

HOMAGE TO MAHATMA GANDHI

AN ANTHOLOGY



Edited and compiled by
A. Prasanna Kumar

CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES
VISAKHAPATNAM
October 2019

CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES was launched on October 2, 1995, the 126th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, with the object of providing a forum for the intellectual, the academic and the expert to interact, focusing on issues and policies of contemporary relevance. Over 250 meetings, seminars and round-table discussions have been held during the last 24 years. On October 2, 1996 the bi-monthly Bulletin of Centre for Policy Studies was started the 139 issue of which was released on October 2, 2019 the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

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INDEX

1.	The Doctrine of the Sword (1920)	1
2.	Bapu	4
3.	Bapu - The Perfect Artist	6
4.	'An Extraordinary Paradox'	7
5.	Gandhi's Martyrdom	8
6.	The Poet's Verdict	10
7.	Gandhi's Religion and Politics	11
8.	Satyagraha	13
9.	Mahatma Gandhi: His Message for Mankind	14
10.	The Lasting Contribution of a Great Father and Worthy Son	16
11.	Gandhi in His Many Aspects	17
12.	The Ba Bapu Saga	31
13.	Great Martyrdom	34
14.	Mahatma – The Pilgrim of Eternity	35
15.	Gandhi – A Memoir	40
16.	Mahatma Gandhi	49
17.	Gandhi's Spiritual Authority	50
18.	Homage from a Man of the West to Gandhi	52
19.	Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Center for Peace and Justice in Tamil Nadu	54
20.	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme	57
21.	Mahatma's Legacy	61
22.	Gandhi, the Journalist	64
23.	Gandhi and Journalism	76
24.	Gandhi's Concept of Good Governance-Its Relevance	87
25.	Power, Violence and Society - a Gandhian Approach	92
26.	Pinakini Satyagraha (Gandhi) Ashramam	97
27.	Gandhi before India - Ramachandra Guha	103

28.	Why Gandhi Still Matters - an Appraisal of the Mahatma's Legacy	106
29.	Gandhi and Applied Spirituality	109
30.	Gandhi, Nehru and India's Independence	112
31.	Mahatma on India after Aug 15, 1947	122

Editorials

32.	Mahatma Gandhi's Last Birthday	126
33.	Man, Machine and the Mahatma	128
34.	India — Seventy years after Mahatma Gandhi	130
35.	Mahatma Gandhi and the Power of Satyagraha	132
36.	Nonviolence is a 'living force'	134
37.	Gandhian Legacy	136
38.	Mahatma Gandhi on Khadi	138
39.	Gandhiji's Dream	140
40.	Father Forgive Us!	142
41.	Gandhiji's Satyagraha	144
42.	Servant of Humanity	146
43.	Gandhiji's Idea of Independence	148
44.	What Gandhiji means to us	150
45.	Mahatma's Message	152
46.	Debt of Gratitude	154
47.	Homage to the Mahatma	156
48.	Gandhiji - 'the Practical Idealist'	158
49.	Remembering Gandhiji	160
50.	Martyrdom of the Mahatma	162
51.	Gandhiji, U.N. and World Peace	164
52.	"No Ordinary Light"	166
53.	'A Beacon for the Whole World...'	168
54.	"The Greatest Treasure"	169
55.	Gandhi Bhavan, Kakinada - A Profile	171

PREFACE

Centre for Policy Studies was born on Gandhi Jayanti, October 2, in 1995. Exactly on the same day in 1996 was launched its bimonthly Bulletin with Gandhiji's picture on its masthead. The 139th issue of the Bulletin, with the editorial on Mahatma Gandhi's Last Birthday, has come out on October 2, 2019, on the 150th birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation. This compilation of articles and editorials published in the Bulletin, during the last twenty three years, is a humble homage to that spirit that continues to illumine our path. Besides the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, some great publications have come out during the last seventy two years - Radhakrishnan's *Mahatma Gandhi*, Rajmohan Gandhi's *THE GOOD BOATMAN*, *MOHANDAS* and *WHY GANDHI STILL MATTERS*, S. Gopal's *Jawaharlal Nehru - An Anthology*, William Shirer's *Gandhi - A Memoir*, Ramachandra Guha's monumental trilogy *INDIA AFTER GANDHI*, *Gandhi BEFORE INDIA* and *GANDHI the years that changed the world*, among others, which contain a wealth of information on the life, work and legacy of Mahatma Gandhi. The aim of the small CPS publication is to remind ourselves of the inexhaustible treasure we have and to kindle the interest of the people, especially of the younger generation, so that genuine efforts will be made to replace hate with love and violence with peace.

In 2005 when Centre for Policy Studies completed ten years, a small book of 146 pages titled *Footprints of Divinity, A Gandhi Reader* was brought out, inspired by Rabindranath Tagore's memorable line to Gandhiji: "When you had taken your leave I found God's footprints on my floor." It's second edition came out in 2010 and the third in 2015.

'A beacon', 'an extraordinary paradox' and 'no ordinary light' was how Gandhiji was described. "Generations to come, it may be, will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth" wrote Einstein. During their visit to India, Christian missionaries from Europe felt that Christ lived at Sevagram. Rajaji saw a parallel in the death of Sri Krishna and Gandhi – life sucked away by a hunter's arrow then and by an assassin's bullet in 1948. Rajmohan Gandhi saw in his grandfather another epic hero Rama who went into exile when he should have been crowned. The devout saw in Gandhiji Sri Rama's adherence to Truth and Dharma, Sri Krishna's great message through the Bhagavadgita and Jesus Christ's suffering and sacrifice. Atheists and rationalists were struck by the practical approach of Gandhiji. To Nehru, Gandhi appeared in different avatars - as 'a perfect artist' in life and death and 'a king' in loin cloth and bare body.

The man who led the greatest mass movement and the most peaceful revolution in human history was no ordinary mortal. Like the Buddha and Christ he lived and died for the poor and the downtrodden. The legacy of Mahatma Gandhi is of everlasting value and relevance.

"At Gandhiji's call India blossomed forth to new greatness, just as two thousand six hundred years ago when the Buddha proclaimed the truth of fellow feeling and compassion among all living creatures," wrote Rabindranath Tagore. "I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills," declared the Mahatma with characteristic humility. He was aware of the hazards of ideological obsession and doctrinaire rigidity. His advice was polite but firm. "There is no such thing as Gandhism. I do not want to leave any sect after me. No literature or propaganda is needed about it. Those who believe in the simple truths I have laid down can propagate them only by living them" he said having seen the devastation caused by two world wars and the massacres perpetrated in his time by the Nazis and Fascists.

The Mahatma led India's March to Freedom climaxing in the lowering of the Union Jack and hoisting the tri-colour Indian national flag at the midnight hour of August 14, 1947. On that historic day of India's independence, the Father of the Nation was fasting and praying for communal harmony in the house of a poor Muslim family in Beliaghata. There was no respite for him in his relentless crusade for communal harmony. For the Mahatma living in the midst of unstoppable violence was excruciatingly painful. On his last birthday began his March to Martyrdom. The 120 days that followed gave him great disappointment, if not sadness. Reports of growing corruption, 'from trustworthy sources', disagreement between Nehru and Patel and agitations for separate statehood in some parts of the country so distressed him that he disavowed his wish to live for 125 years. Said the Mahatma: "If I had earlier had the impertinence to state my wish to want to live to be 125, I must now have the humility under the changed circumstances openly to shed that wish. In stating my new wish I have done no more. And I have done so not in a state of depression. The more apt term perhaps is helplessness".

"It is my hope that when I die I shall die with *Ramanama* in my heart. I am sustained by *Ramanama*," he said two months and twenty two days before his death. A week before his assassination Gandhiji told Edgar Snow that non-violence is a political means, not only a matter of personal ethics. That was a few days after a bomb blast and seven days before Godse's bullets did what the bomb could not. The Mahatma shed his mortal coil on his own terms. '*Rama, R...a...m...a*' were his last words. The frail body gently bled to death and the mortal remains were consigned

to holy flames in the midst of inconsolable grief and sorrow. "He died a martyr to the cause of unity to which he had always been devoted and for which he had worked unceasingly, more specially during the past year or more", said Jawaharlal Nehru. As Romain Rolland wrote: "He died with the name of God on his lips and love in his heart. Even as he received the bullet wounds he greeted his murderer and wished him well. He lived up to what he preached". Quoting Lord Krishna's words from *Bhagavadgita* Radhakrishnan said: "We have killed his body, but the spirit in him which is a light from above will penetrate far into space and time and inspire countless generations for nobler living".

The legacy Mahatma Gandhi bequeathed is no ordinary inheritance for us. The message of his life and work will continue to illumine our path. That beacon of hope is most relevant and necessary for our times when violence in thought, word and deed, religious fundamentalism and communal hatred dominate politics and public life in India and the world at large. The Gandhian path alone can lead us from darkness to light. It is heartening to note that in almost every town and city there is growing interest in the study of Gandhiji's life and philosophy. Meetings, seminars and peace marches are being regularly organized to promote Gandhian ideals.. Dissemination of Gandhian ideals is of immense importance in promoting social and communal harmony. They do help in checkmating divisive forces that cause social disruption and threaten the unity of the country.

Centre for Policy Studies conveys its grateful thanks to the contributors of the articles published in this compilation which, we hope, will be read with interest. We are happy to be associated with Gandhi Bhavan, Kakinada headed by President Prof I. Dosagiri Rao and Vice-President Shri Y.S V.S. Murty, in the publication of this volume.

We convey our sincere thanks to Shri Sankaranarayana (late Shri Bapu's brother) retired AIR Station Director, for the pencil-drawing of Mahatma Gandhi used on the back cover of the book; to Sri V.Seetaramaiah for his suggestions and Dr Ramesh Ramanadham for proof-reading; Shri D.S.Varma, Secretary and Shri T.S. R. Prasad Treasurer of CPS for their support; Shri B.Ramana of CPS for carefully preparing the text, Raju of CPS for his able assistance and Shri M.K. Kumar of Sathyam Offset Imprints for publishing the book in a short time.

A. Prasanna Kumar

Editor

Visakhapatnam
October, 2019

THE DOCTRINE OF THE SWORD (1920)

M.K.Gandhi

In this age of the rule of brute force, it is almost impossible for anyone to believe that anyone else could possibly reject the law of the final supremacy of brute force. And so I receive anonymous letters advising me that I must not interfere with the progress of Non-co-operation, even though popular violence may break out. Others come to me and, assuming that secretly I must be plotting violence, inquire when the happy moment for declaring open violence is to arrive. They assure me that the English will never yield to anything but violence, secret or open. Yet other, I am informed, believe that I am the most rascally person living in India, because I never give out my real intention and that they have not a shadow of a doubt that I believe in violence just as much as most people do.

Such being the hold that the doctrine of the sword has on the majority of mankind, and as success of non-co-operation depends principally on absence of violence during its pendency and as my views in this matter affect the conduct of a large number of people, I am anxious to state them as clearly as possible.

I do believe that, where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence. Thus when my eldest son asked me what he should have done, had he been present when I was almost fatally assaulted in 1908, whether he should, have run away and seen me killed or whether he should have used his physical force which he could and wanted to use, and defended me, I told him that it was his duty to defend me even by using violence. Hence it was that I took part in the Boer War, the so-called Zulu rebellion and the late war. Hence also do I advocate training in arms for those who believe in the method of violence. I would rather have India resort to arms in order to defend her honour than that she should in a cowardly manner become or remain a helpless witness to her own dishonour.

But I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment (*ksama virasya bhusanam*). 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. I therefore appreciate the sentiment of those who cry out for the condign punishment of General Dyer and his ilk. They would tear him to pieces if they could. But I do not believe India to be helpless. I do not believe myself to be a helpless creature. Only I want to use India's and my strength for a better purpose.

Let me not be misunderstood. Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will. An average Zulu is any way more than a match for an average Englishman in bodily capacity. But he flees from an English boy, because he fears the boy's revolver or those who will use it for him. He fears death and is nerveless in spite of his burly figure. We in India may in a moment realize that one hundred thousand Englishmen need not frighten three hundred million human beings. A definite forgiveness would therefore mean a definite recognition of our strength. With enlightened forgiveness must come a mighty wave of strength in us, which would make it impossible for a Dyer and a Frank Johnson to heap affront upon India's devoted head. It matters little to me that for the moment I do not drive my point home. We feel too down-trodden not to be angry and revengeful. But I must refrain from saying that India can gain more by waiving the right of punishment. We have better work to do, a better mission to deliver to the world.

I am not a visionary. I claim to be a practical idealist. The religion of non-violence is not meant merely for the Rishis and saints. It is meant for the common people as well. 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.

I have therefore ventured to place before India the ancient law of self-sacrifice. For Satyagraha and its offshoots, non-co-operation and civil resistance are nothing but new names for the law of suffering. The Rishis, who discovered the law of non-violence in the midst of violence, were greater geniuses than Newton. They were themselves greater warriors than Wellington. Having themselves known the use of arms, they realized their uselessness and taught a weary world that its salvation lay not through violence but through non-violence.

Non-violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering. It does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer, but it means the putting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Working under this law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire to save his honour, his religion, his soul and lay the foundation for that empire's fall or its regeneration.

And so I am not pleading for India to practise nonviolence, because it is weak. I want her to practise nonviolence being conscious of her strength and power. No training in arms is required for realization of her strength. We seem to need it, because we seem to think that we are but a lump of flesh. I want India to recognize

that she has a soul that cannot perish and that can rise triumphant above every physical weakness and defy the physical combination of a whole world. What is the meaning of Rama, a mere human being, with his host of monkeys, pitting himself against the insolent strength of ten-headed Ravan surrounded in supposed safety by the raging waters on all sides of Lanka? Does it not mean the conquest of physical might by spiritual strength? However, being a practical man, I do not wait till India recognizes the practicability of the spiritual life in the political world. India considers herself to be powerless and paralysed before the machine-guns, the tanks and the aero planes of the English. And she takes up non-co-operation out of her weakness. It must still serve the same purpose, namely, bring her delivery from the crushing weight of British injustice, if a sufficient number of people practise it.

I isolate this non-co-operation from Sinn Feinism, for it is so conceived as to be incapable of being offered side by side with violence. But I invite even the school of violence to give this peaceful non-co-operation a trial. It will not fail through its inherent weakness. It may fail because of poverty of response. Then will be the time for real danger. The high-souled men, who are unable to suffer national humiliation any longer, will want to vent their wrath. They will take to violence. So far as I know, they must perish without delivering themselves or their country from the wrong. If India takes up the doctrine of the sword, she may gain momentary victory. Then India will cease to be the pride of my heart. I am wedded to India, because I owe my all to her. I believe absolutely that she has a mission for the world. She is not to copy Europe blindly. India's acceptance of the doctrine of the sword will be the hour of my trial. I hope I shall not be found wanting. My religion has no geographical limits. If I have a living faith in it, it will transcend my love for India herself. My life is dedicated to the service of India through the religion of nonviolence, which I believe to be the root of Hinduism.

(Mahatma Gandhi Essays and reflections on his life and work by S.Radhakrishnan, Jaico Publishing House, 1956)

"I am a servant of Rama. I shall work as long as He commands me to work. I shall go when He commands me to go. I am prepared for both. My only prayer is that I may realise non-violence and make others to realise it. You should join me in that prayer."

- Mahatma Gandhi on January 24, 1948

BAPU

Jawaharlal Nehru

Nineteen-sixteen. Over thirty-two years ago. That was when I first saw Bapu, and an age has gone by since then. Inevitably one looks back and memories crowd in. What a strange period this has been in India's history and the story, with all its ups and downs and triumphs and defeats, has the quality of a ballad and a romance. Even our trivial lives were touched by a halo of romance, because we lived through this period and were actors, in greater or lesser degree, in the great drama of India.

This period has been full of wars and upheavals and stirring events all over the world. Yet events in India stand out in distinctive outline because they were on an entirely different plane. If a person studied this period without knowing much of Bapu, he would wonder how and why all this happened in India. It is difficult to explain it; it is even difficult to understand by the cold light of reason why each one of us behaved as he or she did. It sometimes happens that an individual or even a nation is swept away by some gust of emotion or feeling into a particular type of action, sometimes noble action, more often ignoble action. But that passion and feeling pass and the individual soon returns to his normal levels of action and inaction.

The surprising thing about India during this period was not only that the country as a whole functioned on a high plane, but also that it functioned more or less continuously for a lengthy period on that plane. That indeed was a remarkable achievement. It cannot easily be explained or understood unless one looks upon the astonishing personality that moulded this period. Like a colossus he stands astride half a century of India's history, a colossus not of the body but of the mind and spirit.

We mourn for Bapu and feel orphaned. Looking back at his magnificent life, what is there to mourn for? Surely to very very few human beings in history could it have been given to find so much fulfilment in their own lives. He was sad for our failures and unhappy at not having raised India to greater heights. That sadness and unhappiness are easy to understand. Yet who dares say that his life was a failure? Whatever he touched he turned into something worthwhile and precious. Whatever he did yielded substantial results though perhaps not as great as he hoped for. One carried away the impression that he could not really fail in anything that he attempted. According to the teachings of the Gita, he laboured dispassionately without attachment to results, and so results came to him.

During his long life, full of hard work and activity and novel adventures out of the common rut, there is hardly any jarring note anywhere. All his manifold activities

became progressively a symphony and every word he spoke and every gesture that he made fitted into this, and so unconsciously he became the perfect artist, for he had learned the art of living, though the way of life he had adopted was very different from the world's way. It became apparent that the pursuit of truth and goodness leads among other things to this artistry in life.

As he grew older his body seemed to be just a vehicle for the mighty spirit within him. Almost one forgot the body as one listened to him or looked at him, and so where he sat became a temple and where he trod was hallowed ground.

Even in his death there was a magnificence and complete artistry. It was from every point of view a fitting climax to the man and to the life he had lived. Indeed it heightened the lesson of his life. He died in the fullness of his powers and as he would no doubt have liked to die, at the moment of prayer. He died a martyr to the cause of unity to which he had always been devoted and for which he had worked unceasingly, more specially during the past year or more. He died suddenly as all men should wish to die. There was no fading away of the body or a long illness or the forgetfulness of the mind that comes with age. Why then should we grieve for him? Our memories of him will be of the master, whose step was light to the end, whose smile was infectious and whose eyes were full of laughter. We shall associate no failing powers with him of body or mind. He lived and he died at the top of his strength and powers, leaving a picture in our minds and in the mind of the age that we live in that can never fade away.

That picture will not fade. But he did something much more than that, for he entered into the very stuff of our minds and spirits and changed them and moulded them. The Gandhi generation will pass away, but that stuff will remain and will effect each succeeding generation, for it has become a part of India's spirit. Just when we were growing poor in spirit in this country, Bapu came to enrich us and make us strong, and the strength he gave us was not for a moment for a day or a year but it was something added on to our national inheritance.

Bapu has done a giant's work for India and the world and even for our poor selves, and he has done it astonishingly well. And now it is our turn not to fail him or his memory but to carry on the work to the best of our ability and to fulfill the pledges we have so often taken.

(Nehru – An Anthology)

BAPU - THE PERFECT ARTIST

Jawaharlal Nehru

During his long life, full of hard work and activity and novel adventures out of the common rut, there is hardly any jarring note anywhere. All his manifold activities became progressively a symphony and every word he spoke and every gesture that he made fitted into this, and so unconsciously he became the perfect artist, for he had learned the art of living, though the way of life he had adopted was very different from the world's way. It became apparent that the pursuit of truth and goodness leads among other things to this artistry in life.

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(Jawaharlal Nehru, (Ed) S. Gopal)

"Today is New Year's Day according to the English calendar. A country in which women are not honoured is not really civilised. We should learn to behave with added restraint now that we are free."

- Mahatma Gandhi on January 1, 1948

'AN EXTRAORDINARY PARADOX'

Jawaharlal Nehru

"People who do not know Gandhiji personally and have only read his writings are apt to think that he is a priestly type extremely puritanical, long-faced, Calvinistic, and a killjoy, something like the 'priests in black gowns walking their rounds.' But his writings do him an injustice; he is far greater than what he writes, and it is not quite fair to quote what he had written and criticize it. He is the very opposite of the Calvinistic priestly type. His smile is delightful, his laughter infectious and he radiates light-heartedness. There is something childlike about him which is full of charm. When he enters a room he brings a breath of fresh air with him which lightens the atmosphere.

