violent direct action must be applied in international affairs. This method must not be seen as merely a method to be used in conflicts within nations. It must be seen as a method which can be creatively used to resolve conflicts among the power blocs in the world today.... Through such non-violent demonstrations as sit-ins, stand-ins, and picketing, the leaders of the Western powers and the Soviet Union must be reminded of the dark night of destruction which hovers over all of us....

In 1964 King received the Nobel Peace Prize. In his acceptance- address he discussed both non-violent resistance and Gandhi:

The word that symbolized the spirit and the outward form of our encounter is non-violence, and it is doubtless that factor which made it seem appropriate to award a peace prize to one identified with struggle.

King then summarized the message of non-violent resisters in simple terms:

We will take direct action against injustice despite the failure of governmental and other official agencies to act first. We will not obey unjust laws nor submit to unjust practices. We will do this peacefully, openly, cheerfully, because our aim is to persuade. We adopt the means of non-violence because our end is a community at peace with itself. We will try to persuade with our words, but if our words fail, we will try to

persuade with our acts. We will always be willing to talk and seek fair compromise, but we are ready to suffer when necessary and even risk our lives to become witnesses to the truth as we see it.

These were prophetic words from one who did give his life. Yet in giving these words to the Nobel Committee, King added that:

This approach to the problem of racial justice is not at all without successful precedent. It was used in a magnificent way by Mohandas K. Gandhi to challenge the might of the British Empire and free his people from the political domination and economic exploitation inflicted upon them for centuries. He struggled only with the weapons of truth, soul-force, non-injury, and courage.

### **UNFINISHED WORK**

When Gandhi was assassinated, his work was—he thought —unfinished. In January, 1948, he was still trying to stem the communal rioting in the wake of partition and independence. In this effort he was more successful in his death—at least for a while—than during the last days of his life. Gandhi was also trying to turn the Indian National Congress from a traditional political party into a creative, social service movement. He also failed in this effort.

When King was assassinated, his work was—he knew— also unfinished. In 1967-68, he followed his earlier instincts and openly and actively participated in national and world efforts to end the war in Vietnam. After 1965, he shifted the civil rights focus of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference from the South to the Northern ghetto. This was unfamiliar territory and his method could not be transferred without some experimentation and adaptation. He did not succeed completely in Chicago, but he thought that he found one successful formula in the Poor People's Campaign converging on Washington, D.C., in the late spring of 1968. This Campaign, even in its announcement, raised many questions, some of which King was attempting to answer when he met his death. King was also not immediately successful promulgating his method of non-violence even in his death. There was rioting in almost 200 American cities beginning the night of his assassination. This resulted in 46 deaths (mostly

Negroes), 5,117 fires, 23,987 arrests, and 39 million in damage, with a mobilization of 74,000 Army and National Guard troops. The day after King's funeral, the U.S. House of Representatives passed and sent to President Johnson another civil rights bill, but King's death at most only hastened its passage.

King was at his death the most important civil rights leader in America. He was in the centre of the spectrum of a dozen national Negro leaders; he was to the left, but toward the centre. King was not deterred—to the end—from his belief in non-violence, despite the growth of violence in the Black ghetto with the major rebellions in Watts, Newark, Detroit, and other cities. King was being pushed hard by those Blacks who sanctioned violence and advocated Black Power. King, in his last days, gave constant attention to these twin pressures of violence and Black Power. He may have been as yielding to the second as he was unyielding to the first. Black Power by 1967-68 had made King's hymn, "We Shall Overcome", all but obsolete, especially the refrain, "Black and white together". Yet King's assassination and funeral probably gave this song immortality, rescuing it from a particular period and giving it the universality of being associated with a fallen leader.

The last hours of Gandhi—his assassination, the mourning, and the funeral—have been recorded well for history. The records of the last hours of King—his assassination, the mourning, and the funeral—are only now emerging.

Gandhi died—almost instantly—on Friday, January 30, 1948, at Birla House, New Delhi, shortly after 5:00 p.m., several miles from the sacred Jumna River. He was walking to his daily prayer meeting. King was shot on Thursday, April 4, 1968, at the Lorraine Motel, Memphis, shortly after 6:00 p.m. He was taken to the St. Joseph Hospital, where he died by 7:00 p.m., only a short distance from the Mississippi River. Gandhi's body lay in Birla House about 18 hours and the funeral cortege, two miles long, made its way 5½ miles during more than four hours to Rajghat, where the body was cremated. The body of Gandhi, the pacifist, was carried ironically on a made-over army weapon carrier and 200 men of the Indian army, navy, and air force pulled it by ropes. It became a

state funeral. King's body was transported by private plane less than 18 hours after his death to his native Atlanta. There the body lay for viewing for several days at Spellman College and then in his father's Ebenezer Baptist Church. On April 9, the funeral cortege, miles long, made its way four miles to the Morehouse College campus during more than three hours. The body of King, the pacifist, was carried on a sharecropper's wagon pulled by two mules. His associates would allow no military trappings. The final service was held at the Morehouse campus, followed by a private service at the South View Cemetery.

In New Delhi, a million and a half persons marched as part of Gandhi's funeral procession and another million watched from the streets. In Atlanta, an estimated 200,000 persons marched. An estimated 120 million Americans saw the five hours of procession and funeral on television as life in the U.S. came to a standstill that day of mourning.

When Gandhi died, the Indian government received more than 3,000 messages from foreign countries alone, expressing condolences. They included tributes from King George VI. President Harry S. Truman, Prime Minister Clement Attlee, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, and Albert Einstein. The Indian Ministry of Information declared:

Perhaps no man in recorded history received such spontaneous tributes of universal praise, reverence, and love as did Mahatma Gandhi at his death.

This statement would now have to be revised. When King died, tributes came from most world leaders, statesmen in the Communist, non-aligned, and Western worlds, Secretary- General U Thant, and Pope Paul VI. These tributes were worded in a way reminiscent of those received on the death of Gandhi. The death of Martin Luther King in some ways eclipsed that of John Fitzgerald Kennedy. One of the widely- printed cartoons in America appearing immediately after the assassination was by Mauldin. It showed King entering heaven and meeting Gandhi. The latter said: "The odd thing about assassins, Dr. King, is that they think they've killed you." It is in death, if not in life, that Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Martin Luther King met.

## KING'S ASSASSINATION

King returned to Memphis on Wednesday, April 3rd, to help the two-month-old strike of 1,300 predominantly- Negro garbage collectors. He and some of his Atlanta staff checked into the Negro-owned Lorraine Motel. This two- story, \$ 13-a-night hostelry was close to Claiborne Temple, the church used as the kick-off point for marches. That evening King was tired, so he sent his closest associate, Dr. Ralph D. Abernathy, to speak at the nightly rally of garbage workers. Upon arriving at the rally, Abernathy found so much enthusiasm that he went to a pay-phone and summoned King. Abernathy then gave King an unusually long introduction. Then King gave a speech which contained this prophetic summation

I got into Memphis. And some began to . . . talk about the threats... or what would happen to me from some of our sick white brothers. But I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn't matter with me now, because I've been to the mountain top, and I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life; longevity has its grace. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over, and I've seen the promised land.

King slept that night in room 306 at the Lorraine. He spent most of Thursday, April 4th, with his staff, in the motel, planning the march in Memphis. This was set for Monday, April 8th, in defiance of the Federal District Court Injunction. During the conference the problem of King's safety was again raised, since there was considerable violence when King led a march in Memphis on March 28th. King mused: "Maybe I've got the advantage of most people. I've conquered the fear of death." Also during this staff conference there was more discussion of the role of non-violence. Hosea Williams later recalled:

Dr. King really preached us a sermon. He said the only hope of redeeming the soul of this nation was through the power of non-violence. He talked about the life of Jesus and Gandhi, and told us, "I have conquered the fear of death."

After the staff conference concluded, King washed and dressed for dinner. He and some staff members had been invited to the home of the Rev. Samuel B. Kyles where the latter's 31-year-old wife was to cook them some "soul food". Dressed in a dark suit and white shirt, King left his second-floor, double-room suite and entered the narrow walkway. Leaning over the green railing, he talked to several co-workers assembling below. A funeral director had sent a Cadillac for King and his staff to use that evening. Solomon Jones, Jr., was the driver. Rev. Jesse L. Jackson stood below and introduced King to Ben Branch, who was to sing at the rally King was to address two hours later. King looked down at Branch and said: "I want you to sing for me tonight, I want you to do that song for me, 'Precious Lord, Take My Hand'. Sing it real pretty." Branch replied: "Oh, I will." Jones started the the automobile, and then yelled upstairs to King: "It's cool out. You better put your topcoat on." King said: "Okay, I will," and bent his head downward. These were the last words that King uttered. Just then, at 6:05 p.m., a single shot rang out. It hit him on the right side of the face, by the jawbone. He may have uttered, "Oh!" The impact of the shot lifted him off his feet and he fell backwards on the cement walkway. He bled profusely as he lay face down on the concrete. Jackson dashed upstairs, cradled King's head on his lap. Andrew Young felt his pulse. Ralph Abernathy, who was in the next room, got a towel and moaned: "Martin, Martin." A fire department ambulance soon arrived and King's body was put on a stretcher, his head wrapped in a towel and an oxygen mask over his face.

King was wheeled into the emergency room of St. Joseph's Hospital at 6:16 p.m. His eyes were closed and the only sound was from the resuscitator which was pumping oxygen into his body. A number of doctors and nurses worked on King. At 7:30 p.m. several doctors lined up in front of the reception desk to the emergency room and King's associates were called in. Paul Hess, assistant hospital administrator, read a terse statement:

At 7.00 p.m. Dr. Martin Luther King expired in the emergency room of a gunshot wound in the neck.

His body remained in the hospital until shortly before 9:00 p.m., when it was carried to the morgue. From there it was taken to a funeral home. King's staff met all night in the motel. The next morning they viewed the body and took the casket in a hearse to the Memphis Municipal Airport. A special plane had come from Atlanta with Mrs. King aboard.

The body was put in the plane and it returned to Atlanta, carrying some of the close associates of King, including Dr. and Mrs. Abernathy, Rev. and Mrs. Andrew Young, James Bevel, and Hosea Williams.

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BARBARA WARD JACKSON

### SPOKESMAN FOR THE GOOD IN MAN

In a world that grows steadily more angry and frightened—the rage and the fear mutually reinforcing each other—it is hard to look back to Mahatma Gandhi's kind of leadership without a desperate sense of loss. He loved the poor without hating the rich. He loved the great traditions of Hindu culture without hating the Muslims. He loved his country's liberty without hating the British. He saw evil, misery and injustice as doing even greater harm to the oppressors than to the oppressed. So he loved his "enemies" with compassion and sought radical change by non-violent means since violence harms the man who uses it as much as, if not more than, the one who suffers it.

It is true that the methods of non-violence work best when they are used against adversaries in whom total fanaticism has not taken over—the British raj in India, the federal authorities in the United States. Nazis, Stalinists, White supremacists would have been—and are—unreachable. But we also know that the aftermath of violence and rejection is further violence and rejection. The path back from the purge and the massacre or the final violence of war is desperately slow and uncertain— and today any return from a major nuclear war is virtually inconceivable. So the users of force are only underlining Gandhi's insight: that violent solutions involve everyone—aggressors, victims, by-standers—in a tangle of evil from which, short of extermination, there is no violent escape.

In our present time of troubles, is this lesson lost? Not entirely. The greatest Powers have a tacit stand-off in their own conflicts and work together, even if at arm's length, to contain local wars, over Kashmir, in the Middle East. There is a measure of support for the U.N.'s peace-keeping efforts, as in Cyprus, and its officers *are* used, even if ineffectually. The fear of ultimate violence exercises a certain restraint even in the tragic Vietnam conflict in which, clearly, the North pursues its strategy in the confidence \*that the United States will not resort to ultimate weapons. So at least the deterrent of fear is at work.

But can it become "the beginning of wisdom"? It is here that charismatic leadership of the kind offered by Mahatma Gandhi is wholly lacking. No world leader brings to the conflicts of our day any grandeur of vision, any insight more ennobling than, at best, the hope of stalemate or at worst the dread of extinction. No one speaks for man and the good in man. Even our hopes are negative. So we lose our way and lose heart and bewilderment will remain the mood of the human city until compassion, reconciliation and non-violence find new voices and the Gandhian message is\* heard again.

**JAGJIVAN RAM**

### **MAHATMA GANDHI AND SOCIAL CHANGE**

After more than two decades of nationhood we have woken to the realization that we are but imperfectly integrated, that the consciousness of belonging to one another and of being members of one body needs to be fostered and strengthened. Tradition-breaking influences, operative over a period of time, have weakened the links which bound the various elements of popular Hinduism. Hinduism now has to develop, as it is developing, a sense of obligation to the social whole and be-committed to the principle of equality. The provisions of the Constitution laying down fundamental rights, the reform of marriage and inheritance laws, the change in the sacramental character of marriage, the rising to the surface, economically and politically, of the submerged communities, have given it a further shake-up. As a matter of fact, caste, the sheet-anchor of popular Hinduism, has become a negation of society. Three thousand aggregates of people, rigidly exclusive, aliens socially to each other, neither interdining nor intermarrying, each claiming superiority over the other, can never make an integrated nation. The way to progress is through the widening of the circle of social activity and relationships and the collective consciousness of social life is the inspiration for the highest forms of social endeavour. Enmeshed in the interminable webs of the caste system the collective consciousness has tended to disappear. Unless the chaos of castes is, therefore, ended it may not be possible to explore new ways to a homogeneous, creative, cooperative fellowship. Surprisingly enough, while the abolition of castes has become a historical necessity, the psychological insecurity produced by the weakening of some of the binding links of religion and tradition makes people cling to castes. Practically all politicians and all political parties have made use of the caste structure for electoral purposes.

Did Hinduism at any time possess all the ingredients of nationhood? Are our traditions such as to provide the framework for a modern democracy? What is the spiritual genius of India?

When the curtain rises we find the country peopled by a number of heterogeneous communities striving for integration. There is the open, pastoral, *trivarnic* Aryan society with its simple religion, with no hint in the earlier hymns of the doctrine of transmigration or of ideas concerning purity and pollution comparable to those of present-day Hinduism. There is the highly developed and differentiated urban society of the 'Dasyus'. There is a host of smaller peoples and tribes. Added to natural barriers are the psychological and social barriers. The colour-consciousness of the Aryans and the distinction between a *Dvija* and an *Advija* begin the stratification. A new *Varna*, the 'Shudra' or artisan, is added and the *trivarnic* society becomes *chaturvarnic*.

This schematic and theoretical division into four horizontal groups is an abstraction. Endogamous groups rather than classes become the locus of status. Caste becomes a reality, *varna* a valuable fiction. The extension of caste society becomes possible by its accepting into its fold local groups and forcibly assigning to them subordinate places in the hierarchy. Racial elements, powerful enough to resist assimilation and organized enough to maintain their separateness, retain their identities reconciling themselves to the unedifying position of non-*Dvij*as and recognizing the superiority of the Brahmin. Weaker groups are relegated to a position outside the *chaturvarnic* order, made to live on the outskirts of the village and held in a form of communal slavery which is as impersonal as it is inhuman.

Freed of the drudgery of work, the Brahmin mind develops a thirst for knowledge. Metaphysics and Philosophy are born. There are brilliant attempts to explain the world through various hypotheses. Hindu speculation assumes greater subtlety. With the assumption that the world of perceptual knowledge was an illusion come further assumptions which go to fashion the doctrine of *Maya* and *Karma*. The division of an individual's life into *Brahmacharya*, *Garhasthya*, *Vanaprastha*, and *Sannyasa* is a striking illustration of the doctrine being carried to its logical limit.

Life is to begin with mendicancy and end with complete renunciation of the world and equally complete absorption in the self with a view to

attaining the bliss which worldly life does not and cannot vouchsafe. Renunciation and not living is the end of life. On this structure of thought is superimposed the caste system and this is linked with Karma. It validates the differences in status.

These ideas emanating from Brahmin centres of learning infiltrate into the different peoples and tribes of India, each with its own traditions, customs and beliefs and create a bond which no secular authority could provide, linking diverse beliefs into a consistent pattern and laying the foundations of a common polity. To the emergence of this fusion and synthesis, the Dravidian system contributes as much as the Aryan, as is evidenced by the survival of Indus Valley religious ideas and forms in the Hinduism of today. It is to this Aryan-Dravidian confluence to which flow many other currents that we owe Hindu or Indian civilization. 'Brahmavarta', as a part of North India was known, expands into Bharat extending from Kamrup to Kutch and Himalaya to Kanyakumari. The composite civilization becomes the heritage of all.

As society grows more and more complex and horizontal mobility tends to become vertical, elaborate rules of purity and pollution, both external and internal, are formulated. There are elaborate rules regulating marriage, property- relations and social intercourse. The low-bom are barred from wells, schools, temples and not only their duties and actions are woefully restricted but their children are prevented from receiving the education through which alone they could hope for social betterment. While a Brahmin may legitimately aspire for *moksha* after death, those at the lower rungs of the ladder can aspire only for the next higher step. The *Varna-Dharma* enforces upon the individual the duty of following the very pattern of behaviour which fixes the position of his group in the system and rewards him for so doing by making adherence to duty a pathway to higher status in the next life on earth.

These beliefs and assumptions, it is hardly ever realized, are the products of a socio-economic order which took shape in a particular historical context. They are not born of the inherent psychological traits of a distinct ethnic category. Many of these assumptions have a social purpose. They make for stability. They

are not divinely ordained, though they are supposed to be so. But they have become an indivisible part of Hindu life and continue to exercise a strong influence even when material conditions of life have completely changed.

In vain does a Mahavira or a Gautama Buddha, symbolizing the revolt of the soul against ritualistic Brahminic orthodoxy, emphasize the superiority of right conduct over meaningless ritual. In vain do the saints—Ramanand, Kabir, Nanak, Raidas and many others—stress the godliness of man and the sinfulness of denying him his status. In vain does Vivekananda emphasize that "the unique characteristics of Hindu Society, the caste, the joint family, the rights of inheritance and the relationships arising out of them, are social and legal and not religious institutions". Ram Mohun Roy attempted a reinterpretation of Hinduism, a synthesis of the doctrines of the European Enlightenment with the ideas of the Upanishads. Swami Dayanand found in the Vedas inspiration for universal brotherhood and a non-metaphysical approach to God and society. But Hindu society did not change. The citadel of orthodoxy held. It was the inherent weakness of Hindu society which antedated Imperialism, probably attracted it, undoubtedly sustained it.

This was the state of affairs when Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi emerged on the Indian scene with his austerity, humility, saintliness. He was like a rishi of old who had stepped out of an epic. He had realized that it was not the British guns but our own imperfections which kept us in bondage. He knew the weaknesses stemming from the stratification of the caste system, regionalism, social injustice and ignorance. He was a devout Hindu, a man of faith, deeply and sincerely religious. But his Hinduism was as wide as the skies. To minds conditioned by the ideas of the *smritikaras*, Kautiyya and Machiavelli and by modern political thinking which separates the secular from the religious his assertion that life was indivisible and could not be divided into water-tight compartments, was like a breath of fresh air. For him there could be no hiatus between preaching and practice. He always sought to correlate thought and action and, therefore, for him to know was to act. Politics, he believed, had not only unavoidable contacts with ethics, it was conterminous with it. He

spoke in a language understood by the masses and because mass understanding is at a low level, he had sometimes to stoop very low to reach it. But he spoke with conviction, courage and transparent sincerity. "Truth" and "Non-violence", the two words to which he gave such wide currency, epitomized his ideas. He observed:

It has been said that God is Truth, perhaps it is better said, Truth is God...

Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute...

Even good ends do not justify dubious means... Our real enemies are our fears, greeds and egoism... We must change ourselves before we can change others... The laws of family, of truth and love and charity are also applicable to groups, countries and nations...

These are deemed to be wholly impractical concepts in politics. Yet, Mahatma Gandhi lived in his own life each one of them.

He never bothered about developing a well-coordinated, internally consistent system of thought. He went through a continuous process of evolution, correcting, modifying or enlarging his ideas in the light of fresh experience. But he was bound more by the voice of his conscience, by love of men, than deterred by fear of inconsistency. When he said that *swaraj* could not be granted "even by God but had to be earned", he appeared to reject the teleological view, but when he affirmed, in the context of political decisions, that he was in the hand of God he appeared to confirm it. When he said that the Bihar earthquake was a retribution for the sins of untouchability, Tagore remonstrated that unscientific explanation of physical phenomena would deepen the element of unreason. He was unrepentant and replied that man did not understand the ways of God. He shuddered when people touched his feet and once said that the cry "*Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai*" pierced his heart like an arrow. But when he decided to embark on a twenty-one day fast from May 8, 1933, his second for the sake of the depressed classes, he said that he did so on a call from within.

I had gone to sleep the night before without the slightest idea of having to declare a fast next morning. At about midnight something wakes me up suddenly, and then some voice—within or without I cannot say—whispers, 'Thou must go on a fast.' 'How many days?' I ask. 'Twenty-one days.' 'When do I begin?' 'You begin tomorrow.'

He went off to sleep after making the decision. During one of his tours the inhabitants of a village told him that his auspicious presence had made the village well miraculously fill with water. He reproved them:

You are fools. Beyond a doubt it was an accident. Suppose a crow sits on a palm tree at the moment when the tree falls to the ground. Will you imagine that the weight of the bird brought down the tree?

A man whose most cherished desire, as he admits in his autobiography, was to see God face to face and attain *moksha*, he found the way to it in his love of humanity, in his ambition to be able to wipe every tear from every eye. While he appeared to agree with the Marxian analysis that man's commerce with matter, his economic life, his modes of production and distribution of economic goods, influence politics and ethics and generally the social life of the community, he refused to believe that there was a necessary correlation between the construction of a new social order and the destruction of the old one or that the 'economic' was the only factor which mattered. He did not accept non-violence as a policy. He accepted it because he considered it more effective than violence. He believed that the application of moral and psychological means in the form of mass satyagraha to the regulation of group-behaviour was a higher principle than the application of mere violence or mere external pressure, such as a general strike. He was a man resolved to refashion history with the weapons of love and truth, a man who had found effectiveness in morality.

During the twenties and thirties, he was busy trying to find a way to greater integration of our people. He was the first to realize that like the constituent units of Germany and Russia, but unlike those of the U.S.A., the linguistic regions of India had histories and traditions which were of value and went far

back in time. A composite, strong, strain-free nationalism would seek to safeguard these unbroken traditions and developed languages, even welcome pride in them, when the primacy of national interests is so willingly recognized. He had become, in himself, the embodiment of Indian nationalism and it appeared to him, as to all, a reality beyond question. The two ideas of a national language and linguistic States were not only, he felt, complementary; they were both necessary.

The other link through which he wanted to forge greater unity and integration was through the abolition of untouchability and the revival of the *Chaturvarnic* concept in all its pristine purity. Men are born equal but they are also born with varying inclinations, temperaments, attitudes and aptitudes. Their spiritual growths differ. Instead of letting struggle and competition determine and categorize these differences, would it not be infinitely better, he argued, if the *Chaturvarna* and heredity were accepted as a natural regulatory principle. Month after month, week after week, he returned to the theme in his *Young India* and, later, in *Harijan*. About untouchables he exclaimed:

Socially, they are lepers, economically they are worse, religiously they are denied access to places we miscall houses of God...

If we do not efface untouchability, we shall be effaced from the face of the Earth...

The four *varnas* are fundamental, natural, essential, while the innumerable castes and sub-castes are excrescences... *Varna* fulfils Nature's law of conservation of human energy and true economics...

It is the classification of different systems of self-culture. It is the best possible adjustment of social stability and progress. It tries to include families of a particular way of purity of life. Only it does not leave the decision whether a particular family belongs to a particular type to the idiosyncracies or interested judgments of a few individuals. It trusts to the principle of heredity and being only a system of culture does not hold that any injustice is done if an individual or a family has to remain in a group in spite of their decision to change their mode of life for the

better. Change comes very slowly in social life and caste has allowed new groupings to suit the changes. These changes are quiet and easy as a change in the shape of the clouds. It is difficult to imagine a more harmonious adjustment...

Caste does not connote superiority or inferiority. It simply recognizes different outlooks and corresponding modes of life.. .

Caste is the classification of different systems of self-culture. It is the extension of the principle of the family. Both are governed by blood and heredity... Its value from the economic point of view was very great. It ensured hereditary skill. It limited competition. It was a remedy against pauperism. It had the advantage of trade guilds. It was man's experiment in social adjustment in the laboratory of Indian society. If we can prove it to be a success it can be offered to the world as a leaven and as the best remedy against heartless competition... *Varna* is inherent in human nature. Hinduism has reduced it to a science...

Caste, as at present, is a distortion. But in our eagerness to abolish the distortion let us not abolish the original... It is not a human invention but an immutable law of nature, the statement of a tendency jthat is ever present and at work like Newton's Law of Gravitation...

And so on goes the refrain. Mahatma Garidhj uses *varna* and caste as interchangeable terms and believes that all types of men can be categorized under four broad occupations: teaching, defending, wealth-producing, manual labour. He wrote:

Such is the *varna* system which we are trying to resuscitate. It is like Dame Parkington with a mop trying to push back the Atlantic Ocean.

And Gandhiji proved to be prophetic so far as the desired resuscitation was concerned.

While Gandhiji elaborated and stressed his conception of caste and *varna* expecting Hindu conscience to catch up with the new thinking, he considered the eradication of untouchability as a matter of the gravest urgency. His fast

which commenced on 20th September 1932 as a protest against Ramsay MacDonald's Communal Award was a historic event. Congressmen of Shahabad had sent telegrams to Mahatmaji intimating that I would represent the nationalist Depressed Classes in the Poona parleys. My elder brother's illness stood in the way. I addressed, however, an angry letter saying that he could have accepted reservation of seats at the Round Table Conference and saved himself the ordeal of the fast. His secretary replied that Gandhiji considered any kind of separation bad for both the Hindus and untouchables.

He was not happy at having had to accept reservation though he made it clear that the fast was not directed against it. It was separate electorates he could not accept and he was happy when the Poona Pact ended them. The fast initiated an emotional churning of Hindu society. It did not kill untouchability. It could not. Nor did segregation and repression end. But untouchability forfeited public approval.

It snapped a long chain that stretched back into antiquity. Some links of the chain remained. But nobody would forge new links. Nobody would link the links.

This manifestation of the emotional upheaval found a concrete expression in the launching of the Anti-untouchability League on 30th September, 1932, which, later, when Gandhiji evolved the new term "Harijan", became the Harijan Sevak Sangh. Many among caste Hindus, however, were not happy. An all-India agitation was launched against the Pact aimed at preventing its inclusion in the Government of India Act.

I was, naturally, ever since my student days, concerned with the lot of my fellow brethren. I had been propagating that untouchability with its denial of opportunity and element of serfdom was woven in the socio-economic fabric of Hindu society. It could be abolished, therefore, I held, only when the socio-economic order underwent a complete reorganization. It implied a revolution—social, economic, political—bigger than any the world had witnessed so far. At the inaugural conference of the Bihar Anti-untouchability League, the sermonizing attitude of the speakers chagrined me. After having perpetrated

unparalleled atrocities on people who were once equals in culture and attainments and after having degraded them into service sub-humans, the "give-up-meat-wine-and-develop-clean- liness" lectures appeared to add insult to injury. I spoke harshly. My outspokenness stunned many of those present. But Dr. Rajendra Prasad, who had listened very attentively, was very thoughtful. He did not, like some others, make any comments. Later, he asked me to give some time to Bihar. That is how I decided not to go to Calcutta, became the Secretary of the Anti-untouchability League, later known as Harijan Sevak Sangh, and my public career in Bihar began.

I was not happy with the way the Sangh had to function. The fast, the sad truth was driven home, had produced only emotional effervescence, not a psychological or social revolution, not a fiery iconoclasm. It was to be welfare born of pity for the poor untouchables.

Gandhiji resumed his campaign against untouchability in August 1933 after his release. He had undergone a twenty-one- day fast in May to rouse the Hindu conscience. But the change he had expected did not come. Mammoth gatherings rent the skies with *Jais* to him, but they went home unchanged. The bigots organized black flag demonstrations. About this time Gandhiji referred to Harijans as 'cows\*'. I wrote to him saying that it smacked of 'pity\*'. His reply: the cow was a symbol of gentleness and suffering and no ill will was intended.

When Gandhiji began his Bihar tour in March 1934, I accompanied him. The earthquake had caused terrible damage. He moved from place to place comforting, teaching and preaching. At Buxar there were brickbats and an effort was made to disturb the meeting. But it passed off uneventfully. Lai Shastri, a Pandit from Banaras, who had been put up by the opponents of the Pact to oppose Gandhiji was piqued. He prostrated himself before Gandhiji's car, determined not to let him move. Gandhiji got down and continued the journey on foot. There was opposition at Arrah and Patna, but no brickbats. When, however, we reached Deoghar, the situation was tense—at 2.00 a.m. in the night. Two groups of demonstrators, one for and the other against the Pact, had gathered at the station. There were skirmishes, exchange of lathi blows.

The rear window of the car in which Gandhiji was to be taken was smashed. But he was serene and calm. He refused to go to sleep. He told Binodanand Jha, himself a Deoghar Panda (priest), that he would go to the place of the meeting next day on foot. Nothing would make Gandhiji change his decision. The entire route was cordoned by volunteers and Gandhiji, followed by Thakkar Bapa, Binodanand Jha, myself and others went to the place of meeting, literally under an arch of crossed 'lathis'. There was a mild exchange of lathi blows just when the meeting was about to commence. Gandhiji's presence worked. Even the ruffians, mollified, patiently waited and listened. With the incorporation of the Poona Pact in the Government of India Act, in June 1935, the violent anti-Pact agitation died. But Gandhiji continued his anti-untouchability campaign till his last days.

The Gandhi movement wrought another significant social reform. Women, even in the purdah-ridden areas of North India, attended his meetings in large numbers. Many participated in the movement and courted imprisonment. If India today boasts of the largest number of women legislators in the world the credit, in large part, for the revolution, goes to Gandhiji. He did not, however, make a frontal attack against caste. Initially he had felt that a reformed caste system could provide the links that would forge Hinduism into a nation. But he was gradually disillusioned. And ultimately he came to the conclusion that caste had to go. He wrote:

The most effective, quickest and the most unobtrusive way to destroy caste is for reformers to begin the practice themselves, and when necessary take the consequences. . . . It is desirable that caste-Hindu girls should marry Harijan husbands. That is better than Harijan girls marrying caste-Hindu husbands. If I had my way, I would persuade all caste-Hindu girls coming under my influence to marry Harijan husbands.

On another occasion, he said that caste ought to go root and branch, if untouchability had to be completely eradicated. Since he had finally come to that conclusion, he was questioned, why he did not make anti-untouchability

work part of a wider crusade against the caste system, because, if the root was dug out the branches would wither away themselves. Gandhiji replied:

It is one thing for me to hold certain views, quite another to make my views acceptable in their entirety to society at large. If I live up to 125 years, I do expect to convert the entire Hindu society to my view.

This dream of Gandhiji remains to be realized. Even if consistency is regarded as a negation of virtue, I plead guilty to being consistent in this matter. In 1937, in a meeting at Gopalganj in Bihar, where Dr. Rajendra Prasad and many Bihar leaders were present, I stressed what I considered to be an inadequacy of the national movement. I said that the movement was predominantly political in inspiration and outlook and unless it developed vertically and became, fundamentally, a movement for the radical reorganization of society, the inspiration might exhaust itself prematurely. At root, I emphasized, the inspiration was an urge for a fuller and higher life. But *swaraj* had been kept a wonderfully vague concept, perhaps deliberately so, to preserve the united-front character of the national movement. I could not comprehend, however, how the prevalent mode of thought and backward-looking, encrusted orthodoxy, which did not and could not appreciate or imbibe the new values which underlay the political movement, could provide the basis for their sustenance and growth. There had to be a new orientation in thinking. There had to be a change in the moral and intellectual attitudes of the people. The age-old bonds had to go. A quest for new vistas and horizons had to begin. In that context, I took note of the Harijan welfare activities of caste Hindus and castigated the commiserating 'Messiahs'. A garbled version of my speech in the Press led Gandhiji to enquire from Dr. Rajendra Prasad as to what I had actually said. He had spoken very kindly of me, "as gold purified by fire". I was grateful to him for his affection. But I felt that "reform" was not and could not be the way of change. I was glad when Gandhiji's views underwent a transformation.

The social problem, apart from the problem of untouchables, it is generally held, is economic. If the economic problem is rightly tackled the rest need not matter. That is, in my opinion, a very superficial view. I have always held, and

here Gandhiji's dictum of the indivisibility of life supports me, that our approach must be integrated and that while the economic and political must receive adequate attention, the social may be ignored only at peril to both.

Today casteism has permeated political life to such an extent that the very structure of our democracy is threatened. Nobody appears to take note of this cancer. Tension is mounting and yet the atmosphere of drift continues. The levers of caste are manipulated by all striving for political power not in the furtherance of an integrated nationalism but for sectarian ends which weaken the composite fabric. What is needed is a mobilization of the nation's moral and spiritual resources in a social and intellectual crusade against this pernicious system which must be ended before it ends democracy. The consciousness of the bond of unity must extend beyond caste and region.

Gandhiji did not succeed in bringing about a radical change in the Hindu social order which has influenced and contaminated the Islamic and Christian orders also. He did not aspire or work for it. But he did put untouchables on the road to emancipation. The emancipation of the Hindu mind, which alone will herald the new order, must necessarily be a long-drawn and painful process. The class problem which calls for a guarantee of the minimum necessities of life, housing, employment, quality- integrated neighbourhood school for all, cannot be separated from the caste problem which is the problem of a moral and mental revolution. But time is running out. The deepening caste distrust is not inevitable. What is needed is commitment to action on a massive scale, to make democracy equally good for all, to promote increasing communication across caste lines, to halt polarization. And whatever action is proposed it must be in the Gandhian way—exercise of moral force. Many of the Gandhian ideas are not relevant today—Gandhiji would have outgrown them—but the idea of application of moral force to change group behaviour will hold and the impact of this idea will be more durable than appears today.

F. CYRIL JAMES

### THE SEEDS OF THE FUTURE

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in Kathiawar in 1869. Two years earlier, in far-away Hamburg, Karl Marx had published the first volume (the only one actually written by him) of *Das Kapital*. A year later, in 1870, Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov, better known to history as Lenin, was born in Kazan. Were these three events, thousands of miles apart and compassed in the short period of four years, the ideological seeds of the world society of which we are—each one of us—a part today?

No intelligent man of reasonable maturity in the late eighties would have thought any of these three events significant, even if he had been aware of them. The world around him had all the appearances of permanence. The British Empire was rapidly becoming the leading world power. In Europe, the French Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Russian Empire seemed to be firmly established and the German Empire was gestating. These five powers dominated the affairs of the rest of the world. Even the United States, which has grown so significantly during the intervening century, was a country of no more than 39,000,000 people struggling to heal the wounds of a recent civil war. Its coal production was only one-third that of the United Kingdom: its production of iron about one-quarter.

Europe dominated the world. In spirit the domination was intended to be kindly: it was based upon the assumption that Europeans were better qualified to organize the progress of mankind than any other peoples. The countries in Asia, Africa and South America were regarded with that mixture of affection and severity with which the typical Victorian father treated his children. If they behaved well they were loved and assisted in every possible way: if they were disobedient they were punished. In 1868, a British army invaded Abyssinia because the Emperor had imprisoned a British consul; Russia annexed Samarkand and the whole of Uzbekistan.

It is hard for us, in the third quarter of the twentieth century, to recapture and understand that state of mind, but it is probable that Gandhi in his youthful years understood it and did not find it strange. It was reasonable to expect that the princely courts in Kathiawar would continue forever: his success at school and at the Inner Temple, in London, must have suggested to him that, in due course, he might follow in the steps of his father and grandfather.

As we look back upon those years, with the advantage of historical perspective, it is apparent that the technological revolution (which had begun much earlier and is still continuing) relentlessly changed the pattern of human society and provided fertile soil for new ideas. Two aspects of that technological revolution, which were profoundly to influence Gandhi's philosophy, must be mentioned.

First, the continuous improvements in transportation and communication were shrinking the size of the globe and multiplying the opportunities for contact among men. The Suez Canal was opened six weeks after Gandhi was born, reducing dramatically the length of the voyage from India to Europe. In the same year George Westinghouse invented the pneumatic brake that was to revolutionize railway transport and make possible the safe, regular and swift operation of such trans-continental systems as the Canadian Pacific and Trans-Siberian Railways.

Second, the whole pattern of industry was changing imperceptibly and the small factory was giving place to the mammoth enterprise. Again, to cite no more than a couple of examples that fix the pattern, P.D. Armour opened his first meat-packing factory in Chicago only a few months before Gandhi was born: John D. Rockefeller founded the Standard Oil Company a year later.

Both of these technological trends must have begun to make an impact on Gandhi's thinking when, a young and intelligent barrister, he arrived in South Africa in the spring of 1893 and found himself confronted with the deeply human problem of race discrimination—a stark prejudice against the colour of a man's skin that destroyed the possibility of reasonable human contact. He could

have shirked the issue and returned to India but "I decided to stay and suffer", he wrote. "My non-violence began from that date."

"The greater part of what my neighbours call good, I believe in my soul to be bad", David Henry Thoreau had written in *Walden*, in 1854, and five years earlier he had expressed in his essay on *Resistance to Civil Government* the concept of non-violence that Gandhi was to make his own and forge into a weapon of such power as Thoreau had never conceived. No man can say with confidence how much of a great achievement is due to the magnitude of the challenge; how much to the quality of the man that accepts it. Emerson and the other members of the Concord group of transcendentalists were friends of Thoreau, and the members of the government that he opposed were, after all, much like himself in character, education and political philosophy. Gandhi in South Africa was opposing a government of an alien race and (although his ambulance services to the Imperial Government during the South Africa War suggest that he had not yet fully realized it) the whole tradition of European superiority. One of the fundamental assumptions of the world into which he was born he had found in his soul to be bad and he determined to oppose it by that deep strength of character which is misnamed "passive resistance".

Others can write with greater knowledge than I of the Natal Indian Congress that he founded in 1894, and of its impact during the fifteen years that followed. The climacteric of his life—the great divide that separates his participation in the attempt to reform the old world from his conscious determination to re-create it closer to his heart's desire—came when he abandoned his law practice and embraced voluntary poverty, foreshadowing his later decision to be numbered among the untouchables.

*Hind Swaraj*, which he wrote at the time, sets out clearly his rejection of both the basic assumptions of the world into which he had been born. Self-government for India denied the paternal tradition of European superiority; the philosophy of the spinning-wheel condemned whole-heartedly the modern machine civilization of the Western world.

When Gandhi returned to India, in 1915, it was Rabindra- nath Tagore, another great soul, who hailed him as Mahatma but the Western world had not yet learned to appreciate either his greatness or his powerful impact on the pattern of human society. *The Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, published in fifteen volumes during the years from 1930 to 1935, contains a long article on Karl Marx and an equally long one on Lenin, in which Harold Laski describes him as "the greatest practical revolutionary in modern history". There is no biographical article on Mahatma Gandhi since the *Encyclopaedia* cautiously refrained from appraising individuals who were still living at the time of publication, but H.N. Brailsford, in his discussion of the "Indian Question" and of "Passive Resistance", deals at some length with Gandhi's ideas before concluding that "only a rash theorist will draw from this record any confident conclusion as to the efficacy of passive resistance."

Brailsford and Laski were writing three decades ago, events have overruled their judgments and shown mankind, once more, how "the stone which the builder rejected, the same is become the head of the corner". The shot that assassinated Gandhiji on January 30, 1948, echoed in the minds of countless millions of men and women in every corner of the world, bringing back memories, reviving hopes and, in some, creating a new sense of purpose in life.

It would be impertinent of me, especially in this book where so many of the contributors knew him personally and were his associates, to attempt any precise assessment of the contribution that the Mahatma made to the independence of India and its subsequent development. We, in the world outside, were increasingly aware of the spiritual power of the man who had voluntarily renounced all those things that most men cherish; the man, frail and sometimes emaciated, who could influence Viceroys and, by his own fasting, persuade Hindus and Muslims in India to cease from fighting one another.

Lenin, in a bitter blood-bath, destroyed the empire of the Czars and established the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics. *Das Kapital* has become a Bible to millions of people although, like the writings of other religions, it is

more often quoted and argued about than understood: it has brought to the world not peace but a sword. Gandhiji, with no weapons and no material power, as the world reckons it, exercised an influence that spread far beyond the Indian subcontinent. The influence of Gandhi and the British experience in the transfer of power in India led, during the following twenty years, to the peaceful attainment of independence by all those countries in Africa and Asia that had been British colonies in 1947.

Resist with all your mind and spirit the things that are evil but never resort to violence; worship Truth, love your fellow man. These are ancient precepts that men have heard often, and ignored. Gandhiji proved that, in this twentieth century, they can change the face of the world. As Arnold Toynbee wrote in the tenth volume of his wide-ranging *Study of History*: The thrill of liberation . . . and the bliss of achievement . . . Mundane events that have this poetry in them are the antitypes of the ministries of Christ and the Buddha and the missions of all the bodhisattvas, prophets and saints down to a John Wesley and a Mahatma Gandhi who have come and gone already and will be followed, through the ages, by later members of their goodly fellowship.

KARL JASPERS

### GANDHI ON HIS 100TH BIRTHDAY

Gandhi liberated India from British rule, not through soldiers but through non-violence established in right. He made politics; he was associated with violence but in a manner totally unheard of. In a world which pretended to exist in the idea of right and custom Gandhi tore open the masks of deception. He exposed the domination of violence not only theoretically (which had already occurred long ago) but also in a practical sense by arresting it himself and by visibly suffering under it. Gandhi's decisive strength lay in the readiness to suffer all the consequences of his actions from the ruling authorities and to instil this readiness to suffer also in the Indian masses. He amazed the world by his enchanting leadership by which he carried on this fight methodically on the side of the Indian masses.

The man wanted to achieve the impossible: Politics through non-violence. He succeeded greatly. Has the impossible become possible?

Gandhi shunned *physical* violence. He suffered this violence through the innumerable imprisonments, threats to life and his final assassination. Did he want absolutely no violence at all? There lies the crux of the matter. He may say very clearly and honestly that he wants to convince, that he wants to convert and that he wants to be in agreement with his opponent. But actually he practised and wanted a *moral compulsion*. His personal capacity for suffering, whose effectiveness was enormously enhanced by its reflection in the endurance of the Indian people, became a "violence" which ultimately drove the English out of India.

One could recall the old Indian theory of the power of the ascetics. By means of their unprecedented self-torture, they accumulated a magical power which led to the mastery of all things. Even the gods are frightened of the power of such ascetics. Gandhi's self-discipline is not without inner violence. But this violence against one's own self is not a free coming-to-oneself. Therefore it is that,

whoever inflicts violence on oneself only causes subjugation of others. Subjugating others by means of moral pressure is an element of Gandhi's effectiveness.

If Gandhi's method of non-violence could not actually exclude violence but only shift it, he has yet achieved his political success without any physical violence, even though accompanied by a minimum physical violence on the part of the individual Indian. Has he not found a political method in which right gets the better of power? Herein lies the second critical point. To comprehend his achievements fully it is essential to find out in what sense it is considered a unique and highly remarkable event. History teaches that one learns obedience by putting up with the extermination of man and the consequent devastation, like for example the Athenians in Samos, the Romans in Palestine, the medieval Church in Provence and Cromwell in Ireland. Power can be absolute whenever it becomes unrestricted and unscrupulous, be it out of an impartial policy towards oneself or be it with reference to a manifest God. This terror creates submission in the proud; people who swear by their own freedom perish.

The English were quite resolved about the big problem: How far is a ruling power prepared to leave, if its authority is being threatened? Loss of power is better than radical terror.

Gandhi could speak in public. Even from this prison he was allowed to act. The English liberality and legal attitude provided scope for Gandhi's activities. It was the result as much of the English political conviction as of Gandhi's own.

But the great unique fact remains that a man who was clear in his thinking and who convinced others by the example of his own life, made politics out of something which rises above all politics.

Gandhi developed the theory of his own action. His politics are based on religious, extra-political ground. This ground is the activity of the inner action: It leads on to Satyagraha, the firm holding-of-the-self on Being, on Truth. Gandhi begins with himself. The resistance which projects itself outwardly is the consequence of the active power of Love, of the power of Faith and Sacrifice. "The Satyagrahi must adhere to Truth, to Chastity, to Willingness to

Sacrifice." He must accept every suffering inflicted on him. He is not a passive man but a "Warrior of Truth". The Satyagrahi practises mental and spiritual discipline just as a body practises the handling of weapons. He lives in self-purification.

Gandhi could recall to one's mind the Indian ascetics of the past thousands of years. But he distinguishes himself from all of them by the fact that he never left the world, but rather took on himself graver responsibilities in the world. The second point of difference with the holy ascetics is also connected with the above: Gandhi remained all his life a seeker, continued his self-purification and knew about his guilt. He rejected being taken for a saint. Almost nothing else became more important to him than to guard himself from a deification of his person, to resist the pressure of the Indian *darshan-seekers*. Everything seemed lost to him in the view of such people who thus wanted to misrepresent him.

The greatness of Gandhi is that through self-sacrifice he proved that the "extra-political" could be converted into a power for political purposes in our times. He does not separate politics from ethics and religion; on the contrary he establishes it there firmly and unconditionally: It is better to die, better to let "an entire people be wiped out of the map", than to sacrifice the purity of the soul.

Gandhi has become the unique example in our day of the religious politics of a self-revealing man. A man who was humiliated in South Africa because of his race, who was inspired by his Indian origin and educated in English, is driven by a love for a free India which would regain its respectability, driven as well by a readiness for suffering and for unlimited sacrifice, thereby permanently stalling a sense of guilt which goads on to new determination.

Today we face the question: How can we emerge from physical power, and wars, so that we do not all perish under atom bombs? Gandhi provided the true answer through deed and word: only from higher politics comes the strength that would rescue us from our political crises. It is inspiring that this answer is provided in our times by an Asian.

## E. STANLEY JONES

### MY CONVERSION TO NON-VIOLENT NON-COOPERATION

When the request from Dr. S. Radhakrishnan came for an article from me to this Memorial Volume to Mahatma Gandhi, contrary to my responses to many such requests, I found myself eager to respond. For I owe much to Mahatma Gandhi. So this article would not be just an article—a verbal tribute to a very great man, perhaps the greatest of his age, but more of a grateful tribute to one who has enriched my life at its deepest depths.

Mahatma Gandhi was a Hindu—a deeply Christianized Hindu, more Christianized than most Christians, and I was a Christian, at least 4 Christian-in-the-making. How could he enrich my life at its deepest depths? But he did. The story of that enrichment is the substance of this article. I can make it personal without mere self-reference, for what he has done for me he did for millions around the world. So I speak for them as well as for myself.

In my very first meeting with him in about 1920 at the home of Principal Rudra of St. Stephen's College, where I was giving addresses, Principal Rudra said: "Mr. Gandhi [not yet the Mahatma] is upstairs. Would you like to see him?"

Would I? I was all eagerness, little knowing what the impact of the great little man would mean to my thought and spirit I was meeting destiny. He was seated on a bed with his papers around him and after a few moments of cordial greetings I read to him what had deeply moved me in my Quiet Time that morning: the thirteenth chapter of First *Corinthians* from the New Testament, Moffat's translation, a prose-poem on love. When I finished there were tears in his eyes and he said very simply: "How beautiful—how beautiful!" My first impression was his open simplicity. He did not ask where it came from—the New Testament, nor did he close up when he realized I was a Christian. He took it for what it was, whatever its source.

That created something within me. I would be open and simple and responsive to what he had to give me. Little did I know how much it would be, for I was

not yet converted to his non-violent non-cooperation. Finding him so open and simple and responsive I found myself open to him—to his possible criticism. So I said to him: "You are the leading Hindu of India, what would you say to me as a Christian as to what we Christians should do to make Christianity more naturalized in India—not a foreign thing, identified with a foreign government and a foreign civilization, but a part of the national life of India and contributing its power to India's uplift and moral and spiritual change?" I inwardly braced myself for what I expected—honest, sincere but possible biting criticism of the Christian movement. He completely disarmed me by his suggestions—disarmed me, though the criticisms were deeper and more fundamental than I expected. They were these:

First, I would suggest that all of you Christians, missionaries and all, must begin to live more like Jesus Christ.

(He need not have said anything more—he penetrated to the heart of our need in the first sentence!)

Second, that you practise your religion without adulterating it or toning it down. Third, that you emphasize love and make it your working force, for love is central in Christianity. Fourth, that you study the non-Christian religions more sympathetically to find out the good that is in them to have a more sympathetic approach to the people.

He could not have been more critical and yet more constructive than he was in these four things. By implication he said: "Your movement ails there and here and here and here." And yet it was so gently said, I could scarcely tell which was compliment and which was criticism—it was both. I quoted the four things to a British High Court Judge in India and he replied: "Why that is genius, to put his finger on four such vital things.\* Here a Hindu was converting me to my own faith!

But the conversion went deeper—he converted me to his non-violent non-cooperation. My son-in-law, Bishop J. K. Mathews, who got his Ph.D. from Columbia University with his dissertation on "Mahatma Gandhi", passed on to

me what he had found in his research into the roots of the non-co- operation movement:

Mr. Gandhi, while a lawyer in South Africa, was in a first-class compartment with a first-class ticket in a train in South Africa. A white man got into the compartment and objected to riding with a man of colour. The guard was called and Mr. Gandhi was ejected. He walked the station platform at midnight waiting for another train. As he paced up and down he conceived of the idea and method of non-violent non-cooperation. Reduced to its simplest terms, it is this: "I won't hate you, but I won't obey you when you are wrong. Do what you like. I will match my capacity to suffer against your capacity to inflict the suffering—my soul-force against your physical force. I will wear you down by goodwill."

Two things happened as Mahatma Gandhi paced that platform: First, the most expensive expulsion in human history. The expulsion of Gandhi from that compartment meant the expulsion of the white man from an overlordship of Asia and Africa. For it meant the birth of the modern uprising of the subject peoples of the world—India got her freedom, then Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia, Indo-China and then it leaped over to Africa where 36 nations have found their freedom from outside domination. The overlords reaped what they sowed—they sowed expulsion and they reaped their own expulsion.

But something more important happened—the birth of the moral equivalent of war. Nations in East and West had been accustomed to settling their differences by war. It was felt that war was an ingrained necessity—there was no alternative. It was fight, or flee, or be subservient. Then Gandhi told India and the world that you need not adopt anyone of these three— you could match your soul-force against physical force and wear the other down with goodwill. It seemed to be so simple that it was absurd. But all great discoveries are a reduction from complexity to simplicity. The false hypothesis is always complex, for you have to use many words to cover the falsity. The truth is always simple. Of all the reductions from complexity to simplicity this

reduction to the simplicity of nonviolent non-cooperation is one of the simplest and most profound.

I supported the First World War on the basis of two passages of Scripture: "Herod and his soldiers set Jesus at naught"—militarism sets Jesus at naught—His method and militarism are contradictory. But another passage: "When they saw the soldiers they stopped beating Paul"—militarism protects the innocent and the weak. On the basis of that second passage I supported the First World War. Then the disillusionment set in. I saw that war was a wrong means to get to right ends. You cannot get to right ends with wrong means, for the means pre-exist in and determine the ends. If you use wrong means you will get to wrong ends. So war produces war.

So I was inwardly ripe to be converted to a moral equivalent of war. But I had my doubts about non-violent non-cooperation. When Gandhiji was about to launch his movement I wrote to him urging him not to do it. I was afraid it would degenerate into violence and chaos. I felt that gradualism through constitutional agitation and pressures would bring self-government. He wrote me back this letter:

May I assure you that I shall not embark on civil disobedience without just cause; not without proper precautions and not without copious praying. You have perhaps no notion of the wrong which this Government has done and is still doing to the vital part of our being. But I must not argue. I invite you to pray with me and for me.

This letter was a transcript of Gandhi himself—silken on the edges but steel at the centre, gentle and unbending.

The spirit of the movement is seen in this: Sri Prakasa, since then the Governor of three States in an independent India, was with us at a tea party during those days when the leaders were being picked off and sent to jail. He said with a gay laugh:

I must eat as many as possible of the sandwiches for I shall soon be on His Majesty's jail fare. We can thank our lucky stars that we are fighting

people like the British who have something within them to which we can appeal. We will send the British out as masters, but before the boat has gone out of the harbour we will call them back as friends.

This was a new kind of warfare—you look for whatever good there is in your opponent and appeal to it, then when you have conquered him by your capacity to suffer and by your goodwill, you send him out as master and then call him back as friend. That is literally a new kind of warfare—it ennobles both the one who uses it and the one upon whom it is used—if he responds. I say, "if he responds", for it is not fool-proof. It can harden the one upon whom it is used. But the probability is that he will respond, for like produces like. But war with the ordinary weapons degrades both, for hate is engendered in both, hate is of its very essence. But it is bound to ennoble the user of this method—the pay-off is in the person whether the other man responds or not; the user is a better person for having used this method.

This method is not only beneficent to the user—it is power. A sweating Irish sergeant said to me during those days: "If they would fight with the ordinary weapons of war we would show them something. But this"—and he turned over his hand helplessly. It turns your stomach and appeals to your conscience to have people stand up under having their heads cracked with lathis and do it without hate. Or when sentenced by a British judge to go to jail to have the prisoner say, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." That cuts deep. A Hindu said to me: "Now we understand the meaning of the cross—we are carrying it."

The jails became ridiculous. When 200,000 of the leading men and women of India went to jail the jails literally became ridiculous. You were nobody in those days if you hadn't been to jail. And the jails became the schoolrooms where the leaders of the new India were being trained. They came out of those jails and took over a free India. And I question whether any country East or West was ever taken over by a more dedicated and morally purified group of patriots than those who had absorbed the spirit of Gandhi and had taken over India. They did an impossible task—they made a nation out of heterogeneous

elements and then they ruled a nation—the largest democracy of the world. And they held it steady even through the days of partition. A weaker nation and a weaker leadership would have gone to pieces under the strain.

The means and the ends coincided—they used moral means and they arrived at moral ends.

Almost simultaneously' two great forces emerged in the world—atom force and *atma* force, one physical and the other spiritual. The atom force has been used in its advent for physical ends—destructive physical ends. And how destructive! I have stood nine times at the spot where the first atomic bomb fell at Hiroshima, Japan—have stood in a huddle with Japanese leaders with heads bowed in prayer, praying that no Hiroshima would ever happen to anyone, anywhere again. And dedicating ourselves to peace. Now we have our backs to the wall and God is saying this: "Hitherto you have used physic I power in East and West to settle your disputes. Now I'll show you physical power." And He uncovered the heart of an atom. "Now choose," He says, "if you use atomic power again in war, both sides will be destroyed, literally destroyed." Now we are in the moment of the Great Choice, a World Choice. We see clearly that if an atomic war is waged again both sides will be ruined, some say in twenty-four hours, some say in four. This is the bankruptcy of a method. The method bankrupt, obsolete.

But humanity is afraid—afraid that there is no alternative. We must use physical force—and now physical force means atomic force—or be enslaved. But at this juncture and in this dilemma a new possibility emerges—emerges in a little man in a loin-cloth—Mahatma Gandhi with his o/ma-power, the power of non-violent non-cooperation. So two forces are before us to choose between: the atom and the *atma*—one means universal destruction and the other means universal deliverance.

But humanity sighs, "Would you make us all into Mahatma Gandhis? We can't don loin-cloths and set forth with a walk- ing-stick to conquer the world. We're in a scientific age of machines and secular change." I know. But there is this possibility, and it is a real one. Take the spirit of the *atma* and convert the

atom to constructive ends, harness it to the collective good and to the abolition of poverty. India produced Mahatma Gandhi and his method of non-violent non-co-operation. Now on this one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Gandhi, why can't India launch a movement to convert all atomic energy into constructive channels throughout the world?

I once asked Mahatma Gandhi to come to the West and help us away from war. There were tears in his eyes when he said: "I haven't demonstrated the power of non-violence in India yet." But he did demonstrate it and won the freedom of four hundred million people. Now people in the West are more and more convertible to any way out of war. When I talked with Dr. Martin Luther King he said: "It was your book *Mahatma Gandhi, An Interpretation* that gave me my first inkling of non-violent non-cooperation. Here, I said to myself, is the method we can use to gain the freedom of the American Negro. We will turn this movement from violence to non-violence." "Then my book on Gandhi was not a failure as I had thought," I replied. "No, for us it was the way out," he said.

For all of us it is the way out. We see that we needn't go to war, nor need we submit to wrong. There is a way out— non-violent non-cooperation, soul-force against physical force. But you cannot mix these methods—now violent, now nonviolent. It must be pure non-violence even in spirit. When it is that, it is invincible as in Mahatma Gandhi.

When the Karen Rebellion in Burma was about to start I called together the Karen leaders and asked them what would settle the dispute and head off the rebellion. Out of what they suggested we drew up a "Twelve-Point Programme for Peace". It was put over the radio and headlined on the front page of the newspaper. Hope sprang up, peace was in sight. The head of the Karen Volunteers offered to take out the thousand volunteers in barracks in Rangoon. They were sent out. Then some hotheads burned down the vacated barracks. Violence had stepped in—the rebellion was on. And went on for fifteen years. I kept in touch with the rebel leaders urging them to call off the rebellion. I heard indirectly that the Karen Rebellion leaders used to sit in the underground

around a fire in the jungle reading my book on Mahatma Gandhi and debating the merits of violence and non-violence and trying to decide which to adopt.

That scene of the Karen rebel leaders seated around the fire in the jungle studying Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent revolution is humanity in epitome—whether as manifested in the United Nations, or in the parliaments of the world, or in small groups, or in the heart of the individual. Men everywhere are thinking about a moral equivalent of war. Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent non-cooperation offers that moral equivalent of war. It is a live issue—the livest issue in the world today.

**HUMAYUN KABIR**

### **GANDHI'S REVOLUTIONARY SIGNIFICANCE**

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born at a time when the West like a Colossus bestrode the entire world. Not only were western powers politically dominant, their supremacy in the economic, cultural and intellectual fields was equally unquestioned. India and indeed the whole of Asia and Africa suffered from the loss of political independence, economic buoyancy and spiritual energy. In India, the last attempt of the Mogul Emperor and his adherents to revive past glory was defeated after the revolt of 1857. Turkey was looked upon as the sick man of Europe and her empire was in the process of rapid disintegration. New burdens had been imposed upon China after her defeat in the Opium War. Japan had received a rude awakening from the incursions of the emerging United States. Russia was pushing her frontiers into the heartlands of Asia and pressing east and south in search of an opening into the warm seas. Imperialism of the western world was active on all sides and for the first time in recorded history, many Asians and Africans had begun to feel as if there was something preordained in the supremacy of the West.

Before Gandhi died, this mood of despondency had vanished. In its place was a new expectancy and hope, eager, confident and at times impatient. All countries of Asia and Africa stirred with a new life and claimed their rightful place in the mansions of Man. Not a little of the credit for this transformation belongs to Gandhi. He was chiefly instrumental in restoring the self-respect of, the Indian people and making the ordinary man feel a new sense of dignity. The awakening of India evoked a new thrill from far-flung regions of Asia and Africa. Rarely has a member of a subject nation achieved such position and prestige in his contemporary world. Within ten years of his death, imperialism was everywhere on the retreat.

Gandhi's revolutionary significance for the world lies in his success in releasing the energies contained in the endurance and patience of the Indian people. The Indian masses had submitted to wrongs and suffered hardships against which a

more active people would have revolted long ago. Their passivity and inertia had been regarded as a source of weakness by friends and foes alike. Even Indian leaders held that the character of the Indian masses ruled out the possibility of an open and active revolution. Gandhi was not blind to the fatalism and passivity of the Indian people but found for them a new political function by turning them into reserves of hidden power. Instead of an aggressive and militant struggle, he built up a movement of non-cooperation in which the passivity and endurance of the Indian masses were turned into sources of strength and energy. As the Indian masses moved forward to political action, the static forces inherent in the Indian character became dynamic. The people regained their self-respect and this was in itself a restoration of the values of spirituality.

Gandhi was one of the leaders of the new challenge to Western domination but did not deny the values the West had brought to the human heritage. The scientific revolution in Europe had opened to man a new world of immense possibilities. On the material plane, it had led to an unprecedented development in technology which promised freedom from hunger and disease. On the political plane, its finest expression seemed to be liberal democracy in the Nation State. On the intellectual plane, it gave rise to rationalism and held out the hope that all human ills would be resolved through the spread of education. Europe was full of the spirit of expansion, buoyancy and faith. Wherever Europe led, the rest of the world followed.

Gandhi recognized the contribution of science to the solution of human ills, but protested against the materialism which was following in its wake. He felt that Europe had fought for political freedom but connived at economic slavery of the worst type. The machine in its simpler forms might be essential to human well-being but the way Europe had used machinery had reduced men to near slaves. Gandhi saw that the traditional modes of western thought had led to a dead end and sought a way out of the prevailing political and social impasse through his experiments with truth.

The abuse of the machine had led to the concentration of wealth and the growth of a soulless industrial civilization. Gandhi sought an escape from both these evils by his emphasis on the autonomous and self-contained village as the unit of society. In such small units, the human relationship between individuals cannot be ignored. Impersonal relationships replace human contacts when the social unit grows so large that individuals can no longer know each other as persons. The stress on human relationship would on the one hand ensure against the danger of licence or anarchy and on the other provide conditions for the growth of individual freedom. The small village community would thus avoid the risk of dictatorship of the State and anarchy of Statelessness.

Gandhi was keenly aware of the importance of the economic independence of the individual. Without economic independence, political independence becomes a mockery and democracy a mere farce. Undue concentration of wealth undermines the economic independence of man and yet follows almost inevitably from large-scale production under private proprietary rights. Gandhi's analysis so far is almost the same as that of the socialists. His solution is however very different. The socialist remedy is based on the elimination of private property while retaining large-scale industrial units. Gandhi sought the solution in the dispersal of industry which would automatically limit the accumulation of wealth in the hands of individuals.

The difference in the socialist and the Gandhian solution is not difficult to understand. It is derived from the difference in their attitude to the individual. For the socialist, the individual is secondary and socialists are prepared to impose equality—political, economic and social—by violence if necessary. Gandhi on the other hand held the individual to be of supreme importance. Any imposition on his freedom was therefore to be avoided as far as possible. Equality which is the basis of economic independence must therefore be achieved through peaceful and non-violent methods. Socialists hold that political liberty may be and has often been achieved through bloody revolution. In Gandhi's opinion only the form but not the substance of freedom can be achieved in this way. The results of a violent revolution are always liable to be

lost by a more violent counter-revolution. Besides, those who have taken to the sword have more often than not perished by the sword. It was because of his awareness of this danger that Gandhi urged that the economic and political freedom of man must be attained without resort to violence. All violence is, according to him, born of hate and hence the only way of resolving human conflicts is through a conquest of hatred.

Gandhi's attitude to violence makes his message of special significance to the modern age. The fact that he developed his philosophy, not by denying current trends of thought, but by\* drawing upon various elements in them and forming a new combination compels both attention and respect. He was an inheritor to the liberal tradition and regarded personal liberty as one of the greatest values of life. With the philosophical anarchists he believed that the State should interfere as little as possible with the individual. He also believed in the tradition of collectivisation inherent in socialist thought. He imbibed all these teachings but gave a new turn to everything he learnt. He believed in personal liberty but felt that rights accrue only from the performance of duties. He was in favour of decentralization but not in favour of the abolition of the State. He pleaded that the good things of life must be shared but he was not prepared to advocate the use of violence for achieving this end.

Religious teachers have from the earliest times preached that man cannot live by hate. Practice of non-violence has however in the past been mainly the concern of the individual. Gandhi for the first time showed the efficacy of non-violent action by groups. He was a successful politician and cannot be dismissed as a visionary. His advocacy of non-violence as an instrument of political action has therefore aroused interest throughout the world and made the most diverse groups attempt to use it for solving their problems.

Technology has unified the world today by overcoming the barriers created by time and space. In ancient times an idea could travel only as fast as man could move. Till the middle of the last century, this could not be more than two hundred miles a day. Today a man can go round the world in less than two hours. An idea can be flashed simultaneously throughout the world. Even

twenty years ago all these were beyond the scope of man's wildest imagination. Mountains and oceans no longer divide man. He travels over both and launches into outer space. Technological unification of the world demands economic, political and cultural unity. Such unity can however be achieved only by safeguarding the diversity and autonomy of the constituent units.

Modern technology has created conditions where war can and must be discarded. In ancient times, nations fought one another for pastures and living room. Later they fought one another for raw materials and markets. They lived under a constant fear that without political control over territories, they would face starvation and death. The development of science and technology has for the first time eliminated that fear. Today everybody can be assured the necessities of life. This is feasible provided the energies of man are directed to productive ends and the wealth so produced distributed equitably among all members of mankind.

Conflict or war for assuring survival is therefore no longer necessary. On the contrary war today threatens the very existence of man. Weapons of destruction have been fashioned which can destroy not only the warring parties but the entire world. The U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. have enough atomic weapons to destroy themselves and everybody else. Today, any large-scale war may become global and lead to the annihilation of man. Science and technology have created conditions where mankind must feel and act as one or perish.

Not only has war among nations become an anachronism in the modern world but also class conflicts within the same nation. Major powers have withdrawn from the brink time and again because of their realization that a full-scale global war will destroy mankind. There is today a balance of terror which maintains an uneasy peace. This is some gain but there is still lack of realization that violence within the community may pose an equal threat. One reason is that no internal conflict today remains wholly internal. There are so many affiliations within and among nations that an internal conflict in one place may and does attract interference from outside. The Spanish civil war began as a conflict between two Spanish groups but soon developed into a

rehearsal for the Second World War because of intervention by major powers. Vietnam is a cruel reminder that great nations cannot refrain from interfering in the affairs of less powerful states. In western Asia, the problems can be resolved if the Great Powers do not intervene. There can thus be no assurance for the future unless violence, internal and international, is eliminated. Human conflicts began when Cain repudiated his responsibility for his brother. Today the logic of events has compelled an increasing number of men and women throughout the world to realize "that everyone must accept responsibility for everyone else.

Gandhi's major contribution is an attempt to put into practice non-violent programmes for fighting evil. Even politicians who are averse to the use of force do not generally rule it out as an instrument of policy. Gandhi declared that the method of persuasion, whether in internal or external affairs, is the only human and civilized way open to man. He wanted to rule out resort to physical force and substitute in its place the use of moral pressure. The essence of his method is non-violent resistance to evil. He believed that this must begin with action by the individual to influence other individuals. Such a programme would ease tensions both within an individual and among individuals. International tensions are very often the reflection of intra-national tensions just as tensions within society are often due to tensions within the individual. Every individual who resolves his internal tensions becomes an integrated personality. He then becomes a dynamo of power and radiates energy. Gandhi's answer to the problem of violence, internal and international, was to train a body of men and women who would have no internal tensions and would help to resolve tensions within society. Once tensions within society are reduced, international tensions will automatically diminish.

Searching for causes, Gandhi concluded that injustice and inequality among individuals and nations are the basic causes of tensions and hatred. The State seeks to reduce causes of internal tension by assuring equality of all in the eye of law. Progressive taxation to reduce inequalities in wealth is intended to serve the same purpose. The growing contacts among nations demand the

application of similar methods to ensure justice and reduce glaring inequalities. It is a paradox of the modern age that the more the world is coming together through technological advances, the more barriers are being set up by Nation States to prevent the free intercourse of men.

The world is irresistibly impelled towards unity today but two conditions must be satisfied before a world order can emerge. The first is the guarantee of full cultural autonomy and freedom to even the smallest constituent unit of mankind. One of the most fascinating developments in the last fifty years has been the emergence of giant powers accompanied by an insistent demand for greater autonomy by smaller and smaller constituent units. The second condition is the creation of a body of enlightened opinion throughout the world. Civil authority gained in power as its impartiality was increasingly recognized. The world authority will also acquire greater acceptance by assuring justice and equitable consideration for all.

Gandhi was a revolutionary who sought to transform human nature itself. He was also a realist and knew that people would judge his recipes by their results. He therefore began with the individual and sought to change him first. He believed that the smallest beginning may lead to the most far-reaching consequences. Gandhi's technique is therefore suited for operation by small groups and through programmes which are initially modest. He rejected the theory that ends justify the means and believed that the means are just as important as the end. When the individual acts according to this principle he achieves not only personal excellence but also changes the course of history by adoption of pure methods.

The supreme example of Gandhi's faith in non-violence and the importance of the individual is found in his own thought and action in the last days of his life. The years 1937-47 were years of stress and strain in India. As political independence drew nearer, the clashes of interest among different sections of the people reached a new intensity. India became free but at the cost of her unity. The transition to freedom was marked by violence and murder on a large scale. Gandhi stood firm against the rising tide of communal bitterness and

passion. After helping to assuage tempers at first in Noakhali and then in Bihar and Calcutta, he came to Delhi where communal riots had broken out in the aftermath of the partition of India.

With characteristic courage, Gandhi faced the fury of the mob and preached the message of reconciliation and friendship. His prayer meetings became a source of strength and solace to countless men and women in the capital and outside. Passions had become so inflamed that some misguided men tried to prevent these meetings but in spite of opposition, threats and attacks he continued fearlessly. There had been a murderous attack on him in Calcutta in September 1947. There were further attacks in Delhi and continuing threats. Nothing however could daunt him. With exemplary courage and patience, he pursued his chosen path of understanding, compassion and brotherhood. There was a stamp of greatness on everything he did from the time he opposed tyranny in South Africa but perhaps even Gandhi had never reached the heights he achieved in his last six months. A new sweetness and strength welled out of all his words and action. Everyone who came in contact with him came away a purer and better man. The forces of evil were also gathering strength and on January 30, 1948 Gandhi paid the supreme price for his love of his fellow-men. An assassin's bullet struck him down and he died a physical death but spiritually he was renewed and joined the band of immortals whose names shine like stars in the Armament of human history.

## KHAN ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN

### RECOLLECTIONS

The affectionate, warmly cordial relations I enjoyed with Gandhiji I had only with Jawaharlal Nehru and Rajendra Prasad.

The first time I saw Gandhiji was at the Khilafat Conference in Delhi in 1920. With him were Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Azad and others. I had no opportunity to meet them, but I realized that these were the people who would work and sacrifice for the country's freedom, happiness and prosperity.

The second occasion when I met Gandhiji was at Calcutta, in 1928, when both the Congress and the Khilafat Conference were in session. At the Congress meeting we were listening to Gandhiji's speech. An angry young man jumped on the dais and interrupted him, shouting, "Mahatmaji, you are a coward, you are a coward.\* Gandhiji only laughed at this, laughed heartily and continued his speech in an unperturbed voice. I marvelled at this equanimity of mind. It showed his greatness.

On my release from Hazaribagh Jail, in August 1934, I was told I could go anywhere except the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province. Gandhiji wired me to go and stay with him at Wardha. Jamnalal Bajaj also wanted me to sitay with him at Wardha. I did so. We went every day to Gandhiji and joined him at prayers. Often I used to take part in them. Once Gandhiji said to me, "You know, I used to enjoy very cordial relations with Shaukat Ali and Mahomed Ali. Yet what happened I do not know. They became angry and sore with me and parted company. What is your reaction to this? How would *you* behave with me?" I saw Gandhiji's point and replied: "The question is one of affection. The relations between one person and another depend on their attitudes and views. Whatever your attitude or view is, that is mine too. Your goal is one of service of and love for God's children and concern for their well-being. So is mine. So long therefore as your attitude remains this and mine too, it is clear that we

cannot fall out. It is only when people differ that they separate from one another."

In my own disposition there is little inclination for argument and debate. I have always been of the view that we must talk less and do more. There was thus seldom any lengthy discussion or controversy between Gandhiji and me. For there was no difference in our approach or in our viewpoints. Love of service of God's children was common to us both. We looked at all things from the same angle.

During my stay at Wardha what struck me most about Gandhiji was his punctuality in all things: his meals, walks, sleep, prayers were all on time.

Another thing which I saw was that Gandhiji was never orthodox and rigid in his outlook. I remember an example of this. When I went to Gandhiji in Wardha, my children, who were with me, would often go with me. One day it was Gandhiji's birthday. When we went to him and sat down to a meal, Gani, my son, said to Gandhiji, "I am very happy that I have come here. I said to myself – today is Gandhiji's birthday. We will have cake, *pulav*, *murga*, etc., and we will eat them with relish. But, look, today also it is *kaddoo* as usual – every day it is *kaddoo* – today it is a boiled one at that!" Hearing this Gandhiji laughed heartily, and taking me aside, said: "Look here, they are children and we must give them what they like. We should arrange to prepare and serve them meat eggs, etc." I replied: "They are only joking. Wherever we go we eat only what the hosts provide and eat themselves. Even if you try to make them eat something else, they will not." So, I did not agree. My children too did not. On his part, he was ready to feed people according to their wishes.

The third thing that impressed me about him was his humorous disposition. He would laugh with all – girls and boys, the young and the old. He had a great sense of humour. His heart was full of love and concern for the service of God's children.

Once it so happened that the Bhangi in Wardha threw up his job and ran away. When this was reported to Gandhiji, he said: "Well, let's go with broom and bucket and clean up the place." And we went and attended to the sanitation.

When Gandhiji visited the Frontier Province in 1938, for the second time, we had posted armed sentries where he was to rest for the night, in Charsadda. This was purely a defensive measure. When Gandhiji saw this, he asked: "Why these armed men?" "Bapu," I told him, "they are here only to frighten away any intruders." But Gandhiji did not agree. "I do not need them," he said simply and firmly. The guns were taken away from the guards. The effect of this incident on our people was considerable. "Look at this strange man," they said, "His trust in God is such that he needs no arms!"

There was a great deal of violence at first in the Frontier Province. Non-violence came later. I can tell you that the way of violence led to such severe British repression that even brave people turned into cowards. But when non-violence came, even the cowardly Pathans turned brave. Before that, the Pathans were so much afraid of soldiers and jails, they had no courage to talk to sepoys. But non-violence taught them the necessary courage, bravery and brotherhood. Children used to go to jail smiling. So courageous were they that they faced the biggest people. You think that the Pathan is brave only if he strikes back, that if I am struck I should strike back or vice versa. But that in fact is cowardice. Real bravery is that which refuses to return blow for blow. This is man's greatest virtue. Our way of violence was quickly and effectively suppressed by the British, but our non-violence could not be suppressed either by Britain or by Pakistan.

I am a man of non-violence. Amongst us there were some who used to say that only violence could accomplish things. I refuse to accept this. I seek to serve the people and can indeed do so only through non-violence. I have nothing against those who seek to do so through violence, but our ways are different. Even so, I respect their love of country, their patriotism.

Non-violence is love. Violence is hatred. Violence can never solve problems or bring peace to the world. Else there should have been peace after the First World War. Was there peace? No. Then came the Second World War. Did any peace follow in its wake? None at all. Violence is such a thing that after one act of violence, there will be another of even greater violence. Each of the wars

was more fierce than the preceding one. The next war may well be the most destructive. One thing is clear: if the world wills it, there can be peace, but only through non-violence. If not, there will be a war greater than any before in history because of nuclear weapons and the world will be utterly destroyed.

When I was released in 1945, I was ill Gandhiji was in Bombay, staying at Birla's house. He wrote and called me to Bombay. I went. One day he talked of violence. I told Gandhiji: "How spiritedly you give education to people in non-violence I But with you are your workers. There are rich people to give you ample financial assistance. In spite of this there was plenty of violence in most parts of India. In our Province, we have rich people too. They would give one enough to eat, but for the country and people they would not part with much money. Again, we have plenty of the instruments of violence—which you do not have. Still we have had no violence in the Frontier while you have had plenty here. How did this happen?"

Gandhiji laughed at my question. "People say," he replied, "that non-violence is for cowards. But it is in fact for the brave. There was no violence in the Frontier because you people there are truly brave."

During the partition riots in Bihar, when we were on a tour of the villages, some Muslim refugees came to Gandhiji and said: "Gandhiji, what shall we do? There is so much of violence, murder and insecurity here." Gandhiji replied, "I can only teach the lesson of bravery. You must go back to your homes." They asked: "How can we do that? What guarantee is there that we would not also be butchered?" Gandhiji replied: "What guarantee can I give you? But if anyone of you is killed, the Hindus may have to pay the price for it with Gandhi's life. This is the only assurance I can give you." At this the Muslims picked up courage and went back to their homes. At a prayer meeting that evening, Gandhiji said: "I have given the Muslims of this place the assurance that if any of them is killed, the Hindus of Bihar will pay for it with Gandhi's life."

Gandhiji's words were full of love and charity, and because of this they had great power over the people. He influenced the millions through service, love, love of God.

I was taking food in a small village when the news came over the radio that Gandhiji had been assassinated. On hearing this, I and those who were with me stopped eating, we were so stunned. We could not eat at all after that. We went out and collected the Khudai Khidmatgars. The news of Gandhiji's murder created a sense of shock in all—they felt that a true lover, helper and friend of theirs had left them.

Gandhiji's murder was a crime against God. To kill the man who all his life gave up all, went to jail and suffered and served the country, was a terrible crime. Whatever India suffers must be a result of God's wrath at this wrong.

What was Gandhiji's greatest contribution? It is not easy to single out any; there are so many. First of all, he inculcated in Indians courage in place of cowardice, the courage to demand freedom. The biggest thing he did, however, not only for India, but for the whole world, was to teach the lesson of non-violence. It was through him that freedom came. Gandhiji's non-violence was not of the weak but of the brave. Whatever evil happened was not because of non-violence, but because the people had not fully imbibed or assimilated it. I can only say that India's freedom came through, because of, Gandhiji's method. No doubt a favourable climate for transfer of power developed, but without Gandhiji who could have been ready to take advantage of that change of climate?

If people criticise Gandhiji, or underrate him, let them. That is the way of the world. That has been the lot of all great people. He did so much for the country and the people, in their service he bore so much hardship, sorrow and suffering. But his place is assured and secure. We cannot enhance his status through praise nor can we lower him in the estimation of the world through criticism. He was and will be what he has always been—great.

How best can we honour such a man? The people must be provided with the basic necessities of life which Gandhiji wanted them to have. If we take Gandhiji's philosophy to the villager, he may well accost us saying:

"I am hungry. First feed me. I am naked. Clothe me.

My children are without a school. Give them one. I am ill and I have neither doctor nor medicine. Look after me."

Therefore, I say, the best observance of Gandhiji's birth centenary would be to supply the people the basic amenities of life.

1. Prepared, on the basis of a series of interviews in April 1967, by U. R. Rao, a member of the interviewing team which met the author at Jalalabad, Afghanistan.
2. A kind of gourd.

## KURT GEORGE KIESINGER

### A GREAT MAN

"When the judge, in a cross-examination, maintained that in politics the voice of one man could not be heard, India's great satyagrahi calmly replied: 'That is just what I have been trying to prove wrong'."

This sentence appears in a book on Mahatma Gandhi published in German in 1924. The author was the young Indian candidate for a doctor's degree at the University of Berlin who is today President of the Indian Union, Zakir Husain.

Gandhi's voice was heard by many people all over the world. Although I never met him, I admire this son of India as a great man, and when I planted a tree at his samadhi last year this was a token of my admiration.

In the centenary year of Gandhi's birth India can claim the distinction that under the Mahatma's leadership she not only found a new path to freedom and independence as a great nation, but, in a wider sense, came to be the pace-maker of two continents, Asia and Africa, in their efforts to achieve self-determination and re-enter the sphere of world politics. Gandhi foresaw this tremendous effect of his struggle. He wrote to President Roosevelt about it in 1942 and sought his support for his way of fighting for independence to give the history of mankind a new dimension and thus enrich it. Indeed, soon after the First World War Gandhi had cherished the hope that President Wilson's call for the self-determination of nations would lead to this right being granted to the people of India too. When the Second World War broke out he had, meanwhile, in advocating non-violence, created for himself a political instrument which commanded recognition and respect. Gandhi's appeal no longer went unheard, and the British Government saw the signs of the times.

When I was a young lawyer in Berlin I read Mahatma Gandhi's autobiography, and one particular sentence has remained in my memory ever since: "Facts mean truth, and once we adhere to truth the law comes to our aid naturally." I

often discussed this concise and wise maxim of Gandhi's with young law students whom I taught and prepared for their examinations. In his struggle for India's freedom Gandhi believed unerringly-in-truth and justice, and the ultimate success of his struggle was proof that the law came to his aid.

The principle of non-violence which Gandhi adopted as an axiom of politics stems from an old Indian tradition. "Ahimsa" is the denial of all derogation of life; "satyagraha" is the aspiration to truth and justice renouncing the use of force. This old Indian tradition in Gandhi was particularly inspired by Tolstoi and his belief in Christ's Sermon on the Mount. From the political point of view, however, Gandhi's non-violence is no passive pacifism. To him pacifism was an expression of cowardice, of resignation born of weakness and fear which he saw merely as the antithesis of the unscrupulousness of strong-armed violence, and he condemned power-politics and submission alike as beneath human dignity. As early as 1920 Gandhi wrote:

I do believe that where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence I would advise violence....But I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment. Forgiveness adorns a soldier. But abstinence is forgiveness only when there is the power to punish; it is meaningless when it pretends to proceed from a helpless creature. A mouse hardly forgives a cat when it allows itself to be torn to pieces by her.

And 17 years later, in 1937, he was even more specific about his principle of non-violence:

Non-violence is invariably superior to violence; that means, the power possessed by a non-violent person is always greater than that possessed by one who uses violence.

By his adherence to his political principles and his application of them, Gandhi wanted to show India and all mankind a new way, a third way as an alternative to violence and helplessness, which seemed the world over to be regarded as the one choice. After a long, patient and persistent struggle his efforts bore fruit in his age and for India, and with a few, though bitter, exceptions, many

emerging States in Asia and Africa likewise took hope and strength for their own struggle for independence, freedom and self-determination from the example of India.

Gandhi saw the beginning of the atomic age but did not live to tell us anything about the new and terrible dangers any policy of force would bring considering the weapons of mass- destruction of our times. If he were alive today—and he once said he hoped he would live until he was 125—he would be greatly alarmed by the fact that world peace today depends largely on an unstable balance of fear. Today, especially with free and independent India as his base, he would want to address his appeal for non-violence to the whole world.

In the Germany of today, Gandhi would meet with an active response. The Federal Republic of Germany has from its beginning sought to win the confidence of its neighbours and of Germany's former enemies. It has met with goodwill in many countries, and over the years solutions have been found for extremely difficult problems confronting Germany—for instance, the Saar problem—which made people forget all their past controversies.

The threat of force is no longer a means of achieving political aims; in the age of nuclear weapons war can no longer be the continuation of policy by other means. For this reason the German Government has suggested to the Soviet Union and to all countries of Eastern Europe the mutual and binding renunciation of the use and the threat of force in the solution of all outstanding political problems, and has made it clear that it would include the unsolved problem of the division of Germany. On the basis of such a renunciation of force the search for the truth, as Gandhi saw it, could begin: the search for a basis which would enable us to perceive justice and truth as the guiding principles on the road to peace, to which every nation is entitled.

Gandhi expected that the renunciation of force together with the sincerity of his aims would make the colonial powers realize that his people could make a contribution to the peaceful cooperation of all nations. He was not mistaken. We owe it in large measure to the endeavours of the Mahatma that today politics rest on a moral basis that is respected by the great majority of nations.

Gandhi lived to see India gain her independence. Yet the day of independence was for him a day of fasting and reflection; he did not join in the celebrations and festivities which took place in India on that 15th of August 1947. It was for him a day of retrospection of what had been achieved with such heavy sacrifices, a day on which to look ahead to the perhaps even greater tasks of the future.

We in Europe observed with respect how Gandhi taught his people to resist without using force, and how he gave them at the same time a new unity. We saw in Gandhi a deeply religious person whose language was understood by a people rooted in religious tradition, a statesman who gave his people a common aim and a great vision, an apostle of non-violence in a world in which violence still prevailed. He was incorruptible in his principles, and within the ambit of these principles there was no room for the traditional policy of super-power rivalry, nor for the revolutionary varieties of class warfare. Gandhi had mounted a completely new platform where many outdated concepts faded away.

Gandhi was one of the great men of this world because he served mankind and fought for the right of nations to live their lives in peace and freedom. In Germany, at the heart of divided Europe, this is deeply appreciated. The German people share the admiration and respect of the Indian people for the Mahatma, whom they call the Father of the Nation.

**J.B. KRIPALANI**

### **GANDHIJI'S SPIRITUAL IDEAS**

Gandhiji was not a philosopher or the kind of theoretician who develops his theories and evolves a system which would give a rational explanation of life and its different facets and, if possible, its ultimate goal. Gandhiji's ideas grew and developed as he faced practical situations and sought solutions to problems which confronted him. If one wants to understand Gandhiji's life and work, one must try to understand his spiritual ideas and ideals in the light of which he conducted his struggles against group injustice and tyranny and carried out his reform programmes.

The establishment of British rule in India led to a review of existing ideas, ideals and institutions. The first impact of this contact was naturally in the religious field. This was because most of the ideas, ideals and institutions in India were, more or less, connected with religion. The result of this was the rise of new reformist sects like the Brahmo Samaj and the Prarthana Samaj. Along with the growth of the separate sects, there were also movements in the orthodox Hindu fold to interpret and restate the basic doctrines of Hinduism. These resulted in the establishment of the Arya Samaj and the interpretation of Hinduism by Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Vivekananda, Ramtirth and the Theosophical movement under Mrs. Besant. This spiritual ferment was confined to Hindu society as the Hindus more than any other major community in India had taken to the new system of education introduced by the British.

Gandhiji was brought up in a religious atmosphere. He belonged to a Hindu *Vaishnava* family, influenced to some extent by Jainism. His mother was a devout lady. His father often invited the learned of different faiths to discuss religious problems. In England his insistence on vegetarian diet brought him into contact with idealist Englishmen who had given up meat and become vegetarians. He also came under the influence of the liberal thought in England of the 19th century. He had made a study of the Bible, specially the New Testament. He had also made himself familiar with the writings of Tolstoy,

Emerson and Thoreau. In South Africa he had to work among people of many nations, races and colours. He came in contact there with Christian missionaries. Some of them were anxious to save his soul by converting him to the 'True Faith\*', Christianity. Others were concerned not so much with his soul as with the work that he was carrying on there for the uplift of his countrymen, who had become citizens of South Africa. All these contacts confirmed him in his own faith, Hinduism. But his Hinduism had little to do with the forms, ceremonials and institutions that it had created within itself. He rejected everything that was against reason and against humanity. Though he called himself an orthodox Hindu, he did not subscribe to the pernicious and cruel system of untouchability. He did not believe in the caste system as it prevails in India. About this he says:

God did not create men with the badge of superiority or inferiority; no scripture which labels a human being as inferior or untouchable because of his or her birth can command our allegiance; it is a denial of God and Truth which is God.

He did not observe Hindu ceremonials or holidays. He rarely visited temples except sometimes through courtesy. Even then he would not enter a temple which was not open to Harijans, as he called the so-called untouchables. He thought image worship and going to the temples were good for those who needed such props to their faith. His Hinduism was based on the teachings of the Upanishads and the *Gita*. Like other great reformers in Hinduism he wrote a commentary on the *Gita*. He moulded his life in accordance with the basic teachings of this scripture. He was a *karmayogi*, as described in the *Gita*. In accordance with its teachings he held that good works must be performed in the spirit of sacrifice to the God of Humanity, specially in serving *Daridranarayana*, God the poor and the down-trodden. He says:

I am endeavouring to see God through service of humanity, for I know that God is neither in heaven, nor down below, but in every one.