He is an extraordinary paradox. I suppose all outstanding men are to some extent. For years I have puzzled over this problem; why with all his love and solicitude for the underdog he yet supports a system which inevitably produces it and crushes it; why all this passion for non-violence and coercion? Perhaps it is not correct to say that he is in favour of such a system; he is more or less of a philosophical anarchist. But as the ideal anarchist state is too far off still and cannot easily be conceived, he accepts the present order.... If means are right the end is bound to be right. Gandhiji's conception of democracy is definitely a metaphysical one. It has nothing to do with numbers or majority or representation in the ordinary sense. It is based on service and sacrifice, and it uses moral pressure ... he does represent the peasant masses of India; he is the quintessence of the conscious and subconscious will of those millions. It is perhaps something more than representation; for he is the idealized personification of those vast millions.... a tremendous personality drawing people to himself like a magnet and calling out fierce loyalties and attachments How he disciplined our lazy and demoralized people and made them work-not by force or any material inducement, but by a gentle look and soft word and, above all, by personal example"

(Nehru – An Anthology)

GANDHI'S MARTYRDOM

S. Radhakrishnan

Gandhi has paid the penalty of all who are ahead of their time, misunderstanding, hatred, reaction, violent death. "The light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not." The struggle between light and darkness, between love and hate, between reason and unreason which is at the heart of the cosmic is shown up by this most moving tragedy of our age. We made Socrates drink death; we nailed Jesus to the Cross; we lighted faggots that burnt the medieval martyrs. We have stoned and killed our prophets. Gandhi has not escaped the fate of being misunderstood and hated. He has met his death facing the forces of darkness, of ultimate unreason, and through it, has increased the powers of light, love and reason. Who knows if Christianity would have developed had Jesus not been crucified? Years ago Romain Rolland declared that he regarded Gandhi as a "Christ who only lacked the Cross." We have now given him the Cross also. Gandhi's death was a classical ending to his life. He died with the name of God on his lips and love in his heart. Even as he received the bullet wounds he greeted his murderer and wished him well. He lived up to what he preached.

Possessed and inspired by the highest ideals of which human nature is capable, preaching and practising fearlessly the truth revealed to him, leading almost alone what seemed to be a forlorn hope against the impregnable strongholds of greed and folly, yet facing tremendous odds with a calm resolution which yielded nothing to ridicule or danger. Gandhi presented to his unbelieving world all that is noblest in the spirit of man. He illumined human dignity by faith in the eternal significance of man's effort. He belongs to the type that redeems the human race.

If Gandhi was able to rid himself of all rancour and hatred, to develop that flame of love which burnt up all impurities, if he feared no evil even though he walked in the valley of the shadow of death, if he represented to us the eternal voice of hope, it is because he believed in the heritage of India, the power of the inward life of spirit. When problems material and spiritual crowded upon him, when conflicting emotions shook him, when troubles oppressed him, he retired at will into the retreats of the soul, into the secret corridors of the self to gain strength and refreshment. His life has revived and refreshed our sense of the meaning and value of religion. Such

men who are filled with spiritual poise and yet take upon themselves the burden of suffering humanity are born into the world at long intervals.

We have killed his body, but the spirit in him which is a light from above will penetrate far into space and time and inspire countless generations for nobler living.

yad-yad vibhutimat sattvam

srimad urjitam eva va tat-tad eva'vagaccha tvam

mama tejo amsasambhavam

Whatever being there is endowed with glory and grace and vigour, know that to have sprung from a fragment of My Splendour. -*Bhagavadgita*

(*Mahatma Gandhi* (Ed) S. Radhakrishnan)

GANDHI'S STATESMANSHIP

Albert Einstein, D.Sc.

(The Institute of Advanced Studies, School of Mathematics,
Princeton University, U.S.A.)

Gandhi is unique in political history. He has invented an entirely new and humane technique for the liberation struggle of an oppressed people and carried it out with the greatest energy and devotion. The moral influence which he has exercised upon thinking people through the civilized world may be far more durable than would appear likely in our present age, with its exaggeration of brute force. For the work of statesmen is permanent only in so far as they arouse and consolidate the moral forces of their peoples through their personal example and educating influence.

We are fortunate and should be grateful that fate has bestowed upon us so luminous a contemporary—a beacon to the generations to come.

(*Mahatma Gandhi*, Edited by S. Radhakrishnan)

THE POET'S VERDICT

Rabindranath Tagore

Occasionally there appears in the area of politics, makers of history, whose mental height is above the common level of humanity. They wield an instrument of power, which is almost physical in its compelling force and often relentless, exploiting the weakness in human nature—its greed, fear, or vanity. When Mahatma Gandhi came and opened up the path of freedom for India, he had no obvious medium of power in his hand, no overwhelming authority of coercion. The influence which emanated from his personality was ineffable, like music, like beauty. Its claim upon others was great because of its revelation of a spontaneous self-giving.

This is the reason why our people have hardly ever laid emphasis upon his natural cleverness in manipulating recalcitrant facts. They have rather dwelt upon the truth which shines through his character in lucid simplicity. This is why, though his realm of activity lies in practical politics, peoples' minds have been struck by the analogy of his character with that of the great masters, whose spiritual inspiration comprehends and yet transcends all varied manifestations of humanity, and makes the face of worldliness turn to the light that comes from the eternal source of wisdom.

(*Mahatma Gandhi* (Ed) S. Radhakrishnan)

Jawaharlal Nehru

People talk of memorials to him in statues of bronze or marble or pillars and thus they mock him and belie his message. What tribute shall we pay to him that he would have appreciated? He has shown us the way to live and the way to die and if we have not understood that lesson, it would be better that we raised no memorial to him, for the only fitting memorial is to follow reverently in the path he showed us and to do our duty in life and in death.

Ours is a composite nation, as all great nations must necessarily be. Any narrowness in outlook, any attempt to confine the bounds of this great nation, will be a betrayal of his final lesson to us and will surely lead to disaster and to the loss of that freedom for which he laboured and which he gained for us in large measure.... The only way is to express our determination, to pledge ourselves anew, to conduct ourselves in a befitting manner and to dedicate ourselves to the great task which he undertook and which he accomplished to such a large extent. So we have to work, we have to labour, we have to sacrifice and thus prove, to some extent at least, worthy followers of his.

GANDHI'S RELIGION AND POLITICS

S. Radhakrishnan

The greatest fact in the story of man on earth is not his material achievements, the empires he has built and broken, but the growth of his soul from age to age in its search for truth and goodness. Those who take part in this adventure of the soul secure an enduring place in the history of human culture. Time has discredited heroes as easily as it has forgotten everyone else; but the saints remain. The greatness of Gandhi is more in his holy living than in his heroic struggles, in his insistence on the creative power of the soul and its life-giving quality at a time when the destructive forces seem to be in the ascendant.

Gandhi is known to the world as the one man more than any other who is mainly responsible for the mighty upheaval of the Indian nation which has shaken and loosened its chains. Politicians are not generally reputed to take religion seriously, for the values to which they are committed, such as the political control of one people by another, the economic exploitation of the poorer and weaker human beings, are so clearly inconsistent with the values of religion that the latter could not be taken too seriously or interpreted too accurately. But for Gandhi, all life is of one piece. "To see the universal and all pervading Spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. And a man who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any fields of life. That is why my devotion to Truth has drawn me into the field of politics; and I can say without the slightest hesitation and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion, has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means!" Again, "I have no desire for the perishable kingdom of earth, I am striving for the kingdom of heaven, which is spiritual deliverance. For me the road to salvation lies through incessant toil in the service of my country and of humanity. I want to identify myself with everything that lives. In the language of the Gita, I want to live at peace with both friend and foe. So 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." If man as a political being has not been much of a success, it is because he has kept religion and politics apart, thus misunderstanding both. For Gandhi there is no religion apart from human activity. Though in the present circumstances of India Gandhi happens to be a political

revolutionary who refuses to accept tyranny or acquiesce in slavery, he is far from the uncompromising type of revolutionary whose abstractions force men into unnatural and inhuman shapes. In the acid test of experience he remains, not a politician or a reformer, not a philosopher or a moralist, but someone composed of them all, an essentially religious person endowed with the highest and most human qualities and made more Tovable by the consciousness of his own limitations and by an unfailing sense of humour.

In my travels in different parts of the world I have noted that Gandhi's reputation is more universal than that of the greatest statesmen and leaders of nations, and his personality more beloved and esteemed than any or all of them. His name is familiar to such a degree that there is scarcely a peasant or a factory worker who does not consider him to be a friend of humankind. They seem to think that he is likely to restore the golden age. But we cannot summon it, as we would summon, let us say, a passing cab. For we are subject to a thing more powerful than any nation, more humiliating than any conquest, and that is ignorance. Though all our faculties are designed for life, we have allowed them to be perverted in the cause of death. Though the right to happiness is clearly implicit in the creation of humankind, we have allowed that right to be neglected and suffered our energy to be used in the pursuit of power and wealth by which the happiness of the many is sacrificed to the doubtful satisfaction of a few. The world is in slavery to the same error to which you and I are subject. We must strive, not for wealth and power but for the establishment of love and humanity. Freedom from error is the only true liberty.

Gandhi is the prophet of a liberated life wielding power over millions of human beings by virtue of his exceptioned holiness and heroism. There will always be some who will find in such rare examples of sanctity the note of strength and stark reality which is missing in a life of general good will, conventional morality or vague aesthetic affectation which is all that many modern teachers have to offer. To be true, to be simple, to be pure and gentle of heart, to remain cheerful and contented in sorrow and danger, to 'love life and not to fear death, to serve the Spirit and not to be haunted by the spirits of the dead, nothing better has ever been taught or lived since the world first began.

(Mahatma Gandhi – Edited by Dr.S. Radhakrishnan)

SATYAGRAHA

S. Radhakrishnan

When the strife of these days is forgotten, Gandhi will stand out as the great prophet of a moral and spiritual revolution without which this distracted world will not find peace. It is said that non-violence is the dream of the wise while violence is the history of man. It is true that wars are obvious and dramatic and their results in changing the course of history are evident and striking.

But there is a struggle which goes on in the minds of men. Its results are not recorded in the statistics of the killed and the injured. It is the struggle for human decency, for the avoidance of physical strife which restricts human life, for a world without wars. Among the fighters in this great struggle, Gandhi was in the front rank. His message is not a matter for academic debate intellectual circles. It is the answer to the cry of exasperated mankind which is at the cross-roads—which all prevail, the law of the Jungle or the law of love? All our world organizations will prove ineffective if the truth that love is stronger than hate does not inspire them. The world does not become one simply because we can go round it in less than three days. However far or fast we may travel, our minds do not get nearer to our neighbours.

The oneness of the world can only be the oneness of our purposes and aspirations. A united world can only be the material counterpart of a spiritual affinity. Mechanical makeshifts and external structures by themselves cannot achieve the spiritual results. Changes in the social architecture do not alter the minds of people. Wars have their origins in false values, in ignorance, in intolerance. Wrong leadership has brought the world to its present misery. Throughout the world there seems to be a black out of civilized values. Great nations bomb one another's cities in order to obtain the victory. The moral consequences of the use of the atom bomb may prove to be far more disastrous than the bomb itself. The fault is not in our stars but in ourselves. Institutions are of little avail unless we are trained to obey our conscience and develop brotherly love. Unless the leaders of the world discover their highest human dignity in themselves, not in the offices they hold, in the depth of their own souls, in the freedom of their conscience, there is no hope for the ordered peace of a world-community- Gandhi had the faith that the world is one in its deepest roots and highest aspirations. He knew that the purpose of historical humanity was to develop a world-civilization, a world-culture, a world-community. We can get out of the misery of this world only by exposing the darkness which is strongly entrenched in men's hearts and replacing it by understanding and tolerance. Gandhi's tender and tormented heart heralds the world which the United Nations wish to create. This lonely symbol of a vanishing past is also the prophet of the new world which is struggling to be born. He represents the conscience of the future man.

(Mahatma Gandhi, Edited by S. Radha Krishnan)

MAHATMA GANDHI: HIS MESSAGE FOR MANKIND

S. Radhakrishnan

Civilization is based on a dream. Its codes and conventions, its ways of life and habits of mind are poised on a dream. When the dream prevails, civilization advances; when the dream fails, civilization goes down. When life becomes cluttered with things, when the vanities and follies of the world overtake us, when we see all around the murderous interplay of destructive forces and unnatural strivings, when we fail to see any purpose in 'it all, it is time that we probe the human situation and find out what is wrong with it. Though we have been warned by the last war that our civilization is fragile and will break down if the present trend of human cupidity wedded to scientific genius is not checked we seem to be confused and hesitant about the need to change the direction in which human history has been moving. When a prophet soul who is not enslaved by his environment, who is filled with compassion for suffering humanity, calls upon us to turn our backs on the present world with its conflicts and competitions, class distinctions and wars and seek the upward path, narrow and difficult, the human in us comes alive and responds. To a world lost in error and beset by the illusions of time. Gandhi announces the value of the timeless principles of the truth of God and love of fellow-men as the only basis for establishing right human relationships. In his life and message we see the dream of civilization come true. Centuries have gone to his making and his roots are established in the ages. No wonder the world was shocked with horror and smitten with grief when it heard that the great soul, rare in any age but amazing in ours, was struck down. President Truman said that a giant among men had fallen. This little man, so frail in appearance, was a giant among men, measured by the greatness of his soul. By his side other men, very important and famous men big in their own way, big in their space and time, look small and insignificant. His profound sincerity of spirit, his freedom from hatred and malice, his mastery over himself, his human, friendly, all-embracing charity, his strong conviction which he shared with the great ones of history that the martyrdom of the body is nothing compared with the defilement of the soul, a conviction which he successfully put to the test in many dramatic situations and now in this final act of surrender, show the impact of religion on life, the impact of the eternal values on the shifting problems of the world of time.

Gandhi does not reject machinery as such. He observes: "How can I be against all machinery when I know that even this body is a most delicate piece of machinery? The spinning-wheel is a machine: a little toothpick is a machine.

What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour saving machinery. Men go on 'saving labour' till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour not for a fraction of mankind but for all. I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all. Today, machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might. The machine should not tend to atrophy the limbs of man.... Factories run by power driven machinery should be nationalized, state controlled. The supreme consideration is man."

"If we could have electricity in every village home, I should not mind the villagers plying their instruments and tools with the help of electricity. But then the village communities or the State would own power houses, just as the villages have their grazing pastures ... The heavy machinery for work of public utility which could be undertaken by human labour has its inevitable place, but all that would be owned by the state and used entirely for the benefit of the people."

As a religious and social reformer Gandhi pricked us into a new awareness of the social evils from which we have been suffering. He exhorted us to rid religion of the many accretions with which in its long history it become encumbered, notably untouchability. Hinduism has paid a heavy price for its neglect of social responsibilities. The draft constitution for the new India aims at establishing an equitable social order in which ideals of virtue and freedom will inspire economic and political, social and cultural institutions.

We are too deeply entangled in our own past misdeeds; we are caught in the web we had ourselves spun according to the laws of our own twisted ethics. Communal differences are yet a wound, not a sepsis. But wounds have a tendency to produce sepsis. If this tendency is to be checked we must adhere to the ideals for which Gandhi lived and died. We must develop self-restraint; we must refrain from anger and malice, intemperance of thought and speech, from violence of every kind. It will be the crown of his life work, if we settle down as good neighbours and adjust our problems in a spirit of peace and goodwill. The way to honour his memory is to accept and adopt his way of approach, the way of reconciliation and sympathetic adjustment of all differences.

(Excerpts from his lecture at Oxford)

(CPS Bulletin October 2, 1998)

The lasting contribution of a great father and worthy son

Philosopher - statesman Radhakrishnan and his historian son Gopal, the former on Gandhi and the latter on Nehru, brought out two superbly edited volumes. Radhakrishnan's *Gandhi Reader* is a book of great value. A moving incident was narrated by Gopal thus: Radhakrishnan went to Mahatma Gandhi in Delhi in December 1947 to seek his permission to dedicate his English translation of the *Bhagavatgita* then being published by Allen and Unwin which had received advanced orders for 10,000 copies, Gandhi demurred, protesting that he was the seeker and Radhakrishnan the teacher: "Who am I? What is my service? You are my Krishna, I am your Arjuna". By the time the book was out, Gandhi was dead. Radhakrishnan, hearing at Oxford the news of the murder, was prostrate with grief for days.

If Radhakrishnan's book on Gandhi was hailed as a classic, Gopal's Anthology titled Jawaharlal Nehru (published by Oxford University Press in 1983) is no less valuable. These two books are the main source for some of the articles that follow.

Gurudev and Mahatma

Gandhiji on Tagore and himself: "The poet lives in a magnificent world of his own creation — his world of ideas. I am a slave of somebody's creation — the spinning wheel — But I may say in all humility that we complement each other's activity. I do indeed ask the poet and the sage to spin the wheel as a sacrament."

Exchange of telegraphic greetings between Gandhi and Tagore
(on Tagore's 81st Birthday in April 1941)

To Gurudev Shantiniketan

"Four Score not enough may you finish five-Love-Gandhi".

Tagore's reply :

To Mahatma Wardha

"Thanks message but four score is impertinence, five score intolerable".

- Rabindranath Tagore

GANDHI IN HIS MANY ASPECTS

Dr. B. Pattabhisitaramayya

I. Gandhi—the Avatar

“Be careful in dealing with a man who cares nothing for sensual pleasures, nothing for comfort or praise or promotion, but is simply determined to do what he believes to be right. He is a dangerous and uncomfortable enemy because his body which you can always conquer gives you so little purchase over his soul.”

(Professor GILBERT MURRAY)

The world has produced great men from time to time. Each nation has produced its own saints, martyrs, and heroes, its own poets, warriors and statesmen. In India we call our great men avatars, men who descend on earth from on high embodiments of the Divine, in order to protect and punish vice. We have in our midst an avatar in Gandhi who has worked out the gospel of perfect nonviolence in the work-a-day world.

II. Gandhi—the Sthitaprajna

In Gandhi's view Swaraj is not the replacement of the white bureaucracy by the brown. It is the total recasting of life, indeed a reconquest of India. To reunite the various fragments dismembered territorially into provinces and states, cut up communally into Hindus and Muslims and Christians, divided professionally into rural and urban folk, and split up diagonally into excluded and included areas, that is the problem envisaged by him. The other part of the task is to restore the culture of the nation and charge it with all that is worth copying in modern life, to resuscitate the ideal of service, to supplant the selfishness, fostered by the new civilization by a feeling of pity for the poor, to level up the low, instead of suffering society to be composed of tall oaks and short-poppies, to ensure food and raiment to all, to lower, if need be, the standard of life on the average instead of raising it for a few. To this end he has evolved a new synthesis in his own life and has combined in himself the four varnas and the four asrams of Hindu society. He fulfils the role of a Brahman and is the lawgiver, he is Ksatriya and is the Chief Constable of India. As a Daisya he mobilizes the wealth of the country and as Sudra he has produced food and raiment. In the great trial he said, “I am a weaver and farmer”. And then although a grihastha, he leads a life of celibacy like a Brahmachari, serves mankind along with his wife like a vanaprastha and is finally a true Sannyasi, having given up his all in his ministry to mankind. All the while Gandhi is essentially a man with no superhuman touch or pretensions about him. He is a business man, a man of humour, wit and wisdom, a

child amongst children, a “jolly good fellow” among the grown-ups, and a saint and sage amongst mankind, a guide, philosopher and friend to all. He has a beaming countenance with a pair of scintillating eyes and a laugh which lays bare his whole heart from within. He is frank to a degree and never believes in hearing charges behind people’s backs but always puts them to the accused in the presence of his accusers. He accepts your explanation, takes your word for truth. He is precise in his talk and expects his statements to be understood both with reference to his subjectives and his principal clauses. Most people have taken the latter and ignored the former and therefore expected objective results without bearing subjective burdens. His style is all his own, composed of short sentences shot out like veritable shrapnel in a feu de joie at a new-year parade, dynamic in force and devastating in effect. Gandhi is the _full man—the Purna purusa of the Upanishads whom it is a privilege to know and a blessing to work with. He is the *Sthitaprajna* of the *Bhagavadgita* who by his selfcontrol and renunciation has conquered himself and conquered the world.

III. Gandhi—His Dual Programme

As a satyagrahi Gandhi knows no defeat. If the nation is tired of the offensive, it is at once put on the constructive programme. From the fast pulley to the loose, the belt in the workshop does not glide with greater ease than Gandhi’s power belt from the destructive plane of fight to the constructive. With equal swiftness and suddenness does he switch on the aggressive programme of Civil Disobedience and it develops momentum with the vehemence and rapidity of a tornado or a tidal wave. What his offensives are like, the world knows only too well. He himself did not know what mass civil disobedience which must be civil or non-violent in character and worked on a mass scale of immeasurable proportions. A moral issue is always involved in his campaigns which are seemingly insignificant in character but single-pointed in aim and far-reaching in results. Here it is the Amritsar massacre for which an apology is demanded. There it is the Khilafat wrong, remote in its seat and scene but proximate in its effects and influence. Elsewhere it is the salt tax, trivial in incidence but sinful in its yield. When the world, thinks that Gandhi has sustained defeat he converts that defeat by a sentence into victory.