He also says that whenever he was in difficulty he had recourse to the *Gita* and it was the solace of his life. He held that through work done as sacrifice,

without attachment, and without hankering after desired results and with equanimity one could get the *summum bonum* of life, "salvation" or as he often said with the best thought of Hinduism, "self-realization". About this he says:

Man's ultimate aim is the realization of God, and all his activities, political, social and religious, have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God. The immediate service of all human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavour simply because the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with it. This can only be done by service of all.

For Gandhiji religion and morality were the same. They were interchangeable terms. This was natural for a *karmayogi*, who has to act in every sphere of life.- Gandhiji did not believe that religious activity was separate from the other activities that kept society together. For him the basic principles of this morality were truth and non-violence. These two were elaborated into eleven principles and a verse containing them was recited morning and evening at his prayers. These are:

ahimsa satya asteya brahmacarya asamgraha sarirasrama asvada sarvatra bhaya-varjana sarvadharmasamanatva svadesi sparsabhavana.

(non-violence, truth, non-stealing, chastity, non-possession, physical labour, control of the palate, fearlessness, equality of all religions, swadeshi, discarding of un- touchability).

The first five of these are the basic moral principles of Hinduism and Jainism. The six others are their derivatives suited to the requirements of the times.

Believing in fundamental moral values common to all the great religions of the world, he said he had nothing new to give to the world. "Truth is as old as the hills." He often said that he had no desire to create a new sect. As a matter of fact, sects are generally created not by prophets and reformers but by their followers. Christ said, "I have not come to destroy the Law but to fulfil it." It can, therefore, be said that Christ was not the first Christian. However, a law can only be entirely fulfilled when it embraces the whole of humanity.

Whatever Gandhiji might have said, all those of the present generation and the innumerable generations to come who follow Gandhiji's ideas and ideals in this spirit are truly his followers. In this, as Christ said, it may be that "the first shall be the last and the last first".

With the *Gita* he also believed that all religions are different paths leading to the same goal. He says:

Religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads, so long as we reach the same goal? In reality, there are as many religions as there are individuals... So long as there are different religions, every one of them may need some distinctive symbol. But when the symbol is made into a fetish and an instrument of proving the superiority of one's religion over others', it is fit only to be discarded.

He was therefore tolerant towards all religions, nay, he accepted their fundamental teachings. These regulated men in performing their daily tasks, which must be guided by the basic principles of morality. The moral principles were the same in all the great religions of the world. Gandhiji says:

I believe in the fundamental truth of all great religions of the world. I believe that they are all God-given, and I believe that they were necessary for the people to whom these religions were revealed. And I believe that, if only we could all of us read the scriptures of the different faiths from the standpoint of the followers of these faiths, we should find that they were at the bottom all one and were all helpful to one another.

Though he believed that all religions were true, he did not consider them infallible. They were the creation of men and therefore had something of their imperfection. He says:

After long study and experience, I have come to the conclusion that (1) all religions are true; (2) all religions have some error in them.

He further says:

I do not believe in the exclusive divinity of the Yedas. I believe the Bible, the Koran and the Zend Avesta to be as much divinely inspired as the Vedas. My belief in the Hindu scriptures does not require me to accept every word and every verse as divinely inspired . . . I decline to be bound by any interpretation, however learned it may be, if it is repugnant to reason or moral sense.

Gandhiji as we have said made no difference between religion and morality, *dharma* not as popularly understood now but as it was understood and used by the ancient rishis, that it should inform and guide all our activities. "*Dharma*" means that which supports.

As Gandhiji believed in the basic teachings of all the great religions of the world, he with his co-religionists did not believe in proselytizing activity. In his Ashram there were Muslims, Christians and Buddhists, but he never tried to convert them to Hinduism or even to his own brand of Hinduism. One day Mira behn expressed a desire to become a Hindu. Gandhiji's reply was that she should live in her own faith. By becoming a Hindu she would not in any way raise her moral stature. It was not necessary for a person to change his religion but he should act according to the basic principles of his or her own religion. It was necessary for a Hindu to be a good Hindu, as it was necessary for a Muslim to be a good Muslim and a Christian to be a good Christian. Speaking to Christian priests in India he told them that the humanitarian work that they did was good; but it would diminish its value if it was done with the motive of converting the followers of other faiths to Christianity. He says:

I do not believe in people telling others of their faith, especially with a view to conversion. Faith does not admit of telling. It has to be lived and then it becomes self-propagating.

He did not think that religion was to be practised in a cave or on a mountain-top. It must manifest itself in all the actions of man in society. He says:

I do not conceive religion as one of the many activities of mankind. The same activity may be governed by the spirit either of religion or of irreligion. There is no such thing for me therefore as leaving politics for

religion. For me every, the tiniest, activity is governed by what I consider to be my religion.

He believed in God but for him God was the moral law, the *dharma*. He therefore considered that all those who believed in the moral law were spiritual even though they were so-called atheists. He says that "Truth is God".

To me God is Truth and Love; God is ethics and morality; God is fearlessness. God is the source of Light and Life and yet He is above and beyond all these.

Again he says:

There can be no manner of doubt that this universe of sentient beings is governed by a Law. If you can think of Law without its law-giver, I would say that the Law is the Law-giver, that is God. When we pray to the Law we simply yearn after knowing the Law and obeying it. We become what we yearn after.

He uttered Ramanama though he made it clear that the Rama of his conception was not the husband of Sita or the son of Dasaratha but he who abides in the hearts of men, the *antaryami*. However, like the prophets of old, he did not confuse the minds of the ordinary man and woman to whom Rama and Krishna are the Supreme Being even though they took upon themselves a human form and worked for the establishment of righteousness, *dharma* and the destruction of *adharma*. For himself he believed in a formless and attributeless God. He frankly admits that the existence of God cannot be proved by reason, yet it is not against reason. Though he could not prove His existence by rational arguments which may not convince, he felt it within himself. He says:

There is an indefinable mysterious Power that pervades everything. I feel it, though I do not see it. It is this unseen Power which makes itself felt and yet defies all proof, because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses. It transcends the senses. But it is possible to reason out the existence of God to a limited extent. I do dimly perceive that whilst everything around me is ever-changing, ever-dying, there is underlying

all that change a Living Power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves, and re-creates. That informing Power or Spirit is God. And since nothing else I see merely through the senses can or will persist, He alone is.

And is this Power benevolent or malevolent? I see it as purely benevolent. For I can see that in the midst of death life persists, in the midst of untruth truth persists, in the midst of darkness light persists. Hence I gather that God is Life, Truth, Light. He is Love. He is the Supreme good.

Gandhiji also believed that great saints and sages of all ages and climes have believed in God and their unbiased evidence kept before us through their life and work must be conclusive.

Believing in God, Gandhiji had great faith in prayer. Morning and evening there were prayers in the Ashram. When he was on tour, the evening prayers were performed in public before ever-increasing congregations. In his prayer no image or symbol was kept He did not believe in image worship for himself but, as I have said, he had no objection to it for those who need such symbols. He says:

I do not disbelieve in idol worship. An idol does not excite any feeling of veneration in me. But I think that idol worship is part of human nature. We hanker after symbolism .... I do not forbid the use of images in prayer. I only prefer the worship of the Formless. This preference is perhaps improper. One thing suits one man; another thing will suit another man, and no comparison can fairly be made between the two.

His prayers were not petitions. They were in praise of God and they were the yearnings of the soul. They also were meant to strengthen man and keep him away from earthly temptations. He says:

Prayer has saved my life. Without it, I should have been a lunatic long ago. I had my share of the bitterest public and private experiences. They threw me in temporary despair. If I was able to get rid of that despair, it

was because of prayer. It has not been a part of my life as truth has been. It came out of sheer necessity, as I found myself in a plight where I could not possibly be happy without it. And as time went on, my faith in God increased, and more irresistible became the yearning for prayer. Life seemed to be dull and vacant without it. I had attended the Christian service in South Africa, but it had failed to grip me. I could not join them in it. They supplicated God, I could not; I failed egregiously. I started with disbelief in God and prayer, and until at a late stage in life I did not feel anything like a void in life. But at that stage, I felt that as food is indispensable for the body, so was prayer indispensable for the soul. In fact food for the body is not so necessary as prayer for the soul. For starvation is often necessary to keep the body in health, but there is no such thing as prayer starvation. You cannot possibly have a surfeit of prayer. Three of the greatest teachers of the world—Buddha, Jesus and Muhammad—have left unimpeachable testimony that they found illumination through prayer and could not possibly live without it. Millions of Hindus, Mussalmans and Christians find their only solace in life in prayer. Hither you call them liars or self-deluded people. I will say that this "lying" has a charm for me, a truth-seeker, if it is "lying" that has given me that mainstay or staff of life without which I could not live for a moment. In spite of despair staring me in the face on the political horizon, I have never lost my peace. In fact, I have found people who envy my peace. That peace comes from prayer. I am not a man of learning, but I humbly claim to be a man of prayer. I am indifferent as to the form. Everyone is a law unto himself in that respect. But there are some well marked roads, and it is safe to walk along the beaten tracks, trodden by the ancient teachers. I have given my personal testimony. Let everyone try and find that as a result of daily prayer he adds something new to his life.

Never in his prayer meeting was any patriotic song sung. Good and desirable as love of one's country may be, it was not the love of God. His prayer meetings were also occasions for him to take the public into confidence about what was

happening in the councils of the great whether in the national organization or in the Government. He took them into confidence to the extent that was permissible and desirable. He did this because he wanted from the people enlightened cooperation in the national struggle which was not only meant to remove the foreign yoke but was also meant for their political, economic, social and, above all, their moral advancement. He often said that to the extent India was reformed, to that extent it would be free. A reformed India would be a free India.

Gandhiji believed in self-discipline. He felt that his own personal progress and all that he had been able to achieve was because he lived a life of discipline. He held with the *Gita*: "To him who is temperate in eating and recreation, in his effort for work, and in his sleep and wakefulness, Yoga becomes the destroyer of his misery."<sup>1</sup>

He believed in occasional fasting. He thought it helped in the concentration of mind. Apart from this he held that fasting had a purificatory effect. Sometimes he fasted for the moral lapses of those who lived or worked with him, because he considered himself responsible for their conduct. Any misbehaviour on their part was a proof of some imperfection in him. He thought and said that as he became purer his surroundings would adequately respond.

He believed in taking vows. He thought that if properly observed these strengthened the will. However the present writer feels that sometimes vows taken and broken repeatedly weaken the will and its power of resistance to evil.

We have said that Gandhiji's life was well-regulated. But he was not a flesh-mortifying ascetic. Believing in the philosophy of *karmayoga*, right action, he could not afford to impair his health by the mortification of the flesh as is sometimes done by ascetics. The restrictions in regard to diet, etc., -that he placed upon himself were due to circumstances. His vow not to take more than five Varieties of food a day was taken because wherever he went generous and hospitable hosts provided for him various rich and luxurious dishes. It was in order that his kind hosts might not put themselves to extra trouble on his

account and to avoid waste in a poor country like India, and not for ascetic reasons that he put the above restriction on himself. He also felt that increasing one's wants beyond a particular limit, instead of benefiting one, becomes a burden. But Gandhiji had a good appetite and whatever food he took was healthy and pure.

He took time in masticating his food and seemed to enjoy it. If a person fell ill in the Ashram, everything prescribed for him by the doctor was made available whatever the cost. He discarded his shirt and cap and satisfied himself with a loin-cloth. This was due to the fact that India in those days did not produce enough cloth, especially hand-spun and hand-woven cloth, to satisfy the minimum needs of the people. Also this loin-cloth was meant to be his identification with the poor. Other restrictions of this nature were imposed because he wanted his entire life to be devoted to the service of humanity. It is a fact that not only public workers fighting for a cause, but all original thinkers and serious workers in any field of life's activity must and do limit their physical wants. Only in a Philistine age which needs constant excitement and believes in the multiplication of physical wants as a mark of progress and culture will Gandhiji's life of simple living and high thinking be considered ascetic.

1. *Bhagavad Gita*. VI, 17.

**SUCHETA KRIPALANI**

### **LEADER AND TEACHER OF WOMEN**

In the midst of a vast ocean of ignorant, illiterate and often exploited women, we find in India today a few who have attained a status of complete equality with men, who are able to take their rightful place of equal responsibility in society, and who go about their business with complete self-confidence. How is this strange phenomenon to be explained? Citizens of many progressive countries in the West often ask us how this has been possible, particularly against the background of a long history of suppression and exploitation, of evil social customs such as child-marriage and *pardah*, of the denial of educational opportunities to girls, of laws and religious sanctions that relegated women to a lower position in society. They are baffled at the phenomenal progress made by our women in the last few decades, while there are still many progressive countries in the West where women's rights and opportunities for public service are much more limited.

It is true that for centuries Indian women had been suppressed; the movement for women's emancipation began only as late as the nineteenth century, but this era of darkness had been preceded by a period of enlightenment and of high status for women. The quick regeneration of women in modern India can only be attributed to the existence of some inner strength, inherited from the remote past.

At the dawn of India's history, in the Rig Vedic Age, the women of India enjoyed an exceptionally high status. They had complete equality in all respects. In one of the hymns of the Rig Veda the marriage of Surya, the daughter of the Sun, is described. It is a remarkable hymn and can be regarded as the earliest expression of human thought concerning marriage viewed as a sacrament and a willing union of two loving hearts. This hymn shows how at that time woman was not only her husband's lifelong companion in weal and woe, but the mistress of his household and a real partner in all his activities, including

religious sacrifices. Her entry into the husband's home was regarded as an auspicious event bringing blessings to the entire household.

The Vedic word *dampati*, used to denote jointly the husband and wife, etymologically means the joint owners of the house. The Rig Veda does not even enjoin obedience upon the wife. This position of equality and dignity was upheld by her participation in religious rites and sacrifices, which was regarded as the highest right and privilege in the society of those days. The woman was no less entitled than the man to all *samskaras* or religious sacraments; not only were religious prayers and sacrifices jointly offered by the husband and the wife but the wife alone could offer them in the absence of her husband. More than this, many women were regarded as rishis or composers of hymns, and some of the hymns in the Rig Samhita are actually attributed to women. Twenty such women are mentioned in the later literature. Some of the names are well known, like Lopamudra, Vishvavara, Apala, and Ghosha.

Women could attain such high literary status because they were prepared by education in childhood. The girls, like boys, underwent the *upanayana* ceremony at an early age and this practice continued even in later ages. It is proved by the *Atharva Samhita* where it is said that "by Vedic studentship a girl wins a young husband". It shows that high education was regarded as a necessary accomplishment for being well placed in life. Even in the later Vedic age we hear of two classes of educated women: (1) *sadvodwahas* who prosecuted their studies till their marriage; and (2) *Brahmavadinis* who did not marry and pursued their studies throughout life. At the time of *Brahmayajna* tribute had to be paid to great Vedic teachers. In the list of such teachers the names of eminent women are mentioned, such as Gargi Vachaknavi, Maitreyi and Sulabha. All this shows that the highest education, including Vedic studies, was open equally to men and women, and many women distinguished themselves not only as scholars but also as great philosophers, debaters and teachers. From all this we can conclude that the general position and status of women in the Vedic Age was higher than in any other ancient society and the wife had then a position of great dignity. She had coordinate authority with her

husband as the mistress of the household. She was free in her movements, attended public assemblies, social entertainments and mixed gatherings. She often chose her husband. Marriage was usual but not obligatory and women who so chose could spend their life in literary and intellectual pursuits. There was no child- marriage and widows were permitted to marry again.

In all these respects, the later Hindu society showed a striking contrast to the old. A steady process of decline can be traced through different stages in our literature as the later Samhitas, Brahmanas, Upanishads, Dharmasutras and Smritis. From the time of the Dharmasutras we find that opinion favoured early marriage of girls and marriage gradually came to be regarded as obligatory. Thus, women lost the opportunity to lead a life of studentship like the *Brahmavadinis* of ancient India. Deprived of opportunities of higher learning, particularly Vedic studies, women became unfit to perform sacrifices and the various *samskaras*. Thus in the later period these *samskaras*, which were once performed by boys and girls alike came at first to be performed by girls without the Vedic mantras, and gradually ceased to apply to them. The *Upanayana* or initiation into Vedic studies was also stopped and the girls lost the status of *dvija* or twice-born and came to be regarded as Shudras. In course of time they were, like Shudras, declared unfit for reciting Vedic hymns. In Chapter IX of the *Bhagavad Gita* we are told that "even those who are born sinners, as well as women, Vaishyas and Shudras may obtain salvation by devotion to the Lord" That means by the time the *Bhagavad Gita* was composed the inherent inferiority of women was an accepted idea. This is emphasized by commentator Narada who enjoined that women should ever remain dependent. Manu is oft quoted for disparaging women and relegating them to a lowly status. He said, "Women, who are destitute of strength and knowledge of Vedic texts, are as impure as falsehood itself." In course of time orthodox Hindu society not only came to deny women all opportunities of higher learning or equality of status with men in religious and social life, but looked upon education itself as unbecoming and inauspicious for women. In spite of such ideas some women, mainly belonging to aristocratic families, did prosecute higher studies and, therefore, we find mention of women's accomplishments in the spheres of

literature, music, painting, fine arts, etc. Thus, at the end of the ancient period, the status of the wife resembled that of an obedient servant of the lord rather than that of a companion possessing coordinate authority and equal partnership with the husband in the management of the household. The *Manusmriti* came to be regarded with the greatest reverence all over India. Therefore, the various texts of Manu wherein woman was relegated to a subordinate status were accepted by the latter-day Hindu society.

Even a non-conformist and reformer like the Buddha was not free from the impact of this idea of women's status. He refused for a long time to admit women to his religious order and even when he did so he gave the nuns a position of inferiority to that of the monks.

Once in a while even in this period we find thinkers who did not share these views about women's status but they were exceptions. For instance, Varahamihira in *Brihat Samhita* says:

Tell me truly, what faults attributed to women have not been also practised by men? Men in their audacity treat women with contempt but do they really possess more virtues? . . . Men owe their birth to women: O ungrateful wretches, how can happiness be your lot when you condemn them?

Thus, towards the close of the ancient period women's social and domestic life had generally suffered a radical change and they had come to occupy a position of inferiority both at home and in society. Then a new idea of women emerged: the idea of a human being endowed with the virtues of humility, obedience, sacrifice and self-abnegation and these virtues came to be looked upon as ideals of Indian womanhood. Such women have been portrayed in our literature as models of Indian womanhood and have held positions of glory in Hindu culture for over a thousand years. Even in this depressed phase women were accorded a high status, though perhaps of a different kind. Later Gandhiji extolled these qualities of sacrifice and suffering in Indian womanhood and drew upon their inner strength and courage to bring them into the freedom struggle.

Indian women continued to hold this lowly position till the last century when, under the impact of Western ideas, a movement began for women's emancipation.

In one respect the women of India have been more fortunate than their sisters in many other lands. They did not have to go through a bitter struggle to secure their political and civic rights. During the last hundred years men who have moulded thought in this country, our religious and political leaders, social reformers and educationists, have all recognized the injustice done to women in the past and have endeavoured to restore to them a status of equality and dignity. Their general attitude has been one of sympathy and many have ardently espoused their cause. The contribution of the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society under the leadership of Annie Besant and other reform movements towards the upliftment of women was considerable. Opportunities for education and avenues of work started gradually opening up for women.

However, if the progress of women's emancipation was merely to depend on expansion of educational opportunities it would have taken them a long time to attain the position of eminence that they now occupy in Indian public life. They were again fortunate in having a leader who believed that men and women were equal partners in life and gave powerful support to their cause. Gandhiji was not only a great political leader but a passionate lover of humanity. An implacable enemy of all injustice and inequality, he was a friend of the lowly and the downtrodden. Harijans, women and the poor commanded his most tender attention. He had almost an instinctive understanding of women and their problems, and had a deep and abiding sympathy for them. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, writing about this aspect of Gandhiji's personality, says:

We found in him not only a "Bapu"—a wise father, but what is far more precious, a mother, before whose all-embracing and understanding love all fear and restraint vanish.

Though preoccupied with heavy responsibilities, he took every opportunity to proclaim his views in this regard and educate the public to accept women as equal partners. He said:

I am uncompromising in the matter of woman's rights. In my opinion she should labour under no legal disability not suffered by man. I should treat daughters and sons on a footing of perfect equality.

Again he said:

To call woman the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength then indeed is woman less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior. Has she not greater intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, has she not greater powers of endurance, has she not greater courage? Without her man could not be. If non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with woman.

He decried discrimination against woman as an anachronism:

I fail to see any reason for jubilation over the birth of a son and for mourning over that of a daughter. If children are God's gifts. They have an equal right to live, and are equally necessary to keep the world going.

Commenting on some of the ancient scriptures he says:

The saying attributed to Manu that "for woman there can be no freedom" is not to be sacrosanct. It only shows that probably, at the time when it was promulgated, women were kept in a state of subjection. The epithets used in our literature to describe a wife are *ardhangana*, "the better half" and *sahadharmini*, "the helpmate"; the husband addressing the wife as *asdevi* or goddess does not show any disparagement. But, unfortunately, a time came when woman was divested of many of her rights and privileges and was reduced to a status of inferiority.

Boldly repudiating the sanctity attached to texts of the *Smritis* where disparaging references had been made to women, he went to the length of suggesting their expurgation. He said:

It is sad to think that the *Smritis* contain texts which cart command no respect from men who cherish the liberty of woman as their own and who regard her as the mother of the race. Of course, there are in the *Smritis* texts which give woman her due place and regard her with deep veneration. The question arises as to what to do with the *Smritis* that contain texts that are in conflict with other texts in the same *Smritis* and that are repugnant to the moral sense. I have already suggested often enough in these columns that all that is printed in the name of scriptures need not be taken as the word of God or the inspired word. But everyone cannot decide what is good and authentic and what is bad and interpolated. There should, therefore, be some authoritative body that would revise all that passes under the name of scriptures, expurgate all the texts that have no moral value or are contrary to the fundamentals of religion and morality, and present such an edition for the guidance of Hindus.

Only a man of his greatness and courage could have suggested such a bold step and the suggestion could only emanate from the deepest of convictions.

Such was the character of his non-violent struggle that men and women could participate in it with equal effectiveness. He said:

If women could forget that they belong to the weaker sex, I have no doubt that they can do infinitely more than men against war.

During our freedom struggle women eagerly accepted his leadership and responded to his call. Women from all ranks of society, educated and uneducated, highly sophisticated ladies and rustic women, all gathered round him. Even women of orthodox families who had never been out of their homes joined in the struggle;. Their menfolk were sure that no harm could come to them in a movement guided and controlled by Gandhiji. Under his inspiring leadership, his fostering care and loving guidance they could play a significant part in the freedom fight. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, writing about this, says:

Of all the factors contributing to the awakening of women in India none has been so potent as the field of nonviolent action which Gandhiji

offered to women in his "war" against British domination of India. It brought them out in their hundreds from sheltered homes to stand the furnace of a fiery trial without flinching. It proved to the hilt that woman was as much able as man to resist evil or aggression. To the thinking mind it has also proved that resistance without arms was not only equally efficacious but more ennobling for the resisters as also for those who were being resisted. In any event it gave woman a definite place so far as the salvation of India was concerned.

He said to women in Paris in 1932 and again in Switzerland:

I do not know if I have the courage to give a message for the women of Europe that you have asked for. If I am to do so without incurring their wrath I would direct their steps to the women of India who rose in one mass last year, and I really believe that if Europe will drink in the lesson of non-violence it will do so through its women.

In the various constructive programmes he launched and in the social, economic and educational institutions he founded, women always found a place of equal responsibility and importance with men. This attitude of Mahatma Gandhi was the most significant factor in ensuring a status of equality for women in modern India. Working under him they learned to shoulder the heavy responsibilities with new self-confidence and assurance. Hence when after the advent of freedom women were given equal political rights and had fresh avenues of work opened to them, they could easily adapt themselves to the new conditions and face the new challenges.

What, according to Gandhiji, was the role of women in our society? The answer is found in his replies to letters written to him by some women admirers of his, who urged him to organize women to become his "sword arm" so that they could participate more fully and effectively in his freedom struggle. Though he declined to undertake the task of touring the whole of the country to organize women, he said:

I do believe that it is woman's mission to exhibit *ahimsa* at its highest and best. But why should it be a man to move the woman's heart? If the

appeal is addressed exclusively to me not as man but as the (supposed to be) best exponent of *ahimsa* to be practised on a mass scale, I have no urge in me to go about preaching the doctrine to the women of India. I can assure my correspondent that there is no want of will in me that deters me from responding to her appeal. My feeling is that, if men of the Congress can retain their faith in ahimsa and prosecute the non-violent programme faithfully and fully, the women would be automatically converted. And it may be that there shall arise one among them who will be able to go much further than I can ever hope to do. For woman is more fitted than man to make explorations and take bolder action in ahimsa. For the courage of self-sacrifice woman is any day superior to man, as I believe man is to woman for the courage of the brute.

Again he says in response to another letter:

I had flattered myself that my contribution to the women's cause definitely began with the discovery of satyagraha. But the writer of the letter is of opinion that the fair sex requires treatment different from men. If it is so, I do not think any man will find the correct solution. No matter how much he tries, he must fail because nature has made him different from woman. Only the toad under the harrow knows where it pinches him. Therefore, ultimately woman will have to determine with authority what she needs. My own opinion is that, just as fundamentally man and woman are one, their problems must be one in essence. The soul in both is the same. The two live the same life, have the same feelings. Each is a complement of the other. The one cannot live without the other's active help...

Nevertheless there is no doubt that at some point there is bifurcation. Whilst both are fundamentally one, it is also equally true that in the form there is a vital difference between the two. Hence the vocations of the two must also be different. The duty of motherhood, which the vast majority of women will always undertake, requires qualities which man

need not possess. She is passive, he is active. She is essentially mistress of the house. He is the bread-winner, she is the caretaker in every sense of the term. The art of bringing up the infants of the race is her special and sole prerogative. Without her care the race must become extinct. . . The division of the spheres of work being recognized, the general qualities and culture required are practically the same for both the sexes....

My contribution to the great problem lies in my presenting for acceptance truth and *ahimsa* in every walk of life, whether for individuals or nations. I have hugged the hope that in this woman will be the unquestioned leader and having thus found her place in human evolution will shed her inferiority complex....

I have suggested in these columns that woman is the incarnation of *ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* means infinite love, which again means infinite capacity for suffering. Who but woman, the mother of man, shows this capacity in the largest measure? She shows it as she carries the infant and feeds it during nine months and derives joy in the suffering involved. What can beat the suffering caused by the pangs of labour? But she forgets them in the joy of creation. Who, again, suffers daily so that her babe may wax from day to day? Let her transfer that love to the whole of humanity, let her forget she ever was or can be the object of man's lust. And she will occupy her proud position by the side of man as his mother, maker and silent leader. It is given to her to teach the art of peace to the warring world thirsting for the nectar. She can become the leader in satyagraha which does not require the learning that books give but does require the stout heart that comes from suffering and faith.

Giving an account of the bravery which a woman showed during childbirth by not taking chloroform, which would have risked the child's life, and undergoing a very painful operation he says:

Let not women, who can count many such heroines among them, ever despise their sex or deplore that they were not born men. The

contemplation of that heroine often makes me envy, woman the status that is hers, if she only knew. There is as much reason for man to wish that he was born a woman as for woman to do otherwise. But the wish is fruitless. Let us be happy in the state to which we are born and do the duty for which nature has destined us.

He truly believed that woman was man's equal and both were jointly responsible for conducting the affairs of society. Therefore he was also a very hard task master. He never hesitated to place difficult, even hazardous, work before women. He had confidence that they would be able to face the challenge. I saw this again and again during his historic tour in Noakhali. I remember once he decided to send young Abha out to work alone in a difficult village. I was myself afraid. I pleaded with Gandhiji that she was too young to go to work in such a village where there was intense bitterness between the Hindus and the Muslims. But he was firm in his decision and said: "Abha shall go. Nobody dare touch a hair on her head and she is bound to succeed in her mission."

He proved to be correct. I, a woman, did not have confidence in our own ability but he knew us better! Throughout his life he sent women out to face all kinds of challenges, as he did when he sent Khurshed Ben Naoroji, a grand-daughter of Dadabhai Naoroji, a sensitive and sophisticated person, to go and work amongst the Pathan followers of Abdul Gaffar Khan when he was in jail. In that strange atmosphere, hard and harsh, Khurshed Ben succeeded superbly and became the favourite sister of the Pathans. He was like a good teacher who knew what the student can only learn when his latent ability and initiative are drawn out by his having to face a challenging situation.

A few days before his death, while talking to some of us in Birla House in Delhi, he said that he would like to see a Harijan woman as the first President of India! "I shall dance with joy when I see her in this high place," he said.

He wanted to see the lowest of the land occupying the highest position. That was the dream that he dreamt. That was the trust and confidence that he placed in woman. Many a leader and reformer has espoused the cause of

woman in this country but none held women in such high esteem as did the Father of the Nation. With infinite compassion and love he held us by the hand and led us forward to our rightful place in society.

**H.N. KUNZRU**

### **SPIRITUALIZING POLITICS**

Soon after returning from South Africa Mahatma Gandhi went to Poona in February, 1915, to meet the founder of the Servants of India Society, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, and its members. The members of the Society were well acquainted with the great fight waged successfully by him in defence of the honour of his country and were proud of him for the lustre shed by him on the name of India. They knew that Mr. Gokhale had justified his resort to passive resistance in the Transvaal at a public meeting in September, 1909, in Bombay and had said:

I am sure that if any of us had been in the Transvaal during these days we should have been proud to range ourselves under Mr. Gandhi's banner and work with him and suffer with him in the cause.<sup>1</sup>

They were also aware of the high tribute paid to him by Mr. Gokhale at the Lahore session of the Indian National Congress in 1909. He said:

It is one of the privileges of my life that I know Mr. Gandhi intimately, and I can tell you that a purer, a nobler, a braver and a more exalted spirit has never moved on this earth. Mr. Gandhi is one of those men, who, living an austere simple life themselves and devoted to the highest principles of love to their fellow beings and to truth and justice, touch the eyes of their weaker brethren as with magic and give them a new vision. He is a man who may well be described as a man among men, a hero among heroes, a patriot among patriots and we may well say that in him Indian humanity at the present time has really reached its high-watermark.<sup>2</sup>

All of us were, therefore, eager to have the privilege of meeting Mahatma Gandhi and knowing his views on questions of interest to us. We went to the railway station to receive him and were startled when he came out of a third-class compartment with his bedding slung on his shoulder. He gave us a new idea of simplicity and human dignity. He seemed to say to all those who were present at the railway station to receive him that the ways of the world were of no consequence, and that the inner worth of a man was the only thing that really mattered.

During the week that he stayed with us, we virtually discussed every question that we could think of with him. He reminded us of the Buddha when explaining his views on non-violence; he said to us he would like to hug a snake. We were startled when he said, if a man used one button more than was necessary he was guilty of theft. He thought the men who wanted to devote themselves to the service of the country should live like sannyasis. It was difficult to agree with him on every question but our respect and admiration for him went up considerably when we saw at close quarters the austere life that he led and the principles that underlay his being. Though engaged largely in political work, he was essentially a religious man. He thought it his duty as a religious man to enter the political field. It was his constant effort, to use the words of Mr. Gokhale, "to spiritualize politics". He has said:

I have no desire for the perishable kingdom of earth. I am striving for the Kingdom of Heaven, which is spiritual deliverance. . .my patriotism is for me a stage on my journey to the land of eternal freedom and peace. Thus, it will be seen that for me there are no politics devoid of religion. They subserve religion. Politics bereft of religion are a death-trap, because they kill the soul.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Radhakrishnan has truly said that for Gandhiji there was no religion apart from human activity. He toiled incessantly for the freedom of India and the happiness of the common man. I have known only two persons who had the same capacity for incessant work which had a moral basis, Mr. Gokhale and Mrs. Annie Besant.

Though Mahatma Gandhi devoted himself to the achievement of the political freedom of India, he always insisted that the end did not justify the means. The greater the end, the purer, he held, must be the means to achieve it. He said:

It is true we cannot rise till our political condition is reformed. But it is not true that we shall be able to progress if our political condition undergoes a change by any means and in any manner. If the means employed is impure, the change will not be in the direction of progress but very likely in the opposite direction. Only a change brought about by pure means, that is by peaceful and legitimate means, can lead us to real progress.<sup>4</sup>

Whatever was done must be above board. Secrecy and physical force were inconsistent with truth and implied disbelief in the efficacy of soul-force. Human weakness may tempt one to use methods which seem to promise quick results, but there are no short cuts to real progress. *Ahimsa* and love should be our only weapons in a struggle for a just cause. Genuine differences of opinion and deep-seated prejudices cannot be removed by force. Men's hearts and minds can be changed by suffering and love only. Violence is born of hatred, but we should not hate even our enemies. Hatred is a sign of internal weakness but victories can be won only by confidence in ourselves and in the righteousness of the causes that we espouse.

As a firm believer in satyagraha, Mahatma Gandhi never tried to take advantage of the difficulties of his opponents. He had not attained the maturity that he subsequently did, nevertheless when the Boer War broke out in 1899, he was convinced that the Indians who claimed the rights of citizenship were morally bound to help the Government. He, therefore, offered his help and that of the Indian community to the Natal Government, in spite of their just grievances against it. The Government accepted the proposal only when it was in a very difficult position and permitted Mahatma Gandhi to raise an ambulance corps. The corps, which consisted of 1,100 Indians, acquitted itself creditably of its duties and sometimes served within the firing-line.

The Great War broke out in 1914. Mahatma Gandhi, who returned from South Africa to India in 1915, advised the Indian political leaders to suspend political agitation and help the British Government during the war and to fight for their rights after its termination. This advice was, however, not accepted by them. He gave the same advice after the outbreak of World War II in 1939, when he was the undisputed leader of India, but his colleagues considered it impracticable. I asked him once how it was that he did not insist on the course recommended by him being followed by the country. He replied, "When even Rajendra Prasad thought that my proposal would not be understood by the country, I gave in." Without claiming that he was infallible, one may legitimately think that if his advice had been acted upon, political developments in the country would probably have taken a different course.

He was impelled by his religious attitude to life to settle difficult questions by bringing together people with conflicting views and interests. Victory was meaningless to him without the eradication of the causes that divided men from one another. When he won the case that took him to South Africa, he found that if his client's claim was enforced the other party would be ruined. He, therefore, persuaded his client to agree to payment by instalments. He observed:

I had learnt the true practice of law. I had learnt to find out the better side of human nature and to enter men's hearts. I realized that the true function of a lawyer was to unite parties riven asunder.<sup>5</sup>

It has been said above that Gandhiji was a deeply religious man first and a patriot afterwards. Truth was dear to him above all things. My country right or wrong, could never be his motto. The pressure put by him on the Government of India in 1948, to transfer 50 crores of rupees to Pakistan, in accordance with an agreement arrived at earlier between the two countries, even while the Indo-Pakistan conflict was going on, is a shining example of his belief in the supremacy of what he believed to be the truth. Without holding that his view was sound, one may admire his unflinching adherence to truth as he saw it, even when it adversely affected the interests of his own country.

Mahatma Gandhi said repeatedly that he believed profoundly in Hinduism. He drew his inspiration from the *Upa-nishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita* but he believed that the same fundamental truths were to be found in all religions. He was greatly attracted by the "Sermon on the Mount" and the personality of Christ. He also had a high opinion of Islam and its Prophet. It mattered little to him to which religion a man belonged. All men were entitled to the same rights. Intolerance was, in his opinion, a kind of violence. It was the opposite of *ahimsa* and love through which alone can reconciliation between people having conflicting interests or belonging to different faiths be brought about.

It was religion that drew him to the untouchables. "The nobler a man is the more compassion he hath." He felt deeply for them and regarded untouchability and the injustices heaped on them as a disgrace to the country. It was his efforts to remove this blot on the reputation of Indian society that have made the country alive to its responsibility in this matter. A.V. Thakkar, Vice-President of the Servants of India Society, and Secretary of the All-India Harijan Sevak Sangh started by Mahatma Gandhi, wrote to him some years after devoting all his time and energy to the cause of the Harijans, asking for his permission to work for the solution of the problems affecting the development of the tribal people. Gandhiji replied that, while Thakkar was free to take up the new work mentioned by him, he should not sever his connection with the Harijan Sevak Sangh, for to serve the Harijans was our religious duty.

Gandhiji's doctrine of satyagraha was first tested, in India, in the Champaran district of Bihar, where he was invited by some agriculturists to enquire into the system of compulsory cultivation of indigo. Soon after reaching Muzaffarpur, he saw the Commissioner of the Tirhut Division and got into touch with the Planters' Association to inform them of the purpose of the enquiry which he intended to make and to assure them that, far from wanting to start an agitation against the planters, he wanted to improve the relations between them and the agriculturists. He did not, however, succeed in removing their suspicions and a notice was served on him at the instance of the Commissioner asking him to leave the Champaran district. On his refusal to do so, a case was

instituted against him. He pleaded guilty and read out a statement in the Magistrate's Court explaining the reasons for his inability to comply with the notice. He demanded that he should be punished according to the law, but the case was postponed to the following day. To his great surprise, he was informed by the Collector the next day that the case against him had been withdrawn (under instructions from the Lieut.-Governor) and that he was free to conduct his enquiry and could count on the help of the officials whenever he needed it. "The country thus had the first direct object lesson in civil disobedience."<sup>6</sup>

"The Champaran enquiry was a bold experiment with truth and *ahimsa*."<sup>7</sup> The Lieut.-Governor invited Mahatma Gandhi to see him at Ranchi and after their talks appointed a committee with Gandhiji as one of its members to enquire into the grievances of the agriculturists in Champaran. The planters who were at first hostile to Mahatma Gandhi soon changed their attitude. Apart from the magic of his personal contact what impressed them most was his conduct as a member of the committee. There was a large volume of evidence... supporting and confirming almost every allegation of oppression, corrupt practices and recalcitrance against the planters and their agents.... But at an early stage of the discussion after the evidence had been recorded, Gandhiji set the fear of the planters' representative at rest and completely won his confidence by declaring that he was not concerned with the past so much as with the present and the future and would not insist on a finding on the complaints being recorded; he would be content if the oppressive system of indigo plantation was abolished and the planters' tyranny ceased. He did not insist on full reparation either for the exactions made in the past but said he would be content with refund only of part, say 25 per cent, of the amount exacted—as a guarantee that no more exactions would be made.<sup>8</sup>

Thus ended the first chapter in the history of satyagraha in India which gave a new vision to the people of India. Gandhiji's first contribution to Indian politics was a highly impressive demonstration of the power that resides in the soul of men. His unshakable faith in truth and love raised him to the position accorded to saints and prophets in the old days. His message was not only for India but

for the whole world. His greatness lies specially in having shown in practice that the principles which govern the lives of those who had renounced the world are of universal application. They should and can be observed even by men engaged in political and economic activities. He brought religion out of the cloister and tried to make it a part of our daily life.

1. *Speeches and Writings of Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Vol. II, p. 414.*
2. *Ibid, p. 420.*
3. S. Radhakrishnan (ed.), *Mahatma Gandhi, Essays and Reflections on His Life and Work*, p. 14,
4. M.K. Gandhi, *Gokhale, My Political Guru*, p. 50.
5. B.R. Nanda, *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 41.
6. M.K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, Vol. II.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase*, Introduction by Rajendra Prasad, pp. ix-x.

**KATHLEEN LONSDALE**

## **GANDHI AND SCIENTIFIC TRUTH**

Gandhi was a lawyer, a politician, a prophet and a leader of men. But he was more than all these. To many he was a symbol of truth. Science, as we scientists understand it today, is knowledge of a particular kind, truth of a particular kind, gained in a particular way. Gandhi discovered truth which although not new (truth can never be new) was new to the world of his day. He not only discovered it, he practised it; he not only practised it, he published it. When he found himself in error in even the smallest detail, he took every possible care to correct that error and to let it be known that he was doing so.

...Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills. All I have done is to try experiments in both on as vast a scale as I could do. In doing so I have sometimes erred and learnt by my errors. Life and its problems have thus become to me so many experiments in the practice of truth and non-violence.<sup>1</sup>

This is the scientific method: to seek the truth; to find out (within the limited field of the understanding and control of natural phenomena) by thought and sometimes by inspiration; but always to test, first on a small scale and then on a larger, and to reject what is in error. To the genuine man of science, truth is all-important. There must be no self-deception, no concealment of facts, no twisting of evidence. Most men would like to have truth on their side, but the real scientist (like the really religious man) wants to be on the side of Truth. And when he has found the truth, even in a very narrow and specialized field, the man of science must not hug it to himself, he publishes it so that others may judge his scientific integrity, test his facts and methods and go on from where he leaves off. That is what Gandhi would want his followers to do. Not to sit back and admire him; not to prostrate themselves before his memory and mourn him, but to go on from where he left off, with similar experiments and with a similar readiness to learn by their mistakes.

Gandhi quite often used this comparison with scientific method to illustrate his own ideas:

I am but a seeker after truth I claim to have found a way to it. I claim to be making a ceaseless effort to find it. But I admit that I have not yet found it... I am painfully conscious of my imperfections, and therein lies all the strength that I possess.<sup>2</sup>

What then is Truth? A difficult question, but I have solved it for myself by saying that it is what the voice within tells you. How, then, you ask, do different people think of different and contrary truths? Well, seeing that the human mind works through innumerable media and that the evolution of the human mind is not the same for all, it follows that what may be truth for one may be untruth for another, and hence those who have made these experiments have come to the conclusion that there are certain conditions to be observed in making those experiments. Just as for conducting scientific experiments there is an indispensable scientific course of instruction, in the same way strict preliminary discipline is necessary to qualify a person to make experiments in the spiritual realm. Everyone should, therefore, realize his limitations before he speaks of his Inner Voice ... truth is not to be found by anybody who has not got an abundant sense of humility.<sup>3</sup>

Not all scientists, however, have precisely the same kind of training. We speak of the different scientific disciplines, meaning physics, chemistry, botany, geology and so on. Each has not only its different preliminary course of instruction, but its different way of describing what is found, even when they are apparently investigating the same branch of nature—for example, the atom. The description of an atom which is adequate to express the results of the experiments of a crystallographer such as myself would be regarded as hopelessly inadequate by a spectroscopist or a nuclear physicist. Yet each grasps an aspect of truth that the other may miss; and because all have the same standards by which they test scientific truth, therefore each is respectful towards the conclusions of the other.

Gandhi would, I think, have appreciated this example, for in his discussion of tolerance (a word which he admitted that he did not like, although he could not think of a better one) he asks "Why should there be so many faiths?!" and goes on:

Whose interpretation must be held to be the right one? Everyone is right from his own standpoint, but it is not impossible that everyone is wrong. Hence the necessity for tolerance, which does not mean indifference towards one's own faith, but a more intelligent and purer love for it. Tolerance gives us spiritual insight, which is as far from fanaticism as the north pole is from the south.<sup>4</sup>

The experienced research scientist does believe in inspiration, but it is the inspiration that comes from dedication and from a deep fundamental knowledge of one's subject, so deep that the superficial processes of reasoning may sometimes be superseded by a flash of insight which precedes, although it must always be tested by, action. When Gandhi told Agatha Harrison, whom he had asked to work on mutual understanding between India and Britain, that "God will direct your steps", he knew that he could guarantee this because she was already prepared for such work. She wrote to friends in America:

Often I have had to make a decision and not known which way to turn. This time I knew at once what was the thing to do, and found myself saying to him that I would do it...<sup>5</sup>

In conclusion I would like to quote first from his own writings the definition of God that I have found makes a deep appeal to many young scientists bogged down by their own search for intellectual integrity.