Gandhi’s constructive programme has met with a mixed reception in the country, has not, even now, captivated the imagination of the bulk of the population. His Khaddar is the poor man’s panacea, the new economic talisman, the hope of the widow and the orphan, the maimed and the blind; a collateral industry that serves as a staff supporting the peasant weighed down by an unbearable burden of indebtedness and taxation. The revival of Khaddar stands for a whole cult, for it

reacts against the backstroke of machinery which is a good servant but a bad master. Khaddar symbolizes the revival of the creative genius of India, the sense of freedom and ownership that has always animated the Indian craftsman, the atmosphere of purity and family compactness in which the Indian arts have all along thriven. Khadi is the uniform of the Indian patriot, and the badge of national emancipation. The first five years of Gandhi's ministry were devoted to the task of placing Khaddar on stable basis so that it might lead the way to other village industries and home crafts and retract all machinery, which is merely violence in motion, to its strict limits in life.

Gandhi's constructive programme is a three-fold one—Economic in Khaddar, Social in the removal of untouchability and Moral in the abolition of drink. After achieving the first he addressed himself to the second and the story of his fast unto death in September 1932 is now a chapter of world's history. The third prohibition is being implemented as a part of the ministerial programme under the scheme of provincial autonomy. Only a few weeks ago did Gandhi express his sad disappointment at the slack pace at which this reform is being achieved by his trusty colleagues; for three and a half years is the limit he has set for the complete eradication of drink from India. The fourth item is cultural and relates to national education, for which an All-India Board has been formed at Haripura and under its auspices a system of primary education known as the Wardha scheme is being propagated with the object of linking up the child's education with the life of the nation. There remains but one great reform to achieve—namely communal unity—notably Hindu-Muslim unity. The draft formula is all but ready and the process of unification contemplated is not one of bargains in proportions but of appeal to the good sense and the better selves of the two great communities of India. When thus the nation's activities and attention are directed now to the preparation of men and munitions and now to war, or vice versa, no one can speak of success or failure.

In Gandhi's judgment, the fight with Britain is essentially a moral fight; for the seven citadels constructed by the British are moral (or immoral) prakarams (or protection walls) round their central authority. These are the Services, the Legislatures, the Law Courts, the Colleges, the Local Bodies, the Commerce, and the Titled Aristocracy. Gandhi's programme of non-co-operation is simply aimed at destroying each of these in turn and all in the end. The triple boycott of Councils, Courts, and Colleges is a part of this plan. At one time there was even a call to the Services and the Army to give up their bondage. It was thus that the charm of British rule in India and its invincibility was broken.

IV. Gandhi and Satyagraha

Satyagraha in an age of violence and warfare is as strange a weapon as a steel knife in the Stone Age or the petrol engine in the midst of single-bullock carts. People simply cannot understand it, do not believe in it, will not look at it. When Transvaal is quoted they brush it aside as an event that was possible on a small-scale, short-range fight—not applicable to a continent like India. Champaran, Kaira and Borsad are equally readily dismissed as essays in miniature which cannot be reproduced on a nationwide scale. To-day all doubts have disappeared and all difficulties have dissolved. The problem is to keep Satyagraha within the limits of Satya and its concomitant ahimsa. Truth and non-violence which constitute the two component factors of the new technique are not passive, much less negative forces, they are positive, aggressive forces investing the programme with all the attributes of war on the violent plane. In confounding and demoralizing your enemies and ultimately conquering them by converting them, in engendering a rigid sense of discipline amongst its adherents, in working upon the mind and the emotion of the votaries of the new technique, in invoking courage, sacrifice and endurance, in mobilizing a destructive armoury, Satyagraha operates as a positive and irresistible force to whose efficacy experience has borne ample testimony.

Gandhiji's conception of Truth and non-violence is known to few. It has a double aspect in respect of both, one a positive and the other a negative. When the Collector of Champaran wrote to him a stiff letter which he later decided to withdraw and asked for its return, and when the young followers of Gandhi began to copy it, Gandhi admonished them and said that, if they kept a copy, the letter could not be said to have been withdrawn. That was a new definition of Truth which was repeated during the Gandhi-Irwin pact when the Home Secretary, Mr. Emerson's insulting letter was, on second thoughts, withdrawn and we have not got a copy of it in the archives of the Congress—for the same reason that to keep a copy of a letter that is withdrawn is to harbour it, in your files as well as your breast, and that is untruth as well as anti-non-violence.

The subtlest incitement to violence is not tolerated by Gandhi. In the year 1921, when Gandhi agreed that the speeches of the Ali brothers lent themselves to such a misconstruction, he secured from them a statement repudiating any such intention on their part. But when the same Ali brothers were being prosecuted for their Karachi speech in October 1921, he repeated it in Trichinopoly and caused the whole of India to repeat the same from thousands of platforms. To him the one test is—is the speech non-violent through and through? If it is, his challenge is as ready as his apology, if it is not. As that is the view he takes of non-violence, he was

shocked when in the Civil Disobedience movement of November 1921, during the visit of the Prince of Wales, 53 people died and 400 were wounded! At this distance of time the five days' fast by way of penitence then undertaken by him appears as a trifle compared with his later fasts extending over 21 days and 28 days and his last "fast unto death".

Gandhi's non-co-operation has always been intended and embarked upon for co-operation, but he has never surrendered his first principles of Truth and Non-violence, as is borne out by his letter to Lord Reading dated February 1, 1922:

"But before the people of Bardoli actually commence mass Civil Disobedience, I would respectfully urge you as the head of the Government of India finally to revise your policy and set free all the non-co-operating prisoners who are convicted or under trial for non-violent activities in the country, whether they be regarding the redress of the Khilafat or the Punjab wrongs or Swaraj or any other purpose, and even though they fall within the repressive sections of the Penal Code or the Criminal Procedure Code or other repressive laws, subject always to the condition of non-violence. I would further urge you to free the Press from all administrative control and restore all the fines and forfeitures recently imposed. In thus urging I am asking Your Excellency to do what is to-day being done in every country which is deemed to be under civilized government. If you can see your way to make the necessary declaration within 'seven days of the date of publication of this manifesto, I shall be prepared to advise postponement of Civil Disobedience of an aggressive character till the imprisoned workers have after their discharge reviewed the whole situation and considered it *de novo*."

V. Gandhi—His Inconsistencies

Gandhi has been charged with the impracticability of his ideals by the moderates, with the moderation of his programme by the extremists, with inconsistencies of conduct by both; and in the midst of these conflicting assessments and appreciations of his life and work, he has stood unmoved like a rock and allowed the flow of praise and blame to pass him unaffected. The one guiding principle of his life is the verse in the Bhagavadgita which says:

"Happiness and misery, gain and loss, victory and defeat-do thou treat them alike and gird thyself for battle. Thus wilt thou not incur sin."

In 1896 Gandhi visited Poona and learnt his first lessons in politics at the feet of Tilak and Gokhale. The former appeared to him, he said, like the Himalayas—great and lofty, but unapproachable, while the latter appeared like the holy Ganges in which he could confidently take a plunge. In 1939 Gandhi has risen to the heights

of Himavan but is easily accessible and has fathomed the depths of the Ganga and is ever purifying.

Few people understood what Satyagraha was when it was crudely known by the name of Passive Resistance. It was defined by Gokhale as follows in 1909:

“It is essentially defensive in nature and it fights with moral and spiritual weapons. A passive resister resists tyranny by undergoing suffering in his own person. He pits soul force against brute force; he pits the divine in man against the brute in man; he pits suffering against oppression; he pits conscience against might; he pits faith against injustice, right against wrong.

In 1939 Satyagraha has become a household word and the universally acknowledged strategy of oppressed citizens whether of British-India or of the Indian States and is warmly recommended to the Jews against the German progroms and the Chinese against the Japanese inroads.

At Karachi in 1913 the Indian National Congress voted its admiration “for the heroic endeavours of Gandhi and his followers and their unparalleled sacrifice in their struggle in South Africa for the maintenance of the selfrespect of India and the redress of Indian grievances.” The resolution was passed by the unanimous vote of the House. And in 1931 at the forty-fifth session of the Congress held again at Karachi, Gandhi won the admiration of the nation for his heroic endeavours not on behalf of a handful of men in South Africa but on behalf of the whole nation of 350 millions whose emancipation was successfully inaugurated on the same vital and abiding principles of Satyagraha.

In 1914 Gandhi was a loyal citizen of the British Empire and helped in recruiting for the Great War even as he had organized Red Cross units in the Zulu Rebellion and the Boer War early in the twentieth century. His attitude however to war has veered round from one pole to the other. Though even so late as in August 1918 he had stood for unconditional help to the British in recruitment, still in September 1938 when the war clouds were lowering over Europe, he stood four square against any proposal to exploit the war situation for the benefit of India or to participate in the apprehended war in any measure. The two pictures may be studied in closer detail.

In 1919 Tilak was served with an order prohibiting him from lecturing without the previous permission of the District Magistrate. Only a week before, we are told he was engaged in a recruiting campaign and as a guarantee of good faith he had sent to Mahatma Gandhi a cheque for Rs. 50,000, the amount to be forfeited as penalty if certain conditions were not fulfilled by him. This was in the nature of a

wager. The wager was that Tilak undertook to recruit five thousand persons from Maharashtra if Gandhi could secure a promise from Government before-hand that Indians would get commissioned ranks in the army. Gandhi's position was that the help should not be in the nature of a bargain and therefore he returned the cheque to Tilak.

In September 1938 the Working Committee of the Congress was sitting from day to day at Delhi to deal with the war situation in Europe. There were two schools of thought in the country—those who would negotiate India's rights with Britain and then agree to help her and those who would not help in the prosecution of a war under any conditions. Gandhi belonged to the latter group, and he was in 1938 as clearly against participation in war on any conditions as he was for helping Britain in 1918 unconditionally.

In 1918 Gandhi was engaged in a multiplicity of activities of which the most notable was directed against the Rowlatt Bills. To-day he is engaged in fighting against similar laws operating with full force and vigour in the various States of India—Travancore, Jaipur, Rajkot-Limbdi, Dhenkanal and so on. No better testimony can be cited to his plan and purpose than was placed on record by the author of India (1919)—a Government of India publication:

"Mr. Gandhi is generally considered a Tolstoyan of high ideals and complete selflessness. Since his stand on behalf of the Indians in South Africa, he has commanded among his countrymen all the traditional reverence with which the East envelops a religious leader of acknowledged asceticism. In his case he possesses the added strength that his admirers are not confined to any religious sect. Since he took up his residence in Ahmedabad, he has been actively concerned in social work of varied kinds.

"His readiness to take up the cudgels on behalf of any individual or class whom he regards as being oppressed has endeared him to the masses of his countrymen. In the case of urban and rural population of many parts of the Bombay Presidency his influence is unquestioned, and he is regarded with a reverence for which adoration is scarcely too strong a word. Believing as he does in the superiority of 'Soul Force' over material might, Mr. Gandhi was led to believe that it was his duty to employ against the Rowlatt Act that weapon of Passive Resistance which he had used effectively in South Africa. It was announced on 24th February that he would lead a Passive Resistance or Satyagraha movement if the Bills were passed. This announcement was regarded as being of the utmost gravity both by Government and by many of the Indian politicians. Some moderate members of the Indian

Legislative Council publicly affirmed their apprehension as to the consequences of such a step. Mrs. Besant, with her remarkable knowledge of the psychology of the Indian temperament, warned Mr. Gandhi in the most solemn manner that any such movement as he contemplated would result in the release of forces whose potentialities for evil were quite incalculable. It must be clearly stated that there was nothing in Mr. Gandhi's attitude or pronouncements which could have justified Government taking any steps against him before the inception of the movement. Passive Resistance is a negative and not a positive process. Mr. Gandhi expressly condemned any resort to material force. He was confident that he would be able by a process of passive disobedience of Civil Laws to coerce the Government into abandoning the Rowlatt Act. On the 18th March he published a pledge regarding the Rowlatt Bills which ran as follows: "Being conscientiously of opinion that the Bill known as the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Bill No. 1 of 1919 and the Criminal Law Emergency Powers Bill No. 2, 1919, are unjust, subversive of the principles of liberty and justice and destructive of the elementary rights of an individual on which the safety of India as a whole and the State itself is based, we solemnly affirm that in the event of these Bills becoming Law and until they are withdrawn, we shall refuse civilly to obey these Laws and such other laws as the Committee hereafter to be appointed may think fit and we further affirm that in the struggle we will faithfully follow truth and refrain from violence to life, person and property."

In 1919 (July 21st) Gandhi accepted the advice of Government and friends and suspended Civil Disobedience, and in 1934 (April) again he had occasion to suspend Civil Disobedience except in his own person. "I have been accused of throwing a lighted match," said he in 1919. "If my occasional resistance be lighted match, the Rowlatt Legislation and the persistence in retaining it on the Statute Book is a thousand matches scattered through out India. The only way to avoid civil resistance al. together is to withdraw that legislation." In 1934 in his Patna statement, dated April 7th, he said on the eve of suspending Civil Disobedience once again:

"I feel that the masses have not received the full message of Satyagraha owing to its adulteration in the process of transmission. It has become clear to me that spiritual instruments suffer in their potency when their use is taught through non-spiritual media. Spiritual messages are self-propagating.

"I must advise all Congressmen to suspend civil resistance for Swaraj as distinguished from specific grievances. They should leave it to me alone. It should be resumed by others in my life-time only under my direction, unless one arises claiming to know the science better than I do and inspires confidence. I give this opinion as

the author and initiator of Satyagraha. Henceforth, therefore, all who have been impelled to civil resistance for Swaraj under my advice directly given or indirectly inferred will please desist from civil resistance. I am quite convinced that this is the best course in the interests of India's fight for freedom.

"I am in deadly earnest about this greatest of weapons at the disposal of mankind."

In 1934 in the same Patna statement he bemoaned that "the indifferent civil resistance of many, grand as it has been in its results, has not touched the hearts either of the terrorists or the rulers as a class." But to-day he has the satisfaction of over 2,500 of these friends having been released from internment and avowed their faith in nonviolence, while as a crowning piece of the victory of nonviolence over violence, Sardar Pridhwi Singh, who was taken for dead, while really he had been moving freely between India and Europe for over seventeen years, after jumping out of a running train while in custody and transfer, delivered himself into the hands of Gandhi who in turn committed him to the care of the British jails in India and is striving hard for his release.

After the suspension of Civil Disobedience in 1919 Gandhi knowing the happenings in the Punjab was doubtless greatly shocked by the unexpected turn events had taken and admitted that "he had made a 'blunder of Himalayan dimensions' which had enabled ill-disposed persons, not true passive resisters at all, to perpetrate disorders."

When the Reform Act of 1919 was enacted, Gandhi advocated the view that, despite the unsatisfactory and inadequate nature of the reforms, the Congress responding to the sentiments in the Royal Proclamation, should express the "trust that both the authorities and the people will co-operate so to work the reforms as to secure the establishment of Responsible Government". Compare with this his attitude in 1937 asking for assurances from the Government regarding the non-uses of the special powers and the non-interference by the Governors in the day-to-day administration of the Provinces and the enforced implementing of the same by Government in the matter of the release of political prisoners accused of violence, of the appointment of the Governor of Orissa and the drastic revision of the Zamindari and Land Revenue Laws of the country and the return of the confiscated lands to the peasantry of Bardoli.

At the Amritsar Congress, Gandhi pleaded "for the return of the madness of the Government with sanity but not to return madness with madness". To-day he assures the country that in Rajkot and in the States where Government are going

mad, once again success will be the people's, if only they observe non-violence and return madness with sanity.

Gandhi's passage from the wholly humanitarian to the purely political field was imperceptible and even involuntary—not that he was not aware of it, but he could not resist it; and when he joined the All-India Home Rule League and became its President he felt a call to duty on his terms. Those terms, he said, were “strict adherence to truth and non-violence in the promotion of the causes in which he had specialized, namely Swadeshi Communal unity, Hindustani as the lingua franca and a linguistic redistribution of the Provinces”. The reforms were to him secondary. From social service to politics was then an easy glide to him, through the passage of religion. To day he reverts to social service from politics through the same passage. Indeed to him both are the same, as they constitute but the two sides of a coin, the medal itself being composed of the sterling material of Satya and ahimsa which from the basal principles of all religions.

To Gandhi non-co-operation is not an end in itself but is a means to an end. His outstretched hand of cooperation is always open to the grasp of his opponent provided national honour is not imperilled. That was his position in 1920 and that is his position to-day. In 1920 it was spurned, in 1939 it is warmly sought after by Government.

Another study in contrast is furnished by Gandhi's attitude towards complete Independence in 1921 and 1929. In 1921 he stated at Ahmedabad:

“The levity with which the proposition has been taken by some of you has grieved me. It has grieved me because it shows lack of responsibility. As responsible men and women we should go back to the days of Nagpur and Calcutta.”

In 1928 when the question of Independence was once again brought to the fore, Gandhi made the following characteristic observation:

“You may take the name of Independence on your lips as the Muslims utter the name of Allah or the pious Hindu utters the name of Krishna or Rama, but all that muttering will be empty formula if there is no honour behind it. If you are not prepared to stand by your own words, where will Independence be? Independence is a thing, after all, made of sterner stuff. It is not made by the juggling of words.”

And in 1929 he closed his conversations with Lord Irwin, on December 23rd, with the virtual challenge that he would organize the nation for complete Independence.

In 1920 Government expressed their trust and belief that “the sanity of the classes and masses alike would reject non-co-operation as a visionary and chimerical scheme, which if successful could only result in widespread disorder, political chaos and ruin of all those who have any real stake in the country.” “The appeal of non-co-operation is to prejudice and ignorance,” they said, “and, its creed is devoid of any constructive germs.” To-day the very Government are anxious to negotiate a treaty with the founder of the movement and the residual legatee of its best asset, namely Civil Disobedience.

In 1921 when Lord Reading opened negotiations with Gandhi—and they failed owing to a slight mischance in that Gandhi’s telegram reached Lord Reading in Calcutta a little late—everyone thought that Gandhi was an impracticable man, yea, an impossible man, but when Lord Irwin releasing him and his twenty-six comrades from jail opened negotiations with him in 1931, a decade later, everybody praised him for his qualities of give and take, for his sense of proportion, propriety and perspective qualities equally in evidence and equally effective in the gentle negotiations between Gandhi and Lord Linlithgow in June 1937 which resulted in office acceptance by the Congress.

In 1922 the Chauri Chaura tragedy in which twenty-one constables and a sub-inspector were burnt alive, and with them the police station where they were penned, made Gandhi go back upon the whole programme of Civil Disobedience, while in 1939 the murder of Bazelgette in Ranpur (Orissa) has compelled him to tender the same advice to the people of the States of the Eastern Agency in Orissa. Prestige has never stood in the way of the paramountcy of non-violence. On Gandhi’s release in 1924 he made a declaration in the course of which he observed that he “retained his opinion that Council entry is inconsistent with non-cooperation.” Yet it was he who in 1934 endorsed Council entry when Civil Disobedience was suspended and worked it up to its logical conclusion of office acceptance under conditions, which have enabled the Ministers to work the Reform Act not as the British would have them do but as the nation would desire and demand.

In 1934 in his famous Patna statement, April 7th, he referred to the States and declared that “the Policy advocated by some in regard to the States was wholly in difference from what I have advised. I have given many an anxious hour to the question but I have not been able to alter my view.”

In 1939 he has altered his view altogether only because the conditions in the States have entirely changed. The new awakening amongst them has roused his sympathies to the point of inducing him to offer his utmost support to the cause of

the States' people, so that to-day Mrs. Gandhi is in jail in Rajkot and Gandhi has said that the Princes must either confer on their people responsible government of the States or undergo extinction.

VI. Gandhi—His Instinct

Truth and non-violence are higher experiences of man which require a trained sensibility to appreciate them even as music and mathematics or Khaddar fabrics and communal unity. Trained sensibilities develop direct intuitions, and Gandhi always judges by intuition and not by reason. It is the attribute of virtue to perceive truth instinctively. So does this embodiment of virtue, while those who follow in his footsteps have the duty laid upon them of being the exponents and interpreters of his teachings in terms of the ethical laws and the social conventions of their age and clime. It was thus that he decided upon the great reside at Bardoli in 1922, upon Salt Satyagraha in 1930 upon the suspension of the Civil Disobedience movement in 1934, and on the States' policy in 1939. Light dawns upon him suddenly. Oftentimes did he say that he saw no light and was praying for it. And when he sees the light it appears strange to his people, for his remedies are unprecedented and awe inspiring. When a madman disturbs a meeting of the A.I.C.C. he stops the volunteers trying to remove him bodily and asks the whole house of three hundred members to adjourn. The disturber is paralysed. When a municipality is imposed upon the people of Chiralaperala by force, and against the people's will, his remedy is that they should quit the place; and quit they did like the Tartars of old who revolted against Zebech Dorchi. In the No-tax campaign of Bardoli and Chersada, the peasants were asked to leave their homes and hearths and migrate to the neighbouring State of Baroda, thus making the puissant British Government with their mighty cohorts hors de combat. When the people of the Nilgiri State in Orissa have been oppressed by their Prince, an exodus is the ready and ancient remedy prescribed and followed to bring round an erring ruler to his senses. The success in these cases depends upon the endurance of the people as well as their purity of heart. Gandhi's following, however, does not always see eye to eye with him. They often resisted his decisions. They stoutly opposed the Bardoli resile in 1922 (February) and praised the spirit behind the crimes of anarchy. When the Serajgung resolution was once again voted upon at Ahmedabad at the All Parties' Conference in the autumn of 1924, Gandhi wept in the open meeting; he wept because some of his own devout followers voted on the side of praising the young man who had committed the crime.