He is a personal God to those who need His personal presence. He is embodied to those who need his touch. He is the purest essence. He simply is to those who have faith. He is all things to all men. He is in us and yet above and beyond us. One may banish the word 'God\*' but one has no power to banish the Thing itself.<sup>6</sup>

Next I quote from Carl Heath:

It was his spirit of love and his disinterested search for truth that won him the response of love, and of deep esteem from multitudes.<sup>7</sup>

And finally a quotation from a German friend (Quaker) Margaret Lachmund who was at the time engaged in work involving negotiations in both East and West Berlin:

The courage for clarity and the strength to stand up for truth are repeatedly demanded of us. However, the secret lies in the way in which truth is spoken. If it is spoken in contempt, bitterness or hatred, it results in bitterness; if, however, truth is spoken in love, the door to the other's heart can slowly open so that the truth can perhaps have some effect... without love truth has no effect because it is not heard."

1. *Harijan, March 28, 1936.*
2. *Young India, January 17, 1921.*
3. *Young India, December 31, 1931.*
4. *Young India, September 23, 1926.*
5. *Agatha Harrison. An impression by her sister Irene Harrison. George Allen and Unwin, London 1956.*
6. *Young India, March 5, 1925.*
7. *Gandhi. George Allen and Unwin, London. Third Impression 1948.*

ETHEL MANNIN

### GANDHI AND THE MODERN DILEMMA

To write of Gandhi in relation to the modern world is to be confronted with the modern dilemma—that of reconciling principles with expediency. Politicians talk of peace and wage war. The great mass of the common people everywhere long for peace in the world and hate and fear war; yet perhaps at no time in the history of the human race has the world been so bound and delivered-over to violence on both the national and the domestic scale. To write, now, nearly a hundred years after his birth, and nearly twenty years after his violent death, in praise and support of all that Gandhi stood for seems not merely ironic but almost fatuous. For is not everything he stood for discounted now, in this age of crass materialism and ever-increasing violence? It is pertinent to ask: Was not the spirit of Gandhi, which was the spirit of *ahimsa*, of universal love, and of the non-violent resistance to evil, quenched with his death? In short, at the last was not Gandhi defeated?

On the face of it the answer is an unqualified yes, for India did not continue in the spirit of non-violence after independence, and in recent years in the Far East and the Middle East, and throughout the great African continent there has been a continuous and terrible story of wars and civil wars, and *coups* and fighting, and all the massive human suffering of the common people that goes with it, in what has become a commonplace pattern of violence. Gandhi himself, as we know, died through an act of violence. We can say that Gandhi was defeated, in the sense that we can say that Jesus was, and the Lord Buddha; we can say that the present condition of Man is demonstrably a total rejection of the Gandhian principle of *ahimsa*, the Christian principle of loving your enemies, the Buddhist principle of reverence for life. We can say that the modern world is remote from all such idealism; and it would be true.

Yet, paradoxically, although the world in practice rejects the teachings of its great spiritual leaders, it does not dispute the validity of those teachings. More people than not, of all races and nationalities, will agree, I think, that war is a

very great evil, yet when one breaks out which they believe to be just they will support it, especially if it concerns their own country. They see no alternative but to meet violence with violence, and where it seems expedient to do so they will even initiate violence. Gandhi did indicate an alternative; he even, through civil disobedience campaigns on a vast nation-wide scale, and by his own fastings-unto-death, demonstrated it; and the world was aware of it and impressed by it; an impact was made—so tremendous that when Gandhi died millions who had never met him sincerely mourned him, sustaining a sense of personal loss in the feeling that a great power for good had gone from our midst, and that somehow life would be less safe, more vulnerable to violence.

It is true that at the last Gandhi was defeated; but it is also true that the principles of love and non-violence are still valid. We may not always *do* what is right, but it is important to *know* what is right—to recognize truth when we see it. That, surely, is the minimum requirement of the ethical man. If we are to reject the ideal because it is too remote from us—which most of the time it is—we shall find ourselves rejecting all that rises above the material and the expedient, and whatever the material gains, the spiritual loss—and we are spirit as well as flesh—can only be intense, and ultimately disastrous. To believe in something good, such as the principle of non-violence, and of universal love, and not live up to the belief, is a pity, but it is human; to have no aspirations beyond making money and acquiring *things* and putting by for one's old age, is self-destructive. In the West, where the standard of living was never higher than it is today, the general decadence was surely never more marked.

Writing on the World Pacifist Conference of 1949, a year after Gandhi's death, Reginald Reynolds, who lived and worked with Gandhi at the ashram at Sabarmati during the Civil Disobedience Campaign of 1929-30, and had the honour of carrying Gandhi's ultimatum to the British Raj, said of himself and his colleagues:

Most of us came from countries where we had been pampered. Some of us had thought we were poor because our "standards of living" had been

slightly lowered. But now we had seen people content and happy on so much less and we had discovered the true nature of our own poverty; it was an inner poverty—the poverty of the rich, which they call being bored. Gandhi was never bored for one minute. He was one of the happiest men I have ever known; and maybe even that is an understatement. If life itself could be the measure, Gandhi's "standard of living" was about as high as it could be.<sup>1</sup>

Gandhi was not a saint, and those who eulogize him almost to the point of canonization, do a disservice to his memory, and to the millions for whom he was a guiding light, a power and a strength, simply because he was a good *man*, open to criticism like anyone else—disappointingly inconsistent at times, even a little tiresome, perhaps, but a man of immense moral courage, and therefore of immense moral power—a man great enough *innerly* to survive ridicule and misrepresentation and even, as Reginald Reynolds says, "plain, downright lying". In his autobiography Gandhi does not spare himself, but on the contrary, reveals himself with an unflinching, Rousseau-like candour. And that is precisely his value for us in the West, in our pampered, self-indulgent and materialistic world — that he was no superman, but of the same clay as ourselves; it is only that he managed to do rather better with it, by renouncing possessions and contriving to love his fellow- man. For the under-privileged and under-nourished two- thirds of the world his value is that he identified himself with the under-privileged, the despised and rejected—the untouchables. He was more than a "man for all seasons", he was a man for all people, of all races, and all social conditions, everywhere.

If we cannot live up to his non-violent design for living— and we can't, it seems—so much the worse for us. Yet so long as we can find it in our hearts and minds to acknowledge that he was right, we are not, I think, entirely doomed and damned; for whatever the world's statesmen and generals let us in for, sacrificing love on the altar of personal or national power, there will always remain a core of goodness, a morning- star of hope, of faith in the spirit of man, which somewhere in itself means well even when it does so ill—what the

Quakers call, "that of God in every man", so difficult to believe in at times, and yet in which it is so important to believe if we are not to perish of cynicism and despair. Reginald Reynolds, Gandhi's *Angad* (Messenger), as he called him, wrote in the conclusion of his book:

It may or may not be possible to achieve world peace and a society from which money and power have been eliminated—the kind of society I want to see. Meanwhile all I know is that, if I want peace and that kind of society, the place to start is here; the time now; the people, my immediate associates; and the means are the direct application to the present situation of the principles I wish to establish in the future.

But let the last word be with Gandhiji himself, for the wisdom with which he counselled India in the days of her struggle speaks for the dilemma of the modern world, racked as it is, East and West, by the forces of violence:

Satyagraha—the law of love—is the law of life. Departure from it leads to disintegration. A firm adherence to it leads to regeneration.

It is enough for me to see the light and act up to it, and it is more than enough when I gain companions in the onward march.

I have a horror of the word "expediency"...

1. In *To Live in Mankind, a Quest for Gandhi*, London, 1951.

ZENTA MAURINA

### GANDHI: IMAGE AND SYMBOL OF INDIA

No single statesman, politician or poet and writer of recent times embodied to the same extent as Gandhi did the soul of his country and people. For him there was no cleavage between the word and the deed and even in his lifetime he was called Mahatma, which is to say, the great soul.

This austere idealist is a sober writer of a high order. Maybe that he acquired his lucid, spare mode of expression through his years of study in England, yet his mind has been formed by three component factors: the ancient tradition of Hinduism, Tolstoy and Plato, whose *Phaidon*, the work on the immortality of the soul, he translated into his native language.

He made it a habit to recommend three works of Tolstoy to every Hindu: *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, *What is Art?* *What Must We Do?* When in 1921 the question was put to him in what relationship he found himself to Count Tolstoy, Gandhi answered: "As a piously devoted admirer who owed much to him in the course of his life".

Humility and ascetic simplicity united him with Tolstoy, as did the inexorable will to truth, to non-violence, to the hatred of hypocrisy, the repugnance against modern civilization, and finally the inclination not to forgive himself any fault or mistake and to atone at all times for one's own weaknesses.

Nothing would horrify the Mahatma as much as when he was called a saint:

I pray and worship as any good Hindu does and I believe that we can all be God's messengers. But I have received no special revelations of any kind from God. I do not desire to be anything but a simple workman, a humble servant of India and of mankind.

Whilst Europe's rulers destroyed men like insects, through murder, lies, atheism and blood-thirsty acts of vengeance, increased their short-lived power and dropped Satanic atom bombs, Gandhi fought for the deliverance of India

through justice, truth and Satyagraha. The Satyagraha movement began in 1919. Lenin, who accepted terror as a system of government, was only one year younger than Gandhi and Stalin was born 10 years later than the man who set India free. Gandhi's magical word "Satyagraha" is not synonymous with Tolstoy's "non-resistance" because it calls for action. Without doing any deed of violence one must fight unto death against injustices perpetrated by government and authority. Satyagraha must not be confused with cowardly pacifism. Gandhi carried a sword of peace.

Just as Christ the gentle-minded ruled over the waves of the sea, so did Gandhi over a sea of four hundred million human beings. If the masses became insane, if bloody excesses were perpetrated—no nation being free from scum—Gandhi forced the rebellious elements through hunger-strike to their knees. Just as Socrates did not resist his imprisonment by the Athenians, in the same way Gandhi accepted in 1922 his incarceration by the English. Peace, non-violence, readiness to suffer—these are the messages which he sent to his people from prison. A dangerous illness, an unavoidable operation brought about his liberation after two years in prison. A mere skeleton of a man, he pursued his aim relentlessly without deviating one inch from his Satyagraha principles. When in 1932 he was once again put into prison by the English in Bombay a thunderous howling ensued in the streets and in their houses Indian men and women wept and groaned so loudly and unceasingly that travellers were under the impression of a catastrophe of nature. Like the howling of innumerable sirens the grief and misery penetrated to hotels and palaces alike. 90,000 Indians were arrested—the English maintain to this day that the figure was 30,000—but the numbers in themselves mean little; deeply moving remains the calm serenity with which Gandhi's followers were prepared to go to prison.

Within human and earthly bounds greatness without tragedy is unthinkable. Mahatma Gandhi who lived an exemplary life for freedom and justice and non-violence and did not seek anything but to give new life and meaning to Hinduism and to bring to his people a life of human dignity fell to his death/in 1948 by an assassination which was not carried out by an Englishman but by a

Hindu Brahmin, whose brain was too limited to grasp the greatness of the master.

It is difficult to estimate whether India in the universal armaments race and rapidly proceeding industrialization will remain loyal in future to Gandhi's ideas and prefer peaceful striving for understanding to any form of violence. At any rate we can learn in our disillusioned and meaningless age a new orientation through the study of Hinduism and promote an inner cure by reminding ourselves that any true and lasting unification can only come about if and when we look beyond passing trifles, for the fulfilment of all life and being lies not in them but in the whole.

The burden of our time, dismembered by hatred and violence, can be carried more easily because we know that a man like Gandhi has lived, who carried through the liberation of his country by the gentle power of his kindness.

Thinking of Gandhi we feel strengthened in the faith that man is able to subdue his Satanic impulses.

A life lived as an example is more apt in changing mankind than all the systems of philosophy or all the dogmas of religion.

**MIRA BEHN**

### **THE GREATER TRAGEDY**

Why has Gandhiji's influence on India and the world not been greater? When one thinks back on such things as the mass awakening at the time of the Salt March, or the statesmanship with which Gandhiji upheld India's honour at the time of the Round Table Conference, or again, the heroic patience with which he handled the communal frenzy, giving ultimately his very life, one is oppressed with a sense of tragedy far greater than that of the assassination itself. That had a halo of glory and fulfilment about it and, for a time, it seemed as if something fundamental had been realized. But now, 20 years later, where are we?

Something seems to be wrong. Is it perhaps to do with this—that Gandhiji has been lifted into the hierarchy of saints and saviours, whose messages are preached and printed, while the world goes its own way?—In other words, that his message is being turned into a cult—an ism?

As long ago as 1936, Gandhiji felt this danger, and in so many words gave his warning when addressing the Gandhi Seva Sangh:

There is no such thing as Gandhism, and I do not want to leave any sect after me.

Yet the spinning-wheel is becoming a kind of "religious symbol", while much of Gandhiji's way of life is becoming crystallized into a kind of ritual. And from the way things are going, there seems every likelihood of Gandhiji's little personal belongings assuming the aspect of "religious relics". Is not all this the beginning of a definite religious cult?

Once things and ideas take on a "religious" aspect, they become sacrosanct and freedom of growth is likely to be checked. The very thing which is becoming the symbol of "Gandhism" is a case in point. I am not in a position to know, at this distance, details of the present conditions in India, but I do have a strong feeling that if the spinning-wheel, in its Gandhian form, had not been held so

sacred, the villages could by now have been made to hum with cloth-production. That is to say, of course, if the big industrialists could have been brought to accept this development.

It is impossible to believe that modern science and technical skill are incapable of providing the villages with small-scale installations for the production of high-class cloth, such as could compete with the big mills.

Resuscitation of the cotton industry in the villages of India was Gandhiji's objective, and 50 years ago the spinning-wheel could do wonders in this direction. But 50 years of undreamed of scientific and technical development have completely changed the picture.

As I have said, I do not know everything that is going on. Perhaps the Gandhian workers are reorganizing their programme. But I do not sense any of the fire and fight of the old Gandhian spirit. Yet the full force of revolutionary enthusiasm is what is needed to bring about, by modern means, Gandhiji's self-sufficiency objective for India's villages. How else are the mill-owners to be brought round to its acceptance? The moment such a campaign were launched, not only India, but the world outside, would once more feel the glow and the truth of Gandhian ideals.

Here in Europe one has the impression that this emphasis on the spinning-wheel, and its use as the emblem of Gandhiji's ideals, is a stumbling-block to clear comprehension of his message as a whole, and lessens people's faith in the practicable-ness of his theories. Though Gandhiji himself held to his ideas with extraordinary tenacity, once he was convinced of the need to change, he never hesitated. That was probably one of the reasons why he had such a strong aversion to isms. He was ever seeking the truth which can give real human happiness, and we must also seek, not just follow.

Gandhian workers need to be not missionaries but revolutionaries.

## THE EARL MOUNTBATTEN OF BURMA

### MAHATMA GANDHI—A REAL FRIEND

In the course of my life I have had the good fortune to get to know many of the world's leaders and in my career to have served with many men of outstanding talent. In the long catalogue I recall only a few that I would describe without hesitation as truly great men. I have no hesitation however in placing Mahatma Gandhi in this very short list of the elect of our times.

I only came into contact with him at the end of his life at a point when, in political terms at any rate, his power was beginning to wane or at least he was withdrawing from the front line of responsibility. The unavoidable accent on partition in the Transfer of Power meant a bitter frustration of his life-long aims and ideals—to him it appeared more as vivisection than victory. In such circumstances of partial eclipse he might have left a blurred impression, or appear to have done so; but from the first encounter my wife and I were both aware that here was a unique personality, one whose authority transcended the normal bounds of human leadership; one who quickly became a real friend.

His role in the momentous events covering the last year of his life is now a part of history. He knew where his duty lay, and that it went beyond participation in the actual negotiations.

Essentially it involved his exerting his overwhelming influence upon the people themselves when the communal frenzy threatened to engulf the whole social order. I do not exaggerate when I say that Gandhi on the Maidan in Calcutta in August 1947 was one of the great incidents of the century, a personal *tour de force* bordering on a miracle.

For those engaged in the study of mass psychology here is a supreme case history. With their passions roused and knives poised hundreds of thousands were diverted from seeking release through blood and revenge and were brought to recognition of their brotherhood through the love Gandhi, their physical captive, was able to instil in them.

Such an example was the manifestation of his power as a Mahatma and far transcended mere political authority. It involved the assumption of personal responsibility which turned the final sacrifice of his life by assassination into a martyrdom that helped to heal the wounds of others.

In his death the meaning of his life was finally justified for all to see. As they came in their thousands to pay their last respects by the banks of the Jumna and witnessed his frail body being consumed in the flames, the cry of "Gandhi is immortal" was a shout of triumph. I shall never forget that scene, and have often reflected subsequently on just how it was that Gandhi impinged so deeply on our era. The shock waves of his death reached out across the world.

I think the secret was that he symbolized a profound challenge to the prevailing trends of the 20th century. Not for nothing has it been described as the age of violence, with every conceivable technique of personal and public pressure exploited to achieve the objectives of material power.

I think there was a universal recognition that his response to this challenge was highly original. His whole concept of confronting force with non-violence was not just the dream of a visionary but an approach to the heart of the matter, a call to the conduct and aspiration of the individual and a demand upon self-control without which civilization, however sophisticated in other respects, must ultimately collapse. When asked his views about the desirability of having an Admiral for Viceroy I am told he pointed out that he did not object to dealing with military men, for their stock-in-trade was discipline, and controlled force as used by armies and navies was at least preferable to the uncontrolled violence of the mob.

He commanded world attention and respect not only because of the originality of his approach to the grave problems confronting his country but also because he was throughout consistent.

The suggestion that he was devious and unpredictable is, in my submission, based on a failure to follow the long sequence of his words and deeds. Like other great revolutionaries before him he sought to conserve and not to overthrow. Remarkable evidence in support of this contention is to be found in

his attitude to Swaraj in so far as it might affect the future relationship of a free India with a Britain whose power he was striving to remove and supersede.

When the time came in 1947 to find a formula in which the Transfer of Power could be contained we revived the concept of Dominion Status. Acceptance of the idea by all the parties concerned was regarded by many, at the time, as startling. But as long ago as 1924, in his Presidential Address to the 39th session of the Indian National Congress at Belgaum, Gandhi uttered these prophetic words:

The above sketch presupposes the retention of the British connection on perfectly honourable and absolutely equal terms. But I know that there is a section among Congressmen who want under every conceivable circumstance complete independence of Britain. They will not have even an equal partnership. In my opinion, if the British Government mean what they say and honestly help us to equality, it would be a greater triumph than a complete severance of the British connection. I would therefore strive for Swaraj within the Empire but would not hesitate to sever all connections, if severance became a necessity through Britain's own faults. I would thus throw the burden of separation on the British people. The better mind of the world desires today not absolutely independent States warring one against another but a federation of friendly, interdependent States. The consummation of that event may be far off.

What better example could there be of his political insight and moral judgment which of course was reflected in his great disciples Nehru and Patel?

Without relying on any of the modern techniques he was a supreme master of mass communication. Instinctively he knew the appropriate place and time to perform the appropriate symbolic act which could bring about an awareness of his aims. This attribute alone had the hallmark of genius. In achieving this unison he was deeply suspicious of all artificial aids. He once told a member of my staff that he was really too old to master the mysteries of radio: he was not, he said, in principle against using it altogether, but he had to know whom

he was addressing, whether it was five or five lakhs. So when he finally consented to speak over All-India Radio at the time of the Panjab crisis he asked to do so on the basis that he was addressing his audience—In this instance the refugees at the Kurukshetra Camp—directly and exclusively. Here again, far from being old-fashioned, he was probably ahead of his time. The sincere message may well need the closed circuit In the dark and difficult days ahead the light of his example continues to shine and his still, small voice to be heard above the din of rival ideologies and insults.

He had the greatness to embody the oppressed and their sufferings, and to seek truth wherever it might be found. By his standards a change of heart could be even more important than a change of mind. To borrow the famous phrase of Anatole France, "He was a moment in the conscience of mankind."

HIREN MUKHERJEE

### GANDHI AND 'ABHAYA'

In the *Times of India* (Delhi Edition) of 7th April, 1968, a feature-writer recalled that President Ho Chi Minh, when in Delhi some years ago and asked by Press correspondents to compare his role in Vietnam with that of Gandhi in India, had said that it was "a wrong question" and that a comparison would be "foolish", but had added, most significantly: "I and others may be revolutionaries but we are disciples of Mahatma Gandhi, directly or indirectly: nothing more, nothing less."

It is a joy, at this moment of writing, to come across this statement, made so obviously extempore, into which too much meaning need not also be read. For Gandhi, at his best, would have found, if he was alive today, none more worthy than Ho Chi Minh to be clasped to his heart. One does not know if Ho Chi Minh was ever drawn towards the gospel of *ahimsa* or nonviolence, but as the leader of Vietnam, whose heroism has cast a new radiance on history, he is the exemplar, if one man in the world of today is to be singled out, of *abhaya* or fearlessness; and this quality of fearlessness, rather than the more widely celebrated notion of non-violence, was perhaps Gandhi's greatest contribution to Indian life.

In the early days of his public life, Gandhi went through experiences in South Africa which were loaded with bitterness, and it was in the crucible of such experiences and the meditation to which he was driven that his character was fashioned till its glow illuminated the gloom around him.

I observed on the very first day that the Europeans meted out most insulting treatment to the Indians... I was pushed out of the train by a police constable at Maritzburg, and the train having left, was sitting in the waiting-room, shivering in the bitter cold. I did not know where my luggage was nor did I dare to inquire of anybody, lest I might be insulted and assaulted once again. Sleep was out of the question. Doubt took

possession of my mind. Late at night, I came to the conclusion that to run back to India would be cowardly. I must accomplish what I had undertaken.<sup>1</sup>

These are Gandhi's own words, quietly spoken but with a storm of meaning in them. That episode in the railway train at Maritzburg perhaps bears comparison with the "illumination" that came to Rousseau on the road to Valenciennes. Ejection from the train and assault by the coach-driver may seem trivial incidents, for such indignity and pain was being inflicted on many as a matter of course. But a shrinking and sensitive young man endured it with a fortitude that came to him as he realized he must do it for the sake not only of himself but of other people. It was the dawn in his mind of the conviction, which grew as he toiled on in South Africa, that suffering can be used creatively for the emancipation of people other than oneself. Years later, Gandhi would say: "I must involve in my experiment the whole of mankind." At Maritzburg, of course, his discovery was not complete, but it was there that he was born again, as it were, into a life that was to be lived on a different plane.

The Maritzburg experience gave Gandhi a great spiritual shake-up. It gave him the first release from the bonds of fear—*abhaya*, as our ancients called it, not merely physical courage but the positive absence of fear from the mind. And in the great dynamic phases of his many-splendoured life he helped more than any one man to awaken his people to fearlessness—fearlessness of State repression and social obloquy, fearlessness in respect not only of the coercive apparatus of the State but of all vested interests, fearlessness even in face of starvation and sorrow. Fear's black pall could not, of course, be removed in a trice by the magic of one's precept—but let it be repeated, *abhaya* rather than *ahimsa* was Gandhi's best legacy to his people.

Indian venality and British guile had combined at the battle of Plassey (1757) to set up the East India Company as the real power in our hoary land. Then followed a century of despair, but though the upper ten submitted supinely, the lower ten thousand were never so enamoured of the conqueror's virtues that subjection lost its sting. They never reconciled themselves to servitude.

There never was a time, till 1857, when some region or other in India was not clinging to independence. The Revolt of 1857 represented indeed the crown and the climax of a stupendous, though often almost necessarily sightless, upsurge. In the post-1857 years there was a genuine ache for national self-assertion, but it was countered by the British rulers seeking to win over the elite with occasional offers of a few gilded lollipops from the parliamentary confectionary. In the conditions of colonial economy that was operated with a clever combination of force and fraud and fluctuating favours, the politics that India took on for several decades was such that we were no more than petitioners for paltry instalments of the most doubtful variety of representative government. The President of the first session of the Indian National Congress, like his successors till the end of World War I, affirmed "thorough loyalty to the British Government", and the session (1885) concluded with "three cheers" for its British mentor, A.O. Hume, who replied by calling for "three times three cheers and if possible thrice that for the Queen- Empress, the latchet of whose shoes, Hume said in happy servility, he was "unworthy to loose".<sup>2</sup>

Towards the end of the 19th century and in the first decade of the 20th, there began a new stir. In Maharashtra, Bengal and Panjab most of all, groups of patriots began to come forward, bent on repairing the damage to our self-respect that subjection meant, intoxicated by dreams of freedom and ready to defy death if only to prove that we were unreconciled to foreign domination. These were the "terrorists" whom India will never cease to honour. They gave us back the pride of our manhood; they were the salt of the Indian earth.

Between them and Gandhi, the apostle of non-violence, there is a wide gulf, but the twain do meet on the plane of *abhaya*. "Do not resist, do not in any case answer violence with violence," Gandhi would say, but at the same time his adjuration was: 'Be brave, do not fear'—for to him, violence was preferable any time to cowardice. His non-violence was of the brave, not of the meekly acquiescent—if Gandhi hated anything it was the bated breath and whispering humbleness of the pusillanimous.

Without real fearlessness, the kind of courage which thinks nothing of risking one's reputation with one's follows, one could not speak as Gandhi did at the inauguration of Banaras Hindu University in February 1916. The then British Viceroy was to lay the foundation-stone and there was a whole concourse of princes and potentates, apart from celebrities in political and academic life. Gandhi went in his usual coarse rig-out and, when called on to speak, scandalized the elite by his polite but superbly blunt attack on the luxury and ostentation he saw around them. He said:

I feel like saying to these noblemen: There is no salvation for India unless you strip yourselves of the jewellery and hold it in trust for your countrymen in India. I am sure it is not the desire of the King-Emperor or of Lord Hardinge that in order to show the truest loyalty to our King-Emperor it is necessary for us to ransack our jewellery boxes and appear bedecked from top to toe.

Referring to the presence of police and detectives all over the place, he exclaimed:

Why this distrust? Is it not better that Lord Hardinge should die than live a living death? But, a representative of a mighty sovereign may not. He might even find it necessary to live a living death. But why was it necessary to impose these detectives on us? We may foam, we may fret, we may resent, but let us not forget that India of today in her impatience has produced an army of anarchists. I myself am an anarchist, but of a different type...<sup>3</sup>

It was magnificent. Mrs. Annie Besant in the chair, fairly writhed. "Please stop it," she said, but relented when he told her:

If you consider that by speaking as I am, I am not serving the country and the empire I shall certainly stop.

But then, "thinking aloud", as he said he was doing, he warmed up:

If we have to receive self-government, we shall have to take it. We shall never be granted self-government. Look at the history of the British

empire and the British nation; freedom-loving as it is, it will not be a party to give freedom to a people who will not take it themselves. Learn your lesson if you wish to from the Boer War... It was too much and the long-suffering president stamped out. This unfinished speech is one of the classics of eloquence— without frills, honest-to-goodness, a lashing of India's massive degradation, a cathartic masterpiece.

This was followed, on February 14, by another characteristic speech on *swadeshi* to a conference in Madras. He said:

We want to represent the masses, but we fail. They recognize us not much more than they recognize the English officers. Their hearts are an open book to neither. Their aspirations are not ours. Hence there is a break. And you witness not in reality failure to organize but want of correspondence between the representatives and the represented.

He went on to speak of the poverty of the masses, of the need of self-sufficiency:

This may all seem nonsensical. Well, India is a country of nonsense. It is nonsensical to parch one's throat with thirst when a kindly Mussalman is ready to offer pure water to drink. And yet thousands of Hindus would rather die of thirst than drink water from a Muslim household. These nonsensical men can also, once convinced that their religion demands that they should wear garments manufactured in India only and eat food only grown in India, decline to wear any other clothing or eat any other food.

It was altogether a brave new voice in India's public life, the voice of a man who had risen, as it were, out of India's very earth, a man who said queer, contradictory, impossible things and yet with courage, with urgency and a compulsion of conviction never encountered before.

Such a man could not help noticing people's grievances, big and small, and seeking to redress them. And so, in spite of moderate predilections, he was drawn into the vortex of stormy politics and became its head and centre. The

official review *India in 1919* notes his readiness "to take up the cudgels on behalf of any individual or class whom he regards as being oppressed". Except for his strenuously cultivated fixation about changing hostile hearts by satyagraha and "penance", he was a severely practical person, not unduly perturbed by the massive patriotic emotion which in a subject land tears many people's heart-strings and goads them to revolutionary paths, but in the limited sphere of work, which he deliberately envisaged, he was prepared for a "fight to the death" and to seek to enforce minimum demands "at all costs". He was different from the other Indian leaders and fundamentally superior, for he had his roots among the common people, tried to live their life and improve working conditions, whether of the third-class railway passenger or of the indentured labourer in plantations or of the rackrented peasant or of the factory worker or of the ruined artisan. From the poor and the lowly he drew his strength and his inspiration and he knew very well his difference from the able and often astute politicians of national stature in India. The latter wooed him, imagining him perhaps to be more or less an ingenuous "do-gooder" type who could be useful to them. No wonder they failed.

Gandhi's doctrinal vagaries, springing to the surface when least desired, often inhibited the magnificent popular upsurges that he alone could lead, and this earned him once an angry epithet, "the Jonah of revolution".<sup>5</sup> It is to be noted, however, that when he had genuine expectations, as in 1920-21—he was promising *swaraj* before 1921 was out—he was not unready to relax his usual rigour in matters of principle. This was courage of a high order, particularly when Gandhi was the kind of person he was. He staked much on the issue. He knew that Muslim divines and their followers did not share his faith in non-violence, but when the people were so deeply astir he was ready not to be finicky. So, on March 19, 1920, he said:

Muslims have special Koranic obligations in which Hindus may or may not join. They therefore reserve to themselves the right, in the event of the failure of non-cooperation-cum-non-violence, in order to enforce

justice, to resort to all such methods as may be enjoined by the Islamic scriptures.<sup>6</sup>

This was something of a moral gamble but with real heroism he wrestled with himself and took the risk. The same was to be seen when he did not hesitate, at the height of the non-cooperation struggle, to defend the Mopla rebels as "brave, godfearing" people driven by unendurable provocation into acts that respectable citizens were denouncing. Years later, in 1942, he spoke words this country will never forget—words which unfortunately did not produce commensurate results but were superbly evocative of courage and character.

For the first time in his life Gandhi's envisagement of a mass movement in 1942 was not, at least for a while, preponderantly affected by his fixation about non-violence. In several important interviews he drew a picture of the contemplated civil disobedience movement. He explained to Louis Fischer:

In the villages peasants will stop paying tax... But refusal to pay it will give the peasants courage to think that they are capable of independent action. Their next step will be to seize the land.

This is language which Gandhi had never used before, and when Fischer in surprise, asked, "With violence?", the reply was: "There may be violence, but then again landlords may cooperate." Twitted for his optimism, Gandhi joked: "They might cooperate by fleeing!" Fischer countered by suggesting that the peasants might organize "violent resistance", and Gandhi made, for him, the stupendous answer: "There may be fifteen days of chaos, but I think we would soon bring that under control." On August 8, 1942, he said in answer to an Associated Press interviewer:

You are very right when you say that for a swift ending (of the struggle) a general strike is necessary. It is not outside my contemplation... I shall move with the utmost caution. And if a general strike becomes necessary, a dire necessity, I shall not flinch.

A little earlier he had said:

Here is a *mantra*, a short one, that I give you. You may imprint it on your hearts and let every breath of yours give expression to it. The *mantra* is: "Do or die". We shall either free India or die in the attempt.<sup>7</sup>

Gandhi was too big a man not to know that moral suasion by itself was not a powerful enough instrument for real social change which required the action of masses of people. "I have no influence," he wrote in his *Harijan* weekly (July 26, 1942), "to direct people's energy in a channel in which they have no interest." He knew also that his movement had props that were not entirely welcome. "I am quite of your opinion," he wrote to Jawaharlal Nehru on April 1, 1928, "that some day we shall have to start a movement without the rich people and without the educated class. But that time is not yet."<sup>8</sup> It is a pity that he did not see it was time, even in 1945-46, when, with no more than a slight risk to his presuppositions about non-violence, he could have summoned and led a magnificent struggle. But that is another story.

Meanwhile, who in India will not glory in recollection even of the flame of *abhaya* he had lit in our land in 1920-21? Who but he could say, as he did during his "great trial" on March 18, 1922:

... I knew that I was playing with fire. I ran the risk and if I was set free I would still do the same... Nonviolence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed. But I had to make my choice. I had either to submit to a system which had done irreparable harm to my country, or incur the risk of the mad fury of my people bursting forth when they understood the truth from my lips...<sup>9</sup>

For us in India, words have a high value—which is somewhat unfortunate since it may have had something to do in producing in us a certain\*allergy towards deeds! But who will not thrill, however revolutionary his bent, to words that came out of the mouth of this gentlest of men when he was appearing in the aforesaid trial?

...Little do town-dwellers know how the semi-starved masses of Indians are slowly sinking to lifelessness. Little do they know that their miserable comfort represents the brokerage they get for the work they do for the

foreign exploiter, that the profits and the brokerage are sucked from the masses. Little do they realize that the Government established by law in British India is carried on for this exploitation of the masses. No sophistry, no jugglery in figures can explain away the evidence that the skeletons in many villages present to the naked eye. I have no doubt whatsoever that both England and the town-dwellers in India will have to answer, if there is a God above, for this crime against humanity which is perhaps unparalleled in history .<sup>10</sup>

No wonder Ho Chi Minh felt that being "revolutionaries" did not preclude being "disciples of Mahatma Gandhi, directly or indirectly". For Gandhi's message to his people was the message of *abhaya*, fearlessness and fortitude in pursuing the path of duty.

1. M.K. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, (Ahmedabad, 1928), p. 42.
2. W. Wedderburn, *Alan Octavian Hume*. quoted.in R. Palme Dutt, *Indie Today* (London, 1939), pp. 283-84.
3. D.G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*. Vol. I, pp. 219 ff.; Homer A. Jack (Ed.)*The Gandhi Reader*, pp. 128 ff.
4. Tendulkar, *op. cit.* pp. 226-29.
5. R. Palme Dutt, *op. cit.*
6. Tendulkar, *op. cit.* p. 346.
7. *Ibid.* Vol. VI. p. 135: H. Alexander, *India Since Cripps*. pp. 37-41.
8. Tendulkar, *op. cit.* Vol. VIII, pp. 351-52.
9. *Ibid.* Vol. II. pp. 129-33.
10. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi VoL 23*, pp. 110-20.

**GUNNAR MYRDAL**

### **GANDHI AS A RADICAL LIBERAL**

Mohandas Gandhi's moral personality was a gem, faceted with immense richness. He will appear differently when viewed by different observers, depending upon where they stand and the background against which they perceive him. The present author has for many years been entangled in a study of South Asia's and, in particular, India's problems of underdevelopment, development, and planning for development; my value premises in this study were the rationalistic modernization ideals as they had emanated in the early European era of Enlightenment and been preserved and developed in liberal thought everywhere. Together with Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhi walks through my book<sup>1</sup> as a spiritual leader upholding these ideals in quite a consistent way. Viewed in this setting, Gandhi stands out as a radical and over-optimistic liberal of the post- Victorian English variety, though moulded by the Indian tradition. I realize that this characterization does not exhaust what can be said about Gandhi's world outlook, as I am sure other contributors to this volume have shown. But I do believe that it catches a significant and important trait and belongs to a full view of the father of the Indian nation.

Gandhi's political tactic of civil disobedience and non- cooperation with the colonial power structure was, of course, in line with his moral imperative of non-violence. His absolutist conception of this imperative was not endorsed by the radical liberals in the Congress movement. That is evident from the criticisms by Nehru and other contemporaries. But to them, too, the application of the principle of non-violence seemed a rational means for a very large and very poor people to use in attaining national independence with a minimum of sacrifice from the British Crown, with its specific attributes. Unlike so many of Gandhi's other political views, it did not even prove over-optimistic. Gandhi was a radical leveller. He spoke up for the "dumb semi-starved millions scattered over the length and the breadth of the land in its 700,000 villages" and he saw their situation to be the result of systematic "exploitation". He saw

clearly what later would become so forgotten in India, viz., that greater equality was not an aim in competition with economic progress but instead a necessary condition for it. Until Gandhi's crusade, social and, in particular, economic equalization had been discussed very little, either in India or anywhere else in South Asia. Gandhi's egalitarianism became one of the links between him and the rationalistic intellectuals of Nehru's type who, unlike Gandhi, were relatively unconcerned with tradition and religion. Together they persuaded Congress to accept a radical variant of the modern egalitarian ideology. Confirmed at the Karachi session in 1931, it demanded that "in order to end the exploitation of the masses, political freedom must include real economic freedom for the starving millions".

In line with the golden-age myth, which Gandhi, as little as any other leader—Nehru included—could entirely forsake, he held that a "purer" and functional caste system could once upon a time have been a beneficial social organization. But the present caste system was to him a horror and had to be suppressed. He also stood for the liberation of women from their shackles. He cried out against child-marriage and the religious and social compulsion hindering remarriage of widows. On all these questions Gandhi was the opposite of a traditionalist.

Even in regard to the distribution of income and wealth, Gandhi's views were radical. Often he spoke as if he demanded complete economic equality. But on this point Gandhi's thinking became blurred with his concept of trusteeship: the rich could keep their wealth if they acted in the interest of the underprivileged. This notion was a practical compromise, mainly motivated by his rejection of violence and his realization that the rich would not willingly give up their possessions (see below, however). It was so flexible that it could serve as a justification for gross inequality. But Gandhi demanded a moral revolution, a change of heart among the rich. Nehru, who doubted the likelihood of such a conversion, criticized Gandhi for inconsistency in regard to economic equalization.

Gandhi remained optimistic on this score and often gave expression to his conviction of a radical improvement of the economic conditions of the poor

once India had become independent. He was equally optimistic about the rapid disappearance of caste and other social inequalities. This optimism was founded on two judgments which can now be seen to have been mistaken but which were largely shared by Nehru and the rationalistic intellectuals in the Congress movement. One was that the British colonial rule over India had so suppressed the forces making for economic progress that once the shackles of imperialism were removed rapid economic progress would ensue and increase the elbow room for rich and poor. The other judgment concerned the political democracy that would come with independence and its expected revolutionary effects on Indian society.

To Gandhi a radical change in the social and economic order was, indeed, the meaning and essential purpose of overthrowing foreign rule. Without it, independence and democracy would be an empty achievement. But Gandhi took for granted that once the power was transferred to the masses of the Indian people these masses would assert themselves and carry out the economic and social revolution. The rich and mighty would have to give up their privileges and do it willingly and peacefully. In his words:

Economic equality is the master-key to non-violent independence. . . . A non-violent system of government is clearly an impossibility so long as the wide gulf between the rich and the hungry millions persists. The contrast between the palaces of New Delhi and the miserable hovels of the poor, labouring class cannot last one day in a free India in which the poor will enjoy the same power as the richest in the land. A violent and bloody revolution is a certainty one day unless there is a voluntary abdication of riches and the power that riches give and sharing them for the common good.

That independent India should be a democracy based on adult franchise; Gandhi held as above dispute and so did the Congress as a body. The economic and social revolution to him then became simply an inference of the extreme degree of social and economic inequality existing there as a start.

Not as a qualification but as an amplification of the democratic principle Gandhi was adamant in demanding that a maximum of the political power should be dispersed and reserved for local and functional communities, and on this point also he won adherence in the movement he led. He feared centralization of power, even if founded on a majority vote, and wanted the villagers to be the makers of their own destiny with only general rules laid down from above. This View had, with Gandhi, a moral basis in his conception of the dignity of the individuals and his vision of their having the capacity to organize their life together in a way that was conducive to peaceful cooperation, progress, and happiness.

Gandhi perceived clearly that development basically is a human problem concerning attitudes and institutions. It must imply that people everywhere begin to act more positively to improve their living conditions and then also to change their community in such a way as to make these strivings more possible and effective. The efforts in India to institute "democratic planning" or "decentralization" through various forms of cooperatives and agencies for local self-government have been an outgrowth of this Gandhian ideal that democracy be built "from below". We can now see that when such policies have not been very successful, a main explanation is that the social and economic revolution that Gandhi, like Nehru and the whole radical wing of the Congress, so confidently had expected to follow independence and general suffrage, did not materialize. The attempt to cultivate grass-root democracy in the event bypassed the equality issue and so was emasculated. For effective cooperation assumes greater equality, among many other things.

In practically all fields Gandhi was thus an enlightened radical liberal. He demanded also a revolutionary change in the direction of education and not simply the sluicing of more children and youths through an unreformed school system inherited from colonial times and serving the interests of the metropolitan power and that Indian upper class which had flourished under its protection. There he was in line with the most modern contemporary philosophers of education, particularly prominent in the two countries which were already ahead of the rest of the world, viz., the United States and later

the Soviet Union. He stood up by word and personal example against that serious obstacle to development which persists in the contempt for manual work. Much of the educational reforms he propagated had the major aim of elevating to its proper level the dignity of labour, all labour. He saw clearly its relation to the issue of social equality, and he never tired of stressing this fact. As Gandhiji stood so undeniably on the side of the poor and downtrodden, he dared also to be more outspoken than any other Indian leader after him— with the exception, occasionally of Nehru—in upbraiding his people for laziness and for not keeping themselves and their surroundings clean.

Blended with all these highly rationalistic opinions of Gandhi, which make him an outspoken radical liberal, he held at the same time more traditionalistic views that seemingly, at least, contradict them. His hostility to modern industrial technology and to machines and, more generally, his pro-rural and anti-city bias were sometimes expressed in terms which are hardly compatible with enlightened liberalism. But the recognition in recent years of the very predominant importance of agriculture in economic development and also of the under-utilized labour resources have, to an extent, proved these ideas of his to be less irrational than they seemed to be at a time when development was narrowly defined as industrialization and when it was believed that industrialization would rapidly create new employment that would make possible the "skimming off" of the "labour surplus" in agriculture. Even at the culmination of that era—approximately in the years when the Second Five Year Plan was prepared—the planners found a compromise with Gandhian ideas, viz., to reserve a large area of production of consumption goods for traditional labour-intensive technology. In regard to central State planning generally, where Indian policy has seemed to deviate most conspicuously from Gandhi's teaching, there may now be forebodings of an evolution of thinking that comes closer to Gandhi's own. The plans produced in predominantly financial terms have turned out to be fictitious and misleading. Consequently India is beginning to recognize the necessity to perceive development as a process encompassing the entire social system. This was Gandhi's view, though he never elaborated it.

To Gandhi, politics should be rooted in morals. There he only emphasized truly liberal principles, from which too many writers, particularly among the economists, have tried to run away. More questionable—from a liberal point of view—is Gandhi's insistence on basing morals on religion. But by his religious syncretism, stressing the affinities between all religions, he gave preponderant weight to the "higher" ideals which all religions have in common and which generally are humanitarian and rationalistic, while playing down the importance of rites and taboos which are diversive and arational if not irrational. His adulation of sexual abstinence, however, and his consequent hostility to contraception are definitely anti-rationalistic elements in his moral philosophy. If adhered to, they would have become the more blatantly illiberal when the population explosion gathered momentum, but that occurred only after his death. Similarly, his support for cow worship—and sometimes idol worship—stands out as contradictory to his enlightened liberalism.

## II

Everyone who has studied Gandhi's teaching in some depth must have pondered over what his intellectual, moral and political reaction would have been if he had returned to his India after more than twenty years of independence. Certainly, he would have had to confess to himself that the unbounded optimism that inspired him and his contemporaries in the Congress movement during the struggle for independence had been mistaken.

The social and economic revolution he had looked forward to had been, first, postponed and, later, shelved altogether — except for some continued rhetorical exuberances in public speaking. Instead of the economic equalization he had seen coming, inequalities have been widening. The concentration of financial power has increased. Against the clear condemnation in the Constitution and special legislation, which had been adopted under the influence of the legacy from Gandhi, caste as a social institution has shown an obstinate persistency and may even have gained in importance. The rise in the freedom and status of women which he had propagated has, for the most part, remained a rather empty prescription— except in the top upper classes. The

land and tenancy reforms have been little more than a sham. There has been no fundamental reform of education, which still serves to preserve and mark the gulf between those who work with their hands and those who, having acquired the badge of education, do not have to do so. The efforts to lift up and move rural life—agricultural extension, credit and other cooperatives, community development, panchayat raj, and so on—have, contrary to proclaimed objectives, mainly favoured the better-off.