Gandhi's habit is to play with fire—yet he always emerges unscathed from this risky game. He has been arrested several times. Every time the ordeal of fire has

burnished the metal of his frame. He expressed regret times without number over the madness of his people, and insisted on the Congress doing so as well. He has agreed to the postponement of his cherished schemes of mass Civil Disobedience time after time merely because violence broke out at some place or other, however remote it might be.

Gandhi works more effectively upon the country when he is silent than when he talks, when he is out of the Congress than when he is in. People may have forgotten the fact that at Cawnpore in the year 1925 he took a vow of political silence which he broke at Gauhati in December 1926. But to him such periods of silence, physical or political, are periods of incubation when huge plans mature in his mind and are, after full gestation, given birth to as well-thought-out programmes and formulae. One such long interval was the period between the Cawnpore Session (1925) and the Calcutta Session of 1928 which were followed by the Lahore (1929) challenge on the ticket of complete Independence. Gandhi resists his own following and tries their mettle as much as he does his opponents. If they stand his test, he takes up their ideas and makes them his own. If they fail they go by the board. It was thus that he dealt with the problem of Civil Disobedience first, then of Complete Independence and finally of the States. To-day he is vehement on the question of the States much to the surprise of his col. leagues and the chagrin of his opponents. The younger Congressmen suspect his bona fides and have publicly charged him with being engaged in making a compromise with the British on Federation. They loudly proclaim their determination to destroy the edifice of Federation which is a two-storeyed structure. The youth direct their guns at the top storey. Gandhi is already pulling down the first floor and pillars thereof. These pillars are the States without which there is no Federation, and the Provincial apartments of the ground floor are threatening to collapse since the pillars that support the top floor are fast crumbling. Gandhi's strategy is truth. His armoury is non-violence. He means what he says and does what he means. When he declared at the Second Round Table Conference that he would "fight with his life" the dismemberment of the Hindu Community by Government fixing separate electorates for Harijans, he meant it. He confirmed it on the Azad Maidan on his return from England (December 28, 1931). He committed it to writing in March 1932 in a letter to Sir Samuel Hoare and he began his "fast to death" on September 20, 1932. To-day he is taking another fateful vow on the question of the States and he will break Federation. "What is more, if God so wills it,

I feel I have enough strength and energy in me to lead a battle much more strenuous than any I have fought." Gandhi's life and career furnish a study in contrasts, which are but seeming and imaginary, being the necessary attributes of a character deeply religious and intensely practical. To combine the ideal with the real, daring with caution, the spirit of revolution with a sense of conservatism, a dash for the future with a bias for the past, the fulfilment of nationalism with the preparation of the nation for universal humanity, - in one word to reconcile liberty with fraternity, and evolve from both, is to tack on the brake to the engine in a wellformed train and run it on its rails with its stops and starts, with its steady ascents and rapid descents, with its level and linear movements and its uneven and gradient curves. India has the glory of being led by one who is a man amongst men and yet, what is a puzzle to the contemporary world, has developed into a miracle, a frail being who is a real phenomenon, a Sthithaprajna, yea, an avatar, one who has elevated politics to the sublimity of a religion, charged the conflicts of society with a high ethical and humanitarian touch, and strives to hasten the advent of that far off Divine event, the Parliament of Man and the Federation of the World.

(Mahatma Gandhi – edited by Dr.S. Radhakrishnan)

"People should keep away from it as they would from poison. Liquor is worse than poison. Poison can kill only the body. But liquor destroys the very soul. Taking liquor, one loses the ability to control oneself. I would advise the Government to close down all liquor shops and replace them by eating houses, where the people can get pure and light food. I am sure that giving up alcohol will increase the physical vigour of man and his capacity to earn. That is why Prohibition has been part of the Congress programme since 1920. Now that we are free, our Government should redeem that pledge, and give up the unholy excise revenue."

- Gandhiji on January 1, 1948

THE BA BAPU SAGA

Gandhiji and his 'teacher in the art and practice of Satyagraha'

Rajmohan Gandhi

In 1882 Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was 'married to Kasthur Makanji Kapadia a few months older than he'. Their betrothal had taken place when the former was six and the latter was seven. They lived long a married life sixty two years'.

In the words of Gandhiji: "She was woman always of very strong will which in our early days I used to mistake for obstinacy. But that strong will enabled her to become, quite unwittingly, my teacher in the art and practice of non-violent non-cooperation. The practice began with my own family. When I introduced it in 1906 in the political field it came to be known by the more comprehensive and specially coined name of Satyagraha. When the course of Indian imprisonments commenced in South Africa Kasturba was among the civil resisters. She went through greater physical trials than I. Ba was in no way weaker than I; in fact she was stronger. If I had not had her cooperation, I would have been sunk. It was that illiterate woman who helped me to observe all my vows with the utmost strictness and kept me ever vigilant. Similarly in politics also she displayed great courage and took part in all the campaigns...

She was a devout Vaishnavi , used to worship the tulsi, religiously observed sacred days and continued to wear the necklace of holy beads right up to her death. She was a living image of the virtues of a Vaishnava described by Narasimha Mehta in his bhajan. It is because of her that I am today what I am... In the fast of 1943 I was nearly at death's door, but she never cried or lost courage but on the contrary kept up other people's courage and prayed to God. I can see her face vividly even today.

She successfully learnt (from him) two songs out of a Gujarati fifth-grade school reader, and while she had the strength, husband and wife often 'sat down and sang two songs together' at night, causing Sarojini Naidu to 'joke about the honeymooning old couple'....

One of the numerous occasions when Ba was tensed up at her husband's decision to go on fast is testified by the following telegram sent by Mira Ben to

Gandhiji and his reply. "Got news of fast only today. Ba wishes me to say she is greatly shocked and feels decision very wrong but you have not listened to any others, so you will not hear her."

Gandhiji's eyes were wet with tears of joy as he wrote out this telegram to them:-

"Tell Ba that her father imposed on her a companion whose weight would have killed any other woman. I treasure her love. She must remain courageous to the end. For you, I have nothing but only thanks to god for giving you to me."

How tenderly each loved the other is revealed by this letter of Gandhiji to Ba when the former hurriedly left without telling the latter:

November 2, 1938

BA

Only nine days remain now, and God willing, we shall meet. We shall leave for Segaon the same-day. I forgot to reply to one remark in your letter. You said that while leaving. I did not even put my hand on your head. As the motor started I also felt that, but you were away from me. Do you require outward signs? Why do you believe that because I do not show my love by outward signs, it has dried up? I assure you that my love has increased and goes on increasing. Not that it was less before, but what was there is becoming purer day by day. I do not look upon you merely as a clay doll. What more need I say? If you also, like to ask for outward signs, I will comply.

Blessings from

BAPU

On their long and beautiful relationship Gandhiji wrote "From 1906 really speaking from 1901, Ba had no other interest in staying with me except to help me in my work. She could not live away from me. She would have had no difficulty, if she had wished, in staying away from me. But as a woman and wife she considered it her duty to lose herself in me ever after. She did not cease looking after me till her last breath."

About that last breath Gandhiji wrote "Ba was completely wrapped up in me. She died in my lap. Which other woman has ever been so fortunate? Just before she

passed away she called me. I did not realize then that her end was near. What a happy coincidence that at that time I was not out on my usual evening walk! In this, too, I see God's grace... My sorrow at my separation from Ba is still not healed, even though my mind tells me that she could not have passed away under better circumstances. I was always fearful about her lest she survived me. So I wished that she would precede me to the cremation-ground. And yet I feel so sorrow-stricken. Maybe, I continue to think of Ba constantly, but this, too, is not quite true. In a word, I really cannot describe what I am feeling inwardly."⁷

"Ba's death appears to be like a dream. Of course, I was prepared for it. But when she actually went away I was rather surprised} It seems without her I cannot attend to my personal affairs adequately".

(Rajmohan Gandhi's *MOHANDAS – A True Story of a Man, his People and an Empire*, Penguin Books, 2006 and Mukulbhai Kalarthi *BA AND BAPU*, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad Navjeevan Trust, 1962.)

Gandhiji's faith in Ramanama

"Nothing elates me so much", wrote Gandhiji, "as the music of the Gita or the Ramayana by Tulsidas." He considered the Ramayana as the greatest work and declared that "only in Rama can the weak find strength."

'Striking resemblances' between the two

"There are some striking resemblances between the central character in this story and his counterpart in the great Indian epic, the Ramayana. The hero of that story, Lord Ram, also travels long distances, sometimes willingly, at other times unwillingly. He too spends long periods in exile, and has a loyal and very supportive wife, whom (like Gandhi) he does not always treat with the respect and understanding she deserves. He is also a man of high moral character, who occasionally entertains dark and dangerous thoughts. Both Gandhi and Ram have powerful adversaries, who are not without a certain appeal of their own. Both men could not have done what they did, one in myth and the other in reality, without the self-effacing support of very many others. And both have enjoyed a vigorous and contentious after-life."

(Ramachandra Guha's *GANDHI BEFORE INDIA*, Penguin Books, 2013)

GREAT MARTYRDOM

K.M.Munshi

The Sardar sat close by, with an arm round the shoulders of a sobbing Panditji. Abha and Manu were weeping hysterically; Maniben was reciting the *Bhagwad-Gita*. Dr.Jivraj had just finished examining Gandhiji. Pyarelal was sitting on one side of the bed regarding Gandhiji with anxious eyes. Further off, a little group sat huddled, tears running down their cheeks.

I sat down near the Sardar. The doctor who was examining Gandhiji got up. "No use", he said and shook his head.

The silence of the room was broken by sobs and chanting.

The first impact of the event was terrible. We had been told that the assailant was a Muslim and this opened up a ghastly prospect. The next day rivers of blood would flow in both India and Pakistan. Then, on inquiry, I was assured by the Birla House gardener, who claimed to have caught the assailant, that the murderer was a Hindu.

My memory went back to a conversation which Bapu had had with some of us months before.

Someone had said, "A Muslim will kill you some day, Bapu."

"No Muslim will ever kill me", he said. "If I am murdered, it will be by the hand of a Hindu." His perspicacity was almost prophetic.

Pyarelal came in, "Bapu told me definitely that after his death, he was to be cremated according to the Hindu rites", he said. That clinched the matter. The funeral was fixed for the next morning.

Panditji and the Sardar also suddenly awoke to a new responsibility. They could not forsake the people who looked to them both for guidance.

In death, Gandhiji had worked a miracle, even as he had done so many times in life.

(*'SWAN LOVE AND OTHER KULAPATI'S LETTERS'* by K.M.Munshi)

MAHATMA – THE PILGRIM OF ETERNITY

Nani Palkhivala

THE SECOND OF October has again come by, and our hearts and minds go back to the pilgrim of eternity. Smt. Kamala, the director of this Gandhi Memorial Centre, gave us a beautiful thought when she said that a part of all the great spirits of the past might have found a place within the soul of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji's impact on those who came in contact with him was almost magical. Rabindranath Tagore said:

'At Gandhiji's call India blossomed forth to new greatness, just as once before in earlier times when Buddha proclaimed the truth of fellow-feeling and compassion among all living creatures.'

Even so hard-headed a man as George Bernard Shaw, to whom praise of others did not come very naturally, when asked for his impression upon meeting Mahatma Gandhi, said: 'You might as well ask for someone's impression of the Himalayas!' Romain Rolland, the great French writer and Nobel prizewinner, said that Mahatma Gandhi 'had introduced into human politics the strongest religious impetus of the last two hundred years.' If instead of two hundred years, he had said twelve hundred years, he would have been still right.

The Mahatma met Charlie Chaplin, confessed to him frankly that he had not seen his pictures, and expounded to him his theory about the disastrous effects of the machine on human life. Their conversation led Charlie Chaplin to produce *Modern Times*.

In our own times, Anwar Sadat of Egypt has publicly spoken about the tremendous influence Mahatma Gandhi's Writings had on him.

Gandhiji gave a decisive new direction to history. What was it about this man which held the human race in thrall? Who was this individual? And how did he come to wield such influence over the rest of mankind? He himself said that he was a very strange individual. He confessed that he was not intellectually brilliant, but he added that while there are limitations to the development of the mind, there are no limitations to the development of the heart.

If one were to denote in a word what the Mahatma had, it is the Sanskrit word, *buddhi* -the capacity inter alia to perceive the Truth. This is a capacity which few individuals have, and you can develop it only by deep self-study, by profound devotion.

He was able, as a result of his buddhi, to propound solutions which went far beyond the insights of any academic studies of politics or economics or Science. Let me tell you what he said about himself:

‘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. I am but a weak aspirant, ever failing, ever trying. My failures make me more vigilant than before and intensify my faith. I can see with the eye of faith that the observance of the twin doctrine of Truth and Non-violence has possibilities of which we have but very inadequate conception.’

The pregnant phrase the ‘eye of faith’ reminds you of the lines of George Santayana:

‘Columbus found a World, and had no chart,
Save one that faith deciphered in the skies;
To trust the soul’s invincible surmise
Was all his science and his only art.’

It was the only science and the only art of Mahatma Gandhi-to trust the soul’s invincible surmise. Before I go further into some of the ideas which the Mahatma propagated, I would like to mention one interesting point. There seems to be a mystic-karmic-bond between the United States and India, and you see this link in the case of Mahatma Gandhi. When he was in South Africa (he went there in 1893), the two foreigners who befriended him were both Americans. They gave him succour and shelter. After he came back to India, the first foreigner to spot his incredible spiritual strength was an American. On 10 April 1922, Reverend John Haynes Holmes delivered a speech in an American Church on ‘Who is the Greatest Man in the World?’ Reverend Holmes declared that he had no doubt that the greatest man alive was Mahatma Gandhi. He compared the Mahatma to Christ. In 1922 no other foreigner had the conception of the Mahatma as the prophet of the twentieth century.

Then came the great years of Mahatma Gandhi in India. There he started his civil disobedience movement, which he implemented with phenomenal success. The one person who influenced him the most in his thinking on civil disobedience was again an American-Henry David Thoreau. He had read Thoreau in the year 1907

when he was in South Africa. He had reproduced extracts from Thoreau's writings in *Young India* which he was editing at the time in South Africa. The last man to be the disciple of the Mahatma was an American—Vincent Sheean. He met the Mahatma in Delhi on 27 January 1948, three days before the Mahatma was assassinated, and offered himself as a disciple. The Mahatma talked to him at some length on that day on a variety of subjects, and quoted to him the lines from Upanishads : "The whole world is the garment of God; renounce it then and receive it back as the giû of God." Sheean was most impressed and met him again on the 28th. They were to meet again in the evening of the 30th, but that was not to be.

The last interview which the Mahatma gave was in the early afternoon on 30 January, and it was to an American. She was Margaret Bourke-White who came to interview him for *Life* magazine. She asked him the question: would he persist in his theory of nonviolence in the event of a nuclear attack on a city? The Mahatma's reply was that if the defenceless citizens died in a spirit of non-violence, their sacriûces would not be in vain; they might well pray for the soul of the pilot who thoughtlessly sprayed death on the city. This was his last message of compassion to mankind.

In our times his inûence on America has been of the most signiûcant character. It was his inûence which led Martin Luther King to start a civil disobedience campaign on non-violent lines. Vice-President Mondale has publicly stated how deeply inûenced he was as a young man by Mahatma Gandhi's teachings.

President Carter is another great admirer of the Mahatma. When Hubert Humphrey died, there was one quotation in President Carter's tribute to the eminent Senator and that was what the President had read at the Gandhi Samadhi in New Delhi. The words quoted enumerate what Gandhiji regarded as the Seven Deadly Sins:

'Commerce without ethics;
Pleasure without conscience;
Politics without principle;
Knowledge without character;
Science without humanity;
Wealth without work;
Worship without sacrifice.'

Let me now say a few words about the Mahatma's ideas which have changed the course of human history. His main emphasis, as we all know, was on truth and

non-violence. A thinker has said that truth is a scarce commodity, but its supply has always outstripped the demand. While truth does not seem to be triumphing all round us—somehow, somewhere, in some way, something is working which is bringing the human race closer to truth.

This is what the Mahatma has to say about truth and nonviolence:

“I may be a despicable person; but when Truth speaks through me, I am invincible.

“Truth alone will endure; all the rest will be
swept away before the tide of Time.’

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

“Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man.”

“I do not believe in short cuts which involve violence. However much I may sympathize with and admire worthy motives, I am an uncompromising opponent of violent methods even to serve the noblest of causes. There is, therefore, really no meeting-ground between the school of violence and myself.” It was not a personal God that the Mahatma believed in. He had the very, very deep and profound Hindu concept of Brahma-the all-prevading Reality, which is God in its various manifestations. It is that God that he believed in. To quote his own words:

“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. He is even the atheism of the atheist; he transcends speech and reason.’

Ralph Waldo Emerson, who was well-versed in Indian culture, has written a poem called ‘Brahma’, where this very idea is memorably expressed:

‘They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.’

God is the doubter and the doubt, and God is the atheist and his atheism. In other words, there is just no escape from Him. The same thought was expressed by Francis Thompson in *The Hound of Heaven*. Ultimately the skeptic realizes that God has been by his side all the time.

Another sentence from Gandhiji: "Scriptures cannot transcend reason and truth; they are intended to purify reason and illuminate the truth." He tried to synthesize the essentials of all religions: 'Indeed religion should pervade every one of our actions. Here religion does not mean sectarianism. It means a belief in ordered moral government of the universe. It is not less real because it is unseen. This religion transcends Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc. It does not supersede them. It harmonizes them and gives them reality.'

He identified himself completely with the common man. He spoke and he worked not for the ruler

'but the ranker, the tramp of the road,
The slave with the sack on his shoulders
pricked on with the goad,
The man with too weighty a burden,
too weary a load.

As regards the need of identifying oneself with the masses, he observed-

'We must first come in living touch with them by working for them and in their midst. We must share their sorrows, understand their difficulties and anticipate their wants. With the pariahs we must be pariahs and see how we feel to clean the closets of the upper classes and have the remains of their table thrown at us. We must see how we like being in the boxes, miscalled houses, of the labourers of Bombay. 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, 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.'

The Indian masses responded to the Mahatma's call in a spirit of total surrender.

The Mahatma dealt with problems which are timeless and universal, because they spring from enduring weaknesses of human nature and human society. Since the solutions he found for them were based on eternal verities, his influence and his relevance are also timeless and universal.

On this second day of October, we can have no better wish for India than that the great spirit of the Mahatma may always abide with our people.

(Nani Palkhivala : *Selected Writings* 1999)

Gandhi – A Memoir

William L. Shirer

“Generations to come, it may be,” Einstein once wrote of Gandhi, in words which stand at the head of this book, “will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth.”

I watched this man, a saintly, Christ like figure, walk upon this earth, in flesh and blood, at a moment when he had launched his great civil-disobedience movement that began to undermine the British hold on India and that, in the end, freed his country from two and a half centuries of British rule. It was one of the great accomplishments of history and for him a personal triumph such as our world has seldom seen.

But there were, in a deeper sense, even greater triumphs for this unique man who was unlike any great individual of our time, and perhaps of any time. He liberated India from a foreign yoke, but he also liberated the whole world from some of its encrusted prejudices and foolish ways of life. He was one of history’s great teachers, not only by the example of his life but by what he preached and practised. As such, he was, as Viscount Louis Mountbatten, the last British Viceroy of India, said of him on his martyred death, akin to Buddha and to Christ.

In a harsh, cynical, violent and materialist world he taught and showed that love and truth and non-violence, ideas and ideals, could be of tremendous force — greater sometimes than guns, and bombs and bayonets — in achieving a little justice, decency, peace and freedom for the vast masses of suffering, downtrodden men and women who eke out an existence on this inhospitable planet.

Albert Szent-Györgyi, a Nobel laureate in medicine, took note of this in a jolting book, *The Crazy Ape* :

Between the two world wars, at the heyday of colonialism, force reigned supreme. It had a suggestive power, and it was natural for the weaker to lie down before the stronger. Then came Gandhi, chasing out of his country, almost single-handed, the greatest military power on earth. He taught the world that there are higher things than force, higher even than life itself; he proved that force had lost its suggestive power.

Gandhi, being a human being, was far from perfect, and was the first to admit it, publicly. Like all the great achievers in history, he was a man of many paradoxes

and contradictions. He had his fads, peculiarities and prejudices, and some of them, when I observed them or listened to him explain and defend them, struck me as outlandish. I have not hesitated in this memoir, despite my immense admiration for him that at times bordered on adoration, to point them out.

Like other men, he quarreled with his wife, whom he had married when both were thirteen, and he was for a time a trial to her — we have his own word for it. I saw quite a bit of her in my time in India and liked and admired her. She was illiterate, lost in the world her dynamic husband was shaking, but she had her strengths.

The Mahatma was genuinely the humblest of men (though he was not unaware of his greatness), but I have seen him behave stubbornly and dictatorially to his co-workers, making what I felt were outrageous demands on some of them, as when he insisted that even those who were married, and happily, observe the celibacy he had imposed on himself in his late thirties after many years of what he called a lustful relationship with his own wife. But even after that act of self-discipline he could be, as Jawaharlal Nehru, his chief disciple and his successor, observed with puzzlement, obsessed with sex. In the evening of his long life, at the very moment of his crowning political triumph, though a dark one in his personal life, Gandhi shocked and offended many by his inexplicable practices with beautiful young Hindu women, which seemed to those who knew and loved and worshipped him contrary to all he had stood for and preached.

But against these human frailties there stood out the man of infinite goodness, a seeker all his life of Truth, which he equated with God, a pilgrim who believed that love was the greatest gift of man and that love and understanding and tolerance and compassion and non-violence, if they were only practised, would liberate mankind from much of the burden, oppression and evil of life.

This was not to be, in his own country or in any other, and probably, given the cussedness of the human race, it will never be. But Gandhi gave his life and his genius to try to make it so, or at least more so than it had ever been — he was too wise to have many illusions but his hope was boundless.

To observe at first hand that mighty effort, to rub up against, if ever so briefly, the towering greatness, the goodness, the high spirits and humour, the humility, the subtlety of mind, the integrity and purity of purpose, and that indefinable thing, the genius, of this man was the greatest stroke of fortune that ever befell me.

I have tried in these pages to give a feeling of what it was like, and to indicate its impact on me, an ignorant young American foreign correspondent at the time. The mark it left on me has lasted to this day, through the subsequent half century of my life and work, helping me to bear the ups and downs of existence, to survive the strains of all the brutal man-made upheavals and the barbarism and the hypocrisy we have lived through in our time, and providing a certain light that helped to guide me toward an understanding, however incomplete, of the meaning of our brief sojourn on this perplexing planet.

The Indian revolution, like its leader, also was unique, the first non-violent revolution, I believe, in history, or at least the first that succeeded. It was Gandhi's genius that made it, led it, and saw it through, after incredible setbacks, to its moment of triumph. He never doubted its end nor, as he often insisted to me in some of the darkest moments, that it would come while he still lived. It was a difficult revolution to understand, even for Indians and especially for one like me who came to India loaded down with all the foolish prejudices and myths of the West, which had been dominated so long by force and violence (So astute a statesman as Winston Churchill never faintly grasped it). But I did my best to try to understand it, and perhaps a little light on it emerges from this memoir of the man who made it and won it, and who left so indelible an imprint on this world.

Two or three times during my conversations with Gandhi, our talks drifted to the problems of sex. His views seemed to me outlandish, particularly those that a man and wife should live as brother and sister, that intercourse was a sin if indulged in for pleasure, and that sexual attraction between men and women was "unnatural". I could understand Gandhi's search for brahmacharya. Many a good Hindu had taken that course in order to free himself from the demands of the body and to purify his mind and spirit. But I could not understand, I told him, his requiring abstinence from so many young married couples in his entourage. I thought it was wrong. Arbitrary. Harmful. If they wanted to live as brother and sister, let them do it purely on their own, as he had done.

Probably we shall never know the whole truth about Gandhi's "experiments" with lying naked with naked women in the evening of his life, which he regarded as a test for his sexual purity. But on the basis of what has been revealed, one is left wondering whether such experiments were necessary. If Gandhi got the shivers on wintry nights, why not reach for an extra blanket instead of a girl? If at seventy-seven

or seventy-eight, he still had doubts about his ability to resist sexual temptation, why take the chance? Why go out of your way to let the Devil tempt you? And why risk possible harm to these young women, who were completely under his sway? True, it was a virtue in Gandhi to publicly admit what other men hide. But this strange chapter in the evening of his life is nevertheless confusing and a little chilling to one, at least, who was touched by this man's nobility.

Still, Mahatma Gandhi remains to me much as he did that year in India and London. Not all who came in contact with him saw him as I did: a humble seeker of the truth, who, like Christ, chose to live among the poor and work for them, and who practised what he preached, and who even in the quicksands of politics was ruthlessly honest.

Not all in India regarded him as a saint. Lord Wavell, the next-to-last Viceroy in India (1943–47), who always struck me as unusually intelligent and sensitive for a military man, came to loathe Gandhi, whom he characterized as a "malevolent old politician . . . shrewd, obstinate, domineering, and double-tongued" with "little true saintliness in him". And as we have seen, Jinnah, who in the end became Gandhi's most embittered opponent in India, thought Gandhi "a cunning fox ... a Hindu revivalist". History, I believe, will take a different view, the one expressed by Einstein and Mountbatten in the quotations that head this book, by those, Nehru above all, who knew him best, and by the testimony, such as it is, I have offered in these pages.

So many myths have grown up around Gandhi since his death, as inevitably happens to a towering figure who is martyred, as happened to Christ, that it may have been of worth to try to set him down as he was, or at least as he seemed to be, in the flesh, to those his genius and example touched firsthand - before mythology has completely taken him over.

Gandhi was my greatest teacher, not only by what he said and wrote and did, but by the example he set. Granted that I was a poor student, what did he teach me?

I suppose the greatest single thing was to seek the Truth, to shun hypocrisy and falseness and glibness, to try to be truthful to oneself as well as to others, to be sceptical of the value of most of life's prizes, especially the material ones, to cultivate an inner strength, to be tolerant of others, of their acts and beliefs, however much they jarred you, but not tolerant of your own faults. And yet to stick to your beliefs and values when you thought they were right, never selling them out in exchange for

personal gain or out of cowardice, yet seeking to let them grow and daring to change them in the light of experience and of whatever wisdom came your way.

There was much else Gandhi taught me: the value of contemplation and how to achieve it in the midst of the pressures and distractions of life in the twentieth century. Also: the necessity to discipline your mind and body and to keep your greeds and your lusts and your selfishness and your worldly ambitions in check; the obligation to love, to forgive and not to hate; to eschew violence and to understand the power of non-violence, grasping that the latter often demands more courage than the former.

Gandhi also taught me that the practice of what he called “comparative religion” was vastly more rewarding than adhering dogmatically to any one faith, either to his Hinduism or my Christianity, since he had found great truths and splendid poetry in all the principal religions. All were imperfect, he thought. We should lump them together, as he had tried to do, and take the best from each. That my own effort was not very successful was not his fault. Perhaps my reaction to a rather narrow Presbyterian upbringing dulled my capacity to be very religious. All the religions had too many myths that priests and worshippers took too literally, they had all been corrupted by the handiwork of men, some of them charlatans, and by temples and churches, for me to have the faith to base my life on them. But I owe it to Gandhi that he opened my mind and spirit to the beauty, the wisdom, and especially to the poetry and philosophy of the Hindu and Buddhist scripts, and to a lesser extent to those of the Koran, and even to a deeper understanding of Christianity, about which he often talked to me.

After that experience I could never be a true Christian, believing that salvation was reserved for those of that faith alone. If there were a Heaven, it would be open to Hindus, Buddhists, Moslems and others, who far outnumbered Christians.* (*Or, as Gandhi put it once: “I do not believe that in the other world there are either Hindus, Christians, or Moslems.”) Nor could I any longer believe that the Christian God was the one and only one, as I had been taught in my youth. There were others, for other faiths, just as legitimate.

Gandhi often talked to me about God, who for him was nothing more than Truth. “There is no other God than Truth,” he would say, repeating what he had often written. “I worship God as Truth only, I have not yet found Him.” He meant, I gathered,

that he had not yet found — and would never find — Absolute Truth, which he equated with God.

Gandhi's conception of religion, as of God, transcending all faiths as it did, helped to liberate me from much of my own scepticism about it.

"What is religion," I would ask, "if not simply worship of whatever God you happened to be brought up to believe in?"

"It's more than that," he answered once. "To me, in its largest sense, religion means self-realization or knowledge of self."

If that was what it was — and I had never before heard it put that way — I could readily subscribe to it myself.

Though Gandhi got his principal religious inspiration from the Hindu Bhagavad Gita, on whose poetic teachings, he said, he tried to base the conduct of his life, he was strongly attached to Christianity. At nearly every prayer meeting of his I attended, he included "Lead, Kindly Light" among the hymns to be sung. He loved it.

Gandhi, as I have mentioned, took a dim view of the Old Testament. He was offended by all the violence, the vindictiveness, the lust for revenge and punishment, the "eye for an eye" of the Old Testament fathers and sometimes, it seemed to him, of the God they worshipped. But the New Testament he loved. "Especially the Sermon on the Mount," he would say. "It goes straight to my heart. Like the Gita." And he would sing out the words " '... whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.' "

"That's what I've been trying to do, and to induce others to do, all my life," he would say. "It is the basis of my creed of nonviolence." But however much he revered Jesus Christ and his teachings, he had a certain scepticism of Christianity's celebration of him as the Son of God. He was surprised but pleased when I told him that Thomas Jefferson, in a famous essay that had not gone down well with some of our pious Christians, had shown a similar scepticism. We often discussed it, and he would reiterate, more or less, what he had set down in his autobiography when he told of the efforts of his Christian friends in South Africa to convert him to Christ.

It was more than I could believe that Jesus was the only incarnate son of God, and that only he who believed in him would have everlasting life. If God could have sons, all of us were His sons. If Jesus was like God, or God Himself, then all men

were like God and could be God Himself. My reason was not ready to believe literally that Jesus by his death and by his blood redeemed the sins of the world ...

I could accept Jesus as a martyr, an embodiment of sacrifice, and a divine teacher, but not as the most perfect man ever born. His death on the Cross was a great example to the world, but that there was anything like a mysterious or miraculous virtue in it my heart could not accept ... Philosophically there was nothing extraordinary in Christian principles. From the point of view of sacrifice, it seemed to me that the Hindus greatly surpassed the Christians. It was impossible for me to regard Christianity as a perfect religion or the greatest of all religions.

Thus if I could not accept Christianity either as a perfect, or the greatest religion, neither was I then convinced of Hinduism being such. Hindu defects were pressingly visible to me.

So though Gandhi remained a devout, if unorthodox, Hindu, he reached out all his life for the Truths of other religions and made them his own, unceasingly preaching tolerance of all faiths. For this he was hated and despised by the rigidly orthodox Hindus of the Hindu Mahasabha, one of whose fanatical Brahman members, as we have seen, killed him for deserting the true faith.

I never knew a more deeply, religious man nor a subtler politician, but I was puzzled by Gandhi's insistence on mixing religion and politics. If anything about me irritated this saintly man it was because I questioned this mixture. I thought religion and politics should be kept separate, as the Founding Fathers of our American Republic had had the wisdom to do. Indeed, I ventured to argue that it was Gandhi's inculcating so much Hindu religion in his Indian politics that had kept the majority of Moslems out of his nationalist movement. He would gently rebuke me and contend, as he had in the next-to-last page of his autobiography when he summed up the purpose of his life, that "those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means."

There was a little of that rebuke, still, in the cable he sent me in 1932 during his fast in Yeravda prison. "You should know," he began, "that my politics are derived from my religion" — as if to say: "You, of all people, should know, since I imparted my views on the subject to you often and at length."

Once in Delhi, while we were again discussing the problem, he rather impatiently — or perhaps it was despairingly — referred me to a piece he had written on the matter in *Young India* entitled “Neither a Saint Nor a Politician.”

A critic tries to see in me a politician, whereas he expected me to be a saint.

After disavowing any pretensions to sainthood, Gandhi continues:

But though by disclaiming sainthood I disappoint the critic’s expectations, I would have him give up his regrets by answering him that the politician in me has never dominated a single decision of mine, and if I seem to take part in politics, it is only because politics encircle us today like the coil of a snake from which one cannot get out, no matter how much one tries ... Quite selfishly, as I wish to live in peace in the midst of a bellowing howling around me, I have been experimenting with myself and my friends by introducing religion into politics.

He did it all his life. It seemed to many a mistake. But I believe now it was the only way he could arouse the masses, at least the Hindu masses of India, which formed the great majority. They were too ignorant, too downtrodden, too devout in their religion to be awakened by a mere politician. But millenniums of adhering through thick and thin to Hinduisim and its way of life had prepared them to follow a great religious leader, especially a saintly one who lived among them in their poverty and rags as one of them. Once again Gandhi had sensed what no other politician, not even Nehru, had faintly grasped. The British never understood it either. But they resented it. Mixing religion with politics was not playing cricket.

I count the days with Gandhi the most fruitful of my life. No other experience was as inspiring and as meaningful and as lasting. No other so shook me out of the rut of banal existence and opened my ordinary mind and spirit, rooted in the materialist, capitalist West as they were, to some conception of the meaning of life on this perplexing earth. No other so sustained me through the upheavals and vicissitudes that I lived through in the years after I left India.

For just ahead, when I returned to my beat in Europe, lay the inexplicable faltering and decline of the Western democracies, the rise of Hitler and the flowering of barbaric Nazi Germany in my years in Berlin, the ordeal of the Second World War, which the Nazi dictator launched in 1939 and nearly won, his cold-blooded extermination of six million Jews in the ovens of the extermination camps, which he accomplished with the willing help of so many Germans; and then, after the war, at

home in America the mindlessness of the McCarthy witch-hunting time, in which so many god-fearing Americans participated, as they did in the lies that afflicted us with the war in Vietnam and the six years of Nixon, elected the second time, in 1972, by such an overwhelming majority of our good citizens — all this intertwined for forty years with the ups and downs of my personal and professional life.

What I had got from Gandhi helped me to survive. It showed the way to the development of an inner life, which over that considerable time became ingrained enough, and strong and sufficient enough, to ward off all of the assaults from the outside.

I have tried to put down, however inadequately, what I got from him. The whole wide world got a lot from him too. His impact on it may turn out to be as great and as lasting as that of Christ and Buddha, as many of us who crossed his path, including the last British Viceroy of India, believe.

The example of his life, like theirs, his search for Truth, as they sought Truth, his humility, his selflessness, which was akin to theirs, his granite integrity, and what he taught and practised and accomplished were bound to leave an indelible imprint on his earth. Satyagraha, his supreme achievement, taught us all that there was a greater power in life than force, which seemed to have ruled the planet since men first sprouted on it. That power lay in the spirit, in Truth and love, in non-violent action.

For those of us who glimpsed, however briefly, Gandhi's use of it, who had the luck, for however short a time, to be in his radiant presence and to feel his greatness — and not many of us are still alive, as I write — it was an experience that enriched and deepened our lives as no other did.

I am grateful that fate took me to him.

(Gandhi – A Memoir by William L. Shirer)

They only thing that can relieve Gandhiji of his mental and physical agony is for us all to do all that is possible to create an atmosphere of peace and remove distress and bitterness. Let it not be said that we did not deserve the leadership of the greatest man of the world. Bapu gave life to a dead country. It is the duty of all Bapu's soldiers to carry out his bequest.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

MAHATMA GANDHI

Kingsley Martin

He died, I know, with a sense of failure. Too few of his followers understood ahimsa, and too few of them were sufficiently trained in its application. He has had many converts to non-violence, but with the departure of the British it has been made manifest that they had understood the passive resistance of the weak and not the non-violence of the strong. That the British had left India without violence was, he admitted, a remarkable achievement. He had made, he told Edgar Snow in the last weeks of his life, "a kind of contribution" to the world by showing that nonviolence was a political means and not only a matter of personal ethics. He was aware that the forces of passion and violence were growing in the new India. Ahimsa, he said, could never be defeated since it was a state of mind which was in itself a victory and which could have only good spiritual results in others even if it did not win external victory. But the immediate challenge was the communal struggle. When he had recovered from his Delhi fast, he wished to go to Pakistan and appeal to his friends there. He was well aware that he might not live to do this, the bomb that was thrown during his fast was sufficient warning of the fanaticism of the extremer sort of Hindu. He remarked only the day before his murder that it would always be easy to kill him at one of his prayer - meetings. So it proved. But his death started a legend and Gandhi today stands among the celestial hierarchy in the minds of Indians. In his remarkable broadcast, spoken with deep emotion on the night of the assassination, Pandit Nehru used the occasion to rally all the forces of tolerance and righteousness. For the moment at any rate the Mahatma's death confirmed the lessons of his fasts and reinforced the hopes of communal peace.

Whatever happens in India and Pakistan, Gandhi's "contribution" will not be lost. There is a danger, of course, that his legend may be perverted; when the saint dies there are always those who glorify his memory in order that the world may more readily forget what he taught. But they never wholly succeed. Even in the case of Christianity, where the wrangles of the Church and the pronouncements of Popes have done so much to pervert the lesson of the Cross, the contents of Christ's teaching have continuously broken through ecclesiastical obscurantism, inspiring and refreshing his disciples. Gandhi's life and death will similarly remain a witness to the faith that men may still overcome misery, cruelty and violence by Truth and Love.

(*Mahatma Gandhi* (Ed) S. Radhakrishnan).

GANDHI'S SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

GILBERT MURRAY, M.A., D.C.L.

(Emeritus Professor, University of Oxford)

In a world where the rulers of nations are relying more and more upon brute force and the nations trusting their lives and hopes to systems which represent the very denial of law and brotherhood, Mr. Gandhi stands out as an isolated and most impressive figure. He is a ruler obeyed by millions, not because they fear him but because they love him; not as the master of wealth and secret police and machine guns, but as holding that spiritual authority which, when it once dares to assert itself, seems to reduce almost to impotence the values of the material world. I say "seems": for against purely material force, untinged by conscience or pity, it would be helpless. It only wins its battles because of its secret appeal to the spiritual element in its enemy, that humane element from which man, in his utmost effort to be brutal, cannot quite shake himself free. "A battle of the unaided human soul against overwhelming material force; and it ends by the units of material force gradually deserting their own banners and coming round to the side of the soul!" So I wrote about Mr. Gandhi twenty years ago

We cannot, of course, assume that a spiritual authority is always right in its guidance. Its claims and professions can seldom be proved or disproved. It is directed by human beings, who are subject to ordinary human frailties and as liable as other autocrats to be corrupted by power. But among spiritual rulers, as among rulers in general, Mr. Gandhi stands out as almost unique. In the first place, he utters no dogma, no command, only an appeal; he calls to our spirits; he shows what he holds to be the truth, but does not exclude or condemn those who seek the light in some other way.

In the second place he is unique in his manner of fighting, as was shown best in his fifteen years' struggle for the rights of Indians in South Africa. He and his followers were repeatedly imprisoned, herded with criminals, treated as sub-human creatures, yet whenever the Government which oppressed him were weak or in trouble, instead of pressing his advantage he turned and helped them. When they were involved in a dangerous war he organized a special corps of Indian stretcherbearers to help them; when, in the midst of a non-violent strike by his Indian followers, the Government were suddenly threatened by a revolutionary railway strike, he

immediately gave orders for his people to resume work until his opponents should be safe again. No wonder that he won the day. No genuinely human enemy could hold out against that method of fighting.

Thirdly, perhaps the hardest point of all for a leader who is worshipped and idealized by immense multitudes, he never claims to be infallible. I see that at this moment he is calling a pause in his “non-co-operation” campaign, in order that he, as well as his opponents, may wait and think.

The spiritual authority of one unarmed man over great multitudes is in itself wonderful, but when that man not only abjures violence and helps his enemies in their need, but also recognizes his own human fallibility, he claims unanswerably the admiration of the whole world. From a distant country, from a quiet alien civilization, with different views from his on many practical questions, out of the careworn and striving movements of thought in Europe, where the human conscience and intellect seem for the moment to stand helpless under the bludgeons of ignorance and brute force, I gladly give this great man the title his disciples claim for him and hail with reverence “Mahatma Gandhi”.

(*Mahatma Gandhi* – Edited by Dr.S. Radhakrishnan)

“We all know of his magnificent services to India, and to the cause of our freedom during the past half a century and more. But no service of his could have been greater than what he has performed in the past four months when, in a dissolving world, he has been like a rock of purpose and a light-house of truth. His firm, low voice has risen above the clamours of the multitude pointing out the path of right endeavour. Because of the bright flame, we cannot lose faith in the destiny of India and her people.”

- Jawaharlal Nehru on December 13, 1947

HOMAGE FROM A MAN OF THE WEST TO GANDHI

Romain Rolland

Gandhi is not only for India a hero of national history whose legendary memory will be enshrined in the millennial epoch. He has not only been the spirit of active life which has breathed into the peoples of India the proud consciousness of their unity, of their power, and the will to their independence. He has renewed, for all the peoples of the West, the message of their Christ, forgotten or betrayed. He has inscribed his name among the sages and saints of humanity; and the radiance of his figure has penetrated into all the regions of the earth. In the eyes of Europe he appeared at a moment when such an example seemed almost a miracle. Europe had barely emerged from four years of furious war, of which the ravages, the ruins and the rancours were persisting, sowing the seeds of fresh and even more implacable wars, conjoined with the overturning of revolutions, with their fatal train of social hatreds, which was gnawing the heart of nations. Europe was under the weight of a heavy night, pregnant with misery and despair, without a single ray of light.