And so the masses of people in the villages, where now, as in Gandhi's time, more than eighty per cent of the people live, have mostly remained in relative stagnation. The landless and poorer half of the villagers—Gandhi's dumb semi-starved millions—may be worse off than they were a quarter of a century ago and are certainly not decidedly better off. Undoubtedly, the still unhampered population explosion has contributed in a mighty way to the severity of what, measured by Gandhi's predictions and honest expectancy, he would now see as a large-scale failure. It is open to speculation whether Gandhi, when facing the population explosion and the cattle explosion, would have modified his views on contraception and cow-slaughter. As rational liberalism was a major element in Gandhi's thinking, this does not seem entirely excluded. In any case, he would probably not have laid a main emphasis on these issues, but looked on them as peripheral to the failure in the field of politics.

The development of Indian politics since the attainment of independence, which he himself barely survived, Gandhi would in all certainty have censured severely. He would have seen it to be afflicted with a progressively worsening moral illness, spreading out in the entire polity and society like a cancerous growth, to which the increase of corruption bore testimony. He would have seen another sign of the downward trend of political life in the increasing prevalence of violence —on the one side, riots, usually without a major political purpose, and police brutality on the other. This, as is often pointed out, has reached a higher level than it did during the struggle against the British which he succeeded in keeping disciplined. He would probably have judged this ailment of Indian politics as an *ex post* justification of his recommendation, at the time when India steered out as an independent state, that the Congress

should stay out of politics, not remaining a political party but becoming a voluntary organization for social improvement. When Nehru, and the majority of the Congress leaders chose to act differently, this was motivated by the fact that there was already a Congress party with an effective machine which could become a national party and which undoubtedly made possible the first ten years of relatively successful government in the country. But it was also during these ten years that the postponement of the social and economic revolution was gradually accepted, the revolution that would have been necessary if the exalted hopes of Gandhi, Nehru, and many others were to have materialized.

If Gandhi could return to India after almost a quarter of a century, he would thus have had to confess that he, together with most leaders of the Congress movement, had been grossly over-optimistic. It is equally certain, however, that he would have stuck to what were his fundamental valuations, rooted as they were in his moral convictions and in his religion. It is unthinkable that today he would have remained silent and idle. He would again have taken to the roads and village lanes and begun anew his crusade, seeking to change the social and economic conceptions of the articulate classes of his nation but at the same time trying to stir up the masses from their stupor. And he would have followers of many and diverse backgrounds, now as then kept together as a unified force by his faith, resourcefulness, and humour.

Often when labouring with India's staggering development problems, I have felt inclined to believe that what that great country needs today, more than foreign aid and day-to-day adjustment of policies to meet the recurring emergencies, is a spiritual leader of Gandhi's greatness, his love, and fearlessness. Together with the group of patriots who would come to surround such a leader, he might electrify the nation to undertake, late but perhaps not too late, the revolutionary changes in social, economic and political institutions, attitudes and practices which are now so desperately needed.

1. *Asian Drama. An Inquiry Into the Poverty of Nations.* Pantheon Publishers, New York, and Penguin Publishers, London, 1968, Prologue, Section 9, and Chapter 2. The assertions about Gandhi's opinions expressed in the article are documented in various places in that book.

**SUSHILA NAYAR**

### **THIS I SAW**

Many people have written about the magnetism of Mahatma Gandhi's personality. Many who came to him to scoff remained to pray. They became his ardent admirers and followers. The secret of it was perhaps his respect for human personality. He took everybody for what he or she was worth and let them feel that he cared for each one and helped them rise to the full height of their stature. Rigorous and unsparing where his own shortcomings were concerned, he was tolerant of the weaknesses of others, and eager always to discover and draw out the best in them. His deep sympathy, understanding and compassion drew all sorts of men to him and held them captives of his love.

In 1932 my mother went to Bombay to meet him on his return from the Second Round Table Conference. During the lifetime of my father, whom we lost when I was still at my mother's breast, she, I am told, observed purdah and lived in high style in a house full of servants. Her world had changed much in the interval. My eldest brother had already joined Gandhiji after giving up his studies in response to the call of the non-cooperation movement, while he was working for the degree of Master of Arts. My second brother had to discontinue his studies and to take upon his very young shoulders the burden of maintaining the family. I had only just joined Lady Hardinge Medical College at Delhi, which was a residential college in those days. My mother had gone to see Gandhiji and my brother, who had accompanied him to England and then returned home. She was in her fifties and was suffering from diabetes. After a couple of days' stay, she went to take leave of the Mahatma.

"How can you go away before seeing us off to prison?" he asked, as she touched his feet.

"All right, then I shall stay on for another couple of days," my mother replied.

"And then?" asked the Mahatma with a merry twinkle in his eyes. "After seeing us off to prison, will you go home? How can that be?"

Left speechless, my mother stayed on for three days, four days—nearly a week, when at midnight they came and took him away. Shortly afterwards she followed him to prison, "Swaraj Mandir", as it was called.

With my eldest brother and my mother in prison, I did not know where to go during my summer vacation as the hostel was to close. A friend of our family invited me to spend my vacation with his children. My mother had always been very particular as to where and how her children spent their holidays. But she had now begun to think in terms of the millions of children in India and forgot her own. The Mahatma had broadened her vision as he had done to so many others.

It was as a freshly graduated medico that I went with him in the late nineteen thirties to Sevagram. I had been a good student and thought much of my medical knowledge. Gandhiji began to ask me penetrating questions about health and nutrition and sanitation and prevention of disease. I had to put in a lot of home work not to appear ignorant and to be able to satisfy him. Shortly afterwards there was an outbreak of cholera in the village. He asked me to control it and gave me a few members of the Ashram as volunteers to help me. Starting from scratch, I had to improvise solutions for the problems facing me and make the best of available resources— human as well as material—to organize work in the village. Gandhiji told me that I was to "look upon the village as my hospital and every hut in it as a ward". With buckets of bleaching powder for disinfection of wells and excreta of patients, and with a band of untrained co-workers, I issued forth. My companions saw to the disinfection. I gave intravenous fluids to such patients as needed it. Diligence and the will to serve did the rest. We inoculated all those who had escaped the contagion and the epidemic was controlled. Thus I was launched into social and preventive medicine. Gandhiji helped me develop initiative and self-confidence. I had gone to stay with him for a few days. I stayed with him for nearly 10 years till he was taken away from us by the assassin's bullet.

In 1946 the Muslim League launched "Direct Action", so called, which resulted in the great Calcutta killings. It was met by a parallel fury from the other side.

Following it, an orgy of violence was let loose in the Muslim majority area of Noakhali. This in its turn had its repercussions in Bihar, where the Noakhali happenings were enacted in reverse on a bigger scale. Unless this chain reaction of reprisals and counter-reprisals was arrested, there was every danger of the dream of India winning independence being turned to ashes. To avert that calamity Gandhiji set out on a "barefooted pilgrimage" of the affected areas in Noakhali. What he saw there appalled him. There had been widespread arson, murder and rape, conversion under duress and forced marriages of young girls and married women on a mass scale. For miles all Hindu houses had been first looted and then burnt. The people were in a panic. Many had fled and a mass exodus was feared. This would have inevitably led to a series of flare-ups all over the country. To arrest the panic, put heart into the people and bring the wrongdoers to repentance so that the two communities might once again live together as brothers, Gandhiji posted each member of his party in a devastated village, pledged to lay down his or her life- non-violently before a hair on the head of the people under their charge was touched. Such of us as did not know Bengali were provided the help of an interpreter, but for the rest every worker had to rely only on individual courage rooted in a living faith in God. Only those were deemed qualified for the work who could satisfy him that they were not afraid to die and harboured no anger or ill-will against the perpetrators of even the worst brutalities. Gandhiji interviewed each one of us to make sure that we were fit for the assignment.

When my turn came, I told him frankly that I was afraid after what I had seen and heard, but I was trying to overcome my fear. Gandhiji had said that if a woman's honour was in danger and she committed suicide, he would consider it justifiable. I and the other girls had thought that he would provide us with the means of self-destruction to be used in a desperate situation if it became necessary. But he told us that he was going to do nothing of the sort; he expected us to have confidence in ourselves and faith in God to protect us. To his second question I replied that I was filled with anger when I saw what the Muslims had done, but I also realized that these poor persons were just tools. The real culprits were those who had launched Direct Action and incited them

to indulge in heinous deeds. I wondered whether I would pass the test. Gandhiji sat silent for a moment and then said that I could go to one of the outposts. He was satisfied that I was endeavouring to overcome fear as well as anger.

Each of us worked through the medium of service according to his or her special aptitude and skill. I was posted at Changirgaon, a small village a couple of miles away from Gandhiji's camp. On arriving there I found myself in the midst of the ruins of what must have been a prosperous village. Heaps of charred paddy lay all over the place. The houses had been burnt down. Charred corrugated iron sheets were being salvaged from the debris to construct temporary shelters. There was just one small room in a big house that had remained intact, and it was given to me to live in. A compounder who had been working as a village doctor came and offered his services to me. His small place had been spared. An armed band of hooligans had come to his dispensary. They started looting and smashing religious pictures. A glass splinter from one of the picture frames ran into the foot of the leader of the band causing profuse bleeding. The old practitioner thereupon, forgetting his own misfortune, took him to his half-ransacked dispensary and dressed his foot with all care. Taken aback by this unexpected return of good for evil, the chief of the hooligans ordered his men away and the house was saved from arson—the only house to escape in that locality.

With the help of this compounder I started my work of ministering to the sick and ailing of both the communities. The example of an unprotected Hindu girl living in the midst of Muslims put heart into the Hindus. Administration of medical relief brought me into intimate contact with the Muslims and in a measure won me their confidence. I had been posted at Changirgaon on November 23. Out of the total of 76 families in the village 19 families had never left. Of the remaining, by December 8, 1946, 22 families had returned. There was no further incident in Changirgaon during the rest of my stay there.

From Noakhali Gandhiji went to Bihar, where the victims of the communal frenzy had been Muslims, to bring to repentance the majority community there,

just as he had done in respect of the Muslims in Noakhali. From Bihar he was called to Delhi, by Lord Mountbatten—the new Viceroy-designate of India.

In the first week of August, 1947, Gandhiji came to Wah Camp in Rawalpindi District on his way back from Kashmir. There were over 15,000 Hindus and Sikhs in Wah Camp. They had been evacuated from the surrounding village following the outbreak of communal trouble and were feeling restless. Both the Congress and the Muslim League had accepted Lord Mountbatten's Partition plan. The refugees in Wah Camp were convinced they would not be safe in Pakistan which was to come into being on August 15. They wanted the Mahatma to stay with them till they were safely taken to India. Gandhiji could not stay there as he had promised the people in Noakhali that he would go back there, but he said he would leave me, who was as a daughter to him, with them as a hostage. I would lay down my life before a hair on their head was touched.

I stayed behind in Wah Camp fully convinced that it was wrong for the Hindus and Sikhs to flee from Pakistan. To influence the mind of the Muslims, so that they would guarantee the safety of the Hindus, I visited a few places from where the people had fled. In one village the Muslim landlord had given protection to the minority community. There had been "only three deaths", I was reassuringly told by the Muslims and "just a few Hindu houses had been burnt". The Hindus would be welcomed if they came back. I felt doubtful and did not know what to tell the people in Wah Camp in the circumstances. The Deputy Commissioner came and assured me that the refugees would be quite safe and soon rehabilitation would become possible. I decided to wait and watch.

Then the unexpected happened. East Panjab with a non-Muslim majority was reported to be avenging Rawalpindi and the whole of West Panjab had flared up to avenge the happenings in East Panjab. Several victims of communal fury from places round about us began to pour into the camp hospital. One of them was a young girl of about seventeen—the sole survivor of a group of 74 women, who had jumped into a well to save their honour. Her father Sardar Pratap Singh had come to join the camp earlier. He had a fracture of the leg as a

result of a bullet shot. He and his companions had offered armed resistance to the Muslim mobs who had attacked their village. Several of them, including the leader, were wounded, and some had died. The survivors were told to choose between conversion to Islam and instant death. They asked for reprieve till the next morning.

There was a cement factory next door to the Camp. It was said to be one of the biggest in the world. I went to visit it. At the end of the visit the factory doctor invited me to his house. He was a Bengali. There was a lovely two-year-old blonde girl playing in the house. The doctor explained to me that the child was their adopted daughter. She was a Panjabi. The mother had died in the hospital after childbirth and the father had not cared to claim the child. So the doctor and his wife had adopted her and they simply adored her. Suddenly the doctor's voice became husky: "For the last one week I have been constantly haunted by the fear that when I return home, I may not find her there. They will either kill or kidnap her." "You are unnecessarily anxious," I protested. "Surely no one will touch a child like this and moreover there are very good security measures in this factory." "Yes," replied the doctor. "But two days ago a Hindu was murdered while passing with his cement cart in front of my house. He was a factory hand. The assassin pushed the dagger into him from behind. The place was full of people. No one tried to stop him. The assailant escaped and is probably still there. How can anyone feel safe? Can't you help send away my wife and child to a place of safety?" There was a note of entreaty in his voice. I was deeply moved. The little girl was playing with the dog unconcerned. The thought that anyone could kill an innocent little child like her made me feel sick. I promised to make arrangements for sending away his wife and child to India as early as possible.

Two days later I went to inform the doctor that he could send away his wife and child on the following day, as all necessary arrangements had been made. His face lit up. His wife was a little uneasy at the thought of leaving her husband behind. The doctor turned round to me, "You should also go away with them. This place has become most unsafe." I thanked him for his kind thought

and explained to him that I could not go away. I had to be at my post of duty where Gandhiji had left me. He insisted that I must not expose myself to such great danger. I must go. "No, I cannot," I replied. "Please don't worry about me. So long as my time is not up, I shall be safe anywhere, and when my time is up, there will be safety for me nowhere." I came away. He came to see me after a few hours. Something in my words and manner must have touched him. He stood there with a new look in his face. "Thank you for the arrangements you have made for the evacuation of my wife and child," he said. "But I am not sending them away. If this place is safe enough for you, it is safe enough for them." There were tears in his eyes. My heart overflowed with gratitude to God and Bapu. I said to myself, "He has put the seed of a little faith and courage in the hearts of insignificant beings like us, which in its turn can inspire similar feelings in other breasts."

In the end the refugees in the Wah Camp had to be removed to India and I came back to Gandhiji. On his way to Noakhali he had stopped at Calcutta where serious trouble had flared up. Only a little while before ray arrival he had terminated his successful fast against the communal frenzy in the city. His achievement in Calcutta had led Lord Mountbatten to describe him publicly as the "one-man boundary force" that had done far more than 55,000 soldiers had been able to do in the Panjab.

From Calcutta we came back to Delhi to find it converted into a "City of the Dead". The Muslims had been evacuated to Purana Qila and Humayun's Tomb, where big refugee camps were set up. On September 13, 1947, Gandhiji visited the Muslim Refugees Camp at Purana Qila. Here about 75,000 Muslim refugees were waiting to be evacuated to Pakistan. The camp was honeycombed with Muslim Leaguers, who after making as much mischief as they could, had established themselves there as "leaders" and were engaging among other things in defrauding their brother-refugees by carrying on a surreptitious traffic in the rations that were being sent to feed them. In the result every day nearly ten thousand refugees were going short of rations. Some of the Muslim police, who

had deserted with their arms, were also said to be taking shelter in the camp which was as a result considered to be a most dangerous place.

As soon as Gandhiji's car entered the gate, crowds of refugees rushed out of their tents and tried to surround it. They were in a very ugly mood. Anti-Gandhi slogans were shouted. Someone from among the crowd tried violently to open the door of Gandhiji's car. One of the friends, who had taken Gandhiji to the camp, became panicky and asked the driver to take the car out of the camp by the nearest gate. The driver pressed the accelerator and the car shot forward. But Gandhiji ordered him to stop. He wanted to face the angry crowd. The moment the car stopped the refugees came running up and surrounded it. While I and his other two companions looked helplessly on, Gandhiji stepped out. The crowd closed in upon us. He asked them to assemble on the lawn. Some sat down. Those on the fringes kept standing, full of anger and gesticulating menacingly.

Anxious moments followed. Gandhiji's feeble voice could not carry far. Leaning upon the shoulders of one of his companions, he asked him to repeat his words at the top of his voice. At first the refugees were inclined to be rude. When he said there was one God for all—"to me there are no distinctions of Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Sikhs, they are all one to me"—there were shouts of angry protest. He entreated them to be calm and shed anger and fear. God was the ultimate refuge, not man, howsoever powerful he might be. God would set right what man had spoiled. For his part he had come to "do or die", he said.

There was nothing new in the words but they heard the passion in his voice and saw in the agonized resigned look on that worn face, how deeply he felt for and suffered with them and all those who suffered. Scowling ceased. Soon tears were trickling down the cheeks of some. They narrated to him the tale of their hardships and sufferings. He listened to them with deep sympathy and promised to do all he could for them. Those who were thirsting for his blood a few moments before, were now his friends. They respectfully escorted him to his car and stood there in silence as it passed out of the camp with him seated in a

back seat, his hands folded to bid them goodbye and furrows of deep pain on his face.

The refugees had told him of the lack of medical facilities in the Camp. Gandhiji asked me to go there from the next day. Many discouraged me and advised him not to send me to Purana Qila and, if he must, it should be under adequate police protection. "That would be just the way to get her killed," replied Bapu. I went there alone and was welcomed. Among the refugees I found one or two old college friends of mine. They joined me in my work. Later I also worked among Hindu refugees. What impressed me most was that those who had suffered themselves were generally not for revenge, while those who had only heard stories of the sufferings of their co-religionists were most violent and called for an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

It was not the risk of violence so much as that of untruth that distressed Gandhiji most. The Hindu leaders in Delhi sought to water down the reports of the Hindus' misdoings, while Muslim leaders put forth highly exaggerated and coloured versions of the same. How was he to get at the truth? And how could there be reconciliation when there was so much falsehood in the air? On January 13, 1948, consequently, he started his last fast to purify himself and to purify the atmosphere around him. On the first day angry crowds of refugees from West Pakistan came in a procession shouting "*Gandhi ko marne do. Hamen rahne ko ghar do.*" "Let old Gandhi die. Give us houses to live in." January is bitterly cold in Delhi and those without shelter were outraged that Gandhiji should object to their occupying vacant Muslim evacuee houses, mosques and the like. But Gandhiji was convinced that, if this was allowed, the process of squeeze would never end. He had been on semi-starvation diet for months. His condition deteriorated on the third day of the fast. Acetone appeared in the urine and he was very weak. I asked him if he would allow some orange juice to be added to his water, as he had done in the later stages of his fast in the Aga Khan Palace in 1943. He said no. That was a fast to capacity, this was a fast to the finish, unless the madness ceased. It was a test of his faith. If his faith in God was perfect, acetone would disappear from his urine. I tried to argue with

him and rolled out a dissertation on the chemistry and physiology involved in the production of the acetone bodies in a fasting man's system. How could faith alter the process of burning of tissue fat during a fast, etc.? He listened to me patiently and then, with a look of infinite sadness and compassion, said to me, "Does your science know everything?" He paused. I was silent. He resumed, "Have you forgotten the words of the Lord in the *Bhagavad Gita*, where He speaks about permeating and sustaining the entire Universe by just a small fraction of His being—*ekamsena sthito jagat?*"

The effort to speak had exhausted him. He lay back. I was plunged in deep thought. But soon my reverie was broken by crowds of refugees who had come to have his *darshan*. There were tears rolling down their cheeks. They begged of him to give up the fast. They would abide by his decision in all matters, they said. On the following day, the fifth day of the fast, the fast was broken after pledges were signed by both Hindus and Muslims and all the conditions laid down by Gandhiji were endorsed by the representatives of all sections.

A few days later a Hindu fanatic, Madanlal, exploded a bomb at Gandhiji's prayer meeting. There was a commotion. He chided the audience, "Why are you afraid? What can be better than to die in the act of prayer?" But he had no right to preach to them, he added. How did he know if he could meet the assassin's bullets unafraid with God's name on his lips and no hatred in his heart? The test came on January 30. It was almost as if he had rehearsed his role in the earlier prayer meeting when the bomb was exploded. It shook India. It shook Pakistan. It shook the whole world. A Muslim League leader, Mian Iftikharuddin, said to me with tears in his eyes as we both arrived at Palam airport from Lahore, "Bapu's assassin is not merely the man who pulled the trigger. All of us who doubted his word and did not follow his advice, are guilty/' And these are words for all of us to remember and take to heart in the context of the Gandhi Centenary when flames of violence are again flaring up everywhere in the name of religion, regionalism and caste, and love of the petty self threatens to undermine the values for which the Father of the Nation lived and died.

1. The following is from my diary in which I recorded what I had heard firsthand in Wah Camp:

"Next morning their captors were ready with their scissors to cut off their hair and to shave their beards as a symbol of their conversion to Islam. Some among the mob were loudly discussing among themselves in a vulgar manner as to who was going to have a particular woman to himself. The women heard this. They were ordered to come out to be converted. An elderly lady speaking for the rest answered that they wanted permission to say their prayers for the last time before they surrendered and drink the water from the *gurudwara* well which had recently been constructed. The request was granted. They were given a few minutes. Seventy-four women and girls thereupon entered the compound in which the well was located. They had their ceremonial bath and then began reciting their prayers. Their Muslim captors impatiently shouted to them to hurry up. The leader of the women, shouted back, 'Come if you dare. You will never touch us alive.' And with that she jumped into the well followed by the rest of the seventy-four. This act of heroic self-sacrifice so touched the gangsters that they stood rooted to the spot, and with bowed heads departed one after another, leaving untouched the men and the children whom they had assembled for conversion. The Sikhs then entered the compound and brought out the bodies of the women who had jumped into the well. All except Sardar Pratap Singh's daughter were dead. That night they were attacked by another Muslim mob but a military patrol came to their rescue and escorted them to Wah Camp."

When I narrated this story to Gandhiji later, his eyes were wet. "Non-violent courage never fails," he said; "and when the odds are too heavy for man, God comes to our succour in a way least expected."

**L.B. PEARSON**

### **GANDHI FOR OUR TIME**

When Gandhi was assassinated and his violent death, so incongruous for a man so profoundly peaceful, stunned India and the world, Prime Minister Nehru said to the nation:

The light has gone out, I said, and yet I was wrong. For the light that shone in this country was no ordinary light. The light that has illumined this country for these many years will illumine this country for many more years, and a thousand years later that light will still be seen in this country, and the world will see it and it will give solace to innumerable hearts.

Here is the core of the message of Gandhi to all men, the essence of his being—that a light shone forth, first to his countrymen and then to all the world, which transcended and which transcends today all ideology, all passing fashion. This light is the light of man the peacemaker, the man of goodwill to all other living beings, caring and kind, the man who lifts the eyes of nations to their best selves and, through the incandescence of his spirit, helps to light the way down a frail path to a possibility shining beyond.

These things are achievable in this world by mortal beings. We do not have to think that we must wait for a better world than this. There is a small company of men who, from ancient days, have shown the way to move nations and mankind by their very being and by the lightness of their actions. Lincoln, like Gandhi, transformed a nation and remains a lasting spirit to shame those who would ignore his ideals. Lincoln, like Gandhi, moved a world, and the world remains illuminated by his thoughts and his being. We speak of the Gandhian Ideal as one might speak of Periclean Athens—the man's name illumines the idea or the era.

Both Lincoln and Gandhi conceived of their peoples as of the city upon a hill, towards which eyes could turn and wherein could reside a repository of

conscience for all mankind. The people, in turn, conceived of them as the living symbols of the possible. Einstein said of Gandhi when he died:

In our time... he was the only statesman to stand for a higher human relationship in the political sphere.

Thus, Mahatma Gandhi lived his life not only at a crucial time for India, but for all the world. It could be truly said that Gandhi was, by the power of the idea, one of the forefathers of the United Nations and of other hopes for sanity, serenity and peaceful order in even such a complex world as ours. At the United Nations, when Gandhi died, Philip Noel-Baker praised him as "the friend of the poorest and the loneliest and the lost" and remarked that "Gandhi's greatest achievements are still to come".

Surely the ultimate meaning of the United Nations as a hope for all men is the meaning of Gandhi's life. The thread of hope, for him, was never broken, because he believed not only in his ideals of truth, kindness, self-effacement, humility, service and non-violence, he also believed deeply in his fellow men and in their possibilities for greatness. And for this belief he was willing, in his own way, to fight. He said:

I am a born fighter who does not know failure ... for humanity is an ocean. If a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.

It is always important and necessary to recall that Gandhi was a man of action as well as of high ideals. In him, these two elements met and were transmuted into a powerful idea in tandem with a force. And through the positive application of his ideals he achieved inner peace: Thus he was a direct precursor of the idea of the United Nations, which could not hope to sustain itself, beleaguered as it often is, without the overriding power of an idea. If Gandhi had not lived, the United Nations would be the poorer. "I will not like to live in this world," said Gandhi, "if it is not to be one." He showed us all the way in which we can work towards this goal. As he terminated his last great fast, aimed at putting an end to communal violence—and this was just before his

assassination –he asked that this Hindu verse be read aloud, which could well be his message to all mankind:

Lead me from untruth to truth  
From darkness into light.

**FATHER DOMINIQUE PIRE**

### **GANDHI IN THE YEAR 2000**

In my tiny office, I have a portrait of Gandhi. He is seen bending humbly and efficiently over a leper to help him to look after his sores. The Gandhi I see there is a man I understand. I feel close to him. When, after the second World War, there were refugees all round, I did my best—with very limited means—to help these people efficiently to take root again (refugee—uprooted).

In 1960 and again in 1966, I went to bow in respect at Gandhi's mausoleum in New Delhi. In this same town, I also visited, in 1966, a rather poor Gandhi Museum, which I found displeasing. When it was realized to what an extent a splendid Nehru Museum, set up less than two years after his death, is for us a living reminder of the political successor of Gandhi, it was then no doubt too late to make the Gandhi Museum a finer memorial.<sup>1</sup>

Gandhi's death—as I have said in public<sup>2</sup>—is something which strikes me more strongly than his life. He was killed, not by the "neighbour on the opposite side", or an enemy, or a "foreigner"; but by a friend, a brother, one of the same religion as he. My mother taught me—from the time when I was very young indeed—to feel the same respect towards any conscience which differed from my own. I am in hearty agreement with Tagore when he wrote:

The world-wide position today is not how to unite by wiping out all differences, but how to unite with all differences intact. . . . When natural differences find their harmony, then is true unity.

In all my acts, in all my foundations, including what I am doing in India for the moment,<sup>3</sup> I strive to have no thought, no ulterior motive, nor even any appearance of an ulterior motive of a utilitarian nature, whether national, political or religious. At the same time, it is true, I endeavour also to have respect for my conscience and the behests of my conscience (without projecting these on others). This way of living is dangerous. Gandhi's death is a proof of this. On this point I feel my closeness to him. But the reader should not see any comparison with myself in this. Gandhi was an exceptional man; I am only a simple worker for peace, a worker to whom a mandate for peace was given, and which he accepted not as a recompense but so as to try to become "the voice of men who have no voice".

Up to this point it has been easy for me to write what I have just written. But suddenly I feel incapable and worried. What value will non-violence, and Gandhi's success in decolonizing his country and turning out the English colonialist, have in the year 2000, what is it worth in Vietnam, in South Africa,<sup>4</sup> in the fact of racial segregation in the United States<sup>5</sup> and even in Kenya? I have no reply to this. Certain friends who are set on non-violence reproach me, saying I do not know non-violence well enough, and assure me that non-violence will disarm violence. Personally, I am not sure of this for all cases. And even if violence is an evil, situations are sometimes so unjust, and affect human beings who are so weak in the face of others who are so strong, that I am in doubt. Even to the point of wondering whether the disciples of Gandhi themselves are not in doubt. For this, one needs to know intimately someone like Pastor Martin Luther King, and this is not my case: one needs to live with him, understand him, and be understood by him without any prejudices. Yes, the advocate of non-violence who is faced with the breaking-out of violence, wishes to become more non-violent, more a follower of Gandhi. This is the logical position for him. But is there really no difference between the decolonizing of India and the war in Vietnam? I have always thought—and I continue to think, while being always ready to declare that I am wrong—that the success of Gandhi's non-violence depended on the sporting instinct of the English and also on their cold realism, feeling that the moment for political de-

colonization had arrived, which no doubt favoured the maintenance and perhaps the growth of economic colonization.

As I write these lines I look at the portrait of Gandhi, just on the left-hand side of the little desk at which I am sitting. I ask him to forgive me for the poverty of these lines. I ask his forgiveness for having raised even a suspicion as to the necessity for violence, in certain well-defined cases and under the strictest conditions. I believe, together with my old friend Albert Schweitzer, that the best guarantee for peace will be the formation of an enlightened and active public opinion. I believe in the pacifically explosive nature of a capable gesture of goodness: Gandhi tending a leper. And I await to be enlightened by those who are wiser as to what Gandhi would do, today, for Vietnam. That indeed would be a beacon, that would be an example to be imitated. But Gandhi died after seeing his country torn into three parts, and after knowing that "partition" had cost the lives of two million of his fellow- countrymen and had displaced a further seventeen million of them.

1. For myself there remains the example of a Gandhi who is pure, good, simple, who day after day gave himself to the poor. And his centenary will be celebrated by me by the organization of conscientious work, day by day, in the Mahatma Gandhi Island of Peace at Kalakkad. May I hope that the spiritual heirs of my friend Albert Schweitzer will give thought to this while there is time still, since, two years after the death of the Great Doctor, his archives are still not even classified, and his house at Gunsbach is hardly open to a few visitors.
2. At the laying of the foundation-stone of a University of Peace which I founded in Belgium, in 1960, and which bears the name of Mahatma Gandhi.
3. The setting-up of a second Island of Peace (an Island of Peace is a short- term programme for the promotion of a rural district in a developing country). The work of the first Island of Peace was developed during a period of five years in East Pakistan, and was terminated in May 1967. The work of the second Island of Peace beginning in 1968 at Kalakkad (District of Tirunelveli, Madras State) and is planned for a maximum period of seven years.
4. The South African ambassador in Brussels, to whom I returned a review which praised the beauties of his country, wrote to me the following, in a letter dated 27th February 1968: "You may be assured that I have acceded immediately to your desire

to no longer receive *The South African Panorama*. Your conscience might indeed be troubled at the sight of two happy nations, black and white, living in harmony, and it might say to you that your rejection of apartheid is tantamount to the arbitrary condemnation of our white population to the loss of its independence, and our black populations to that of their well-being and their prosperity"—while apartheid is tightening its vice-like grip round the coloured population.

5. Governor Wallace declared most earnestly: "A racist is someone who does not love his neighbour. He disdains God's handiwork. But the partisan of segregation, on the contrary, loves other men, but he knows that in making some men white and others black, God separated us from the outset." See the French review *l'Express*, 26 February 1968, p. 19.

**PYARELAL**

## **INDIA AFTER BAPU**

“So long as my faith burns bright, as I hope it will even if I stand alone, I shall be alive in the grave and, what is more, speaking from it.” –Gandhiji

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The forthcoming Birth Centenary of Gandhiji would be a fitting occasion for us to ask ourselves whether we have made the best use of the legacy that the Father of the Nation left us, and whether it could not even now be used to provide an answer to the numerous problems facing us.

Gandhiji was a man of the people who refused to have for himself what could not be shared with the masses or used in their service. He had no use even for individual salvation, if it stood in the way of his serving others. -He, therefore, had no use for independence which was not won through nonviolence, because it is only under non-violence that the weakest can take an equal share in the struggle for independence with the physically strongest, and consequently claim an equal share with the rest in the fruits of independence. He wanted a self-reliant India in which the common man would feel master of his destiny, which he could shape as he liked without any let or hindrance, an India in which everybody would have enough for his basic needs, in which there would be no insuperable gulf between rich and poor and in which the rulers would be the servants of the people, and not their masters claiming exclusive privileges for themselves. To realize this dream he forged the weapon of satyagraha and non-violent organization of the masses through constructive work. He gave it the name "Constructive Non-violence".

He never wearied of telling us that the same means which enabled us to win independence would be needed to sustain it and to realize its fruits. If after attaining our goal we forsook the path that had brought us to it, our last state would be worse than the first.

II

In 1945 Gandhiji invited Pandit Nehru to meet him in order to thrash out with him the differences in their respective viewpoints on several issues concerning the future of the country. These differences had been of long standing. Gandhiji had so far not bothered himself about them as hitherto for all practical purposes they had largely been of academic interest. On the attainment of independence they were likely to become vital. Gandhiji, therefore, felt that having named Pandit Nehru as his "heir", he must understand his "heir" and his "heir" should understand him. After their first meeting, summing up his position he wrote:

I am convinced that if India is to attain freedom and through India the world too, then sooner or later the fact must be recognized that people will have to live in villages, not in towns, in huts, not in palaces... I hold that without truth and non-violence there can be nothing but destruction for humanity. We can realize truth and non-violence only in the simplicity of village life and this simplicity can be found in the charkha and all that the charkha connotes.

Anticipating Pandit Nehru's objection he proceeded:

I must not fear if the world today is going the wrong way. It may be that India too will go that way and, like the proverbial moth, bum itself eventually in the flame round which it dances more and more fiercely. But it is my bounden duty up to my last breath to try to protect India and through India the entire world from such a doom.

I must skip over the ensuing unfinished controversy. Before it could proceed far the tide of history overtook us and cut short further argument. The upheavals and cataclysms preceding and following independence left us hardly any time to make a complete break with the past and start building anew from below, as Gandhiji would have wished. All that could be done by a supreme effort was to keep our heads above the onrushing tide of chaos that threatened to engulf us. The administration consequently was left to follow in the same old rut, manned as it was by a personnel trained by the British for the perpetuation of their

power. This was the price that India had to pay for continuity of administration. It ensured smooth transition from foreign rule and the country was spared the inconveniences of temporary dislocation, perhaps a spell of chaos, during the interregnum but it prolonged the agony of the old system of rule.

The Union Government, after the long history of repression and frustration under the British rule, developed early a weakness for State planning. This kind of planning has an irresistible fascination for the town-bred intellectual. It enabled privilege to be equated with patriotism and progress with the satisfaction of urban values and the sophisticated way of life in which they had grown up and which in consequence had grown upon them. In brief, it meant political and social domination of country by town, of village by city, and power and much coveted perquisites for the elite who constituted our ruling class.

Indian national leaders had in the past denounced the evil of paternalistic rule under the *ma-bap* British Government. It had killed the people's initiative and deepened their inertia and habit of dependence on an outside authority for the amelioration of their condition. But when our leaders themselves became the Government, they assumed under the fashionable label of "Welfare State" the very role which they had previously denounced. They were convinced that whatever might have been the case under foreign rule, with them in power everything would turn out well. Any suggestion to the contrary was resented as an aspersion on their past record of patriotism and service. Gandhiji noticed the trend and felt uneasy.

Gandhiji also had a philosophy of planning. But it was planning from below by the people of their own lives in the way they thought best; not execution of blue-prints of what others thought best for them. Under it, not the cities but the villages held the key position.

This kind of planning calls for a different approach, outlook and preparation on the part of the leaders. It does not make for power, as that term is commonly understood, but it can remove hunger, ignorance, and want from the land in the quickest time and ensure individual freedom, health and abundance for all. It requires the leaders and the servants of the nation to step down to the level

of the masses and think and plan in terms of the latter's every-day experience. First things have to come first. Ambitious vistas of national glory and power must wait. The prospect did not appeal to our leaders and the town-bred elite from whose ranks the bulk of our administrative services was drawn.

While the fight against the British was on, our leaders were interested in developing the non-violent sanction. On coming to power they lost interest in it. They had now the machinery of the State at their command which is more handy. The nonviolent power of the masses can prove a double-edged weapon if the rulers are not careful as to the path they choose to tread. Our national leaders after they became the Government fought shy of it. They lost interest in constructive work as conceived by Gandhiji, except in so far as it had a mass appeal or value at the hustings. The people smelt the change and became restive.

Complained one embittered correspondent to Gandhiji:

India has reached the present state on the strength of your ideals and practice based on them. But is it not clear that we are kicking the very ladder by which we have mounted so high? Where are Hindu-Muslim unity, Hindustani, khadi, village industries? Is not any talk about them hypocrisy?

Had not the Congress leaders virtually buried Gandhiji alive? he asked.

Writing under the caption "Is He Buried Alive"? Gandhiji replied:

I cling to the hope that I am not yet buried alive. The hope rests on the belief that the masses have not lost faith in them (his ideals). When it is proved that they have, they will be lost and *i* can then be said to have been buried alive. *But so long as my faith burns bright, as I hope it will even if I stand alone, I shall be alive in the grave and what is more, speaking from it.* (Italics mine).

Gandhiji went on to warn:

The public is showing a critical tendency... There must be some good reason for their doing so, and this change in their attitude should not be

ignored ... If the situation does not show signs of improvement and is allowed to deteriorate from day to day as it is doing, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to avoid the storm that may come.

His warning went unheeded. The masses continued to suffer and their sufferings grew. Giving expression to the feeling of deep frustration in the people's mind, on 26th January 1948, the first Independence Day celebration after independence and the last to be witnessed by him, Gandhiji observed:

What are we celebrating today? Surely not our disillusionment. We are entitled to celebrate the hope that the worst is over and that we are on the road to showing the lowliest villager that it means his freedom from serfdom and that he is no longer a serf born to serve the cities and towns of India but that he is destined to exploit the city-dwellers for the advertisement of the finished fruits of well-thought out labours, that he is the salt of the Indian earth, that it means also equality of all classes and creeds, never the domination and superiority of the major community over a minor, however insignificant it may be in numbers or influence. Let us not defer the hope and make the heart sick.

### III

Shortly before his death, my sister Sushila (Dr. Sushila Nayyar) one day asked Gandhiji, "Bapu, you have always said that you are essentially a social reformer; now that India is free, will you concentrate on social reform?" Gandhiji replied that the freedom of his conception had not yet come. Outlining the tasks which he had set himself and which he wished to take up at the first opportunity, he gave the first place to purification of politics. "If I survive the flames (meaning the communal conflagration)," he said, "my first job would be to reform politics."

There had been a marked fall in standards, erosion of loyalties, scramble for power and an unseemly hurry on the part of Congressmen to cash in upon their past sacrifices. If they thought, Gandhiji warned, that the British having quit, they could now take things easy and rest on their oars, they were greatly mistaken. To sustain freedom and realize its content would need as much hard

work, spirit of dedication and self-sacrifice on their part as the winning of it. Congress and Congressmen must, therefore, lay a self-denying ordinance upon themselves, renounce power and its perquisites and devote themselves to building up the non-violent power of the masses, in order to purify politics and turn it into an instrument of service, rather than of domination and self-aggrandizement for some. To this end he prepared an outline of a plan ("His Last Will and Testament")—which was published in *Harijan* after his death and will be found reproduced in facsimile in my *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*. This plan was quickly put upon the shelf.

The other two tasks were organization of the youth and mobilization of the masses. Gandhiji had been deeply worried over the growing indiscipline among the youth, particularly the students, and restlessness among the people, born of a feeling of frustration and disillusionment. Frustration arose from the increasing tendency to officialize nation-building activities in pursuance of the goal of the Welfare State and adoption of a pattern of development in which the common man had little say and which was largely beyond his comprehension. The disillusionment stemmed from the glaring divergence between the ideals that their leaders had professed and in the name of which they had called upon the people to make sacrifices, and their present practice.

If God gave him the chance, said, Gandhiji he would once again call out the students to take their due share in the task of nation-building as he had done at the beginning of the non-cooperation movement, organize them and provide them suitable outlets for their idealism and creative energy so that it could find fulfilment in the service of the common man. Finally, he would undertake an all-India tour to awaken the masses to the grand opportunity that had opened out before them to take their destiny in their own hands and mould it according to their wish. He would exhort them to call upon their leaders to implement their pledges given while they were engaged in the freedom struggle. These related to the universalization of khadi and revival of village industries, Prohibition, eradication of untouchability root and branch from their hearts,

and equality of opportunity for the lowliest with the tallest in the land for the realization of the highest in life.

For this both politics and planning needed to be democratized, and so redesigned, he said, as to enable the people to provide themselves in the immediate present with what they had so long been denied.

#### IV

Two decades after attainment of independence during which nearly four thousand five hundred crores of rupees by way of foreign aid have flowed into our country, these tasks outlined by Gandhiji are yet unaccomplished. We are today faced with the spectre of a rising cost of living, an increasing tax burden, foreign exchange difficulties and food deficits on an unprecedented scale. During the fourth plan period, we are told, more than one-third of our borrowings shall have to be written off against interest charges and repayment liability against foreign loans. It would be fatal to let ourselves be misled by the honeyed compliments that are sometimes paid to us by outsiders or by what our pundits may say. The increasing difficulty in obtaining foreign aid on our terms, if nothing else, should induce a reappraisal of our position and a search for a corrective to this line of approach.

The greatest problem that faces us today, we are told, is our huge "manpower reserve". Our numbers are more a liability than an asset and the only hope of rescuing them from dirt and filth and converting them into a clean, decent society is to prevent their further growth, no matter at what cost.

Behind the thinking that regards our reserve of manpower more as a mass of hungry mouths to be fed than pairs of useful hands to be set to work, is our profound disbelief in the potential of our people or in their being able to do anything themselves. It is the contempt of the urbanized intellectual towards the man at the end of the column that makes him regard the latter as an encumbrance to be removed in the interest of the good of the greatest number. This conclusion, in our present circumstances, will perhaps be inescapable if the principle of the greatest good of the greatest number is to prevail. A different prospect, however, unfolds if we proceed on the principle,

enunciated by Gandhiji, that in the good of the least is contained the good of all. We shall then regard the man at the end of the column not as a liability to be eliminated in the interest of progress but the foundation on which the whole edifice of our social well-being is to rest. We shall then adjust the pace of progress to the capacity of the common man, so as to take him along. We shall not allow machines to replace man and animal-power, but only to supplement it in order to enable us to realize the full potential not only of our human but cattle population also. In our choice of the techniques of production we shall see to it that they are commensurate with the means and the degree of skill and intelligence of our millions whose good they are to subserve. Equipped with these our people can be helped to provide themselves with most of their basic needs, and in the process educate themselves also.

There can be no two opinions as to the necessity for population control. But whatever be the method of our choice it stands to reason that the system of economy that we adopt should be such as would enable us to maintain the maximum population on available land. Large-scale mechanized monoculture with the help of artificial fertilizers brings down *paper* costs, makes procurement easy and enables it to be increased to capacity. Under it the yield per worker employed on the land goes up. But the maximum yield per unit area is often higher under small-scale farming than under other systems and higher by far when measured in terms of the primary well-being of the common man—the health and vitality it confers on the workers engaged in it and the population it serves. The argument that small holdings of land in the hands of individual owners will mean less production has been called a "myth" in the *Ambassador's Report* by Mr. Chester Bowles.

According to a generally accepted computation, 2.5 acres of land are required to provide a minimum adequate diet for each person, by Western standards anyhow. On a vegetarian diet it has been estimated that 1.5 acres per head may provide enough. The reason for this difference is that animals grazed for slaughter require about seven times more land than is necessary to raise an

equivalent amount of nutrition in the form of grains, vegetables and fruit for human consumption.

Given a proper land system, said Gandhiji, conservative subsistence farming could enable us to maintain out of our own resources all our population even with the present rate of increase for a good long time to come, provided that we were prepared to forgo for the time being some of the trimmings of "progress" and to put first things first.