The appearance of Gandhi, this feeble and nude little man, who repudiated all violence, whose only arms were his reason and his love, and whose humble and stubborn gentleness had just achieved its first victories, seemed a paradoxical defiance hurled in the face of the politics and the thought, traditional, accepted, and unquestioned, of the West. But it was, at the same time, a beam of health which shot through the despair. One could hardly believe it. . . . And it was some time before one could be convinced of the reality of such a prodigy. . . who knew this better than I, who was one of the first in the West to discover and to spread the message of the Mahatma? . . . But in the degree that the certainty of the existence and the constant, patient and progressive activity of the spiritual master of India made itself felt, a torrent of recognition and of faith flowed from the West towards him. For many, he was like a return of Christ. For others, for independent thinkers, disturbed by the disordered movement of the civilization of the West, whose direction was no longer governed by any moral principle, and whose marvellous genius of discovery and invention is monstrously distorted towards its own ruin, Gandhi was a new incarnation of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and of Tolstoy, denouncing the illusions and the crimes of civilization, and preaching to men the return to nature, to the simple life, to health. Governments pretended to ignore and despise him. But the peoples felt him to be their best friend and their brother. I have seen here, in Switzerland, the pious love that he inspired in humble peasants of the countryside and the mountains. But if his

message of wisdom and love, like that of the Master of "The Sermon on the Mount," has touched the hearts of countless good people, he did not depend upon it (any more than he would have counted on that of the Master of Nazareth) to change the course of destiny of a world which was itself dedicated to war and to destruction. To be applied to politics, the doctrine of Non Violence requires a very different moral climate from that which pervades the Europe of to-day; it demands a total, immense and unanimous sacrifice of self, which has no present chance of Success, in the face of the growing ferocity of the new systems of totalitarian dictatorships, which have been established in the world, and which have left their pitiless traces in the blood of millions of men. The radiance of such sacrifices has neither the possibility nor the hope of exerting a victorious influence except at the end of a very long period of trial for the peoples. And the latter cannot find the heroism to support them unless they feel sustained and exalted by a faith like that of Gandhi. This faith in God is lacking in the majority of men in the West, among the people as much as among their leaders. And new faiths (nationalist or revolutionary) are progenitors of violence. The most urgent task for the peoples of Europe is to defend by all means their liberties, their independence and even their lives, menaced by the devouring imperialisms of allied fascist and racist States. Their political abdication would inevitably lead to the servitude of humanity, perhaps for centuries. In these circumstances we cannot recommend the practice of Gandhi's doctrine, however much we may respect it. It seems to us that it is called to play in the world the role of those great monasteries of the Christian Middle Ages, wherein were preserved, as on an islet in the midst of the Surging ocean, the purest treasure of moral civilization, the spirit of peace and of love, the serenity of the spirit. Glorious and sacred role! May the spirit of Gandhi, as aforetime that of the great founders of the Christian orders, of St. Bruno, of St. Bernard, of St. Francis, maintain, among the raging torments of the age of crisis and of transformation which the human race is traversing, the Civitas Dei, the love of men, harmony! And we, intellectuals, men of science, men of letters, artists, we who are also working, within the limits of our feeble strength, to prepare for the mind that "City of all men, where reigns the "Truce of God"-we who are "the third order" (to use the language of the Church) and who belong to the panhumanist confraternity, we offer our fervent homage of love and veneration to our master and brother, Gandhi, who is realizing, in the heart and in action, our ideal of humanity to come.

(*Mahatma Gandhi* (Ed) Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan)

Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Center for Peace and Justice in Tamil Nadu

Shri Devendra Oza, IAS(Retd.)

Former Vice Chancellor,
Gandhigram Rural University, Tamil Nadu

Gandhigram in Dindigul Dist of Tamil Nadu is a big complex consisting of three separate but integrated entities. Those three are

- a) The Gandhigram Trust (which is the mother institution)
- b) The Gandhigram Rural University (of which I was the Vice Chancellor 1990-1993)
- c) Gandhigram Institute for Rural Health.

These three came into existence in the mid 40s. They were founded by a husband and wife team – Dr.G. Ramachandran who was an Educationist and Dr. Smt. Soundaram Ramachandran who was a medical doctor. Dr. Ramachandran had spent many years of his life (from about 1920) at Shanthineketan and in the early thirties he joined Mahatma Gandhi at Wardha. Dr. Smt. Soundaram came from an aristocratic Brahmin family (called TVS) and joined the Gandhi Ashram around the same time as Dr. Ramachandran. They met there and she, a child widow , took the bold step to remarry. Gandhi acted as the Priest at their wedding in the early 40s and asked them to start work in a village “which should be at least ten miles away from a main road”. This command of Gandhi they implicitly obeyed, and came to a village called Chinnalapatty which was , and is, famous for its handloom sarees. It is located about 250 miles south west of Chennai, or 50 miles north of Madurai. In those days (mid 40s) there was no road at all and Dr. Soundaram started her medical work by engaging a bullock cart, going round the surrounding villages. Dr. G. Ramachandran was both a Scholar and Educationist hailing from Kerala. He started the Gandhigram Rural Institute to train village boys and girls for self employment in rural areas. The focus was on Agriculture, animal husbandry, spinning and weaving, rural agro industries, etc.. For almost 30 years – up to 1975, they carried on this way, but Gandhigram Rural Institute became a University in that year , retaining the old name “Institute” Over time ,a The University started teaching more and more subjects – Languages, Pure Sciences, applied Sciences, Cooperation, Rural Industries, Rural Sociology, etc. In short, it is now a modern University leading right up to Doctoral Program in several disciplines. One important faculty in the University is Gandhian Thought and Peace Studies for which it has an excellent, well deserved, reputation. It is largely a Residential University with a total strength of about 4000 students. It gets students from the north eastern states of India (Assam etc.) and some years ago we had students from several African countries.

The Gandhigram Institute for Rural Health runs a very well equipped rural hospital. As I said above, Gandhigram Trust is the Mother Institution, although the University has turned to be a much larger Institution since it is a Federal University with a large budget. Basically the Trust has stuck to large Rural Development Programs which include Water Supply and Sanitation, Khadi and Village Industries, Training of Panchayat Presidents, and training of the rural youth for self employment. The Trust also runs a very big rural school based on Mahatma Gandhi's model of Basic Education. They also have special programmes for women.

Now I will explain to you the background and purpose of my visit to Atlanta (Georgia) in the US, in April 2015.

At the Gandhigram University Prof Ragupathy teaches Political Science. In May 2014, he organized a Seminar on "Lincoln, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King". Some well known scholars from South India participated. By special invitation, Sri Subash Razdan, Chairman of the Gandhi Foundation USA also came for a day. Before Sri Razdan left, we formed a small group, and discussed with him the possibility of creating some permanent program in the name of Martin Luther King who had visited Gandhigram in

February 1959. Sri Razdan agreed and encouraged us. I then took the responsibility of establishing the "Mahatma Gandhi -Martin Luther King Center for Peace and Justice" as an integral part of the Gandhigram Trust. Sri Shivakumar who heads the Trust agreed to give us the basic infrastructure for our work. The Center, which we call Gandhi King Center was formally inaugurated in July 2014. Sri Razdan during his second visit to GRI in January had invited me and Prof Ragupathy to come to Atlanta to form a Network with the big King Center there. That is what brought us both to Atlanta.

As soon as I returned to India in early May 2015, I have drafted the following Plan of Action for the GK Center.

1. Since Gandhigram Trust does not have any large fund, we have to make some low cost programs.
2. We must include in our Plan things like running an e-journal, also asking for space in the GRI Bulletin, creation of a proper website, etc.
3. Our PoA should have two sections, namely, the first 12 months and the first 36 months.
4. We must maintain continuous contacts with Gandhi Foundation, USA through Mr. Razdan.
5. The GRI Department of Political Science should be able to give us two or three volunteers who can give three hours a week to the GK Center.

6. I think we must name the Center as originally agreed, namely, Mahatma Gandhi Martin Luther King Center for Peace and Justice. The letter papers could be printed simply "Gandhi King Center" and the full name can be given just below. It is not necessary to bring in the word "DEVELOPMENT". The website should be carefully constructed. The Department of Computer Science of GRI can help us. I have also recommended the name of one Sri Suresh who has designed the website for Anasuya Foundation for Women and Children.

7. We must first prepare a list of Gandhian Institutions in Tamil Nadu, thereafter in South India and thereafter in India. This will help us to form a NETWORK. We must write articles in English and other Indian languages announcing our PoA.

8. One or two Seminars at Gandhigram will be useful to get new views. This is important.

9. A modest amount of fund raising must start immediately.

This list is purely illustrative and we can think of more.

So far we have held several meetings with students, with academics and with rural women on issues of Peace and Justice. We are now planning three Training Camps for Peace and Justice as indicated below:

1. 15th and 16th of August, 2015 – training camp at Chennai for NGOs

2. 2nd, 3rd and 4th of October, 2015 – training camp at Gandhigram Dindigul District, Tamil Nadu (for a mixed group of NGOs and senior students)

3. 15th – 19th of January, 2016 – training camp at Dindigul District, Tamil Nadu for mixed group of students, panchayats leaders and rural women. (Rev Martin Luther King came to Gandhigram on 19th January, 1959)

The GK Center hopes to become one of the important "Peace and Justice NGOs in India". I suggest you can give me your opinion about what the GK Center can do. More important, what we should do over the next twelve months and how we can work together.

Those who wish to see more could visit the websites Gandhigram Rural Institute, Gandhigram Trust, etc. I am the Coordinator for the GK Center and my telephone numbers are 044-24422269 and 9444216627. Sri Shivakumar who is heading the Gandhigram Trust in Dindigul District Tamil Nadu has the telephone number 0451 2452326 and his email id is secgdmtrust@gmail.com.

(CPS Bulletin June 2, 2015)

MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME

Shri V. Sheshadri, I.A.S.,

Joint Secretary, Prime Minister's Office

Mahatma Gandhi said, "India lives in her villages". One of the besetting features of a typical Indian village is abject poverty. Tens of millions of rural households in the country do not earn incomes sufficient enough to access a consumption basket which defines the poverty line. Rural poverty is fundamentally attributable to lack of productive employment opportunities at the village level. Creation of employment opportunities for the unskilled rural workforce, therefore, constitutes one of the most formidable challenges to planned development. In the last six decades, a plethora of anti-poverty schemes have been introduced. Of all these, National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (renomenclatured as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme), arguably, stands out as the most resounding and comprehensive antidote to rural poverty.

What fundamentally distinguishes MGNREGS from other antipoverty schemes is its statutory status. MGNREGS is sanctified by a landmark parliament enactment of 2005. No other anti-poverty scheme enjoys a statutory status. The legislation casts an obligation on the state to provide one hundred days of employment in every financial year to every rural household willing to do unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage. Correspondingly, every rural household has a legal entitlement to one hundred days of employment during a financial year. "One hundred days of work", is therefore a statutory guarantee; a legal entitlement.

Another distinguishing feature of MGNREGS is its recurring nature. The guarantee of one hundred days of employment is available during every financial year. It is not a one-time assistance. Emphasis of anti-poverty schemes in the past was on proffering an income-generating asset like a milch animal, kirana shop etc., to the impoverished household. Once the asset was given, the impoverished household was deemed to have been lifted from the morass of poverty. No further assistance was made available to the household. Instances are not wanting when

the household - unable to maintain the asset – has become poorer. Recurring nature of the entitlement affords a bulwark against such a scenario.

Notably, this guarantee of one hundred days of work is available to every rural household “willing to work”. The scheme does not involve any “selection of beneficiaries”. It is open to all rural households and involves “self-selection”. “Willingness to work” on the part of the rural household is essential. It is therefore a “demand-driven”, self-targeting scheme.

An informed assessment as to how the scheme has performed since inception, would disclose several inestimable benefits and quite a few shortcomings.

The most precipitate impact of MGNREGS has been on arresting migration. Distress migration of unskilled labour triggered by lack of employment opportunities has for long been a redoubtable endemic. Year after year, hundreds of families leave their villages and migrate to distant places in search of employment. Prior to MGNREGS, there was no calibrated strategy to combat migration. Identification of migration – prone habitations and ensuring the grounding of wage employment works in these habitations serves as the surest check against migration. NREGS has therefore emerged as the most powerful weapon – the brahmastra – to combat migration. Plenty of success stories and copious statistical evidence abundantly corroborate this aspect.

The scheme has had a significant impact on the rates of wages in rural areas. Works grounded under NREGS in a particular village, will have an overarching impact on the rate of wages in the whole village. Indirectly payment of minimum wages is ensured. More remarkably, NREGS has equipped the wage-earning community with enormous bargaining power. Earlier, wage-seekers had no choice but to work for a pittance. Now, they can refuse to work below the minimum wages. Now the employers are left with no choice but to comply with the wages demanded by the wage-earners. NREGS has thus emerged as an instrument of empowerment.

Huge monetization of the rural economy has been another major consequence of the implementation of the scheme. Humungous amount of money has flowed into the villages. In Visakhapatnam district, in about five years, about 850 crores of rupees has directly reached about 4.5 lakh households in the form of wages. Perhaps

never before in the two-century long history of the district has such a large sum of money been accessed by such a large number of poor households in such a short span of time.

Preponderant participation of marginalized sections of the society viz scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is another noteworthy aspect of the scheme. For instance, let us take Visakhapatnam district. Let the figures speak for themselves. Out of the total expenditure of 850 crores of rupees till date, a whopping 450 crores of rupees has gone to the tribal households. During the current financial year, wage expenditure in tribal areas accounts for 48% of the total wage expenditure in the district. During the current financial year, around 80000 households are about to complete 100 days of guaranteed employment. Of these, about 39000 households are tribal households. Of the total number of households which have completed 100 days of employment in the district cumulatively since the inception of the scheme, 47% are tribal households. This demonstrates the efficacy of the scheme in promoting social equity.

Not that the scheme is without shortcomings. It has its share of flaws and blemishes. The scourge of corruption has not left the scheme untouched. In Andhra Pradesh, robust institutional mechanisms like social audit and Ombudsman have been evolved to detect malpractices. Preventive vigilance can be further strengthened.

A pungent criticism of the scheme has been that it places too much importance on employment creation with too little focus on creation of durable assets. The criticism – though not misplaced – overlooks the fact that the primary objective of the scheme is employment creation and not asset creation. Nevertheless, efforts have been made to create productive assets of sustainable nature under the scheme. Land development works, road works, horticulture plantation etc., have been taken up in substantial numbers. In Visakhapatnam district, about 1.43 lakh acres of land which were hitherto uncultivated has been brought under cultivation. Coffee plantation has been taken up in about 38,000 acres of land in agency tracts of the district. About 30,000 tribal households stand to earn a net annual income of about Rs 35,000/- per acre per year from coffee cultivation.

Another stinging criticism of the scheme is that the scheme has adversely impacted agriculture. Increasing labour scarcity in agriculture is attributed to MGNREGA. High agricultural wage rates means high cost of cultivation which results in rise in food grain prices. Many therefore argue that MGNREGA is leading to inflation. The criticism is not wholly without substance. There is a need therefore to explore the possibility of dovetailing MGNREGA with agriculture.

It has been aptly said “No law can be perfect, even if it is made by a Committee of archangels”. MGNREGA is no exception and this Act, too, has its strengths and imperfections. On balance, however the benefits of the scheme clearly outweigh its imperfections. Village economies have been radically transformed. Starvation deaths have almost disappeared. Distress migrations have considerably declined. Wage incomes in rural areas have substantially soared. Purchasing power has steeply risen. Dietary habits have changed. Nutritional standards have improved. Health conditions in rural areas have improved. The scheme has not only given the rural households 100 days of guaranteed employment, it has given them enormous self-respect and immeasurable self-esteem. It would be no exaggeration to say that the scheme has perceptibly changed the quality of life in rural areas. MGNREGA, in short, has radically improved the ‘standard of living’ as well as the ‘standard of life’ in the Indian villages.

(Shri Sheshadri received the Prime Minister’s award on February 2, 2013 for excellence in the implementation of NREGS. He had earlier received the Prime Minister’s award in 2010 when he was Collector of Chittoor.)

(CPS Bulletin April 2, 2013)

“It is the duty of all leading men, whatever their persuasion or party, to safeguard the dignity of India. That dignity cannot be saved if misgovernment and corruption always go together. I have it from very trustworthy sources that corruption is increasing in our country. Is everyone then going to think only of himself and not at all of India?”

- Mahatma Gandhi on January 24, 1948

MAHATMA'S LEGACY

Dr. Uday Balakrishnan

Indian Postal Service (Retd.)

Former Member Postal Services Board and

Chairman Investment Board

(Gandhi was assassinated this month, 1948. This piece, on the Mahatma, is based on my talk at an Exhibition in Budapest on Gandhi, December 2008.)

All these years we have been hearing nothing but good things about Mahatma Gandhi. Until recently, it was difficult to find a dissenting voice. But time dims memories even of the Mahatma and there is a whole industry out there to prove that he is being made too much of.

The Mahatma left no ghost written books and from what he had to say about himself, enough could be made out to 'prove' the worst of a man who hid nothing from anyone. It was almost as if Gandhi is now being faulted for not having been born with all the qualities that made him one of the greatest of all time; of that there is no doubt.

In a century crowded with heroes, the Mahatma stood tallest amongst them all, giving some of us Indians a heavy air of moral superiority and smugness that irritate and often evoke ridicule. To trivialize a legacy still further there is the never ending debate amongst us as to why Gandhi was not awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace – little pondering if indeed such a prize was worthy of him; even if he had been awarded it is doubtful if Gandhi would have accepted something in memory of the inventor of an explosive.

For the younger generation, under thirty, busy taking on the world in a hurry, a wizened old man with large ears in a seemingly ridiculous dress hardly looks the earth shaker he is being made 300 out to be.' 'What is the fuss?' they first ask and 'Why all this hype?'only to take another look, and find his ways agreeable with their own. Affirmative action, supporting the underdog, racial integration, religious accommodation, fair treatment for women, Gandhi stood for all those and much more. Fairness was at the core of his belief and the centrality of his conviction that right will triumph over might. The world's Greens could just as well have stated their case almost entirely in Gandhi's own words.

In today's astonishingly rapid global economic meltdown, Gandhi's philosophy rings all the more true and loud. Schumacher, in 'Small is Beautiful', makes an economist's case to validate a Gandhian truth.

From Martin Luther King Jr, Bertrand Russell and the Ban the Bomb campaign, Willy Brandt and his famous gesture of contrition in Poland and Nelson Mandela, the world walks his path of mass protest against inhumanity, injustice and the unambiguous repudiation of violence. It is no accident that the U.S. President elect, Barack Obama has a picture of Gandhi in his office; Gandhi inspires.

Gandhi always stood for the underdog and fought for a cause however hopeless it might be as long as it was righteous and honourable. He spoke a language which everyone understood. Through his trademark dress, famously adopted in Madurai, Southern India in 1921, he identified himself with the rustic villager and the poor, putting both at ease in his presence, leaving neither awestruck nor wordless.

Gandhi exuded a sense of raw non-power that endures beyond his lifetime. Who else in a newly independent India, smarting under the trauma, agony and pain of partition could have Culture: Mahatma's Legacy Education, Development and Culture 301 compelled the Government to hand over millions to Pakistan which he felt rightfully belonged to that country? A comparable gesture does not exist in history.

Courtesy was Gandhi's enduring trademark even when he was at the receiving end. A remarkable example of this was when accused of sedition he pleaded guilty in a court in Ahmedabad and sought and received the heaviest punishment. Such was the respect he commanded, that the judge who sentenced him stood up in reverence when Gandhi entered his court and sent him to prison with the utmost reluctance.

Gandhi spoke the language of engagement rather than conflict; even as he fought, he worked his opponents to recognize in him a sincere friend acting in their best interest. He reached out to both India and the world through a personal philosophy influenced as much by Bhagavad Gita as by Jesus, best encapsulated in the immortal words of Lord Krishna: 'He who by comparison with himself looks upon the pleasure and pain in all creatures as similar- that Yogi O Arjuna is considered the best'.

Gandhi commanded the respect of some of the greatest of his time, among them Rabindranath Tagore, Tolstoy and Romain Rolland. He met evil in Mussolini, recognized its horrid face and let the world know. He repeatedly dared to meet those who considered him their enemy. While the poor accepted him as their own, some of India's pioneering industrialists like Tata and Birla had the perspicacity to recognize and support the greatest of Indians who owned so little and had nothing tangible to give them in return.

Gandhi knew the West first hand through his close and enduring association with Great Britain and many people in Continental Europe and the U.S.A. His associates, best reflected in the composition of his Ashrams, came from across India and all over the world.