Nowhere is farming a self-sufficient occupation. Ancillary to subsistence farming, based on cattle and human economy, is the system of handicrafts and supplementary cottage industries. The bulk of the farm produce should, Gandhiji held, be processed or manufactured into goods for local consumption on the farm itself. Scientists tell us that if a method could be discovered of economical extraction of the infinitesimal percentage of gold that is present in sea water, the precious metal thus recovered would exceed many times the entire supply from all the gold mines in the world. Similarly, said Gandhiji, there are unutilized natural resources in our villages, lying at the very door-steps of the people who need them, not enough for commercial exploitation but sufficient for their basic needs. The same applies to the bits of time and labour of millions of hands. They are not commercially exploitable but are more than enough for the satisfaction of their individual needs. Proper utilization of these tiny bits can provide our needy masses in the immediate present what no central planning helped even by foreign aid on a colossal scale can.

To illustrate, take our needs in fabric and footwear. Addressing the Supreme Soviet in 1957, Soviet Prime Minister Khrushchev admitted, after four decades of sustained central planning, that it would be another five or seven years before Russian industry would be able fully to satisfy ... the footwear or fabric requirements of the country. As against it, experience shows that there is no part of India where every man, woman and child cannot provide himself with these from locally available resources and with the help of indigenous tools

that cost next to nothing, within a period of six months to one year with proper training and organization.

Stupendous as the foreign aid that we receive is, it works out to less than two pence a week, per head of the Indian population. But even a child spinning on a *takli* of his own construction can earn as much per day. Multiply it even with a fraction of four hundred million and see what it adds up to.

Or take another illustration. In 1964-65, we exported bone of dead cattle to the tune of Rs. 3 crores which meant so much loss of phosphorus and calcium to our already exhausted soil. At the same time we imported 50 crores rupees worth of chemical fertilizers. Under the fourth Five-Year Plan it is proposed to invest a little over Rs. 501 crores in fertilizer factories—and this at a time when our foreign exchange position is so tight. But the total manurial value of the wastes from India's human population works out to about 230 crores of rupees and that from cattle population to 983.5 crores of rupees at the rate of Rs. 1,000 per ton of manure. If all the nitrogenous wastes from our human and cattle population were properly utilized by composting, it would not only means a net saving of Rs. 50 crores in foreign exchange and over Rs. 500 crores of rupees in capital investment, it would add nearly Rs. 1,213 crores to our national income every year. At the same time it would ensure better sanitation and better health and increased vitality of the people as a result of improved nutrition and absence of disease. One of the last acts of Gandhiji was to get an All-India Compost Conference held in Delhi. As a result of its deliberations a Compost Wing was set up under the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. It is never heard of, if it at all exists.

But just as recovery of minute quantities of precious material from industrial wastes calls for special processes, the utilization of infinitesimals in natural resources, and in the time, labour, intelligence and skills of millions of men, women and children, scattered over the length and breadth of our subcontinent, also calls for a special technique. I cannot do better than describe it and its working in Gandhiji's own words.

The golden rule is resolutely to refuse to have what millions cannot. We should be ashamed of resting or having a square meal so long as there is one able-bodied man or woman without work or food.

The only way is to sit down in their midst and work away in steadfast faith, as their scavengers, their nurses, their servants, not as their patrons, and to forget...the 'haves'...

We must identify ourselves with the villagers who toil under the hot sun beating on their bent backs and see how we would like to drink water from the pool in which the villagers bathe, and wash their clothes and pots, and in which their cattle drink and roll. *Then and not till then shall we truly represent the masses; and they will, as surely as I am writing this, respond to every call.*

Gandhiji was a practical idealist. He never put upon anyone a burden beyond his capacity to bear. He did not expect that those who were in charge of our economic policies would adopt straightaway all the precepts that he had laid down for the realization of a Sarvodaya order. But he did expect them to encourage, cooperate with and even initiate popular effort to realize the goal of regional self-sufficiency on a self-help basis in which everybody would have enough for his basic needs in the immediate present. To that end he made certain recommendations which are as valid today as they were then. These were:

Government should (a) provide suitable incentives to village crafts in the form of subsidies or remission of taxes in part or whole and institute prizes and other forms of recognition, where greatest progress is achieved in this direction, (b) *Give local option* to such units or regions as may wish in pursuit of the goal of self-sufficiency to protect themselves from the competition of heavy industry, *to ban the erection of power-driven machinery in their midst and the import of mass-produced machine-made goods*; and (c) Help them protect themselves from the vagaries of a fluctuating money economy by exempting them from the operation of intensive procurement drives and *make it possible*

for them *to meet a portion of their dues by payment in kind, which they should be able to retain in the area under experiment in order to carry out works and projects for their uplift* without depending upon financial aid from outside.

## V

Apart from the uncertainty of India being able to sell manufactured goods in foreign markets in the face of growing competition, the food supplies from .....producing countries available for export are fast decreasing, owing to the continuous natural increase in the world's population. To adopt the expedient of rapid industrialization for reducing the pressure on the land and for increasing the people's standard of living would in the circumstances be a hazardous gamble, to say the least. Let us by all means plan building a staircase to Sirius if we wish, provided that we take along with us the last man in the column. To strengthen the foundations of democracy must be our first concern. Without it the imposing pile of national prosperity, so-called, that we are trying to erect, is likely to prove a dangerous trap, and may tumble down any time, crushing to death all beneath it. There are warning signals galore already to put us on our guard.

Calling out the military every now and then, when there is a breakdown of the machinery of civil administration, is an alarming portent. While one should always hope for the best, there is a danger that, if this continues while elementary problems affecting the millions remain unsolved, a day may come when a dictatorship—whether of the right or of the left—may begin to appear to the long-suffering masses as the lesser evil. We can ignore the peril only at our cost.

It is the acid test of democracy that the people should look upon the police as their friends, who can be approached for help in a difficulty and to whom all citizens tender their willing cooperation. But the average citizen in India is today scared stiff of the police. And the police is on the whole inclined to regard any intrusion by a private individual or a voluntary organization into the field of law and order as interference or unwelcome poaching on its preserves.

Lacking public cooperation, our police has tended to rely more and more on the use of force. It has been shown statistically that there has been more firing by our police since independence than at any time in normal conditions under British rule. The Indian police puts far more reliance on arms than its counterpart in England, and resents any suggestion to the contrary, whereas in England it is the reverse.

Socialism is a beautiful word, but it can prove to be a fatal siren song. The British rulers did not hesitate to describe themselves as "Socialists", pointing to the gigantic railway and irrigation systems they had created and their land tax measures as instances of "Socialism" in practice. We know what that meant. After two decades of experiments in a socialist pattern of society, out of the total corporate investment of Rs. 5,500 crores, about a half, we are told, is commanded by 75 and about a third by another dozen monopolists. The average daily income per head of the lowest decile of the population, comprising nearly 45 millions is stated to be between 20 and 35 paise. One hears a gibe about "distribution of poverty" when an equitable sharing of the existing means is proposed. One cannot conceive of a cheaper or a more heartless gibe than this about "distribution of poverty" when millions have nothing except their poverty to share with us. A "Socialist pattern of society", as Badshah Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, popularly known as the "Frontier Gandhi", has told us, becomes a farce if it is not reflected in the personal example set by the leaders of society, and in the purity of the administration. To establish a Socialist order, Gandhiji said, we may not look on things

philosophically and say that we need not make a move until all are converted to Socialism. Without changing our life we may go on giving addresses, forming parties and hawk-like seize the game when it comes our way. This is no Socialism ... Socialism begins with the first convert. If there is one such, you can add zeros to the one and the first zero will account for ten and every addition will account for ten times the previous number. If, however, the beginner is a zero, in other words, no

one makes the beginning, multiplicity of zeros will also produce zero value.

Privilege abolished by legislation has the knack of entering in by the back door under a variety of faces. Therefore, Gandhiji said that not coercion, not even legislation, but love alone, embodied in voluntary sharing, could usher in true Socialism.

The prince and the peasant will not be equalled by cutting off the prince's head. Not by confiscation, or by expropriation or by cramping of superior talent can the wealth and happiness of all be increased but by those who have more of the world's goods and superior talents using their advantage not for self but for the good of society as a whole.

He gave this doctrine the name "Trusteeship".

I cannot do more than touch on this subject in passing here. But a few essential features may be underlined, (a) Gandhiji's Trusteeship gives no quarter to capitalism; it only gives to the present owning class a chance of reforming itself, (b) It stipulates voluntary repudiation of the right of ownership *in toto*, except in so far as it helps to promote the well-being of society as a whole, (c) It is based on the faith that human nature is never beyond redemption but it does not leave the transformation of the owning class entirely to the sweet will of the owners. It rests on the presumption that if the owners fail to play the game they will have to reckon with satyagraha or non-violent organization of the people, who have learnt to claim and fight for rights accruing from duties performed. (d) It does not aim at achieving dead uniformity by a mechanical removal of inequalities. It turns natural, inevitable and recurring inequalities into a means for the uplift of society instead of exploitation of the weak by the strong, (e) It is inapplicable to enterprises that are unethical or otherwise harmful to society, e.g., breweries and distilleries, factories for the manufacture of narcotics and other intoxicants, armament factories, low and degrading kinds of recreation and entertainment, trades involving cruelty to men and animals, or such enterprises as are calculated to take the bread out of the mouths of the toilers on a large scale by driving them into enforced

unemployment, (f) It alone provides an antidote to "residuary" ownership and recurring inequalities, arising out of what the late Professor Haldane called "the natural inequality of man", and an escape from the dilemma of making people unfree when we try to make them equal, and unequal when we make them free.

Confronted with a current cliché that Socialism could succeed only in a society of angels and when such a society arrives, there would be no need left for Socialism, William Morris replied:

I do not believe in the world being saved by any system.

I only assert the necessity of attacking systems grown corrupt.

William Morris had not worked out how this could be done without resorting to methods that are self-defeating. Ganclhiji takes up the problem at this point and provides the answer:

The answer lies in the implicit connection between truth which is God and satyagraha—the master key to all human problems. The laws of satyagraha are still being discovered. When they are fully discovered, full socialism will no longer be a Utopia but a firm reality.

Backed by the sanction of satyagraha, he claimed, "Trusteeship" provides the most reliable means for realizing the values for which Socialism stands.

## VI

The most serious challenge facing us today is a crisis of character. "Parkinson's Law" is operating with a vengeance in all Government departments. There is a callous indifference to extravagance and waste. In private even some of the top-ranking officials bemoan the difficulty of their position in the conscientious discharge of their duty as a result of conditions created by their bosses. Democracy is becoming a costly luxury. The scale of perquisites and privileges of the ruling class today has left far behind what we used to condemn in our British rulers. They at least had the excuse of having been brought up in a different milieu of cultural and moral values. We have no such excuse. The public is becoming more and more critical of the gaudy trappings of office. This

is at the root of the corruption with which the ruling class is now trying to grapple. But let there be no mistake. The physician must heal himself first. In Gandhiji's words:

I suggest we are thieves in a way... You and I have no right to anything that we really have until these millions are clothed and fed.

Straining at a gnat while swallowing a camel will not improve matters very much. The evil has to be tackled at the root.

For a quarter of a century the Father of the Nation gave us training in the cultivation of truth, non-violence, self-restraint and self-denial. Some of us sincerely adopted these disciplines; others adopted them as a means to an end. Still others jibed at them but found it convenient to conform to them outwardly. All of them were benefited by conforming to them to a greater or less extent. Later, some of those who had adopted them only as a temporary expedient, or willy-nilly under the pressure of public opinion, began gradually to discard them. Some did it overtly, others covertly. This deception—the discrepancy between profession and practice—did not escape the notice of the people. They lost faith in their leaders. The rising generation became cynical and revolted. This is the explanation of the present-day decay of moral values and the growing student indiscipline.

To illustrate, on January 30 every year Gandhiji's death anniversary is observed by a ceremonial reversing of arms at Rajghat. A place where a person is cremated becomes consecrated ground. It is sacrilege to use it as a public monument. To honour the memory of a person, who lived and died for the establishment of peace and non-violence on earth, by holding a ceremonial with weapons of death is a cruel mockery. A public statement protesting against this practice was signed by several eminent followers of Gandhiji, including Vinoba Bhave some years back. It was not issued to the Press on the advice of Dr. Radhakrishnan, the then Vice-President. It was afterwards contended on behalf of the Government that to stop the military ceremonial would be an insult to our armed forces. But when I mentioned this to General Cariappa once, he was shocked to hear it. He was not even aware of

the practice, which, he said, he considered a "blasphemy". I do not think its continuation enhances our prestige in the world in any way. The only fitting way to pay homage to the departed great is to walk in their footsteps, not flaunt before their ashes what they wished to wean us from.

Then there is Prohibition. It is written into our Constitution. Allan Octavian Hume, who is regarded as the father of the Indian National Congress, denounced *abkari*, i.e., revenue derived from the liquor traffic, as "the wages of sin". He protested with all the vehemence of his soul against the

iniquitous system which first produced and now supports

a large class whose sole interest is to seduce their fellows into drunkenness and its necessary concomitants, debauchery and crime.

As an administrator of unrivalled experience he went on to point out that

while we debauch our subjects we do not even pecuniarily derive any profit from their ruin. Of this revenue it may be said that ill-gotten wealth never thrives, and for every additional rupee that *abkari* yields, two at least are lost to the public by crime, and spent by the Government in suppressing it.

The Grand Old Man of India Dadabhai Naoroji, Gokhale, Ranade, and Lokamanya Tilak, all of whom we venerate as the architects of our freedom, have spoken in scathing terms about the immorality of deriving revenue from the drug and drink traffic. During our freedom struggle tens of thousands of our mothers, daughters and sisters braving the insults of hooligans and rough-handling by the police, courted imprisonment in order to stop the drink and drug evil by peaceful picketing. But today one State after another in our Union is scrapping Prohibition on the ground that failure to enforce it has undermined respect for law and that it means loss of revenue. This is a flagrant betrayal of the Constitution. Instead of scrapping Prohibition those who trot out such excuses deserve unceremoniously to be scrapped.

Even more disturbing are attempts to "re-interpret Gandhi" in order to make him "relevant" to our present-day conditions even by institutions named after

him. In one of the theses put forward recently in this regard it has been argued in all seriousness (a) that Gandhiji's emphasis on non-violence was an "obsession", (b) that the doctrine that the means determine the end must not be made a "fetish" of, (c) that non-violence can never take the place of violence but only supplement it, and finally (d) that Gandhiji for once "lost hold of truth", when he claimed that non-violence could provide an answer to the Nazi tyranny and the challenge of the atom bomb. To use an old gag, comment is needless.

It has become a fashion to scoff at the basic spiritual discipline and moral values that brought us independence. We have deified material progress and a sorry god it has proved to be. To destroy is easy but to build moral attitudes into a people is a slow and uphill task. We are like a clock that is getting unwound. If we do not bethink ourselves and do something to generate power instead of devoting ourselves solely to the capture of power it will not continue to tick for long. We have got to return to the basic spiritual discipline if we do not wish ourselves to be cheated out of the promise that the advent of independence held out to us.

Not the least precious legacy that Gandhiji left us is the *mantra* that each individual has within him unlimited potentiality and holds in his hands the key to social and political change. If without waiting for others a man begins to practise what he believes in all sincerity and faith, he will suddenly find himself in the company of a multitude of others who were waiting just like him for someone to come forward and give the lead.

The heart of our people and of our youth is sound. They only need the right lead. I am sure that if only our elite went among the masses, shovel and spade in hand just as they went out in *dhoti* and *kurta* at the beginning of the non-cooperation movement, stood shoulder to shoulder with them, lived among them and like them, so far as possible sharing their privations and denying to themselves what cannot be shared with them and till it can be shared, we should witness an upsurge of popular enthusiasm that would astonish us. I am

betraying no confidence when I state that our late Prime Minister Lai Bahadur Shastri fully shared this faith.

"But we have already come such a long way on this road— what can we do now?" we shall be asked. The answer is we must retrace our steps and restart from the point where we took the wrong turning or else the farther we travel the worse shall we fare. As Gandhiji used to tell us, our day dawns from the moment we wake up.

If we have not the strength to take the decisive step right now we can at least cease to lie to ourselves and to others. Let us candidly admit to ourselves our mistake and not make a virtue of our weakness by inventing excuses. The recognition of our weakness might one day give us the strength—according to the depth and degree of our sincerity—to be delivered from it, but if we fail to do so and take shelter behind subterfuges it will destroy the very possibility of deliverance.

### C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

#### VIOLENCE IN THE HEART

It is a paradox that in spite of my intimate connection with Mahatmaji, he is the one subject on which I feel helpless when I begin to write. A cynicism overtakes me. Secular admirers have headed their tributes on him for having shown the world a new method of solving conflicts by truth and love instead of by violence. They often call it a "technique". As the secularists have understood the Mahatma, a concealed *petitio principii* invalidates the technique. It appears to me that we must get behind Love and Truth and dive deep till we discover what really can make Gandhiji's solution a serviceable reality.

Leaders of men abroad have admired Gandhiji as one who developed an effective new "technique" based on non-violence for struggling against wrong. The very notion that what Gandhiji taught was a "technique" has led to error and of course disappointment. Non-violence is not a gadget to get what we used to try to get through violence and much trouble in the pre-Gandhian days, as we get cooking energy from electricity instead of from coal or wood fuel. Mahatma Gandhi's "technique" is no doubt the presentation of Love and Truth in any confrontation against evil. But love and truth are not available in the market. We cannot procure them as we can procure rifles and pistols. They can issue only out of faith in God.

We have changed from animal power to steam and from steam to oil fuel and from oil to electricity. All these variations of energy do not furnish the basis of understanding Mahatma Gandhi's "technique". The moral energy, Soul-force as Gandhiji loved to call it, comes from Faith and true religious devotion. All the time up to his death Gandhiji laid stress on this source of power. Much of the non-violence practised by ardent devotees who, for the sake of convenience or for avoiding bloodshed, seek to practise what Gandhiji taught are only variations of violence. Non-violence does not consist in merely not calling to aid a lathi or a dagger or a pistol. The positive aspect of non-violence is what has to be realized; and that is firm faith in the reality of God's sovereignty. Where

this is absent, non-violence will fail. It is generally known that the non-violent way shown by Gandhiji demands abstaining from the use of physical weapons. But it is not as generally realized that abstention from the use of physical violence with hatred and venom burning in the heart is not non-violence such as Gandhiji conceived it.

To enunciate that Love and Truth are the new tools given to us by Gandhiji to serve as powerful answers to the hatred and falsehood and violence of the enemy is easy. To say that these forces of Love and Truth can solve, and are the only way to solve the racial, economic and political conflicts of the world is easy. But in practice it will be found to be a begging of the question. How can I summon up love for one who has given me so much cause to hate? How can the Negro love the White man? How can a Pakistani patriot love Indians? How can Indian patriots love the Pakistanis? The force of Love cannot spring from nowhere where there is good reason for the opposite of love. It must spring from a firm faith in God and His Sovereignty over the hearts of men, if we desire to save Gandhiji's way from becoming an empty doctrine or a disappointing technique. When Mark Antony in Egypt, as Shakespeare has depicted, sent Enobarbus's treasure after him on learning that the latter had deserted and gone over to the enemy, or when the Bishop in Victor Hugo's novel sent the other silver candlestick also to Jean Valjean who had stolen the first one, the conversion was immediate.

isvarah sarvabhutanam hrddese 'rjuna tisthati

bhramayan sarvabhutani yantrarudhani mayaya

(*Bhagavad Gita*, XVIII, 61.)

The *Gita* tells us in the above *mantra* that the Lord dwells in the hearts of every being and by His power moves all beings who are set like marionettes on the machine. The secret presence of God in the hearts of all beings is the secret of satyagraha. It was not the application of a new technique but the understanding of ancient spiritual teaching and firm faith in its truth. Satyagraha is not for the sceptic, not for one who is content with the phenomenal world and the careful classification of what one sees in that world,

which is called science. It may be a beautiful fountain-pen. But if there is no ink in it, or if you fill it only with water the pen can't write. Let us, while celebrating Gandhiji's Birth Centenary, reflect and realize his true teaching and the true lessons of his work and not look him as a mere inventor of a cheap gadget to displace an old troublesome way. Gandhiji was not an inventor. He was a man of God, and therefore was he called Mahatma.

## G. RAMACHANDRAN

### THE CORE OF GANDHI

Gandhi's was a many-sided personality. The external simplicity of his life and his constant and concentrated devotion to nonviolence often effectively cloaked many profound currents of ideas, disciplines, loyalties and aspirations which surged within him. He was at once a saint and a revolutionary, a politician and a social reformer, an economist and a man of religion, an educationist and a satyagrahi; devotee alike of faith and reason, Hindu and inter-religious, nationalist and inter-<sup>v</sup> nationalist, a man of action and a dreamer of dreams. He was a great reconciler of opposites and he was that without any strain or artificiality. He loved greatly but without sentimentality. He unreservedly accepted the fact that truth can reside in opposites. We have all come so much under the spell of the astonishing integration and unity of the man within himself that no one has yet attempted a clear analysis of his complex and magnificent personality.

It was the poet Rabindranath Tagore who once wrote that those disciplines are the most complex which ultimately lead to the simplicity of a song. One has only to look at those who learn music to understand something of the daily grind of hard disciplines through which they must pass before they bring out a soulful song. Gandhi's life was one long and ceaseless saga of endeavour in which he added, bit by bit and piece by piece, to his stature ending up in the ever-advancing fulness of his total personality. There was nothing mystic or miraculous about his growth from a common man into the unsurpassed Mahatma of our history. It is open to each one of us to see how he advanced, step by step, gathering innumerable fragments of truth one by one and mixing them together in the fiery crucible of his life, ready to look at facts, accept their real significance, face any consequence in the pursuit of a cause, suffer any penalty for a mistake, recover lost ground again, but always moving onward, open-minded, without fear and dedicated heroically to reach and hold the truth of a matter at any cost. He was, therefore, not born a Mahatma. He

moulded himself into one by the *tapasya* of which he became the embodiment. He was a common man who pulled himself up to the most uncommon height. He was no God but became a god-man. Gandhi knew this about himself and that was why he named his autobiography, "The Story of my Experiments with Truth." Experimentation was one of the deepest passions of his life. He experimented with food, health and cure, clothes and dress, politics and economics, education and reform, ethics and spirituality and organization and revolution. With relentless logic and courage he broke new ground in every direction and yet had the depth and width of mind to separate the false from the true, the unreal from the real, defeat from success and to integrate all his aims and endeavours into the inner unity of his personality.

When we look into the splendid mosaic of his thoughts and deeds there is one thing which stands out as unique and puts him in the forefront of world leadership. This was the unique discovery he made in a unique laboratory. The laboratory was South Africa and the discovery was satyagraha. It was history which threw Gandhi into the South African crucible. The situation in South Africa was itself unprecedented in history. It was not merely that a White minority Government brutalized itself and millions of coloured people in an attempt permanently to enslave them. Slavery was nothing new in the world, but this one was unique in that it was grounded in a new metaphysics and ethics buttressed by perverted science. Every thought and action conceivable to diabolic human ingenuity was drawn upon to perpetuate the subjection of the many who were physically weak to the few who were physically strong. Any rebellion was made totally impossible. The very thought of rebellion was made treason under the law. The White minority Government was armed to the teeth not only with weapons but with twisted laws, institutions and philosophy. This slavery itself was held up as part of God's plan for man and the teachings of the New Testament were blackened and poisoned in support of it. The Bible had taught through 20 centuries that God made man in His image, but the cruel tyrants in South Africa taught that this applied only to the White man. The many who were weak and held in subjection had no arms, no education, no organization and no power of any kind. They could work and just manage to

Jive within the unbreakable frontiers of this slavery. Once they accepted this slavery, they were fed, clothed and given shelter, but without any modern human rights whatsoever, not even the right of a husband to live freely with his wife or a mother with her children. They could live like animals in the cattle-shed of this fantastic civilization. Any attempt to break away in any direction was met with torture and death. It was a terrible prison-house reared and maintained with infinite care within the heart of a new civilization.

It was into this prison-house of slavery that history cast Gandhi. He had lived and studied in London. He was a Barrister-at-law from the Middle Temple. He was also an Indian from an aristocratic family with a great and ancient tradition of culture in his blood. But he was very young and inexperienced. He could have turned tail and run away from this terror in South Africa. It was at this point that Gandhi revealed the first glimmer of his greatness. He stood firm and looked at the terror with unflinching eyes. Can we not say, in humility, that God broke into history at this point and gave Gandhi the inner urge to stand firm like a rock? He had behind him only a mass of unlettered, poor, weak and unorganized Indian "coolies" and he himself had already been dubbed a coolie-barrister by the arrogant Whites who kept the keys of the slave-prison. The historic challenge before Gandhi was whether the weak could fight the strong with any hope of success.

Throughout history in all the battles and conflicts between the strong and the weak, the weak had always surrendered or perished. Gandhi asked himself the question if this inescapable fact of history, as it appeared to be, could ever represent the law of truth, justice and love, i.e., the law of God. Again, the light of God entered the soul of Gandhi and he knew at once that what surrounded him was simply the negation of the law of God and therefore of history. Thereafter Gandhi did not hesitate. He plunged into the greatest experiment of our time to discover the weapon with which the weak could fight the strong, not individually but in the mass.

Let us unravel some of the ingredients which went into this astounding experiment. The first was Gandhi's impregnable faith in God. To Gandhi, God

was Truth, love and justice. Truth and justice were concepts, but love or hate furnished the motivation for their interaction. Hate was acting in South Africa to perpetuate injustice and untruth. Could love be made to act effectively for truth and justice in the same area of collective human life? The answer came from the depth of Gandhi's mind. His inner mind said, yes, it can because it must, if God and man were to co-exist. Otherwise, God would be annulled and man would be left lonely in the jungle of life. That was impossible! This was the logic of Gandhi. He held on to that logic till the end of his life. But there remained the question, how could love be harnessed and made to act in the collective life of the slaves? The first answer was that love must act totally differently from hate. Suppression, torture, violence, the prison and the bullet were the instruments of hate in the South African crucible as everywhere. These must be rejected as instruments of love. But what could be the instruments of love? Having rejected the weapons of hate, Gandhi set about to discover the instruments of love for the battle of the weak against the strong. Discoveries came to him one after the other. The weak can refuse to obey, the weak must not surrender, the weak must invite suffering instead of inflicting suffering. The weapons of love must make the weapons of hate as useless as possible and above all the slaves must stand together as one united community. It must be remembered that the challenge was to use the weapons of love collectively. It was clear as crystal to Gandhi that the whole of this battle must inevitably be non-violent. And yet large masses of people must act together non-violently! Gandhi was modern enough to understand the dynamics of numbers which he did not disdain in a mood of super-saintliness. He realized at once that the first step was for him to disobey the iniquitous laws himself and then persuade all his people to disobey them. He saw why the White minority Government used cruel violence to suppress the Coloured people. It was only under such suppression that the coloured millions, including Indians, would give unmurmuring obedience. The whole aim was to secure obedience through terror. Gandhi's answer was to match fearlessness against terror and disobedience against submission. Gandhi came to the ingredient in his experiment which made disobedience a duty. It became the only duty. But

could there not be violent disobedience? came the subtle question. Gandhi discovered that violence weakened disobedience because it would leave the initiative in the hands of the tyrants who were masters in the art of violence. Disobedience would become more effective when it was nonviolent. Instead of increasing the violence of the tyrants it would reduce that violence to an extent and within that margin non-violence could become more effective. Gandhiji thus arrived at the discovery of strong disobedience through non-violence. But disobedience and surrender must be kept poles apart. How could this be done? If the tyrants failed to secure obedience, what would happen? They would punish the slaves, beat them up, throw them into prison and shoot them with bullets. So Gandhi said to himself and his people that disobedience should persist in spite of everything the tyrants did. They could and would do everything in their power to extract obedience but they could not annihilate a whole community resisting them non-violently. The larger the number the better. But the question was, would the weak disobey in sufficiently large numbers and face all the terrible consequences of disobedience? Here Gandhi's mind hesitated for a moment. Then came another vital ingredient in his discovery. There was the soul in each human being. Whatever might be the differences between human beings due to geographical and historical circumstances and conditions during a few thousand years, man himself, who was several hundreds of thousands of years old on the earth, had each one a soul equal to any other soul. God created man in His own image, said the Bible. God resided in each human being, said the *Gita*. The Buddha and Mohammed affirmed the same truth. Gandhi was a believer. He decided heroically to act upon the basis of the equality of human souls. From Gandhi's faith in this equality sprang his conviction that there was no man or woman so small, weak or helpless but could discover the strength of the soul inside and make use of it when life itself was in peril before tyranny. Gandhi thus put his faith not only in the transcendent God but equally in the God immanent in every man and woman. Gandhi then put together all these ingredients of his discovery and welded them into the concept and practice of satyagraha. Thus, step by step again, the experimenter in the laboratory of South Africa arrived at his radiant

discovery of the power of collective non-violence which evolved in time into the revolutionary weapon of satyagraha.

It is difficult to make a discovery but it is even more difficult to apply it in a most difficult situation. Where did Gandhi get the reckless courage to use satyagraha in South Africa?

He was himself undergoing a basic transformation within himself. He found out that fear and non-violent action would be completely contradictory. He therefore shed all fear and resolved that if he did not trust in the power of the soul he could do nothing. He therefore gave his people the call to awake, arise and act non-violently. The response astonished and justified Gandhi's faith in God and man. His people rose as one man and followed him valiantly in the non-violent struggle, the meaning of which came to them instinctively and with growing conviction. What happened in South Africa in this epic struggle which lasted for 7 years is now a part of our history. It jerked the Whites into wonder and dismay. It also flashed the message of a new revolution across the world. Tolstoy, in far away Russia, saw it and recognized it as a new power for good in the whole world. The "coolies" began civil disobedience. The Whites became angry and blind. They struck out at Gandhi and his "coolies" with all their weapons. They threw thousands into prisons, properties were confiscated and crowds were beaten up brutally. Disobedience continued nevertheless. No Indian surrendered and no Indian obeyed. The Whites sought for a remedy and found none. It became a long-drawn-out struggle which ended in the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement. The struggle ennobled the coolies and gave them confidence and strength. The Whites were ashamed inside themselves and were cleansed a little. The Whites were Christians. The Hindu and Muslim coolies showed them the meaning of the Cross. Both sides emerged from the struggle with a feeling that something new had happened to them equally. The world had changed a little, not only in South Africa but in the conscience and mind of man. Tolstoy wrote to Gandhi that the struggle in South Africa was significant for the world. More than anything else Gandhi himself became a transformed man. Deep within him there stirred the first awareness of a great mission.

Gandhi went to South Africa as a young lawyer. He returned to India as the Mahatma.

This then was Gandhi's discovery in the laboratory of South Africa. It was the discovery of a weapon with which the physically weak can fight the physically strong. It is perhaps the greatest discovery of our century, greater than the discovery of atomic power. Atomic weapons are now in the hands of the mighty and with these weapons the strong will fight the strong and might destroy themselves. But here was the discovery of a weapon which the weakest could use with effect against the strongest with a sporting chance of success. The victory of the physically strong and the subjugation of the physically weak became no longer an imperative of history. Gandhian nonviolence created a breakthrough in the history of the world. The physically weak need never remain any more helpless in the face of the physically powerful. This is the explosion of hope which Gandhi ignited in our time. There is almost nothing more significant for the future of man than this in the landscape of our century. Luckily Gandhi has not left the power of satyagraha in doubt. After the non-violent struggle in South Africa, Gandhi led millions of the Indian people in three massive non-violent revolutions against British rule through which mainly the freedom of India was won. The new imperative laid upon us now is to place the weapon of satyagraha in the hands of the suppressed and downtrodden throughout the world. No greater duty rests upon the people of India than this in view of the Gandhi Centenary in 1969.

Let no one be deceived into thinking that the impact of Gandhi and non-violence on world events is not clear or effective. The world seems to have little to do with Gandhi and satyagraha. The U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. dominate the world because of their stock-piles of atomic weapons of incalculable destructive power. Civilization is now in the grip of escalating violence. But let us remember that since the end of the Second World War we have had several groups in the world which have successfully practised satyagraha against tyranny and terror. More significant still is the worldwide reaction against nuclear weapons and a third world war and for world peace. Surprisingly, peace

movements are strongest in the most advanced countries like the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., the United Kingdom and Japan. Non-violence is still only a trickle against the tidal waves of violence sweeping the world. But these tidal waves point to the decay and death of civilization. The trickle however points the way onward to a great renaissance of the human spirit with the possibility of building a new human society based on freedom, justice and peace. Militarism and nuclear weapons are the blood-soaked sign posts of a vanishing era. Gandhi and non-violence are the vibrant symbols of a slowly emerging epoch of justice and peace. This is the core of Gandhi's life and work. To understand that love can be made more effective than hate, that violence and hate are inseparable, and equally so are non-violence and love, that non-violence can be organized on a commensurate scale to fight tyranny of every kind and above all that these are possible with mankind everywhere – this is the core of Gandhi.

**SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA**

### **MAHATMA GANDHI: THE ABIDING ELEMENTS IN HIS LIFE AND WORK**

Great leaders of men fall into two broad categories. To the first category belong all those who affect the life and thought of their contemporaries in varying degrees, but whose influence steadily fades away after their death. To the second belong those few who continue to influence humanity through their life and message long after their physical disappearance in death. The latter phenomenon bespeaks a type of greatness capable of defying time itself which dissolves everything else in its relentless flow. Such greatness discloses something permanent and abiding in the midst of much that is temporary and fleeting in the ideas and values radiated by the leader by his life and message. Gandhiji belongs to this second category.

Revealing the central theme of his life as the passionate pursuit of spirituality, Gandhiji writes:

What I want to achieve—what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years—is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain *moksha*. I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal. All that I do by way of speaking and writing, and all my ventures in the political field, are directed to this same end.<sup>1</sup>

Twenty years after his death and on the eve of the first centenary of his birth, it would be wise to study Gandhiji's life and work with a view to finding what is abiding in it and profiting therefrom. Time—a brief twenty years—has already washed away several aspects of his socio-economic schemes and programmes. His utterances are there to tell us that he expected this to happen. Being a resolute experimenter with truth, he was averse to the idea of leaving behind him a school of "Gandhism". The search for truth cannot coexist with attachment to a set of finished and final dogmas either in the field of the physical sciences, or in social life or the spiritual quest. In the light of this, a foolish consistency does indeed appear to be the hobgoblin of little minds.

Writing in *Harijan* on 30-9-1939 (p. 288) on this subject, Gandhiji said:

My aim is not to be consistent with my previous statements on a given question, but to be consistent with truth as it may present itself to me at a given moment. The result has been that I have grown from truth to truth.

On the strength of his love of truth, Gandhiji refused to give himself away to a sect or a party. Writing in *Young India* on 25-8-1921 (p. 267), Gandhiji said:

A persistent correspondent from Simla asks me whether I intend to form a sect or claim divinity. I have answered him by a private letter. But he would have me make a public declaration for the sake of posterity. I should have thought that I had in the strongest terms repudiated all claim to divinity. I claim to be a humble servant of India and humanity and would like to die in the discharge of such service. I have no desire to form a sect. I am really too ambitious to be satisfied with a sect or a following, for I represent no new truths. I endeavour to follow and represent truth as I know it. I do claim to throw a new light on many an old truth.

The central core of his message, and what is imperishable in it is *satya* and *ahimsa*, truth and non-violence, as he has himself expressed it on innumerable occasions. Gandhiji's uniqueness lies in projecting these sterling personal moral virtues on to the wider fields of collective socio-political life and action. He translated his passionate spiritual quest into an equally passionate struggle to ensure the freedom and dignity of the human spirit everywhere. He sought the incorporation of these values in the body-politic as the only means to advance the cause of human evolution, the evolution of man the brute into man the god. He saw humanity at the crossroads of its destiny. During the past few centuries, human intelligence has become disciplined and sharpened, and man has become master of vast resources of energy and power. In the absence of a spiritual orientation, all this has led to the sharpening of man's animal appetites and the deepening of his inner conflicts and tensions, leading to hatred, violence, and war. Gandhiji, along with several contemporary thinkers,

saw the need to match the growth of man in the tangible fields of his physical and intellectual life with a corresponding growth in the not-so-obvious field of his spiritual life. And this is the specifically human field of evolutionary advance, says twentieth-century biology. It is only when man's life-energy gets this spiritual direction that he becomes truly human and his life becomes true life. If he fails in this and his life-energy becomes stagnant at the sensate level, man lives a false life and suffers irreparable loss. This is proclaimed in ringing words by the *Kena Upanishad* (II.5):

iha ced avedid atha satyam asti

na ced ihšvedin mahati vinastih

"If a man realizes (his spiritual dimension) here (in this life), then does he experience true life; if he fails to realize it here, great shall be his loss."

Gandhiji's insistence on truth did not mean merely the practice of verbal truthfulness, but the far more pervasive search for the truth hidden in the heart of life and experience. As a man penetrates deeper and deeper in this search, he discovers the basic truth of his spiritual nature over and above his sensate nature, and his spiritual unity and solidarity with all existence. And the corollary of this discovery is the cultivation of love for all beings in increasing measure; for love arises and is sustained by the awareness of spiritual unit and kinship. Gandhiji therefore combined his emphasis on truth with a similar emphasis on love which he expressed by the Sanskrit term *ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* literally means 'non-violence'. Surrounded by a world given to much mental and physical violence, Gandhiji tended to put a great deal of stress on the virtue of *ahimsa* or non-violence. And yet he was deeply conscious of the limitations arising from the largely negative nature of this virtue and utilized every opportunity to explain that what he meant by his *ahimsa* was the positive force of love. We can derive and sustain an active social ethics only from the positive principle of love and not from the negative principle of non-violence. And Gandhiji is essentially the teacher and exemplar of a dynamic social ethics, the aim of which is to evoke and to release the positive forces of love from spiritually sensitive men and women so as to strengthen the moral texture of

society. Such a society alone can provide the sustenance and stimulus for the all-round growth and fulfilment of its members.

Gandhiji's views on the state flow from his philosophy of human nature and destiny above delineated. Revealing his vision of a democratic state in an independent India, Gandhiji said:

I hope to demonstrate that real *swaraj* will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when abused. In other words, *swaraj* is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.<sup>2</sup>

The state is the servant of the citizen's urge for fulfilment; it exists to ensure his growth and development; this growth and development is essentially psycho-social, moral, and spiritual, but needs for its base economic security and political stability; the latter is the fruit of intelligent cooperative labour and the spirit of service arising from the ethical sense of interdependence. This involves a wide diffusion of the inseparable values of truth and non-violence in society. Democracy cannot survive without this elevation of the citizens on the moral plane. Says Gandhiji:

My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest. That can never happen except through non-violence.<sup>3</sup>

Biology in the nineteenth century could not find a place in its scheme of evolution for the ethical value of love and human concern. As expressed by Thomas Huxley in his *Evolution and Ethics*, evolution meant struggle for existence and survival of the fittest, whereas ethics meant the making of as many as possible fit to survive. Evolution and ethics thus ran a parallel course. But the revolutionary advances registered by biology in the twentieth century have made ethics central to evolution at the human level.

Speaking on "The Evolutionary Vision" Sir Julian Huxley, an eminent contemporary biologist, gives a spiritual orientation to the evolutionary process:

Man's evolution is not biological, but psycho-social; it operates by the mechanism of cultural tradition, which involves the cumulative self-reproduction and self-variation of mental activities and their products. Accordingly, major steps in the human phase of evolution are achieved by breakthroughs to new dominant patterns of mental organization of knowledge, ideas, and beliefs –ideological instead of physiological or biological organization.<sup>4</sup>

Discussing, in the light of the revolutionary advances of twentieth-century biology, the aim of human evolution as "greater fulfilment", Huxley says:

In the light of our present knowledge, man's most-comprehensive aim is seen not as mere survival, not as numerical increase, not as increased complexity of organization, or increased control over his environment, but as greater fulfilment—the fuller realization of more possibilities by the human species collectively and more of its component members individually.<sup>8</sup>

And pleading for a scientific study of the scope of this concept of fulfilment, Huxley concludes:

Once greater fulfilment is recognized as man's ultimate or dominant aim, we shall need a science of human possibilities to help guide the long course of psychosocial evolution that lies ahead.<sup>6</sup>

Gandhiji's message of the application of truth and nonviolence in inter-human relationships marks one of such important "break-throughs to new dominant patterns of mental organization". Says he:

In this age of wonders no one will say that a thing or idea is worthless because it is new. To say it is impossible because it is difficult, is again not in consonance with the spirit of the age. Things undreamt of are daily being seen, the impossible is ever becoming possible. We are

constantly being astonished these days at the amazing discoveries in the field of violence. But I maintain that far more undreamt of and seemingly impossible discoveries will be made in the field of non-violence.<sup>7</sup>

It is this science, the science of human possibilities, that constitutes the spiritual core of the world's religions. And it is this science that Gandhiji enriched greatly by his message and, still more, by his life and example.

1. *An Autobiography*. Introduction, pp. 4-5.
2. Nirmal Kumar Bose, *Selections from Gandhi*; p. 109.
3. D.G. Tendulkar, *Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*. Vol. V, p. 343.
4. Julian Huxley, *Evolution After Darwin*. Vol. III, p. 251.
5. *Ibid.* Vol. I, p. 20.
6. *Ibid.* p. 21.
7. *Harijan*. 25-8-1940, p. 260.

B. SHIVA RAO

## GANDHI AND HUMAN RIGHTS

More than anyone else in India's long and chequered history, Mahatma Gandhi will be remembered by posterity as her man of destiny. He led the movement for national freedom adopting a technique that was subsequently enshrined in the principles of the U.N. Charter. At different stages in our progress towards that end and often in difficult situations, he eschewed violence and hatred.

The full significance of Gandhi's leadership can only be appreciated against the background of the circumstances under which he assumed the leadership of the movement at the end of the First World War. Terrorism, born of impotent hatred of the British ruling class, had raised its head in the first two decades of this century, when the tempo of political activity was definitely rising in the country. Gandhi stepped into undisputed leadership in 1919 as a sequel to the Amritsar massacre carried out under a British General's orders. Only he could effectively control the wave of deep indignation that swept over the entire country as the grim details came fully to light.

The end of the Great War had resulted in the swift demobilization of lakhs of trained soldiers who had braved the hardships of battle on various fronts and covered themselves with glory. In such a climate Gandhi's experiment with non-violent non-cooperation involved considerable risks. But the impact of his personality on the masses was such that deviations from that path were few and of a minor nature.

After a decade of strenuous struggle, brushing aside all the memories of the conflict, Gandhi addressed a moving appeal in 1931 to the representatives of the British Government and of the Opposition parties in the British Parliament at the Round Table Conference in London:

India, yes, can be held by the sword! I do not for one moment doubt the ability of Britain to hold India under subjection through the sword. But what will conduce to the prosperity of Great Britain, the economic

freedom of Britain—an enslaved but rebellious India or an India an esteemed partner to share her sorrows, to take part side by side with Britain in her misfortunes? Yes, if need be, but at her own will, to fight side by side with Britain —not for the exploitation of a single race or a single human being on earth, but it may be conceivably for the good of the whole world! If I want freedom for my country, believe me, if I can possibly help it, I do not want that freedom in order that I, belonging to a nation which contains one-fifth of the human race, may exploit any other race upon earth or any single individual. If I want that freedom for my country, I would not be deserving that freedom if I did not cherish and treasure the equal right of every other race, weak or strong, to the same freedom. I would love to go away from the shores of the British Isles with the conviction that there was to be an honourable and equal partnership between Britain and India.

British response to this appeal was much worse than a simple negative. On his return to India, Gandhi was placed in detention for about two years and released only after a British-made constitution had been placed on the statute-book. In the first elections held under it in the early months of 1937, the Congress under his leadership won a remarkably decisive victory. From a powerful section of the party came strident voices demanding "the wrecking of the Constitution from within" and the creation of a new one by representatives of the Indian people through an elected Constituent Assembly.

It was not easy to resist such pressure; but Gandhi preferred a constructive approach, singularly free from bitterness. He told me at the end of an interview in the summer of that year, "The British are a decent people; it is easy to make a deal with them." For him the new Constitution that the British had given India was "an attempt, however limited it might be, to replace the rule of the sword by the rule of the majority". He told the British a little later that there was no need for them to leave India. On the other hand, he said:

India is a vast country. You and your people can stay comfortably, provided you accommodate yourselves to our conditions here.