In history, the greatest, most times have been first identified by the mass of ordinary people – the mill workers in Lancashire, rendered jobless because of Gandhi's campaign in favour of home-spun handlooms, saw a kindred soul in him recognizing the righteousness of his cause; so did millions of dispossessed in India and the world.

Gandhi saw India inside out, ground up, through the windows of a third class railway compartment and the door-way of a hovel in a village. Not one of his contemporaries in India came anywhere close to him in knowing the country so comprehensively and understanding its soul so very well.

Some contend that India has not lived up to Gandhi's ideals – many of us who have seen this country through its hamlets and villages will tell you otherwise. The conflicts that bedevil India make headlines but its enduring calm rarely merits a column in the back page of a newspaper. Gandhi's legacy lives on in India which lives largely by his creed – what else can explain how a billion plus people with immense diversity, sixty years after his assassination continue to live in a peace that so much of the rest of the world longs for?

(Education, Development and Culture, Centre for Policy Studies, 2009)

"If the country's production does not increase, and we go on increasing our expenditure, where shall we be? Let us first produce results. Let us all sit down and assess how much more of grain, cloth, industrial goods, etc. we have produced after Independence."

- Mahatma Gandhi on December 19, 1947

Gandhi, the Journalist

Dr. R. Sampath

Chief of Bureau (Retd.), *The Hindu*

Visakhapatnam

Mahatma Gandhi was a phenomenon of not only Indian politics but also of the Indian ethos, thanks to his efforts at spiritualising politics and administration. As Jawaharlal Nehru remarked, Gandhiji's arrival on the political scene, after his successful experiment with non-violent civil disobedience - he christened it 'Satyagraha' - in South Africa, was like a whiff of fresh air. It looked as though the country was waiting for him to take up the leadership of the battle for freedom. His story thereafter became the history of India's freedom struggle.

Like the Indian nation, Indian journalism, too, it seemed, was waiting for the Mahatma's arrival. On the arena of Indian journalism, Gandhiji carved a niche for himself in that he became a trend-setter in inculcating ethical values not only to the Indian people but also the newspaper editors of his time. In the words of M. Chalapathi Rau, "Gandhi's emergence as the leader who shaped the nationalist movement, had a decisive influence over all developments in the country and had its effect on the evolution of the press also. The creed of nationalism was not new but there was a new note of defiance and sacrifice." According to Kotamraju Rama Rao, "Gandhi gave men of his time an extra dimension to life, a special zest for work. We of the press particularly lived in his reflected effulgence. To the newspapers he lent prestige and importance as the media of his message, as the vehicles of inspiration and as the recorders of his operations in the field, as well as of his vital counsels in conference, cabinet and committees."

Though Gandhiji claimed journalism was not his profession – he wrote so in the August 18, 1946, issue of '*Harijan*' - he was not new to journalism. During his stay in South Africa, he launched '*Indian Opinion*' weekly in 1903. In 1919, "Gandhi possessed what he had hoped for from the moment of his return to India (from South Africa): vehicles to communicate his message", says Rajmohan Gandhi, in his '*Mohandas – A True Story of a Man, His People and an Empire*'. They were '*Young India*' (English weekly from Bombay) and '*Navajivan*' (Gujarati monthly from Ahmedabad). These journals were brought out by Umar Sobhani, Shankarlal Banker and Indulal Yagnik, who were also associated with the nationalist daily, '*Bombay*

Chronicle'. "At the end of April, in one of the (British) Raj's drastic measures, (Benjamin Guy) Horniman, the British editor of the '*Chronicle*', was deported, and the paper's publication had to be suspended. In response, Sobhani, Banker and Yagnik requested Gandhi to take over the editorship of 'Young India' and 'Navajivan' and with their help bring out 'Young India' twice a week and 'Navajivan' every week. Gandhi agreed, and on 7 May 1919 the first number of 'Young India' New Series came out."

As the greatest journalist - one can call him the greatest communicator - of all time, Gandhiji had shaped many a nationalist editor to serve the cause of Truth and the freedom movement. He was indeed a role model for many a journalist-in-the-making in his days. One of the close associates of Gandhiji, C. Rajagopalachari, while paying his tributes to the Mahatma on the occasion of his birth centenary, remarked: "Gandhiji possessed the alchemy to shape men out of clay." The Mahatma's political associates like Pandit Madanmohan Malaviya, Abul Kalam Azad, Sadhu Vaswani, Jairamdas Daultatram, Andhra Kesari Tanguturi Prakasam Pantulu and Bhogaraju Pattabhi Sitaramayya were either publishing or editing journals of their own inspired and encouraged by Gandhiji. Prakasam published '*Swarajya*' English daily from Madras with Khasa Subba Rao as editor. Rajaji edited a Tamil weekly, '*Vimochanam*', wholly devoted to the cause of Prohibition. Pattabhi Sitaramayya founded the '*Janmabhoomi*', an English journal, from Masulipatam, his native town, in 1919. "This paper was run by Pattabhi for over eleven years. During the years when Pattabhi, as a supporter of Gandhi, opposed the Swarajists tooth and nail, the '*Janmabhoomi*' voiced his views. Through its columns he not only 'exposed the fallacies' of the Swarajists but interpreted Gandhi and his philosophy. It did not take the paper long to get into the notice of the Government which demanded security from the Kistna Swadeshi Press where it was printed. In its quality, the '*Janmabhoomi*' was compared to Mohammed Ali's '*Comrade*'. To the youth of those days, it served as a source of inspiration. 'It gave definite shape to my journalistic leanings and fired my youthful ambitions. It was my mental pabulum week after week,' wrote Kunduri Iswara Dutt. To the younger politicians also it appealed." (Quoted from Prof. A. Prasanna Kumar's biography of Pattabhi Sitaramayya), Gandhian journalism emerged from the values and philosophy practised and propagated by him through '*Indian Opinion*', '*Harijan*' and '*Young India*'. "With courage and conviction, Gandhiji applied the principles in his life and also in

journalism and could bravely write his quest for truth or experiments with truth in the modern era, narrating his experiences while boldly facing the poignant situations to achieve his goals. Essentially, he believed that newspapers should have values when they were launched with a view to serving the people,” says Prof. D.V.R. Murthy (Andhra University)

Greatness of Truth

Thanks to his belief in ethical values, Gandhiji would not compromise on anything impinging on Truth. It has to be told even if it is bitter. Objectivity should be the watchword of any journalist, he opined and quoted the following Upanishadic statements (reproduced from '*Gandhi, the Writer*' by Bhabani Bhattacharya) in his writings in the '*Indian Opinion*':

—Truth alone prevails and not untruth. Truth is the pathway which learned men tread. It is by this path that the sages, satiated in their desires, have obtained salvation in Him who is the infinite ocean of Truth. (Mundaka Upanishad)

—Speak the Truth, observe duty, do not swerve from Truth. (Taittiriya Upanishad)

—Speech rests on Truth; everything rests on Truth. Therefore, they call Truth the highest. (Mahanarayana Upanishad)

—There is no duty higher than Truth and no sin more heinous than untruth. Indeed Truth is the very foundation of Righteousness. Truth and mercy are immemorial characteristics of a king's conduct. Hence royal rule is in its essence truth. On truth the world is based. Both sages and gods have esteemed truth. The man who speaks truth in this world attains the highest imperishable state. Men shrink with fear and horror from a liar as from a serpent. In this world the chief element in virtue is Truth. It is called the basis of everything. Truth is lord in the world, virtue always rests on Truth. All things are founded on Truth; nothing is higher than it. Truthfulness, equability, self-control, absence of self-display, forgiveness, modesty, endurance, absence of envy, charity, a noble well-wishing towards others, self-possession, compassion and harmlessness – surely these are the thirteen forms of Truth. (Mahabharata, Shanti Parva)

Gandhiji was not happy with the way reporting of speeches in newspapers as he felt they were defective. “There are very few who can write down a speech verbatim, while it is being delivered or afterwards from memory. This results in much distortion

and interpolation. The best rule would be to send the proof of the reported speech to the speaker for correction and publish its own report of the speech only if the speaker doesn't revise the proof sent to him." (From *'Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi'-Vol. VI*). He was also against interpretative reporting since it betrayed the individual reporter's value judgment which could go wrong.

While admitting that he was not a journalist by profession – on the contrary, Gandhiji entered the field of journalism as duck takes to water – he did realise the power of the press. Explaining the objectives of newspapers, he wrote in *'Indian Opinion'*: "In the very first month of *'Indian Opinion'*, I realised that the sole aim of journalism should be service. The newspaper press is a great power, but just as an unchained torrent of water submerges whole countryside and devastates crops, even so an uncontrolled pen serves but to destroy. If the control is from without, it proves more poisonous than want of control. It can be profitable only when exercised from within."

Advt. – an anathema

Gandhiji was dead set against the reliance of news journals on advertisements for revenue generation. His dictum was that a newspaper should sustain itself by only readers' support. He went to the extent of saying that advertisements would only mar a newspaper's credibility. "If it is not self-supporting, I should conclude that there is inefficient management or editing, or that there is no public demand for such a paper," he wrote in *'Young India'*. When he launched the Hindustani journal, *'Harijan Bandhu'*, he felt the need for more paper. "Once he wrote a letter to Sir Edward Benthall, managing director of the Titaghur Paper Mills, asking him to give paper free of cost for the Hindi edition. Sir Edward was not ready to make a gift of the paper but promised to give advertisements in the journal, so that Gandhiji could buy enough paper for the newspaper. Gandhiji said that the *'Harijan'* would mention that the paper was a gift from Titaghur Paper Mills and that itself would be a good advertisement. Benthall was not agreeable to such an acknowledgement. He insisted on a direct advertisement. But the *'Harijan'* had decided not to take advertisements for pecuniary interests," records Nadig Krishnamurthy in his book, *'Indian Journalism'*.

Here is his quotable quote on advertisements and newspapers: "It is now an established practice with newspapers to derive their main income from advertisements rather than from subscribers. The result is deplorable. The very newspaper which in

its editorial columns strongly denounces the drink evil publishes advertisements in praise of drinks. We read about the ill-effects of tobacco as well as where to buy tobacco or which brand of cigarette to smoke in the same newspapers. Or, it may on the one hand, publish a severe denunciation of a certain play and, on the other, elsewhere in its columns, a long advertisement of it. The largest source of revenue is derived from medical advertisement, which is the cause of much harm to our people. They, almost wholly, nullify the other services rendered by newspapers. I have seen the harm caused by the advertisements, for many people are lured into buying the medicines – supposed to increase virility, overcome debility, etc. Many of these medicines are those which encourage immorality. It is strange that such advertisements find a place even in religious papers.”

Service motto

Gandhiji also emphasised by his own example that the sole aim of journalism should be service. According to him, “One of the objectives of a newspaper is to understand the popular feelings and to give expression to them; another is to arouse among the people a desirable sentiment; and the third is fearlessly to expose the popular defects”. Going by this definition, we can conclude that Gandhiji had rightly set the agenda for aspiring newspaper editors and publishers. These three tenets cover the ‘service’ motto he had talked about. He was not for bringing out a newspaper or a journal for its own sake. The stakes, as adumbrated by him, are high. Echoing the people’s feelings and aspirations is indeed a service that should delight the reader of such a newspaper. By using the expression, “to arouse among the people a desirable sentiment”, Gandhiji had stressed the need for educating people on certain lofty ideals like overall common good, eradication of untouchability, emancipation of women, self-reliance in the form of encouraging ‘swadeshi’ production of goods, promotion of hand-spun-and-woven cloth (Khadi), Prohibition of or abstinence from the drink evil and civil disobedience in a non-violent manner (Satyagraha) against authoritarian tendencies hurting people. The third service assigned by Gandhiji to newspapers is to function like a mirror truly reflecting the popular foibles and serve as a corrective facility.

Education of the public was an article of faith with Gandhiji. And to achieve this noble task, journalists could not afford to be slipshod, especially when they were expected to tell the truth. He was for thorough verification of the facts before

publishing them by means of a report. "Newspapers are meant primarily to educate the people. They make the latter familiar with contemporary history. This is a work of no mean responsibility. It is a fact, however, that readers cannot always trust newspapers. Often facts are found to be quite the opposite of what has been reported. If newspapers realised that it was their duty to educate the people, they could not but wait to check a report before publishing it. It is true that often they have to work under difficult conditions. They have to sift the true from the false in a short time and can only guess at the truth. Even then, I am of the opinion that it is better not to publish a report at all if it has not been found possible to verify it. The true function of journalism is to educate the public mind, not to stock it with wanted and unwanted impressions."

'Mantra' of restraint

For the journalist in the Mahatma, 'restraint' was the 'mantra'. In his autobiography, 'My Experiments with Truth' he wrote: "I have taken up journalism not for its sake but merely as aid to what I have conceived to be my mission in life. My mission is to teach by example and precept under severe restraint the use of the matchless weapon of Satyagraha which is a direct corollary of non-violence and truth...To be true to my faith, therefore, I may not write idly, I may not write merely to excite passion. The reader can have no idea of the restraint I have to exercise in the choice of topics and vocabulary. Week after week I poured out my soul in its ('*Young India*') columns and expounded the principles and practice of Satyagraha as I understood it. I cannot recall a word in these articles set down without thought or deliberation or a word of conscious exaggeration, or anything merely to please. Indeed, the journal became for me a training centre in self-restraint and for friends a medium through which to keep in touch with my thoughts." His aim was always to express his feelings or observations and never to impress his reader. For him, the message rather than its purveyor should be important. One would like to exclaim: 'Modesty, thy name is Gandhi!'

In '*Young India*' Gandhi once gave a glimpse of the exacting code he had set up for himself. 'To be true to my faith, I may not write in anger or malice....It is training for me. It enables me to peek into myself and to make discoveries of my weaknesses. Often my vanity dictates a smart expression or my anger a harsh adjective. It is a terrible ordeal but a fine exercise to remove these weeds'..."

As a principled journalist, Gandhiji elaborated that “my writings cannot be poisonous, they must be free from anger, for it is my special religious conviction that we cannot truly attain our goal by promoting ill-will ... There can be no room for untruth in my writings, because it is my unshakable belief that there is no religion other than truth...My writings cannot but be free from hatred towards any individual because it is my firm belief that it is love that sustains the earth”.

Am eniviable style

Ramachandra Guha, in an article in *'The Hindu'*, wrote: “No one knew Gandhi’s prose style better than Krishnaswami Swaminathan, Chief Editor of the ‘Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi’ and himself a retired Professor of English Literature. Now in his school-leaving examination the young Mohandas had obtained a mere 44.5 % in English. But residence in London, wide reading, and diligent practice made him a decent practitioner of written English by the time he had turned thirty. Reading and re-reading his vast output, Professor Swaminathan came to marvel at the transparent simplicity of his literary style. Gandhi’s prose, remarked Swaminathan, ‘is a natural expression of his democratic temper. There is no conscious ornamentation, no obtrusive trick of style calling attention to itself. The style is a blend of the modern manner of an individual sharing his ideas and experiences with his readers, and the impersonal manner of the Indian tradition in which the thought is more important than the person expounding it. The sense of equality with the common man is the mark of Gandhi’s style and the burden of his teaching. To feel and appreciate this essence of Gandhi the man, in his writings and speeches, is the best education for true democracy’.” In fact, the facility with which Gandhiji wrote, and the felicity of his expression will always be an envy of any journalist, national or international.

The following letter dated October 25, 1894, which Gandhiji wrote to the editor of the *'Times of Natal'* over a contemptuously worded editorial titled, ‘Rammysammy’, speaks volumes about the Mahatma’s eloquent simplicity in the choice of words to convey his thoughts, without being vitriolic in his reaction. Gandhiji wrote: “You would not allow the Indian or the native the precious privilege (of voting) under any circumstances, because they have a dark skin. You would look the exterior only. So long as the skin is white it would not matter to you whether it conceals beneath it poison or nectar. To you the lip-prayer of the Pharisee, because he is one, is more acceptable than the sincere repentance of the publican, and this, I presume,

you would call Christianity. You may; it is not Christ's. Sir, may I venture to offer a suggestion? Will you re-read your New Testament? Will you ponder over your attitude towards the coloured population of the Colony? Will you then say you can reconcile it with the Bible teachings or the best British traditions? If you have washed your hands clean of both Christ and the British tradition, I can have nothing to say; I gladly withdraw what I have written. Only, it will then be a sad day for British and for India if you have many followers."

No equivocation

The Mahatma was against equivocation by journalists in their writings in order to circumvent any possible legal action against them. He wanted them to be fearless but at the same time use a tempered language. "What is the duty of a newspaper in a country where there are laws like the Seditious Writing Act and the Defence of India Act to restrict freedom? In order to get over this limitation our newspapers have evolved a style of writing which makes it possible to interpret what they say on a particular matter, which may seem to fall within the purview of these Acts, in two different ways. Some have perfected this art to a science. But, in my opinion, this causes harm to our country. People develop a tendency to equivocate and fail to cultivate the courage to speak the truth. It changes the form of the language which, instead of being an instrument for expressing one's thoughts, becomes a mask for concealing them. I am convinced that this is not the way to educate our people. Both people and individuals must cultivate the habit of speaking their minds. Newspapers are in a position to impart such training to them. The right course, and the one which will ultimately be found to be out of the greatest advantage to us, would be that those who are afraid of the above laws and who do not want to get entangled in them should stop publishing newspapers, or that they should frankly state their true views and bear the consequences."

By his own example, Gandhiji set the trend of facing legal actions like contempt of court. "As a journalist, Gandhiji never shirked from the responsibility of carrying the burden of proof, and he favoured objectivity in the news reports and also exhorted the newspapers to abide by objectivity instead of favouring other methods to escape the law. He boldly published a letter (in '*Young India*') against the judge [Ahmedabad District Judge Kennedy] to express truth. He stood by his conviction in questioning the judge's attitude. He was prepared to face the consequences of violating the rule,

and in the face of a tough stance of the judge, he firmly argued his case to resist contempt of court." (Quoted from '*Gandhian Journalism – Is It Relevant Today?*' by D.V.R. Murthy). The contempt case related to the Satyagraha pledge signed by some lawyers of Ahmedabad. Judge Kennedy sought explanation from them by issuing a show-cause notice as to why their 'sanads' should not be cancelled for having signed the pledge. The judge felt that the explanation given by them was not satisfactory and addressed a letter to the High Court for suitable action. This letter was given to one of the pleaders of the satyagrahi lawyers, and it soon reached Gandhiji who published it in '*Young India*' dated August 6, 1919, under the heading "O'Dwyerism in Ahmedabad" along with an article captioned "Shaking Civil Resisters". Following this, Gandhiji was asked to publish a written apology in the paper, but he refused to abide by that order. Thereupon the High Court declared that the publication of the letter would come under the contempt of court. Gandhiji stood firmly on the ground saying that he would honour the independence of the journalist and would go to any extent to undergo punishment. Thereupon, the court severely reprimanded the editor and publisher of '*Young India*' (M.K. Gandhi and Mahadeo H. Desai respectively), but did not impose any sentence on them.

Apology has to be sincere

Later, writing an article, 'Contempt of Court', in the issue dated March 21, 1920, Gandhiji wrote: "I had to conserve a journalist's independence and yet respect the law. My own reading of the law was that there was no contempt committed by me. But my defence rested more upon the fact that I could not offer an apology if I was not prepared not to repeat. The apology tendered to a court to be true has to be as sincere as a private apology....I venture to think that that I succeeded eminently in convincing the court that behind my disobedience – if it was disobedience – there was no anger or ill-will but perfect restraint and respect; that if I did not apologise, I did not because an insincere apology would have been contrary to my conscience. I hold that it was about as perfect an instance of civil disobedience as it ever has been my privilege to offer. And I feel that the court reciprocated in a most handsome manner and recognised the spirit of civility that lay behind my so-called disobedience. The luminous judgment of Justice Marten lays down the law, and decides against me. But I feel thankful that it does not question the propriety of my action. Justice Hayward's judgment recognises it as an instance of passive i.e. civil resistance and practically makes it the reason for not awarding any sentence. Here then we have an

almost complete vindication of civil disobedience. Disobedience to be civil must be sincere, respectful, restrained and never defiant, must be based upon some well understood principle, must not be capricious and above all must have no ill-will or hatred behind it. I submit that the disobedience offered by Mr. Desai and myself contained all these ingredients."

Later, Gandhiji had to face a sedition case against him for publishing three articles in 'Young India'. In these articles – 'Tampering with Loyalty' (September 1921), 'A Puzzle and its Solution' (December 1921) and 'Shaking the Manes' (February 1923) – he severely criticised the British administration, and asked the people to rebel against the Government, and in particular, the Indian sepoy to rebel against the Government. Because of these writings, a case of sedition was registered against the editor, M.K. Gandhi, and publisher, Shankarlal Ghelabhai Banker. The charges were "bringing or attempting to excite disaffection towards His Majesty's Government established by law in British India, and thereby committing offences punishable under Section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code".