On the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, Gandhi, with incredible magnanimity, called for an unconditional support for the British against Hitler. Consistently with his basic philosophy of non-violence, his support would have been moral, not expressed in terms of men and resources.

In the first two years of the war, he initiated or encouraged a number of moves for a war-time settlement with the British, with the progressive elements among the Princes and that section of the Muslim League which looked to Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan for guidance. Every move was unfortunately thwarted by the British Government, Mr. Churchill the Prime Minister saying: "I have not become the King's first minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire." But Gandhi had an unconquerable faith in his own principles. Future generations will marvel at the foresight and wisdom of a man who dared, in a century blood-stained by two wars of global dimensions, to pin his faith on the principles enunciated by Gautama Buddha.

For another reason equally noteworthy, it is appropriate to recall the spirit of Gandhi's leadership of India's freedom movement. It was first in South Africa, in the early decades of this century, that Gandhi raised his voice against racial discrimination practised by the then Government of South Africa on settlers in that country of Indian origin. On a limited scale he fashioned the instrument of passive resistance against injustice, oppression and wrong. Success in a restricted sphere opened his eyes to the possibilities of its application on a far wider scale to the termination of India's subjection to British rule. Even here he proceeded with the utmost caution. In 1916, on his first arrival from South Africa, he did not favour a campaign to demand home rule for India at the end of the First World War. Britain was fighting a desperate war with Germany, and the time was not appropriate in his judgment for a move which even indirectly sought to take advantage of Britain's plight.

His programme for achieving freedom was in one respect different from that of his predecessors in the Congress. Political leaders before him had fixed their gaze on India's progress towards freedom in terms of constitutional reforms. The social, economic and cultural disabilities of the Untouchables numbering

then 60 million had, indeed, attracted the notice of reformers from the second half of the nineteenth century. These pioneers had sacrificed much in a great cause, enduring social obloquy, even ostracism, humiliation and persecution from the orthodox sections of society. But until Gandhi appeared on the scene, the two streams of progress—political and social —had remained distinct and separate.

Fresh from South Africa and keenly alive to the inhumanity of racial arrogance, Gandhi saw as in a flash the vital link between the removal of untouchability and India's freedom. In 1917, at the annual session of the Congress at Calcutta, presided over appropriately by another great servant of India, Mrs. Annie Besant, the first concrete step was taken to forge such a link. In a resolution adopted on Gandhi's initiative, "the Congress urged upon the people of India the necessity, justice and righteousness of removing all disabilities imposed by custom upon the depressed classes, the disabilities being of a most vexatious and oppressive character, subjecting those classes to considerable hardship and inconvenience".

Two years later Gandhi evolved a constructive programme for all workers in the cause of freedom, giving the complete eradication of untouchability and all the evils it had bred in India's social and economic life the topmost priority. He would not sacrifice, he declared on one occasion, the vital interests of the Untouchables even for the sake of winning India's freedom, adding, "I would far rather that Hinduism died than that untouchability lived." In his paper *Young India* he repeatedly justified this stand. In 1921, he wrote in the course of an article:

Untouchability cannot be given a secondary place on the programme. Without the removal of the taint swaraj is a meaningless term. Workers should welcome social boycott and even public execration in the prosecution of their work. I consider the removal of untouchability as a most powerful factor in the process of attainment of swaraj.

Gandhi never grudged time, energy or resources for the nation-wide fight against untouchability. He was unwavering in his conviction that the protection

of these classes should not be carried to an extent that might in the long run harm them and the country. On the one hand he wanted the new Constitution to contain a provision making the observance of untouchability in any shape or form an offence. But on the other, to separate electorates for the Scheduled Castes he was uncompromising in his opposition. In his view:

Separate electorates for the Untouchables will ensure them bondage in perpetuity. Do you want them to be Untouchables for ever? Separate electorates would perpetuate the stigma. What is needed is destruction of untouchability; and when you have done it, the bar sinister which has been imposed by an insolent 'superior' class upon an 'inferior' class will be destroyed. When you have destroyed the bar sinister, to whom will you give the separate electorates? With adult franchise, you give the Untouchables complete security. Even the orthodox would have to approach them for votes.

In 1942, for the first time in the course of the freedom struggle, Mr. Churchill's government conceded to India (through the Cripps offer) the right to frame a constitution for herself without outside interference at the end of the Second World War. It is significant of the awakening that Gandhi had produced in these socially backward millions that the All-India Depressed Classes Federation promptly declared that no constitution would be acceptable to the Scheduled Castes unless (1) it had their consent; (2) it recognized the fact the Scheduled Castes were distinct and separate from the Hindus and constituted an important element in the national life of India; and (3) the constitution contained provisions which would give them a real sense of security.

And the end of the Second World War, when the Constituent Assembly was set up to draft a Constitution for free India, the Congress party readily accepted the position that "its primary duty was to protect the religious, linguistic, cultural and other rights of the minorities in India so as to ensure for them in any scheme of government the widest scope for their development and to secure their participation in the fullest measure in the political, economic and cultural life of the nation".

A resolution for the setting up of an Advisory Committee on fundamental rights for the various minorities, tribal and excluded and partially excluded areas, was moved by Pandit Govind Ballab Pant. He told the Constituent Assembly:

Imperialism thrives on strife. So far, the minorities have been incited and have been influenced in a manner which has hampered the growth of cohesion and unity. But now it is necessary that a new chapter should be started and we should all realize our responsibility. Unless the minorities are fully satisfied, we cannot make any progress: we cannot even maintain peace in an undisturbed manner.

Bearing that objective in view, Pandit Pant explained:

The voice of the minorities and the representatives of the excluded and tribal areas will preponderate in this Committee. They will be in a position to record their decisions and no section will be in a majority.

Dr. Ambedkar submitted an exhaustive note to the Advisory Committee on minorities and fundamental rights. As the acknowledged leader of the Scheduled Castes, he was primarily concerned with their political and social safeguards, and with guaranteeing that the new Constitution provided adequately for their uplift.

On the question of constitutional safeguards, the general attitude of the Advisory Committee, whose members were drawn mostly from the minorities themselves was set out in its report in the following passage:

We have felt bound to reject some of the proposals placed before us partly because, as in the case of reservation of seats in Cabinets, we felt that a rigid constitutional provision would have made parliamentary democracy unworkable and partly because, as in the case of the electoral arrangements, we considered it necessary to harmonize the special claims of minorities with the development of a healthy national life. We wish to make it clear, however, that our general approach to the whole problem of minorities is that the State should be so run that they should stop feeling oppressed by the mere fact that they are minorities;

and that, on the contrary, they should feel that they have as honourable a part to play in the national life as any other section of the community. In particular, we think it is a fundamental duty of the State to take special steps to bring up these minorities which are backward to the level of the general community.

In framing the Constitution, the Constituent Assembly naturally attached the greatest weight to the views and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Minorities. On Gandhi's tragic assassination on January 30, 1948, before the Constituent Assembly was even halfway through its task, a grief-stricken nation decided that the most practicable tribute to his campaign for the emancipation of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes would be to embody in the Constitution a number of provisions for their advancement and welfare. These—proposed by the representatives of the people directly concerned—were comprehensive in scope and left no aspect of the problem out of account.

In the last twenty years, the all-round progress of the campaign started by Gandhi has been remarkably striking. There is, indeed, evidence of the disabilities of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes persisting in many of our rural and inaccessible regions. But success for the campaign is assured sooner or later in full measure.

In two vital spheres Gandhi has lit the way for all mankind: the achievement by peaceful means of freedom from foreign control and the elimination of all forms of social, economic and racial discrimination. In these respects he has anticipated the U.N. Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

There was a third great cause which was close to his heart, as he indicated briefly to the Asian Relations Conference in 1947:

The West is today pining for wisdom. It is despairing of the multiplication of atom bombs because such multiplication must destroy, not merely all the West but the whole world. It is up to you to deliver the whole world and not merely Asia from wickedness and sin. That is the precious heritage which your teachers and my teachers have left for us.

The movement in favour of complete disarmament he did not live to inspire. But the passage quoted above should be a constant reminder to free India that she has yet to make a worthy contribution to disarmament in this war-weary world.

**B.N. RAU**

### **MAHATMA GANDHI'S INFLUENCE**

There is a strongly individualistic trend in the regions of the Far East; we believe not merely in "the worth of the human person"—to quote the language of the Charter of the United Nations—but also in the immense power of the individual. This is brought home to us from time to time. By way of illustration, I should like to relate certain incidents of Mahatma Gandhi's life.

Towards the end of August 1947 I was on my way to Burma to help in the framing of her new Constitution, and I stopped for a couple of days in Calcutta *en route*. The Mahatma was also there at the time: it was a period of general Hindu-Muslim tension, but Calcutta itself was comparatively quiet. So I asked the head of the police whether the peace that reigned in the city was in any manner due to the presence of Gandhiji. He replied, "Oh, no—that is due to a multitude of other causes—chiefly the efficiency of the police. One man cannot bring peace to a whole city." I congratulated the police and continued my journey to Rangoon.

About the first week of September, I was again in Calcutta on my return journey and again there was complete peace in the city. But there had been grave events during the interval. In fact, on August 31, there had been a serious disturbance, the very house in which the Mahatma was living being attacked and he himself narrowly escaping injury. Next day, he started a fast—a fast unto death unless the warring communities came to their senses and promised to behave themselves. The fast lasted 73 hours; but during this period, leaders of all communities—Hindu, Muslim, Christian—and of all organisations, merchants,

shopkeepers, workers—came to his bedside and signed a pledge that there would be no more communal trouble. And from that day, for months on end, there was no trouble either in Calcutta or anywhere else in Bengal, although there was grave trouble in other parts of India.

It was shortly after this dramatic change in Calcutta that I happened to be in the city on my return journey from Rangoon; and I happened to see the head of the police again. So I asked him what he thought of the situation this time. He replied, "This time I must confess that peace has been brought by the efforts of one man and one man alone." This was in September 1947 in Calcutta. Later in the same year the Mahatma did the same thing in Delhi—only the fast lasted six days: on the sixth day, the leaders of the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities went to his bedside and made themselves personally responsible for the good behaviour of their followers and promised peace. He demanded tangible proofs of their repentance in deeds, not mere words; these they gladly swore to give and the people behind them made good the promise. He even prevailed upon the Government of India immediately to fulfil certain obligations which he thought they had delayed in performing. In these days, when we hear so much of totalitarian regimes and the power of the State over the individual, it is heartening to read of these manifestations of the power of the individual, not only over large communities but even over the State itself. In the countries of the Far East, where the supremacy of the individual is not only an article of faith but is also visibly proved from time to time, totalitarian doctrines are not likely to take deep root.

These are days of confusion and frustration—we do not know exactly what is happening around us or whither things are tending and we cannot judge with confidence what we should do. Each of us has to do his best according to his own lights. In moments such as these it is fortifying to remind ourselves of the power of the individual. I referred to it as an article of faith, but it is reinforced by an analogy from science. The atomic bomb is the greatest explosive force that we know in the physical world today. Yet, what starts this tremendous explosion is one single neutron—an infinitesimal, invisible particle

which, acting as a kind of gun, first sets off two other guns, and then each of these two sets off two others and so on, until there is a terrific force of almost earth-shaking dimensions.

What is true of the physical world is also true of the moral: there also we may have vast chain-reactions radiating from a single individual. One of the lessons which we may learn from modern science, therefore, is the importance of the infinitesimally small and, by analogy, the tremendous potential worth of the individual human person and the immense value of individual freedom. If a single individual, organization or country can set in motion the right kind of idea, it may ultimately\* move the whole world.

**HERBERT READ**

### **THE SELF AND THE COMMUNITY**

Since Gandhi died, a martyr to his cause, it does not seem that his influence has grown throughout the world: it may even have diminished. I do not speak of his reputation in India, because I have no intimate knowledge of the climate of opinion there. But from a distance one sees only political confusion, and a determination to go forward with plans for industrialization and militarization which are contrary to the teaching of the Mahatma. I shall speak only of the state of mind among thoughtful people in Europe and America, and this moves towards despair and indifference rather than towards any effective non-violent resistance to the ever-increasing evils of modern civilization. Certain groups of poets and players have revolted against the social conventions of our time, and they will often express a belief in some form of Oriental mysticism, but their main desire is to escape from social responsibilities, from reality itself, and for this reason they often resort to narcotics of various kinds. They are far from any conscious self-discipline, and totally unaware that satyagraha is a science, a constructive programme that requires in the first place sacrifice of personal vanity and of all forms of self- display or "exhibitionism".

There are, of course, strong groups of pacifists in Europe and America, but they are very confused in their principles. They will be against war in the abstract, against the use of force as a sanction for political policies. But when it comes to a special case, such as the Israeli attack on Egypt, they will be ready to condone the use of force, or to stand aside and secretly rejoice in the successful outcome of this particular military action. There are others who will be pacifists when it is a question of opposing the American aggression in Vietnam, but advocates of the use of force to bring down the Smith regime in Rhodesia. When two aggressors are locked in conflict, as the communists and non-communists are in South-East Asia, the pacifist's sympathies are likely to be with the communists, and though these sympathies may not be translated into action, even the signing of a manifesto in favour of one militant party is an act

of violence—a cowardly act of violence. Better to fight than stand aside and cheer!

The most anomalous position into which a pacifist can be misled is the support of the various organizations advocating the establishment of some form of World Government. All forms of government, as Gandhi often pointed out (and as Tolstoy before him pointed out), inevitably seek the sanction of force, and all the plans for a World Government that I have seen make provision for an international police force, to which would be entrusted the final task of "enforcing" the decisions of an international (or super-national) tribunal. Force does not become sanctified by being de-nationalized—indeed, such a rootless (and ruthless) universal force would lose some of the inhibitions that still restrain a national force. Nations (and races) are organic; a World Government, or an International Police Force, is an inhuman fabrication. The history of totalitarianism shows the progressive dehumanization of the organizations called into being by the myth of unity.

In general the pacifist movements of Europe and America have been outlets for suppressed feelings of aggression, as some of their opponents have been quick to point out. It has not been realized that what Gandhi called satyagraha is not merely, or even chiefly, a political attitude. It is a *moral* attitude and involves the whole mind of man. But again, it is not a question of man in the abstract, or man as a species. We must begin with the individual man, with our own self, in fact. Satyagraha is, indeed, the psychological process of individuation, as described by Jung. Man cannot make peace with man until he has made peace within himself, peace between his self and his environment, which includes all other individuals with whom he comes into contact. Bharatan Kumarappa, in his editorial note to Gandhi's *Collected Writings on Nonviolent Resistance* (Schocken Books, New York, 1951) writes:

The practice of non-violence in the political sphere is not, therefore, a mere matter of preaching or even of establishing arbitration courts or Leagues of Nations, but involves building up brick by brick with patience and industry a new non-violent social and economic order. It depends

*ultimately* on banishing violence from the heart of the individual, and making him a transformed disciplined person.

I quarrel only with the word I have emphasized; for "ultimately" I would substitute "primarily". Dr. Kumarappa continues:

Gandhi's contribution lay in evolving the necessary technique and showing by example how all this can be done.

To insist on self-discipline as the first necessity may seem like an evasion of the social problems that confront us on all sides and are the immediate cause of all the conflict in the world. But it cannot be helped: an uncertain disciple, one without a clear understanding of what satyagraha means, will do more harm than good in the world, spreading confusion and despair.

Gandhi always insisted on the necessity of training for the individual before he was fit to take part in non-violent resistance. This training would be arduous—more arduous than military training, which does not touch the inner life of man. It would be as arduous as the training of those monks and friars who established Christ's gospel in the Age of Faith. When those monks and friars relaxed their discipline Christ's gospel ceased to be effective. Satyagraha is a religious faith—indeed, a distillation of the essential truth embodied in all the great religions. But religions are not established in a day, nor are they established by preaching. They are established by works—by the behaviour of individuals trained in a common discipline. Such individuals should indeed combine and have a common strategy, but as Gandhi said, "generally speaking this work of peace can only be done by local men in their own localities". It can only be done by personal presence and visible example. This is not to decry the activities of a great organizer of peace such as Vinoba, but from a world point of view Vinoba too is a local man working for peace in his own locality, a man of deeds and not of words.

The social conditions in the advanced industrial countries of Europe and America are so different from those prevailing in India that we still seek a method of training willing disciples in the arduous path of non-violent resistance, and I confess that I see no easy success in solving the problem.

Merely to declare oneself a pacifist and an anarchist (as I have done) is an idle gesture, though one's words and actions may influence a few people. But many of the methods advocated by Gandhi are not applicable to the complex industrial societies of Europe and America, corrupted by the overwhelming desire for worldly wealth, distracted by the incessant impact of mass media of entertainment. A voice in this wilderness is extinguished by the roar of machines. The social disease of alienation has so eaten into the fabric of our industrial society that the task of re-unification (or individuation, for individuation, as a psychological process, is a healing of alienated man) is not merely daunting, but essentially absurd. Nevertheless, as Camus said, one must embrace the absurd: "*Vivre, c'est jfaire vivre l' absurde.*" But to reach this absurd conclusion is to establish a point of departure. To reason, to make rational plans such as those already mentioned for a World Government, is to ignore man's innate irrationality. To make man into a rational being is neither possible nor desirable; it would deprive him of the will to live, which is not a rational plan, but a blind instinct. Gandhi recognized this and therefore admitted that satyagraha "presupposes the living presence and guidance of God. The leader depends not on his own strength but on that of God. He acts as the Voice within guides him". Always Gandhi turns to this irrational motivation. But the alienated minds of Western men do not (and cannot) hear this Voice. Their minds must be healed before they can communicate with God, or with any inner voice.

We continue to use the word "God" but it may be that modern man will refuse to use such mythic language. But he will learn to recognize the reality that was represented by such a word in the past. When he uses such a term as "the unconscious" he has already admitted the presence within him of an inner Voice, however difficult it may be to understand this Voice. It is true that there are materialists who deny the existence of the unconscious, but they cannot explain the irrationality of human society or offer any consolation to the afflicted. Their materialism makes them impotent. They are people who are incapable of self-realization, the first necessity in any process of social adaptation.

I believe that Gandhi, towards the end of his life, came to believe that the harmony, justice and freedom which we desire for the community can only be achieved by individuals who have attained a state of harmony in their own minds. I find this view confirmed by Thomas Merton in his Introduction to *Gandhi on Non-violence* (New Directions, New York, 1965):

In Gandhi's mind, non-violence was not simply a political tactic which was supremely useful and efficacious in liberating his people from foreign rule, in order that India might then concentrate on realizing its own national identity. On the contrary, the spirit of non-violence sprang from *an inner realization of spiritual unity in himself*. The whole Gandhian concept of non-violent action and satyagraha is incomprehensible if it is thought to be a means of achieving unity rather than as *the fruit of inner unity already achieved*.

Indeed this is the explanation for Gandhi's apparent failure (which became evident to him at the end of his own life). He saw that his followers had not reached the inner unity that he had realized in himself, and that their satyagraha was to a great extent a pretence, since they believed it to be a means to achieve unity and freedom, while he saw that it must necessarily be the *fruit of inner freedom*.

To those whose minds are dedicated to piovements and collective efforts of all kinds this may seem to be a pessimistic conclusion. But if it is generally accepted, it might be the beginning of a new era in politics. The processes would necessarily be piecemeal and slow, confined to individuals and small communities, and it is possible that catastrophic events will overtake us, and destroy the civilization we would save. But it would not be the first time in-the history of the world that civilization has been preserved .by the patience and humility, the suffering and sacrifice, of a few lonely individuals, a few isolated communities.

I have mentioned four of the requisite virtues, but there is a fifth which subsumes them all and which Gandhi did not hesitate to call love. In the West this word has been so abused and degraded that I for one find it faltering on my

lips. Even charity, the word based on the Latin *caritas* and used in the authorized version of the New Testament, is now a word of double meaning, and certainly does not convey what we mean by love in the context of human salvation. The degradation of sacred words corresponds to the spiritual degradation of modern man. An alienated vocabulary full of confusion reflects an alienated mind. The restoration of a true meaning to words like love is only possible as part of a process of spiritual healing. Meanwhile a *silent* dialogue may take place among the few, and this dialogic relation, as Martin Buber called it, is a question not of words, but of mutuality, of "an abstract but mutual experience of inclusion". This may reduce the apparent effectiveness of a political movement, but the first necessity is to learn to distrust words, even the word love, and to confront each other in deeds.

**RUKMINI DEVI**

### **SOME RECOLLECTIONS**

The centenary of the birth of a great person is an occasion when tributes are paid to him in large measure. I am sure that when we celebrate the hundredth birthday of Gandhiji the whole world will pay him tributes in speech and by the written word. I do not think that mere praise is necessary at this stage. I wish to say how, in my opinion, this centenary celebration can help to inspire others. The number of people who had first-hand knowledge of Gandhiji is dwindling and those remaining who received inspiration from him have to pass on this inspiration to others. This is a difficult task, because the direct influence of a great person is not easy to duplicate or to pass on to others.

I was not intimately associated with Gandhiji, but the few occasions when I saw him and met him have remained in my memory. I knew of him first from Dr. Annie Besant, who, as all Indians know, was interned by the British Government in Ootacamund because of her work for Indian Home Rule. I also heard of him from Dr. Arundale who was interned along with her. In those days, Dr. Besant was the leader of the movement for Indian freedom and our country was thrilled by her. In every village and city in this country, people praised her for her championing of the cause of India's freedom. While she was under internment, Gandhiji declared that he would march to Ootacamund with thousands of people to protest against her internment and to have her and her comrades, Dr. Arundale and Mr. B.P. Wadia, released. Fortunately, this demand made by Gandhiji was so impressive that it had immediate effect and she was released along with her companions.

The Home Rule movement was followed by the satyagraha movement led by Gandhiji. This also led to the ideological disagreement between him and Dr. Besant. She was against the advice given to the general public, including students, to break the law and wrote very strongly against the whole idea behind the non-cooperation movement. I was then only sixteen years of age and could not understand how such great people, each with a following of

thousands and each an example of high spiritual living, could disagree so deeply. Naturally, loving Dr. Besant as I did, I felt that Gandhiji could not really be a great man. So, in order to see this man whom so many adored and to understand why he was so loved, I went to a big meeting, where he was present. My first impression was disappointing for he looked like anyone else, not having a commanding presence, nor any outward impressiveness. Then I heard him speak. He had a soft voice and a beautiful smile and I thought that this simplicity itself was a charm that won hearts. I was deeply touched to see how people were moved by him. It was many years later that I had the opportunity to contact him personally. I also wish to say that though the disagreement between him and Dr. Besant was strong, in conversation Dr. Besant often told Dr. Arundale and me that Gandhiji's love for the poor people was unique and wonderful and that he was truly saintly and unselfish. She also said so in many public statements and articles. She always emphasized that it was possible to disagree and yet have a great regard for the personal character of an opponent as was the case between Arjuna and Bhishma. I am very happy to say that I saw this quality exemplified in both Dr. Besant and Gandhiji. When I met him several times during the last years of his life, he often spoke about Dr. Besant whom he said he "worshipped as a goddess", and offered to help me in the Besant Centenary celebrations. His greatness shone out and I was deeply moved.

When I first met him in those years, I was unknown to him except as the wife of Dr. Arundale. When Dr. Arundale passed away, Gandhiji wrote to me and said, "I should come to see you. But because I have a tight programme and I am getting old I am writing to ask if you will come and see me." I was amazed at the charming humility in this kind letter. Of course, I went to see him. He spoke beautifully about Dr. Arundale and said that he was one of the few men who at all times remained pure and loving as a child, and that if he had lived, he would have welcomed him (Gandhiji) to Adyar. He also explained to me his differences of opinion with Dr. Besant, but said that they had made no change in his feelings towards her. Here was true greatness I thought. There was no resentment, no pettiness and it came into my mind that this man was incapable

of being unkind. With this realization my attitude to him changed completely. From then on there were quite a few occasions when I met him. I was struck by one outstanding trait in his character. Gandhiji welcomed everybody as a friend, whether he had known them for many years or whether he was meeting them for the first time. This automatically made everybody his friend. He also had time for everybody, not only to see them, but even to write to them by hand, which he very often did. How could he have done this, unless he felt that each individual was special and important? This is how he was able to bring out the dormant qualities of those who came into contact with him. Naturally, adoration encourages imitation and I met many trying to talk and act like him. But they were unconvincing, because mere imitation of the outer form does not convince. Even today, my idea of celebrating the Gandhi Centenary is not necessarily by wearing khaddar, or a white cap, or spinning on the charkha, for these are merely outward symbols. If we are truly to celebrate it in the way he would have wished, we must renew in ourselves the feelings within and achieve a change of heart.

Gandhiji wanted dedicated men to work in every village. To him the village was the heart of India, of our culture, of our arts, of our spiritual heritage. His idea was that we had a great deal of inspiration to receive from the villages. Since his passing, we have forgotten the villages and our community development and village programmes have only helped to spoil the beauty of the villages and to kill the spirit of peace and cooperative co-existence.

Among his greatest contributions was the promotion of village industries and of healthy living. He had firm faith in natural things and I would say he was the first man in India to encourage what is known as health food stores and reform houses where pure and healthy foods were brought to the notice of the people. Unfortunately, the Khadi Gramodyog Bhavans sell unpolished rice, unpolished sugar and such products only on a small scale. If this movement is built up to include many healthy and pure items, the health of the nation will grow as it can in no other way. It would be a marvellous development. Gandhiji combined ideals with a practical way of putting them into effect. However difficult they

were to practise, he made ideals the basis for all work. For example, he put his ideas of *ahimsa* into action and wore only shoes made of *ahimsa* leather (meaning leather made from the hides of animals that had died naturally). We must remember that, in his time, there was no significant development of plastics and other synthetic materials. He also encouraged *ahimsa* silk—silk made from cocoons from which the silk-worm moths had not been killed but had flown away.

Nature-cure was another idea that he promoted. He was convinced that if people learnt to live healthily and in a way that was close to nature, disease could be prevented. He did not believe in the use of medicines and he detested vivisection and animal experimentation. It is known to the world that he applied the principles of *ahimsa* in its truest sense to all activities of life and that, in this, he was a great pioneer. Unfortunately, many who speak of *ahimsa* and non-violence as doctrines enunciated by him relate these principles only to the winning of political independence. To me what is most important is the application of the idea to all activities of life, arising naturally out of reverence for life and a consequent attitude of harmlessness towards all forms of life. Unfortunately, his faith in his fellow human beings was such that he did not realize that the masses could not live up to his ideals. Therefore, even his non-violent satyagraha movements led sometimes to violence and this caused him much grief.

Everybody talks of him as the "Father of the Nation" and pays tributes to him saying that he was responsible for finally winning India's freedom. Yet when India became free, the way of life we adopted turned out to be far different from what he had wished for the country. The hatred between religious groups caused many cruelties and misery and there was large-scale bloodshed on the eve of independence. It was, therefore, natural that we should have wanted India to be a secular state, but the concept of the secular state did not mean a country without spiritual leadership or ideals. I am certain if Gandhiji had worked only for India's political freedom without any reference to the spiritual life, he would not have had the following of the masses. They followed him

because they felt that he spoke for them, that he had no personal ambition and, most important of all, that he had a dedicated and saintly character. Even at the very last breath of his life he invoked the name of Sri Rama. Yet in our secular state there is no attempt made to bring religion, philosophy or spiritual ideals within the scope of our education. On this occasion of the centenary, should we not ask ourselves whether we have not betrayed the trust that had been bequeathed to us by our great leaders? What have we done for our younger generation? What heritage have we passed on to them? What examples have we set before them? What knowledge have we given to them of the spirit of India and of the ideals of Indian life? Are we not discarding the most precious principles which Gandhiji himself preached? There is violence among human beings. The slaughter of animals is on the increase. More and more piggeries are being opened. Animal food is being promoted in the name of health. We are more westernized in our outlook, in our clothes, in our daily life than we ever were in the whole of our history. We promote ideas that lead to a completely materialistic civilization.

Gandhiji said of animal experimentation that it is "the blackest of all the black crimes that man is at present committing against God and His fair creation". Yet we have never stopped the export of monkeys to foreign laboratories in order to earn foreign exchange and in our own country we are opening more and more laboratories for animal experimentation. Is this in keeping with the spirit of Gandhiji? This and many similar questions we have to ask ourselves. His passionate interest in promoting kindness to animals can be gathered from the following words which I am quoting from his speeches:

Sacrifice of animals in the name of religion is a remnant of barbarism.... It ill becomes us to invoke in our daily prayers the blessings of God, the Compassionate, if we in turn do not practise elementary compassion towards our fellow creatures.... To my mind the life of a lamb is no less precious than that of a human being. I should be unwilling to take the life of a lamb for the sake of the human body. I hold that the more helpless a creature, the more entitled it is to protection by man from the

cruelty of man.... We should be able to refuse to live if the price of living be the torture of sentient beings. . . .

I myself have had the great good fortune of spending some unforgettable moments with Gandhiji. The last time I saw him was about twenty days before his untimely death. He himself had no artistic understanding or ability, but he could appreciate art when it was spiritual in expression and that is why when I met him for the last time, he talked to me about the dance and my way of expressing it. The last thing that he said to me was: "I will not live much longer. I do not know anything about Bharata Natyam which is considered to be spiritual, but I would like to see it." Somehow he knew the end was coming. The end was most tragic, but death came to him as to a hero. He would not be happy to see the India of today. In fact, towards the end of his life, seeing the violence in pre- partition India, he was shocked and shaken by the fact that his fellow citizens had not lived up to the high standards of life that he had placed before them. At the end his feeling was of sorrow, but there was no bitterness in that sorrow. This was the great characteristic of a generous heart.

Whether it is too late or not for us to attempt to rekindle the highest impulses in the hearts of our countrymen and to set an example to the world not of industrialization but of integrity and character, I do not know. But I am sure that if we would truly allow our imagination to recapture the spirit of our great leaders, and of Gandhiji in particular, we need not lose hope. We must endeavour in every way to speak and think and act according to our highest ideals so that this India which unites all religions and races into one, can speak with one voice and give a clarion call of peace to the world so torn by wars and violence to all beings—human and sub-human. To me this would be the ideal way to mark the centenary of the birth of this great Indian.

**K. SANTHANAM**

### **GANDHI AND POSTERITY**

Our difficulty in understanding and appreciating the great men of the past who lived before the age of printing is the lack of authentic information. Even in the case of Socrates whose dialogues have come down to us through the brilliant and poetic pen of Plato, we have a rather vague picture of a meddling old man fond of verbal hairsplitting and sophistry. The accounts we have of Buddha and Jesus were written by disciples long after the death of the masters and contain many supernatural and miraculous episodes which must have been current among superstitious people.

The difficulty for posterity in understanding the great men of our time will be the superabundance of detailed and unimpeachable information which it will be difficult to digest and co-ordinate. This is particularly the case with Mahatma Gandhi. Already the books written about him run into hundreds. The Collected Works published by the Ministry of Information, Government of India, which are to contain everything written and spoken by Gandhiji from his boyhood to the day of assassination covering over 60 years, are likely to run into some 70 volumes of 600 pages each. Together with other books containing selections from his writings on various topics and those written about him by those who came into direct personal contact with him, they constitute a vast mass which it would be difficult for any individual, to wade through. There was hardly any topic in the world on which Gandhiji did not think or express some opinion some time or other. Ardent admirers have not been wanting who have tried to compile these thoughts and convert them into systematized teachings on all aspects of life and society. Thus we have books on the economic philosophy of Gandhi, the political system envisaged by him, his theory of education, his views on naturopathy and hydropathy and other manifold subjects.

While these particular expositions of Gandhiji's beliefs and teachings have their own value, there is a danger that the true Gandhi may be lost amid the confused jumble of casual observations and deep-rooted convictions, the

essential teachings and non-essential suggestions, personal eccentricities and the profound inner faith. Faced with a similar task with respect to Vedic literature, the great Sankaracharya boldly divided them into Karma Kanda (works) and Jnana Kanda (knowledge) and declared that it was (the latter that should constitute the imperishable heritage of men.

I think a similar operation will have to be performed with respect to Gandhian literature. I am convinced that Gandhiji's views on politics, economics, education, medicine and similar topics should be treated as carrying no greater importance than that of any other person who could think freely without being overwhelmed by current conventional thoughts and traditions. They do not mark him out as one of the greatest men of the century. Rather they should be considered as amiable foibles which deserve to be noted on account of his greatness.

It is therefore of the greatest importance that attention should be concentrated on those aspects which constituted his distinct contribution to human thought and progress. In my view they can be divided into four broad categories, namely, (1) his unique personality, (2) the fundamental virtues on which his ethical system is based, (3) the technique of satyagraha, his matchless weapon for fighting the evils of mankind, and (4) the qualities of leadership which enabled him to guide and lead millions without any influence or power derived from social status, wealth or other sources.

Future generations will have great difficulty in visualizing his personality. They will read that wherever he went, men, women and children came out in their thousands. Often he spoke to them in a language they did not understand. Generally he spoke only for a few minutes, exhorting them to spin and to give up untouchability, intoxicating drinks and foreign cloth. But most of them came merely to see him and feel blessed.

Mere adoration by the masses may be ascribed to some mass hysteria promoted by publicity but the respectful admiration of Viceroys and Governors and foreign correspondents will convince them that his unique personality was no illusion of the ignorant masses. The veneration and affection of Gopal Krishna

Gokhale, V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, G.A. Natesan and others who disliked his views and methods of action will provide ample proof that, as a man, he stood far above his fellow men.

His personality was compounded of many qualities which it is hard to find in the same person. He had almost absolute control over his word, thought and action. An atmosphere of high seriousness always surrounded him but there was not the slightest trace of priggishness or conceit. He was always genial and pleasant and willing to joke and to laugh. But he never wasted words, and spoke with the same brevity and carefulness with which he wrote. He was extremely strict and ascetic in his own personal life, but he was extremely tolerant and even indulgent to others.

In August 1920, he was travelling from Madras to Calicut with Maulana Shaukat Ali, Rajaji and others. I had the privilege of being in the party accompanying him. At one station, volunteers brought him his goat's milk and at the same time placed a plate with a big chunk of red meat before the Maulana sitting by his side. I was so shocked that I tried to get away from the scene to a remote corner. Gandhiji saw my nervousness but merely smiled and proceeded with his breakfast. At Calicut, his Gujarati host entertained the members of his party and others at a sumptuous dinner. While we were eating, Gandhiji passed through the dining hall and looking at our plates filled with various dishes, he laughed and said, "So this is how you are going to fight the British."

Once there was a report in the papers that at a cocktail party in Delhi attended by Pandit Motilal Nehru, who was then the leader of the Congress Party in the Indian Legislative Assembly, the then Finance Member of the Viceroy's Council remarked that he was not afraid of prohibition propaganda so long as Motilalji was the leader of the opposition. At that time, there was a vigorous campaign going on all over the country for boycott of liquor shops and many workers had gone to jail in that connection. Some of us approached Gandhiji with the report about Motilalji's public indulgence in drinking. He merely smiled and said, "When you become Motilaljis, I shall give you also the necessary exemption."

We find however from the Collected Works that he privately took the matter up with Motilalji!

At the Belgaum Congress, Gandhiji made a moving speech advocating spinning franchise. We all knew that Chittaranjan Das was strongly opposed to the proposal which he considered impracticable and undesirable. But at the end of the speech when the motion was put to vote, it was supported by Das and his followers. When the meeting was over, they crowded round Deshbandhu Das and asked him why he had suddenly changed. He said:

Gandhiji appeared to be like a flame of fire and I felt that I should prefer to be consumed by that flame rather than resist it.

Innumerable examples like these can be quoted. There was hardly any person who came into contact with Gandhiji who was not filled with reverence and affection even though he did not agree with Gandhiji's views. As early as 1908, Rev. J.J. Doke wrote:

He is one of those outstanding characters with whom to talk is a liberal education, whom to know is to love.

It is as an exponent of moral values that Gandhiji will be best remembered for all time. He was a deeply religious man and he started his waking day with early morning prayers and ended it with similar prayers. His profound belief in God was more intuitive and emotional than intellectual and metaphysical. Occasionally he agreed with the *Advaita* conception of *Brahman* but more often he was the devout *bhakta*. But by and large, religion was a personal matter with him and he never tried to convert anyone to his views. So far as others were concerned, he was content to say that God was Truth and Truth was God. Religion was to him merely the background of a righteous life and it is the elaboration of his conception of righteousness that constitutes his greatest service to humanity.

According to Gandhiji, righteousness is the blending into one integrated whole of truth, non-violence and love. These virtues are dynamic and not static and the righteousness consists of continuous growth in these three directions. It

involves an intense awareness of right and wrong and good and evil. This awareness should be continually amplified and purified by experience.

Non-violence is not merely abstention from physical violence. Such abstention may be a good beginning but it should grow into absolute freedom from bitterness and hatred even towards those whom one considers to be deliberately evil and wicked. Gandhiji used to say that absolute non-violence was only a limit towards which a man could grow but which he could never attain. His conception of love was that of active compassion. Gandhiji had no use for mere sentimental sympathy with poverty or suffering. He believed in active and unremitting work and service to reduce these evils, whatever the result of such work may be. When he resolved to fight untouchability, he immediately created the necessary organization, the Harijan Sevak Sangh, gathered workers and collected funds and formulated programmes for the uplift of Harijans. His fervent advocacy of the spinning-wheel was based on the fact that this was the one direct immediate relief he could give to the poor and unemployed villagers and he organized the All-India Spinners' Association with branches all over India.

Satyagraha is the practical application of truth, nonviolence and love to fight social evils and march towards the ideal of human brotherhood. Owing to the particular situations in which he found himself, law-breaking and jail-going became its chief manifestations. But its essential content is non-cooperation with evil and cooperation with good, subject to the condition that either should be governed by truth and non-violence. Unfortunately, Gandhiji was assassinated just when he would have been able to elaborate the applications of satyagraha to the affairs of Free India and her international relations.

I cannot help feeling that the moral force which India could have exercised in the United Nations and in her foreign relations would have been much greater if she had advocated the principles of non-violence and satyagraha consistently.

As the leader of the Indian struggle for freedom, Gandhiji's achievement was not inferior to that of any of his great contemporaries like Lenin, Churchill or Roosevelt. On account of the conditions which he had imposed on himself, his

authority was entirely moral and his orders and instructions had no sanctions other than voluntary acceptance of his leadership. Yet no one was ever obeyed by so many for such a long time. He never fumbled or equivocated. His decisions were quick, clear and precise. He practised the greatest economy of time and was always punctual in his engagements. He knew when and how to compromise and he was always anxious to carry his co-workers with him through persuasion and consent rather than by mere submission.

**MIKHAIL SHOLOKHOV**

### **GREATNESS OF HEART**

Amid the cruel and tragic events of human history and the development of national culture, there is inspiring evidence of people uniting for the sake of good, of a mighty upsurge of the human soul. The finest pages in the chronicle of nations' destinies, the history of countries, are devoted to the struggle for progress, freedom and a happy future.

Each nation conducts this struggle, builds the future and promotes its national culture under very different conditions. It is, therefore, quite natural that the desire of nations for understanding, which is yielding more and more abundant fruit, should be manifesting itself with growing intensity in our day.

In spite of the intrigues and pressure of the forces that desire to disunite nations for the sake of their mercenary aims, our rapidly advancing times are bringing to the fore that which is common to all nations and helps to rally and unite their lofty efforts, regardless of the different destinies of each nation.

Human thinking holds in high esteem what has been done for each nation by its great sons, the ideals that inspired them and their life's accomplishment. One of these noble figures in the history of mankind is Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

In a book dedicated to the centenary of the birth of this outstanding leader of India's national liberation movement I, a Soviet writer and one of the large team of contributors, do not, obviously, propose to tell the Indian reader of the life and vast literary heritage of Gandhi, of his constant quests and the complex evolution of his views—all this will be dealt with by other contributors, who have a special knowledge of the subject. What I should like to do is to convey to the Indian reader what in Gandhi's image as a socio-political leader evokes the greatest response in my heart as in the hearts of many Soviet people. It is, thus, by no means a fully rounded portrait, which I would never have undertaken to write, but reflections on some aspects of Gandhi's versatile activities that I present here.

Nobody can ignore the remarkable fact that there was rapprochement between Gandhi and Lev Tolstoi, the great Russian writer. This is a striking example of how the possibility of reaching understanding and unity for the sake of progress already existed in those years, despite the tremendous difference in the historical conditions under which the peoples of India and Russia lived. I shall, perhaps, mention only Tolstoi's "Letter to a Hindu", which was highly appreciated by Gandhi. Without examining the content and significance of the philosophical views of Gandhi and Tolstoi, I should like to emphasize what made the two passionately seek ways and means of struggle in both philosophy and practical activity. It was protest against oppression and the ability to feel the pain and suffering of their own and other peoples that lay at the bottom of their quests and drew these two Titans together: a dedicated champion of India's liberation and a great Russian writer and humanitarian.

I hope the reader in India will not misunderstand me, thinking that here is a writer and Communist out to impose his own point of view and interpret the facts in his own way. I am not trying to impose anything, simply looking closely, meditating and sharing my thoughts.

Aware of the imperative requirements of the present day, I feel bound to pay the closest attention to such clear-cut features of Gandhi as his hostility to racism, the idea of the superiority of some nations over others, and to his noble

intolerance of racial and colonial oppression. Worthy of respect and serious attention is Gandhi's statement: "I reject the patriotism that tries to rise at the expense of the unhappiness or exploitation of other nations."

For many long years Gandhi combated the enmity and strife engendered by various religious faiths. This struggle was evidently dictated by the foundations on which Gandhi's ethical concepts rested, by his ideas of the general laws of morality. But in practice it acquired a new, vast, vital, patriotic and political content: it opposed the desire of the colonialists to follow the counsel of their distant predecessors, the ancient Roman enslavers of other peoples, namely, *"Divide et Impera"*.

Gandhi regarded as one of the main objectives of his life the demolition of age-old, traditional dogmas that gave birth to that terrible phenomenon in the life of India which he himself called the "shame of untouchability". Let us recall that the "untouchables", a caste of pariahs, comprised nearly twenty per cent of the country's population. If Gandhi had failed to fulfil this civic duty, a huge social stratum would have been completely left out of the national struggle for the country's liberation from colonial tyranny. Had that happened, the bright goal which Gandhi defined as swaraj—an independent motherland—would not have been achieved, as he himself was fully aware.

Then take Gandhi's struggle for the emancipation of Indian women, his struggle against their seclusion. He saw this half of his people as a great potential social force. And he sought to unite all the forces of the nation in the struggle to make the long-awaited aim of "swaraj" a reality.

Small wonder that Jawaharlal Nehru gave Gandhi the proud appellation of "Symbol of India's determination to secure liberation", saying that he "instinctively felt the heartbeat of the nation".

Gandhi's fight to have the "music of the loom" sound in every Indian home was evidence of his desire to give employment to everybody and, probably, also of his under-estimation of the significance of industrial development. But one cannot lose sight of the fact that this was a unique quest because he believed that the clothes woven by the hands of millions of Indians would make it

possible to say "No" to the attempts of the colonialists to consolidate their rule through a textile invasion.

Thus, every aspect of Gandhi's activities showed him to be a persevering and, in his way, consistent opponent of the colonial system, a man who ardently loved his country and desired its freedom and independence.

Yes, Gandhi strove towards a "peaceful revolution" through "non-violence". We, in our country, likewise strove to accomplish the revolution with the least possible bloodshed and without civil war. The non-peaceful development of our revolution was forced upon our working people by the internal counter-revolution and the armed intervention of fourteen imperialist states who were out to crush our freedom and extinguish the flame of our revolution.

These were different paths. But we cannot fail to appreciate Gandhi's belief in the strength of the masses, for revolution is always a movement of the broad mass of the people. Moreover, we cannot fail to appreciate that the logic of struggle brought Gandhi round to the slogan: "Quit India", which struck at the colonialists.

Nobody can forget that in the years when the Second World War broke out Gandhi came out against Nazism and expressed deep sympathy for the Soviet people. He was among those who protested against the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, urged the banning of nuclear weapons and the peaceful settlement of outstanding issues between peoples, and called for general disarmament.

Gandhi's life and work were an unceasing quest: a quest for truth, for his concept of morality, for specific methods of political struggle, and for philosophical principles. The complexity and versatility of this quest mirrored the peculiarity and complexity of India's development.

The people of India have for all time added to Gandhi's name the wonderful word: Mahatma—Great Heart. I would say that the heart of this great son of the people was impressive where it absorbed and mirrored the continuous quests of

the Indian people themselves—their patriotism and their desire for freedom and independence.

Such a heart is truly great.

#### EARL SORENSEN

#### GREAT SOUL

The birth of Mohandas Gandhi in October 1869 was similar to that of every child and he shared with all infants who survived the same human nature. Nevertheless, whatever be the genetic or other explanations, he was unique in his combination of several divergent elements.

He inherited Hindu religious traditions and yet revered the Christian New Testament and Jesus Christ without ceasing to be a Hindu; he belonged to a Bania caste family, but sought to emancipate Harijans from the humiliation of being untouchable outcastes; he strove to integrate his religious and moral values with political activity; he extolled *ahimsa* although fighting strenuously against British imperial domination; he married at thirteen years of age, begat children and then lived celibate through half his lifetime; he had genuine humility and a somewhat imperious temperament; he endured imprisonment without malice to anyone; and he was a supreme Indian patriot possessing a deep sense of our common humanity and the interdependence of all nations and peoples.

Others have had similar individual associations, but these in him became so vitalized as to make him a dominantly powerful leader in the national struggle for independence and a personality with world-wide influence. As an Englishman I honour him as a figure whose spirit and example is unconfined to the context of his mother-country, for although inevitably his primary service was to India the qualities of his life have enriched mankind. He desired no slavish sycophancy and among his Congress friends in the prolonged nationalist movement he received and respected differences of judgment. Penetrating his

human fallibility were his spiritual and ethical convictions, majestic courage, intellectual shrewdness and dedicated resolution. I disagreed with him in some respects, but I am profoundly grateful for his abiding inspiration.

Many British and other non-Indians who were critical of him found their hostility fade when they confronted him, and in the courts where he stood on trial his prosecutors became impressed by his integrity and magnanimity. The statue of him that will stand for all time in the centre of London will visually testify British appreciation of his qualities, and though he would have been greatly disturbed if he had known of this memorial I believe it is right that his aversion has not been allowed to inhibit the desire permanently and publicly to record his significance to our age.

As we know, Gandhiji had first-hand experience of British life, even if less so than Jawaharlal Nehru, when he received his legal training in London. My first glimpse of him was during his attendance at the 1931 Round Table Conference when one evening he spoke at the Quaker Friends Hall, London. Refusing accommodation at a West End hotel he chose to sleep at the late Muriel Lester's Kingsley Hall settlement in the East End. I lived only five miles away and although I had no chance of private talk with him, because of his manifold Conference engagements, I was among those with whom he talked collectively. I know of middle-aged people who remember trailing with him as children when he sauntered in the early morning around near-by streets.

When, however, I was a member of the 1946 Parliamentary Goodwill Mission to India I had opportunities of meeting him both with my colleagues and personally. At 7 a.m. one morning I strolled with his arm in mine on a roof top as we talked of mutual religious and kindred interests more than of politics. My daughter, Moira, having been stranded for a time in South Africa during the war, often visited his son Manilal and his wife at Phoenix near Durban, the Settlement founded by his father in the years of his South African agitation. Both Manilal and his brother Devdas, came to my home in Walthamstow where we conversed about their father and his principles. My direct human contacts have been slight compared with those of others, but the privilege I have had of

familiarity with writings about Mahatma Gandhi and by him empowers me to assess his unique character. I cherish the inscribed book he gave me as a memento of our talks together. With him I have felt an intimate communion of spirit, as others have done when they transcend particular racial, domestic and cultural legacies. Such fellowship is immune from mortal severance.

My country is very different from India, but the long historical association of our two countries has had good as well as bad elements in the relationship. Now that British imperialist sovereignty has been replaced I hope that the bridges fortified by equal national dignity and responsibility will enable the peoples of both lands within the Commonwealth to sustain a lasting friendship. To this Gandhiji made a rich contribution by his appreciation of some British qualities and by his capacity even during the heat of conflict to discriminate between the intolerable arrogance of the British Raj and the democratic heart of the British people. When India became involved in the second World War, if admittedly under duress, Mohandas Gandhi grieved at the sufferings imposed on British and other fellow-human beings. I feel sure he also realized that had a Nazi conqueror ruled India the possibility of civilized mutual agreement for Indian liberation might have been far more ruthlessly resisted, judging from Nazi perverted racialism and treatment of those subjugated by Nazi power.

In any case to the one whose birth we commemorate we owe an incalculable debt for his unwavering fidelity to moral and spiritual values, his emphasis on generosity despite all provocation and his exemplary guidance in the practice of non-violent satyagraha devoid of poisonous hatred. Even if satyagraha cannot always logically be applied the underlying spirit of the Gandhian teaching survived the arduous negotiations over the time and manner of British withdrawal and was a solvent for residual resentments. The partition of India and its dreadful immediate aftermath gave Gandhi anguish, as would the continuing unhappy tensions between India and Pakistan. With hindsight we can argue that by this or that action tragedy would have been avoided, but this is now futile speculation. At the time of decision the participants were desperately over-strained by their exacting efforts for contrary conceptions of

what they deemed right or expedient and all have common human responsibility for failure to ensure that the surgical operation would not evoke appalling reactions. Did not Gandhi himself once confess he had made a blunder of Himalayan magnitude when the hartal he believed would be a vast peaceful demonstration violently broke in some districts beyond disciplined restraint?

He failed to recognize how the noblest intentions can become deplorably mistranslated by those who have not the requisite spiritual endowment. Notwithstanding such fallibility the moral influence of Mahatma Gandhi was profound and continues to be so now it is more diffused. His name will never be erased from the pages of history focussed on India, nor will future readers be ignorant of what he sought to do for his people with whose massive struggle he was identified. He attempted, with much success, to charge that mass movement with moral components normally preserved only for personal life and thus relate inescapable political agitation with all its complexities to ethical obligations. He inspires those who also strive with poorer aptitude to emulate him within their own domain. His spirit shines forth in these words of a letter he sent to the Viceroy prior to leading a procession to the seashore for the purpose of defying the Salt Laws:

My personal faith is absolutely clear. I cannot intentionally hurt anything that lives, much less fellow-human beings though they may do the greatest wrong to me and mine ... While, therefore, I hold British rule to be a curse, I do not intend to harm a single Englishman or any legitimate interest he may have in India. . . . I do not want to harm your people. I want to serve them even as I want to serve my own. . . .

Strange words, but typical of a myriad others by the man who believed that by his criterion of Truth devotion to human freedom must always rely on the armoury of goodwill. So armed he fought against imperialist pride, repression and injustice and bequeathed to all who strive to overcome evil an example and a spirit no assassin can ever destroy.

**SRI RAM**

### **GANDHIJI: WHAT MADE HIM WHAT HE WAS**

At any time in the world, in any country, there are to be found exceedingly few whose devotion to truth in conduct is totally unqualified and who have been willing to sacrifice everything which men love, and even face humiliation of the worst sort to uphold that principle. Tolstoy was one such and there have been others who can be named.

Gandhiji, as Shri M.K. Gandhi is respectfully called, has recorded the fact that he looked upon Tolstoy as an exemplar and model, and he himself was of the same class and category. Even when he undertook proceedings in the field of political action, which seemed dictated by exigencies and had the design of popular appeal, in his own mind he followed Truth. Thus he invented the term "satyagraha", which unfortunately has been widely used as a fair label to cloak every form of indiscipline and even violence for enforcing one's demand. Although this was inevitable, because truth and mass psychology go ill together, yet the fact that Gandhiji stood for Truth shines undimmed.

At any time in the world, in any country, there are to be found exceedingly few whose devotion to non-violence (*ahimsa*) is unqualified and who while unflinchingly following the path they consider to be the path of righteousness, would bear any blow, suffer any violence, rather than retaliate with resentment or injury to fellow-beings. Gandhiji was also of this class, along with Tolstoy who was also a pacifist and wrote movingly against the slaughter of animals. I mention Tolstoy again because the comparison is so obvious.

It was said of Socrates that the oracle considered him the wisest man in Greece, because he knew his own ignorance, while others did not know theirs. In a somewhat similar vein it may be said: All men make mistakes. In leading an ignorant mass of people one might make Himalayan mistakes, as Gandhiji said of himself when the situation got out of hand. But he is a rare individual who frankly and simply, in a childlike manner, admits his own mistakes.

What made Gandhiji great was his renunciation of every possession for the helping of his country, the uncompromising practice of his principles, and his refusal to bear any resentment. India has travelled far from the ideals he proclaimed, which those who followed him accepted only in name, for purposes of their own. But it is those ideals, however imperfectly followed, exemplified by some perfectly in her history, which made India unique among the nations. Let us hope she will remember them when the present excitements are past, and revert to her ancient allegiance.

U THANT

## NON-VIOLENCE AND WORLD PEACE

I respond with pleasure to the invitation from Dr. Radhakrishnan to make a brief contribution to the Gandhi Centenary Commemoration Volume. I do so because the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi have profoundly influenced movements in other parts of the world, including the civil rights movement in the United States, and also because many of his ideas are in line with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Charter calls upon us to "promote social progress and better standards of life and larger freedom". The Charter also reaffirms "faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small". The Charter has as its goal a world where no country is subject to the tutelage of another. The Charter calls upon us to refrain from the threat or use of force.

It was in an effort to assert the dignity and worth of the human person that Gandhiji started the first passive resistance movement called "Satyagraha" in South Africa at the beginning of this century. As its connotation so clearly shows, Gandhiji believed that the weapon of truth, if firmly grasped and purposefully used, could lead to peaceful change without resort to violence.

This was indeed one of the great ideas of our century.

Gandhiji has rightly been regarded as the apostle of *ahimsa* or non-violence, a concept enshrined in the teaching of practically all the great religions. It is really one of the basic tenets of my own religion, Buddhism. Intolerance, violence and the spirit of persecution are foreign to Buddhism. Since the day the Buddha began his holy mission of converting man by the wisdom of his all-redeeming love, not a drop of blood has ever been shed on His account and for His sake. The Buddha taught his disciples never to show anger nor bear malice if others speak against Him. However, non-violence should not be considered as a negative concept. Gandhiji believed that non-violent methods employed in

key areas could achieve more enduring results than those obtained by the use of force. It was important to him that the results should be achieved by peaceful means because the means were as significant as the end itself.

A familiar phrase one often hears is that "the end justifies the means". Gandhiji categorically rejected this idea; he did not believe that a noble end could be achieved by ignoble means. To him the means merged in the end, and the end sanctified rather than justified the means. Here again is a profound thought which all of us at the United Nations should keep in mind when pursuing the goals of the Charter.

Gandhiji used the technique of non-violent pressure or passive resistance successfully to achieve the independence of India from British rule. However, his concern with social evils in India was as great as his concern with the political independence of India. In fact, one of the earliest uses of satyagraha in India was directed against the prevalent practice of untouchability in a village in Southern India. Thus, Gandhiji asserted the importance of the dignity and worth of the human person and the principle of equality of all human beings regardless of their caste or creed. The pursuit of social justice in India was an abiding concern of Mahatma Gandhi.

As I have said on an earlier occasion, the principle of nonviolence is also a basic concept of the Charter. One of the most fundamental principles to which Member States have committed themselves is to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force. History teaches us that no durable solution can be found for any human problem except by persuasion and by common consent. The use of violence is double-edged, as violence is bound, by the doctrine of reciprocal action, to provoke violence in turn. Before long, we find that the rule of law has given place to the law of the jungle. We have therefore to go back to first principles and to observe the Charter commitment to refrain from the threat or use of force in international relations.

It is a strange irony that the apostle of non-violence should have died at the hands of an assassin twenty years ago. This, of course, was not the first time that a man who had preached peace all his life died a violent death, and I am

afraid it will not be the last. This does not mean, however, that the principle of non-violence or the imperative of peaceful change has been falsified. On the other hand, it is a vindication of the abiding value of non-violence; it shows that those who follow the path of violence are compelled to resort to violence to end the life of a prophet of non-violence because they cannot hope to win over the minds of the public to follow the methods of violence that they advocate. History repeats itself, and the recent assassination of the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. seems to me to fall into the same pattern and at the same time to prove that the universal revulsion of feeling that violence provokes only helps to enhance the value of non-violence.

Today we live in a violent world. Everywhere there is a mood of restlessness and a desire for change. I have often expressed the view that if people in authority the world over cannot read the writing on the wall and accept the necessity for change, inevitably change will be brought about by violent means. I believe that, in line with the Charter, changes brought about by peaceful means are not only more desirable but more durable.

Gandhiji's philosophy, to me, has a meaning and a significance far beyond the confines of his country or of his time. Many of his principles have universal application and eternal validity, and I hope the passing years will show that his faith in the efficacy of non-violent pressure as an agent for peaceful change is as justified today all over the world as it was in his time in India.

## ARNOLD JOSEPH TOYNBEE

### A TRIBUTE

Gandhiji's epithet is not just honorific; it tells the truth about him. He was indeed "a great soul". He may have been the greatest of any that have made their appearance in our time. He was undoubtedly the peer of the greatest souls of previous ages from which we have surviving records of outstanding personalities. This is my individual judgment, and I believe it coincides with the judgment of most other people who have any knowledge of what Gandhi was and of what he did. But am I perhaps prejudiced in Gandhi's favour through the accident of my being an Englishman?

I am conscious of the possibility that I may be prejudiced because, in my judgment, Gandhi was as great a benefactor of my country as he was of his own. Gandhi made it impossible for the British to go on ruling India, but at the same time he made it possible for us to abdicate without rancour and without dishonour. He made it possible for the government of India to pass back out of British into Indian hands without mutual bloodshed, and for the Indian and the British peoples to become friends, after parting company with each other politically, on a footing of equality—the natural human relation between fellow human beings, but a relation which cannot be established so long as people are implicated with each other in the artificial and estranging relation of rulers and subjects. In helping the British to extricate themselves from this entanglement, Gandhi did them a signal service; for it is easier to acquire an empire than to disengage from one.

In 1917, in the course of the First World War, the Parliament at Westminster had pledged itself to give self-government to India by stages; and, in taking this auspicious decision, it had faithfully represented the feelings and wishes of the British people. Our hearts had been touched by the generosity of the Indian people's reaction to our critical situation in Europe at the time. So far from trying to take advantage of the straits in which their foreign rulers now found themselves, Indians had volunteered—and this in hundreds of thousands—for

active service in the British forces in France. The feeling in India was, I think, that in spite of the fact that the British had been withholding from India the self-government that India had already been demanding, Britain did stand for liberty on the whole and in principle; that she was fighting for liberty in Europe now; and that, if she won this war, and won it with India's support, Britain's conscience would be likely to move her to give to India the liberty that Britain was fighting to preserve for herself.

This was indeed the effect of India's reaction on British hearts; the decision taken in Britain in 1917 was sincere, and the British did start to take steps to carry it out; but voluntarily to give up power, when one holds power, goes against the grain of human nature; in honouring their pledge to emancipate India by stages, the British might have 'dragged their feet' till the Indian people lost faith and patience; there might then have been revolutionary violence on the Indian side and repressive counter-violence on the British side; and, if there had been bloodshed on a large scale, the situation might have got out of hand. The likelihood that the story might have taken this tragic turn is indicated by a long series of melancholy historical precedents. Gandhi gave the course of events a new turn, and this new turn gave the story a happy ending for the relations between Britain and the people of the subcontinent—though not, unfortunately, for the Hindu and Muslim communities as between themselves.

This is why, being British, I might perhaps be unduly partial to Gandhi. Would my judgment on him perhaps be less favourable if the accident of my birthplace had made me, say, an Iranian or an Ethiopian or a Swede? I do not think so; for Gandhi's service to India and Britain has been, by its very nature, a service to the whole of mankind. Gandhi found a way of bringing about a great political change—a transfer of political power on the grand scale—without bloodshed and without animosity. He not only found the way; he moved hundreds of millions of people to follow him in taking it. In achieving this as between the Indian and the British peoples, Gandhi set an example for the rest

of the world to follow. He taught mankind a moral lesson in the field of politics, and this on the eve of the opening of the Atomic Age.

The discovery of a technique for mastering, for human use, the titanic physical power latent in atoms is symbolic of Man's cumulative progress in technology and science since the date when our pre-human ancestors became human. The immediate use of this master-stroke of science and technology for making and employing a devastating lethal weapon is symbolic of the disparity between Man's progressiveness in technology and his backwardness in the domain of human relations—that is to say, in morals. The greater the material power that Man's scientific and technological prowess places in his hands, the wider grows the gap between his material success and his spiritual failure and the greater grows the danger that he will misuse his enhanced material power for the wicked and insane purpose of destroying himself. The invention and use of the atomic weapon has made this danger acute, and this has made it urgent for Man to save himself from himself by accomplishing a sudden great moral advance. It has now become imperative for Man to renounce the use of violence, and this not only in the particular institutionalized form of war, but in every kind of relation between one human being and another.

Science and technology are Man's outstanding success; human relations are his outstanding failure; but human relations are of various kinds, and in some kinds of human relations our moral delinquency is less extreme than it is in others. We are at our least bad in our personal relations—the relations between husband and wife, parents and children, friend and friend. We are at our worst in the impersonal relations in which we deal with each other, not direct, but through the dehumanizing medium of institutions. This is the field in which Man is at his worst, and, in this sordid field, the most slummy area is politics.

Slums need clearing, and slum-clearance needs heroes to take it in hand. But one cannot set one's hand to clearing a slum without a risk of being polluted by its filth. The slum of politics is a moral slum, and the pollution that threatens to infect a worker in this slum is moral pollution. For this reason, many sensitive, pure, and noble spirits have shrunk from taking part in politics; and

this repugnance, natural though it is, has created a vicious circle; for politics cannot be redeemed unless the noblest spirits devote themselves to this unattractive task. The task of redeeming politics becomes ever more urgent as Man's command of material power increases, and since politics is the field in which power is applied the most brutally to the conduct of human relations. In the Atomic Age, more than ever before, there is a need for saints to plunge into the mire of politics at their spiritual peril. Gandhi did plunge in up to the neck, and came through, spiritually unscathed. I guess that the spiritual gift that made Gandhi able to keep himself free from contamination was his gift—a rare one—for living and working in a spiritual slum, without ever allowing himself to become acclimatized to it. In his innermost self, Gandhi remained, I believe, aloof from politics, even when his outer self was the most actively engaged in them.

A saint's attitude to politics is a spiritual touch-stone on which his spirit can be tried, and it is illuminating to consider how one saint compares with another in the light of this test.

Two of Gandhi's greatest fellow countrymen, the Buddha and Asoka, could not escape contact with politics. Both of them were 'born in the purple'—born, that is, in the spiritual slum of politics through being born heirs to thrones. These two great souls reacted in opposite ways to the spiritual handicap under which they had both started life. The Buddha jumped clear of politics. He repudiated his hereditary doom of succeeding to his father's throne. Indeed, the Buddha repudiated his family ties as well as his political trammels. He deserted his wife and child in order to seek spiritual enlightenment for himself and, through communication from him, for all other sentient beings. Asoka, on the other hand, entered into his political heritage; committed one of the traditional political crimes, the crime of making an aggressive war; repented of his crime when he recognized it for what it was; and was moved by his repentance to become an adherent and propagator of Buddhism, but was not moved by this change of heart to divest himself of his political power; Asoka retained this in

order to use it as an instrument for spreading the knowledge and practice of the way of life that the Buddha had worked out by his spiritual travail.

Gandhi's start in life was unlike Asoka's and the Buddha's; it was like Jesus's and Muhammad's. Like these two prophets of the Judaic type, Gandhi was not committed, by the accident of birth, to a political career that he must either accept or repudiate. Gandhi, too, was born in a private station, and was therefore free to keep clear of politics if he chose. In this situation, Jesus did keep clear of politics; he refused to embark on the political career—a militant one—that was expected, by the Jewish community of Jesus's day, of any Jew who claimed, or was acclaimed, to be the Messiah. On the other hand, Muhammad gladly seized the opportunity of becoming a political leader that was offered to him unexpectedly at a moment when his career as a prophet seemed to be on the verge of failure. Muhammad was successful politically, and suffered spiritually from his political success (at least, so it seems even to a sympathetic non-Muslim student of Muhammad's life).

Like Muhammad, Gandhi went into politics deliberately, but, unlike Muhammad, Gandhi did not take this step under pressure of a crisis in his personal career. By the time when Gandhi went into politics, he had already become a successful practitioner of his chosen profession—the law—and his motive for deciding to go into politics was neither personal ambition nor the hope of retrieving a failure in one field of activity by entering another. Gandhi's motive was personally disinterested. Gandhi's objective was to raise the spiritual level of life in a spiritual slum—the slough of politics. Gandhi waded into the slough, showed how the slough could be purified, and remained personally uncontaminated by his immersion in it. This gives the measure both of Gandhi's own spiritual stature and of the magnitude of his service to mankind at a turning-point in human history.

**SOPHIA WADIA**

### **THE WAY OF BAPU**

India and the whole world are preparing to celebrate on a grand scale the birth centenary of Mahatma Gandhi. On the 2nd of October 1869 was born at Porbandar or Sudamapuri the baby boy who was to become Mahatma Gandhi.

I confess to an underlying feeling of sadness at the approach of these centenary celebrations, for while Gandhiji is acclaimed the Father of our nation, are we in India following the way he showed us, the way of Truth and Non-violence, the way of Service and Sacrifice? What would our Father, Bapuji, say to us today were he to come into our midst? Would he not shed tears of blood at the sight of our disunity, our intolerance, our selfishness, our indiscipline? We pay homage to his memory, we are preparing to celebrate with edat the joyous event of his birth on Indian soil a century ago, but are our hearts clean, is our conscience dear? If we are really in earnest let us honour Gandhiji in the only way which can mean anything at all by endeavouring to labour for the fulfilment of his dream, that of a united India strong in the power of the spirit:

I would like to see India free and strong so that she may offer herself as a willing sacrifice for the betterment of the world.

And so I am sad and yet not sad. Sad that we should have strayed from Truth and Non-violence; not sad when I think what a wonderful country India must be that such a being as Gandhiji should have been born to her. The fragrance of his life cannot be altogether lost. The example he gave us none can obliterate. And so we shall not despair. We shall hope and pray, confident in the faith that the clouds will disperse and that even now the Light is there behind the veil of darkness which envelops us. May we soon see the Light of Truth! Meanwhile we must keep up our courage and live and strive to hasten that glorious hour. In this task every individual counts. Everyone is needed and has a part to play. None is too small or too humble to be able to make his own contribution.

Thus strengthened and encouraged, let us turn to Bapu, whom we of the older generation were privileged and blessed to have known personally and closely. But how many really *knew* him?

In the life of every human being there are two aspects or currents, the outer and the inner. The former is the history of objective facts and of external events, and begins with the date and the place of birth, the parentage, family, religious denomination, environment, education, career, etc., etc., and concludes with the date and place of the death of the body. Thus it includes the achievements and reverses on the outer plane of being, the successes and the failures, and the external and objective pattern woven throughout that incarnation and known to all those associated with that person.

Side by side with that known pattern, however, or rather behind it, there is another one unknown to most and written in fiery characters in the immortal fabric of Man himself. Call it the secret of life of the Soul, call it the line of the life's meditation, call it by any name you please: it is there in the fibres of the heart's chamber, far more real than the story of the external life. This is true of all men, but most profoundly true of a man like Mahatma Gandhi. He was too great to be known from mere externals and so he lived among his contemporaries mostly unknown, and often misunderstood, because they could not see behind the veil, because they thought he was something else. This is one of the tragic features in the lives of all truly great ones. On the human plane theirs are most lonely lives indeed and their voice frequently but a voice in the wilderness. And yet curiously enough it is in such lives that occasionally the inner and the outer synchronize in some dramatic event to bear witness to the greatness of the soul itself, that future generations may come to recognize it.

This happened for Gandhiji in his death, still much talked about after twenty years and recently featured in *Life* (Asia Edition), in an article entitled "How\_and Why Gandhi Died," by Manohar Malgonkar.

Mahatma Gandhi's death at the hands of an assassin was a martyrdom and exemplified his own ideal of ultimate sacrifice, for did he not state:

The triumph of satyagraha consists in meeting death in the insistence of Truth?

Even in death he triumphed and his voice, even if not heeded by his sons and daughters today, is still vibrant, still powerful and capable of awakening a responsive chord in the hearts of all aspiring individuals.<sup>1</sup> For life is an aspiration: its mission is to strive after perfection, which is Self-realization.

Gandhiji's life, from birth till death, was an aspiration and that made him truly great. His greatness does not lie merely in that he led India to freedom through Truth and Non-violence. His real greatness lies in the fact that he himself grew unto the Light of Truth. He strove incessantly to find Truth and having found it declared it: Truth is of God and it is God. And it is open to every man to find the Truth.

Let us now recall what Mahatma Gandhi told us about God which is Truth and about Man, the mystery of the ages, each one of us, for if we know our true nature we shall know our relationship with God and with all men. Yes, to know what we really are is the first step towards becoming what we ought to be.

Gandhiji walked with God. His creed was service of God and therefore of humanity, and this is what he tells us:

It is unnecessary to believe in an extra-mundane Power called God in order to sustain our faith in *ahimsa*. But God is not a Power residing in the clouds. God is an unseen Power residing within us and nearer to us than finger-nails to the flesh. There are many powers lying hidden within us and we discover them by constant struggle. Even so may we find the Supreme Power if we make diligent search with the fixed determination to find Him. One such way is the way of *ahimsa*. It is so very necessary because God is in every one of us and, therefore, we have to identify ourselves with every human being without exception. This is called cohesion or attraction in scientific language. In the popular language it is called love. It binds us to one another and to God. *Ahimsa* and love are one and the same thing.<sup>2</sup>

And in another place:

Man's ultimate aim is the realization of God, and all his activities, social, political, religious, have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God. The nwmfriiat\* service of all human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavour, simply because the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with it This can only be done by service of all I am a part and parcel of the whole, and I cannot find Him apart from the rest of humanity. My countrymen are my nearest neighbours. They have become so helpless, so resourceSess, so inert that I must concentrate myself on saving them. If I could persuade myself that I should find Him in a Himalayan cave I would proceed there immediately. But I know that I cannot find Him apart from humanity.<sup>3</sup>

To Gandhiji the unity of all mankind was an actual fact:

I believe in absolute oneness of God and therefore also of humanity. What though we have many bodies? We have but one soul. The rays of the sun are many through refraction. But they have the same source.<sup>4</sup>

Thus the recognition that we are all rays of the one Spirit leads us directly to the realization that humanity is one and indivisible. This is the teaching of the *Bhagawd Gila*, a favourite scripture of Bapu's, which he regarded as *Mata*. Mother, and went to for help and guidance as indeed a child to its mother: "As a single Sun illuminateth the whole world, so doth the One Spirit illumine everybody, O son of Bharata."

Says Bapu:

Having ascertained the law of our being, we must set about reducing it to practice to the extent of our capacity. . .<sup>5</sup>

The Law of our own being indicates that our ideal should be to live in the One Spirit as its ray lives in us and to live in our fellows as they live in it. This ideal being set before us, we must endeavour to sustain our faith in our ideal. Bapu has told us that faith in one's ideals constitutes true life and that it is, in fact, "man's all in all". Nor should we allow discouragement to set in. That which

matters is to strive incessantly with all our might. To try, try and ever keep on trying—the only failure is to cease trying:

It is of little moment when the goal is reached so long as effort is not relaxed.<sup>6</sup>

We need not be afraid of ideals or of reducing them to practice even to the uttermost.<sup>7</sup>

Striving does not require any quality unattainable by the lowliest among us. For satyagraha is an attribute of the spirit within. It is latent in everyone.<sup>8</sup>

The above are words of wisdom and contain golden precepts. We could go on quoting such inspiring passages. They are instinct with a living power of their own and give solace and comfort, courage and fortitude. Bapu's collected writings, his complete works, are now available and part of our celebrations of his Birth Anniversary should be to go to his recorded message and thus commune directly with his mind and heart. But let us not stop there: let us resolve to follow the path he showed. Let us endeavour to apply his message of Truth and Non-violence.

India and the world need men and women of vision and sincerity, of unselfishness and integrity, "one hundred per cent reliable", to use a favourite expression of Gandhiji's.

May we take advantage of the Centenary Celebrations to resolve to cultivate the divine virtues that we may become "one hundred per cent reliable"! This will demand persevering and sustained effort at self-discipline. Without self-discipline one cannot overcome one's lower nature and without gaining mastery over oneself one cannot realize the Self.

The individual is the one supreme consideration, wrote Gandhiji, because each individual is one with the All.

I do not believe that an individual may gain spiritually and those that surround him suffer. I believe in *advaita*. I believe in the essential unity of man and for that matter of all that lives. Therefore I believe that if

one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him and, if one man falls, the whole world falls to that extent.<sup>9</sup>

We owe it to humanity to seek to improve our character, to cleanse our mind, "to deal justly and walk humbly".

May the power that radiated through Mahatma Gandhi become in each one of us an ever present inspiration, that we may prove worthy of his blessing.

1. The voice struck a chord, notably, in the Rev. Martin Luther King, whose leadership of the American Negroes had a Gandhian purity of motive and means. Alas that his following of Gandhiji's way of life should have brought him also to Gandhiji's kind of death! The news of his tragic martyrdom came almost as the words in the text were being written. Our homage to his memory.
2. From a private letter dated 1 June 1942, from Sevagram.
3. *Harijan*. 29 August 1936.
4. *Young India*, 25 September 1924.
5. *Ibid.*, 5 February 1925.
6. *Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government*. 1942-44 (Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 2nd ed., 1945), 74.
7. *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi* (G.A. Natesan and Co., Madras, 4th ed.), p. 355.
8. *Young India*. 26 December 1924.
9. *Ibid.*, 4 December 1924.

## HAROLD WILSON

### INDO-BRITISH FRIENDSHIP

One Saturday in late September of the year 1888 there arrived at Southampton an Indian student, aged nearly nineteen. It was of course his first visit to Britain; there had been many misgivings at his home in Rajkot about this long journey across the sea, but he himself had been eager to qualify as a barrister in London and to see something of England. There were naturally some difficulties during the first few weeks Mr. M.K. Gandhi spent here. The most persistent of these stemmed from his unshakable resolve to remain a strict vegetarian. For a time he had no proper meals at all until at last, after much searching, he found a vegetarian restaurant in the City of London and bought a treatise on vegetarian diet. He then began to feel more at home and even for a short time became a fashionable young- man-about-town. Very soon, however, he decided to live a more frugal life, walking long distances through the City and cooking his own meals. Throughout his stay in Britain he never drank alcohol and never touched meat. In the regimen which he kept here it is not difficult to trace the beginnings of that iron self-discipline which he imposed upon himself throughout the rest of his life.

He did not find reading for the Bar at all an arduous pursuit. He was able to do some travelling and began a study of works such as the *Bhagavad Gita* and the Bible which exerted a profound influence upon him. Later in life he himself said that the development of the technique of satyagraha (firmness in truth) owed much to the Sermon on the Mount. He remained rather shy. His circle of friends might have become larger in these early days if he had been a more extrovert young man. Yet during these three years in Britain he not only learned to study by himself and to make up his own mind on many problems of ethics and religion; I believe that he must also have learnt a lot about the ordinary people of this country—how they lived their daily lives, their prejudices, what really interested them, how their minds worked. This knowledge must have been of value to him throughout his long and chequered subsequent relationship with

successive British Governments and with the Government of India. Behind the official facade he could perhaps still see the more ordinary, homely Britain of which he had learnt at first hand. From our point of view it was fortunate that he had had that experience. Despite the many ups and downs of politics, I believe that he never lost his liking for the British people.

Mahatma Gandhi's visit to London in 1931, when at the height of his fame he came as the sole delegate of the Congress Party to the Second Round Table Conference, aroused intense interest both in Britain and India. For some twelve years he had led the struggle of the people of India for independence; he had been imprisoned more than once; his standing in India as Father of the Nation had never been higher. During the sessions of the Conference he accepted an invitation to stay at Kingsley Hall in Bow. He used to take long walks in the early morning through the streets of East London, where he became a great favourite with the children. The London County Council subsequently placed a plaque on the building to commemorate his visit, and there is a fine portrait of him in the Hall.

The proceedings of the Round Table Conference were a deep disappointment to him. But he spent much time away from St. James's Palace, "doing the real round table work" as he put it, making friends and patiently expounding the case for Indian self-government. He paid a remarkably successful visit to the cotton workers in Lancashire, who had been hard hit by the Congress Party's boycott of cloth made in Britain; during this visit he explained to them the whole background of India's poverty. He addressed the boys of Eton, and visited Oxford and Cambridge; he talked to many political leaders, and had tea at Buckingham Palace with King George V.

Mr. Winston Churchill who had become increasingly outraged, and perhaps alarmed, by the growth of the Mahatma's influence, which now seemed to threaten "the brightest jewel in the Crown", refused absolutely to see him. If these two outstanding personalities had ever met face to face, that would indeed have been an historic event. That they never did so was certainly a loss both to Britain and to India. Despite the setbacks to his cause at the

Conference, Mahatma Gandhi remained cheerful throughout the three months he spent in Britain. The press found almost endless fascination in his personality, and he did have some success in bringing India's problems home to the people of Britain. In answer to a question from a member of one of his audiences, he said that he would like India to be an equal partner with the Dominions. But it must be a partnership on equal terms. In effect, he was asking that a self-governing India should become an independent Member of the Commonwealth, a concept which we all take so much for granted today.

The Round Table Conferences of 1930 and 1931 took place at roughly halfway through the long struggle for India's independence led by Mahatma Gandhi. These years brought many disappointments and frustrations in the relationship between Britain and India. The British Governments of the day were prepared to make concessions "and to contemplate the attainment by India of Dominion status or something equivalent as the eventual goal. But the pace was measured and, in many Indian eyes, painfully slow. Time and again the British Government and the Congress Party were out of step. There were, however, some happier moments. In a letter to the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, before he embarked on his famous Salt March early in 1930, the Mahatma expressed with friendly candour his attitude towards us:

Though I hold the British rule in India to be a curse, I do not therefore consider Englishmen in general to be worse than any other people on earth. I have the privilege of claiming many Englishmen as dearest friends....

In the following year, while Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was in office for the second time as Labour Prime Minister, the Delhi Pact was concluded between Lord Irwin and the Mahatma. The Viceroy made no secret of his personal regard for Mahatma Gandhi. The result was a valuable meeting of minds and a welcome break in the long record of misunderstandings.

There was also a time between 1937 and 1939 when, after the passing of the Government of India Act in 1935 and the subsequent elections, the Congress Party took office with Mahatma Gandhi's full approval in six of the Provinces.

There were some doubts on both sides about how this new experiment in co-operation between Congress rule in the Provinces and the British Raj still in control at the Centre would work out in practice. Good sense and pragmatism prevailed. Congress ministers, with the encouragement of the Mahatma, became absorbed in the opportunities for constructive social work with which their newly-won power presented them. The British Governors of the Provinces, with a lead from the Viceroy, were at pains to ensure that unnecessary clashes of principle were avoided and that the new constitutional arrangements worked as smoothly as possible.

I have said little of the methods employed by the Mahatma to oppose the British Government in India and to bring about the ending of British rule. During the long years of struggle, extending over a quarter of a century, he launched three major campaigns of non-violent civil disobedience, which involved the principle of satyagraha. The action taken, such as the manufacture of salt or the boycotting of shops selling cloth manufactured outside India, was essentially non-violent, and the Mahatma insisted that when this action was opposed by the authorities, no counter-force should be used. It goes without saying that great physical and moral courage were needed to carry this policy through. No blows were to be exchanged with the police; those who took part in civil disobedience must allow themselves to be taken to prison without resistance. The objective was the conversion of the adversary—to lead Britain, through moral persuasion, to grant the repeated requests of the Congress for independence. In 1920 the Mahatma wrote:

Even under the most adverse circumstances I have found Englishmen amenable to reason and persuasion and, as they always wish to appear just, it is easier to shame them than others into doing the right thing.

At last, after the British General Election of 1945, Clement Attlee, who headed the first post-war Labour Government decided that "the right thing" must be done without further delay. In August, 1947, the freedom for which Mahatma Gandhi had striven so long came to India; the transfer of power was complete; Satyagraha had reached its fulfilment. Had it all taken too long? There were

some in India and in Britain too who thought so; yet suppose the civil disobedience movement had been conducted from the first with violence and bloodshed—there is no doubt that if he had so chosen the Mahatma could have launched such a campaign—the result might have been a legacy of bitterness and hatred which<sup>1</sup> would have poisoned the relationship between Britain and India for generations to come. It was through Mahatma Gandhi's insistence on non-violence and upon what he fervently believed to be the right means to attain his goal, that the freedom of India was achieved with the full consent of both parties to the contract, that there was no sense of triumph and defeat, that Britain too felt happy at the settlement and eager to welcome this great new partner into the Commonwealth of Nations. All this was accomplished by the Father of India, who came to our country for the first time some eighty years ago and who learned to know us so well. We in this country owe him an immense debt of gratitude for the solid foundation of Indo-British friendship which he so truly laid.

## THE CONTRIBUTORS

HORACE ALEXANDER (b. 1889): Quaker; first met Gandhiji in March 1929 on visit to India; returned to India in 1946 at Gandhiji's instance to work in the Indian section of the Society of Friends; publications include *The Indian Firmament*, *India Since Cripps*, *Consider India*.

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ZENTA MAURINA: German writer; author of *The Image of Gandhi*.

MIRA BEHN (b. 1892): Joined Gandhiji's ashram at Sabar-mati in 1925; accompanied Mahatma Gandhi to London in 1931 for the Round Table Conference; suffered several terms of imprisonment during India's struggle for freedom; author of *The Spirit's Pilgrimage*.

THE EARL MOUNTBATTEN OF BURMA (b. 1900): Admiral of the British fleet; Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia, 1943-46; Viceroy of India, 1947; First Governor-General of free India.

HIREN MUKERJEE (b. 1907): published more than 15 books in Bengali and English, including *India Struggles for Freedom* and *Gandhiji: A Study*; leader of the Communist group in the Lok Sabha.

GUNNAR MYRDAL (b. 1898): Swedish economist and politician; Professor, Political Economy and Financial Science, Stockholm University, 1933-50; Government Adviser on financial, economic and social questions, 1933; Minister of trade and commerce, 1945-47; Executive Secretary, U.N. Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-57; publications include *Economic Theory and Under-developed Regions, An American Dilemma, Beyond the Welfare State, Challenge to Affluence, Asian Drama*.

SUSHILA NAYAR (b. 1915): was resident medical attendant to Gandhiji and his ashram; toured Noakhali with Gandhiji during communal riots in 1948; Minister of Health, Delhi State, 1952-55; President, Delhi Legislative Assembly, 1955-56; Minister of Health, Government of India, 1962-67.

L.B. PEARSON (b. 1897): Prime Minister of Canada, 1963- 68; Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada; Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, 1958-63; author of *Democracy in World Politics, Diplomacy in the Nuclear Age*; Nobel Peace Prize, 1957.

FATHER DOMINIQUE PIRE (b. 1910): Belgian ecclesiastic and social worker; founder of a pilot village in Asia (East Pakistan) in 1962 called Island of Peace and a

second Island of Peace in 1967 in India (Madras State); Nobel Peace Prize, 1958; author of *Building Peace*; Founder, Mahatma Gandhi University of Peace, Huy, Belgium.

PYARELAL (b. 1899): was Private Secretary to Mahatma Gandhi; editor, *Young India*, 1932 and *Harijan*, 1946-48; author of *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase*, *Mahatma Gandhi: The Early Phase* and other books.

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI, Bharat Ratna (b. 1879): Governor- General of India, 1949; published more than 30 books in Tamil and English including *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*.

G. RAMACHANDRAN: Secretary, Gandhi Peace Foundation; editor, *Gandhi Marg*; author of a number of works on Gandhian themes; Member of the Rajya Sabha; Director of Gandhi- gram, Madurai.

SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA: a monk of the Ramakrishna Mission; Head of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta since 1962; often lectured abroad.

B. SHIVA RAO (b. 1891): Member, University Grants Commission since 1962; was on the Indian workers' delegation, I.L.O. Conference, Geneva, 1929-30; a delegate to the Round Table Conference, 1930-31; member of the Indian delegation to the U.N. General Assembly, 1947-50 and 1952; Member Constituent Assembly of India, 1946-50, Lok Sabha, 1952-57, Rajya Sabha, 1957-60; publications include *India's Constitution in the Making*, *The Industrial Worker in India*.

B.N. RAU (1887-1953): Judge, Calcutta High Court, 1935; Chairman of the Indus Waters Commission, 1942; Prime Minister, Jammu and Kashmir, 1944-45; Constitutional Adviser to the Constituent Assembly, 1946; represented India at the U.N., 1952; Judge of the International Court at the Hague.

HERBERT READ (1893-1968): British poet and critic; Professor of fine arts, University of Edinburgh 1931-33; Editor, *Burlington Magazine*, 1933-39; President, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, British Society of Aesthetics; Erasmus Prize, 1966; publications include *English Prose Style*, *Art and Society*, *Collected Essays in Literary Criticism*, *The Politics of the Unpolitical*, *A Coat of*

*Many Colours, The Grass Roots of Art, The Philosophy of Modern Art, The Art of Sculpture, Concise History of Modern Painting, A Concise History of Modern Sculpture, Collected Poems, Poetry and Experience.*

RUKMINI DEVI (b. 1904): studied art and dance, specialized in Bharata Natyam; Founder-Director, Kalakshetra, Adyar; author of *The Message of Beauty to Civilization, Art and Education* and other books.

K. SANTHANAM (b. 1895): Lt. Governor, Vindhya Pradesh, 1952-56; Chairman, Finance Commission, 1956-57; published about 16 books in Tamil and English including *India's Road to Socialism, Cry of Distress, Satyagraha and the State.*

MIKHAIL SHOLOKHOV (b. 1905): novelist; Deputy to Supreme Soviet of USSR since 1946; Nobel Prize for Literature, 1965; publications: *And Quiet Flows the Don* (4 vols), *The Destiny of Man, Collected Works Vols I-VIII.*

EARL SORENSEN (b. 1891): Chairman, India League: World Congress of Faiths: Gandhi Memorial Fund Committee; President, International Friendship League; publications: *God and Bread. Men or Sheep, The New Generation, India and the Atlantic Charter, My Impressions of India, etc.*

SRI RAM (b. 1889): journalist and author; President, The Theosophical Society, Madras.

U THANT (b. 1909): Secretary-General of the United Nations since 1962; publications (in Burmese): *Cities and their Stories, League of Nations, History of Post-War Burma, Toward World Peace.*

ARNOLD JOSEPH TOYNBEE (b. 1889): Director of Studies in the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1925, and Research Professor of International History in the University of London; publications: *A Study of History* (12 vols); *Change and Habit, Acquaintances, Between Maule and Amazon.*

SOPHIA WADIA (b. 1901): educated in Paris, Columbia and London Universities; Founder-Editor, *The Indian P.E.N*; Editor, *The Aryan Path*; author of *The Brotherhood of Religions, Preparation for Citizenship* and other books.

HAROLD WILSON (b. 1916): Prime Minister of U.K. and First Lord of the Treasury since October 1964; Leader of the Labour Party since 1963; Chancellor of

Bradford University since 1966; publications: *New Deal for Coal*, *In Place of Dollars*, *The War on World Poverty*, *The Relevance of British Socialism*, *Purpose in Power*.