"When the charges were read out in the court, Judge C.N. Broomfield called upon the accused to plead to the charges. He asked Gandhiji whether he pleaded guilty or claimed to be tried. Gandhiji pleaded guilty to the charges and Banker too pleaded guilty to the charges. The judge wished to give the verdict immediately, but the advocate-general, J.T. Strangaman, insisted that the due process of law must be followed. The advocate-general requested the judge to take into account 'the occurrences in Bombay, Malabar and Chauri Chaura, leading to rioting and murder' (in the course of the Non-Cooperation Movement). In respect of Banker, the second accused, the advocate-general said that the offence was lesser as he only published and did not write them. Therefore, the advocate-general asked for a substantial fine in addition to imprisonment as might be possible. However, the judge asked Gandhiji 'Would you like to make a statement?' Gandhiji agreed to give a statement, and the judge asked for a written statement to be recorded. Gandhiji made an oral statement which was followed by a written statement.

A passion

"Before I read this statement, I would like to state that I entirely endorse the learned advocate-general's remarks in connection with my humble self. I think that he was entirely fair to me in all the statements that he has made, because it is very true and I have no desire whatsoever to conceal from this court the fact that to

preach disaffection towards the existing system of government has almost become a passion with me, and the advocate-general is entirely right when he says that my preaching disaffection did not commence with my 'Young India' but it commenced much earlier, and in the statement that I am about to read, it will be my painful duty to admit before this court that it commenced much earlier than the period stated by the advocate-general...it is impossible for me to disassociate myself from the diabolical crimes of Chauri Chaura or the mad outrages of Bombay...I do not ask for mercy. I do not plead any extenuating act. I am here, therefore, to invite and cheerfully submit to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a deliberate crime, and what appears to me to be the highest duty of the citizen. The only course open to you, the judge, is, as I am going to say in my statement, either to resign your post, or inflict on me the severest penalty if you believe that the system and law you are assisting to administer are good for the people..."

"When Gandhiji sat down, Mr. Justice Broomfield bowed to the prisoner, and pronounced the sentence. 'The determination of a just sentence,' the judge declared, 'is perhaps as difficult a proposition as a judge in this country could have to face. The law is no respecter of persons. Nevertheless, it will be impossible to ignore the fact that you are in a different category from any person I have ever heard or am likely to have to try. It would be impossible to ignore the fact that in the eyes of millions of your country men, you are a great patriot and a great leader. Even those who differ from you in politics look upon you as a man of high ideals and of noble and even saintly life.' (The trial climax as described by Louis Fischer in his book, *"The Life of Mahatma Gandhi"*)

"The judge then announced that Gandhi must undergo imprisonment for six years, and added that if the Government later saw fit to reduce the term 'no one would be better pleased than I'. Mr. Banker received one year jail and fine of one thousand rupees.

"On hearing the sentence, the Mahatma rose and said that the sentence 'is as mild as any judge could inflict on me, and so far as the entire proceedings are concerned, I must say that I could not have expected greater courtesy'...."

Gandhiji had thus shown to journalists how they should react in such trying circumstances. While he deliberately broke the law, he did not search for escape routes.

Relevance of Gandhian journalism

How relevant is Gandhiji's journalism today? Answers J.V. Vilanilam, former Vice-Chancellor and Head of the Department of Communication and Journalism, University of Kerala: "Those who tend to consider Gandhian journalism impractical, irrelevant, insipid and even uninspiring in the modern, sophisticated, cyber world will have to revisit the fundamental goal of journalism in any clime and time. They will come to the conclusion that all media have to serve society and uplift the moral, social, political and cultural values of life." Prof. Vilanilam justifies his argument by quoting extracts from the Salzburg Declaration of 2002, released at a meeting of journalists from 32 countries: "The Declaration emphasises the service aspect of journalism....Gandhiji also believed that a newspaper is a social institution and that its success depended on the extent to which it could educate the readers. His ideas about journalism are quite fresh and relevant even today." Citing the fact of Gandhian newspapers such as 'Young India' and 'Harijan' which followed certain high moral values and obligations of service, Prof. Vilanilam wonders, "They seem to have anticipated the tenets of the Salzburg Declaration."

To sum up, Gandhiji as a journalist exuded his 'dharmic' power on the thinking of Indians, particularly newspaper editors. As an uncompromising champion of his own dictum, 'practise before you preach' ('karo pahle, kaho peechey'), the Mahatma exemplified the great qualities that are required of a journalist: truthfulness, self-restraint, steadiness and courage.

[An abridged version of the chapter on 'Gandhian Journalism' in the doctoral thesis of the author.]

"We are in a mess, and created poison for ourselves. To safeguard Hinduism, one cannot treat as enemies the Muslims in India. My days in this world are numbered. Soon I shall be gone. Then you will realize that what I said was right. The same rule applies to Muslims. Islam will be dead if Muslims tolerate only Muslims. The same goes for Christianity and Christians. All the religions of the world are good, for they teach righteousness and friendship; those that teach enmity between man and man are not religions at all."

- Mahatma Gandhi on December 18, 1947

Gandhi and Journalism

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In 1888, Gandhi went to London for the study of Bar-at-Law and during his stay in London he spent hours reading the columns of *Daily Telegraph*, the *Daily News* and the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Gandhi showed interest in reading travelogues with plenty of illustrations (Bhattacharyya, 1965:1). Newspaper reading was a novel experience to him as he recorded in his autobiography, *My Experiments with Truth* that he never read a newspaper in India. As noted by Bhattacharyya (1965:1), that Gandhi found newspapers informative and entertaining, and he had a desire to see his name and article in print. Encouraged by Alfred Hills, Chairman of the Thames Iron Works, London, and persuaded by Josiah Old Field, the editor of a magazine, the *Vegetarian*, Gandhi wrote nine articles on diet, customs, festivals, etc., of the Indians (Raj Mohan Gandhi, 2006:45), between February and April 1891. 'Three years of writing and staying abroad enlarged not only his scope of writing, but made him a better and more accomplished free-lance journalist.' (Bhattacharyya, 1965:2). 'If the London Vegetarian Society afforded him a forum to write and speak, the political situation in South Africa chiseled him into a conscientious journalist'. (Raj Mohan Gandhi, 2006). During a brief spell in India, from the middle of 1896 to November 1896, he was touring in India to enlist the support, among others, editors, for South African Indian cause. He came into contact with G. Pillay, editor of the *Madras Standard*, who provided an opportunity for Gandhi to edit the newspaper, and subsequently, Gandhi published his famous *Green Pamphlet*, wherein he highlighted the grievances of his countrymen in Africa (ibid). His association with editors and working closely with the editorial staff of the newspapers helped Gandhi in acquiring some inside knowledge of the working of these papers. This bolstered him to start one journal in South Africa.

Mahatma Gandhi was instrumental in launching, *Indian Opinion*, in 1903 in South Africa; a weekly which started publication in four languages – English, Hindi, Tamil and Gujarati with an intention to serve all Indians in South Africa. Two close

associates of Gandhi, Madanjit Vyavaharik and Manshuklal Hiralal Nazar launched *Indian Opinion* on June 4, 1903, while the latter, a journalist from Bombay was looking after the editorial function of the weekly. The intention of the journal was to act as a voice of the Indian community, in order to improve their lot, and thus the journal did not have any commercial leanings. As the two gentlemen could not run the journal, the responsibility fell on the shoulders of Gandhi, who took over the journal in October 1904. His friend, Albert West, who gave up his business as a printer was managing it, while Gandhi was editing the journal with the sole intention of educating and mobilizing Indians through the weekly columns on various aspects of life. Gandhi's mission was to portray the sufferings of every Indian in South Africa, and indicated the line of duty that every Indian must follow in order to win his elementary rights (Bhattacharya, 2002:44). The journal which published news and views of Indians in South Africa was known for its moderate policy and sound news. The *Indian Opinion* carried two or more editorials, a few editorial comments which dealt mostly with Indian problems and discriminatory laws. It also carried a small correspondence column, reproduced articles on Indian problems from other journals. It also published the "Weekly Diary", a popular column, which contained different aspects of Satyagraha was eagerly read by Indians. Gandhi had to suspend Tamil and Hindi editions of *Indian Opinion* for want of compositors and editors. The journal, in particular carried the popular biographical sketches of eminent men in many parts of the world such as Count Tolstoy, Abraham Lincoln, George Washington and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. Also, he supported the publication financially. In his autobiography, he noted that lack of funding to the weekly forced them to discontinue the publication in Tamil and Hindi. He outlined the three objectives of the journal, *Indian Opinion* (Bhattacharya, 2002: 44-45). They were: 1) to make Indian grievances known to the Governments in South Africa and Britain and to the people of India, 2) to make the Indians in South Africa aware of their own shortcomings and try to overcome them, and 3) to eliminate the prevailing distinctions between Hindus and Muslims and among Gujaratis and Tamils and others. Therefore, Gandhi said, "I poured out my soul in its columns and expounded the principles and practice of *satyagraha* as I understood it". The journal had a circulation of 3500 and every Indian was eagerly waiting to receive it every week (Nanda, 1998: 98). Gandhi mostly wrote on philosophy of Satyagraha, which served as inspiration to Satyagraha movement, and on intellectual and aesthetic subjects.

Gandhi, penned the first editorial, 'Ourselves' for the inaugural issue. He also wrote the second lead article, 'The British Indians in South Africa, and short notes like 'Is it fair', 'Virtuous Inconsistency', 'Better late than never', 'Words and deeds',

'Minute by Mayor', all of them were unsigned. Gandhi took over the reins of *Indian Opinion*, as losses steadily mounted. In 1904, *Indian Opinion* wrote an editorial with a heading 'Ourselves', a repeat of first editorial under the same caption, of July 1903. The editorial unfolded the newspapers future plans, and outlined how the paper was run since 18 months of its inception.

Since, *Indian Opinion* incurred losses, and to surmount the already existing losses, the size of *Indian Opinion*, was reduced from 16 pages to 8 pages, and was brought out on Wednesday instead of Saturday.

Changes were made in Gujarati edition on January 4, 1913; the journal was printed in two columns instead of three, to make it appear better. After Gandhi left South Africa, *Indian Opinion* "lost its sheen" (Bhattacharyya, 1965:28). When Gandhi returned to India on January 9, 1913, journalism was still in its nascent stage in the country, and yet to establish itself as profession except the Anglo-Indian press in India. Newspapers had to depend on sales and monetary help from individuals. Highly popular Indian newspapers did not match the technically superior Anglo-Indian press in news coverage.

Gandhi, in fact, wrote only two books, '*My experiments with truth*' in Gujarati and '*Hind Swaraj or Home Rule*,' which was written in Gujarati, was translated by him into English. In the preface to the book *Hind Swaraj*, he said:

It (*Hind Swaraj*) was written in 1908 during my return voyage from London to South Africa in answer to the Indian school of violence and its prototype in South Africa. I came in contact with every known Indian anarchist in London. Their bravery impressed me, but I felt that their zeal was misguided. I felt that violence was no remedy for India's ills, and that her civilization required the use of a different and higher weapon for self protection. The Satyagraha of South Africa was still an infant hardly two years old. But it had developed sufficiently to permit me to write of it with some degree of confidence. What I wrote was so much appreciated that it was published as a booklet... In my opinion it is a book which can be put into the hands of a child. It teaches the gospel of love in place of that of hate. It places violence with self sacrifice. It pits soul force against brute force. It has gone through several editions and I commend it to those who would care to read it.

Hind swaraj used the technique of dialogue between the reader and the editor. The purpose of adopting of such dialogue seemed to be that Mahatma did intend to clarify the doubts that would linger in the mind of the reader (Murthy, 2010). He answered many queries posed by the reader such as education, civilization, culture and so on. Answering a query of the reader in *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi explained the

objectives of newspaper. He said 'one of the objectives of the newspaper was to understand popular feeling and to give expression to it; another was to arouse among the people certain desirable sentiments, and the third was fearlessly to expose popular defects'. While explaining the objectives of the newspapers, he further, commented on the power of the press.

"In the very first month of *Indian Opinion*, I realized that the sole aim of journalism should be service. The newspaper press is a great power, but just as an unchained torrent of water submerges whole countryside's and devastates crops, even so an uncontrolled pen serves but to destroy. If the control is from without, it proves more poisonous than want of control. It can be profitable only when exercised from within. If this line of reasoning is correct, how many of the journals in the world would stand the test? But who would stop those that are useless? And who should be the judge? The useful and the useless must, like good and evil generally, go on together, and man must make his choice.

As soon as he returned from South Africa in 1915, Gandhi started his political life. However, he launched three newspapers during 1919-20 defying the Indian Press Act. Although the Act barred new publications, he boldly launched *Satyagrahi* (in Hindi and Gujarati), *Navajivan* (Gujarati), and *Young India* (English).

Consequent upon the World War I and the massacre at Jullianwalla bagh, B G Horniman, the English editor of the *Bombay Chronicle*, was vehemently condemning the British administration for the atrocities and supported the National Movement. As a result, Horniman was deported to Britain. The directors of the *Bombay Chronicle* who were running the other journal, *Young India* requested Gandhi to take over the journal. Gandhi agreed on the condition that the editorial office would be shifted to Ahmedabad from Bombay, as he set up an *ashram* at Ahmedabad, which would require his guidance. As he purchased a printing press, Navajivan Publishing House to publish his monthly, *Navajivan*, he would bring out *Young India* from Ahmedabad. He gave a note to the subscribers in the first issue of *Young India* on October 8, 1919

... The editing of "*Navajivan*" has been a perfect revelation to me. Whilst "*Young India*" has a little more than 1200 subscribers, "*Navajivan*" has 12000. The number would leap to 20000 if we would but get printers to print that number. It shows that a vernacular newspaper is a felt want. I am proud to think that I have numerous readers among farmers and workers. They make India. Their poverty is India's curse and crime. Their prosperity alone can make India a country fit to live in. They represent nearly 80 p.c. of India's population. The English journals touch but

the fringe of the ocean of India's population. Whilst therefore I hold it to be the duty of every English knowing Indian to translate the best of the English thought in the vernacular for the benefit of the masses, I recognize that for a few years to come i.e. until we have accepted Hindustani as the common medium among the cultured classes and until Hindustani becomes compulsory in our schools as a second language, educated India, especially in the Madras Presidency must be addressed in English.

But I will not be party to editing a newspaper that does not pay its way. "*Young India*" cannot pay its way unless it has at least 2500 paying subscribers. I must appeal to my Tamil friends to see to it that the requisite number of subscribers is found, if they wish to see "*Young India*" continued. The more so now, because the proprietors of "*Young India*" have decided to give up all advertisements. I know that they have not been entirely if at all converted to my view that a newspaper ought to be conducted without advertisement. But they are willing to let me make the experiment. I invite those who wish to see "*Young India*" free from the curse of advertisements to help me to make the venture a success. The Gujarati "*Nava Jivan*" has already demonstrated the possibility of conducting a newspaper without advertisement soiling its pages. What a financial gain it would be to the country, if there was for each province only one advertisement medium-not a newspaper-containing innocent unvarnished notices of things useful for the public. But for our criminal indifference, we would decline to pay the huge indirect taxation by way of mischievous advertisements. Some readers who are interested in the purity of journalism recently sent me a most indecent advertisement extracted from a well known newspaper. I have refused to soil the pages of "*Navajivan*" by reproducing it. But anyone turning to the advertisement sheets of even leading journals can verify the aptness of my criticism.

He did not accept advertisements and believed that the newspapers should survive on the revenue from subscribers. The circulation of *Young India* went up to 45000, and his articles were effective (Krishnamurthy, 1966). However, *Young India* was closed in 1932, owing to repressive acts of the British administration.

The thought of having another weekly was lingering in Gandhi's mind when he was in prison in Poona on account of Civil Disobedience Movement (Bhattacharya, 2002:94). Though he was in prison, he established Harijan Sevak Sangh and asked the Sangh to publish *Harijan*.

On February 11, 1933 *Harijan* was published as a weekly, at the request of Gandhi which carried, 'Gandhi's views on untouchability, village sanitation, rural

reconstruction through village industries, women's education, women's rehabilitation, basic education, and the upliftment of all (*sarvodaya*) through employment for every able bodied person (Vilani, 2005: 81).

For instance, Gandhi wrote in *Harijan* on February 27, 1937: "I believe in the proper education of woman. But I do believe that woman will not make her contribution to the world by mimicking or running a race with man. She can run the race, but she will not rise to the great heights she is capable of by mimicking man. She has to be a complement to the man".

The weekly newspaper priced at one anna (six paise), was devoted to the cause of Harijans and scrupulously excluded politics. The English edition came out first, followed by the Hindi. Edited by RV Sastry, the weekly newspaper carried news items on Harijan welfare, the main editorial was devoted exclusively on untouchability and a column titled, 'To the Reader', which explained the importance of the newly launched movement. It also featured English rendering of poem written by Tagore in Bengali translated by Shri S Datta, entitled 'Scavenger'. Outlining the aims of *Harijan*, Gandhi said, it would be devoted for the service of Harijan and would highlight all efforts for the removal of untouchability. Through *Harijan*, Gandhi espoused the cause of Harijan; he demonstrated that service should be a motto of journalism.

With such educative contents, the print order of the weekly was 10000. However, in response to the censorship imposed on the newspapers, Gandhi suspended the publication of *Harijan* in November 1940 with an article, "good-bye", and within a gap of one year, he resumed the publication in January 1942. In eight months of its' resumption of publication, Gandhi went to prison on August 8, 1942, and immediately the administration closed down the weekly. But it resumed publication after a lapse of three and half years on February 10, 1946 (Bhattacharya, 2002:200). As Gandhi was upright in his attitude, he wrote in *Harijan* in July 1947: Perhaps we may have to close the *Harijan*. My mind rebels against many things that our leaders are doing. Yet I do not feel like actively opposing them. But how can I avoid it if I am running a paper? Further, he wrote: Sardar (reference to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel), I feel that *Harijan* should now be closed. It does not seem to me to be right to give contrary guidance to the country (Bhattacharya, 2002: 201).

Though Gandhi viewed that the duty of the newspapers was only to serve the people, he used *Young India* to resist the Britishers boldly in not compromising with any aspect related to the freedom of India, and also the freedom of the press. In the face of mounting hostility against the British administration, the government brought in the Press Act of 1910, which imposed heavy security deposit to open a printing

press, and thereby muzzle the freedom of the press (Murthy, 2010). However, Gandhi stood firmly for the freedom of the press, and two cases reported below illustrate how Mahatma argued his cases related to contempt of court, and sedition which he accepted eventually to go to jail.

Contempt of court

As a journalist, Gandhi never shirked from the responsibility of carrying the burden of proof, and he favoured objectivity in the news reports, and also exhorted the newspapers to abide by objectivity instead of favouring other methods to escape the law. He boldly published a letter against the judge to express the truth. He stood by his conviction in questioning the judge's attitude. He was prepared to face the consequences of violating the rule, and in the face of tough stance of the judge, he firmly argued his case to resist contempt of court. In the two issues of *Young India*, he published articles which attracted the law of contempt. On March 10, 1920, in *Young India*, contempt of case proceedings were reported with a heading, 'Was it contempt of court? Proceedings against Mr Gandhi and Mr Mahadeo H Desai'. Two judges Marten, and Hayward Kajiji were hearing the contempt case against Editor Gandhi and Publisher Desai of *Young India* for publication of a letter addressed by Kennedy, District Judge of Ahmedabad, to the Registrar of the High Court, complaining of the conduct of certain Satyagrahi lawyers of Ahmedabad. In April 1919, Judge Kennedy found that certain lawyers in Ahmedabad had signed the Satyagraha pledge, and he asked them to explain why their Sanads **should not be cancelled** for their having signed the pledge. He did not consider their explanation satisfactory, and hence, addressed a letter to the Registrar of the High Court on April 22, 1919. In consequence, two notices were issued by the High Court to the lawyers concerned. A copy of Mr. Kennedy's letter was given by the Registrar to Divetia, pleader for one of the lawyers, who handed the same to Mr Kalidas J Jhaveri, one of the Satyagrahi lawyers, who in turn handed it to Mr. Gandhi. On August 6, 1919, the letter was published in *Young India* with a heading "O'Dwyerism in Ahmedabad" along with an article commenting on the letter with a heading "Shaking Civil Resisters". As soon as the proceedings were completed, the Registrar addressed a letter to Mr. Gandhi directing him to appear before the Chief Justice's Chamber, to give an explanation as regards the publication of the letter. Mr. Gandhi replied through a telegram explaining his inability to attend on the appointed date as he was going to the Punjab. The Registrar replied saying that the Chief Justice did not wish to interfere with Mr. Gandhi's appointment and that a written explanation would do. Gandhi was asked to publish an apology in the paper, which was refused by Gandhi. Following

his refusal, the judge declared the publication of the letter would come under the contempt of court. On the judgment of the High Court, Gandhi stood firmly on the ground saying that he would honour the independence of the journalist and would go to any extent to undergo punishment. The article appeared on March 24, 1920 in *Young India* with a heading, **contempt of court** as follows:

The long-expected hearing of the case against the editor and the publisher of *Young India* in connection with the publication of a letter of the district Judge of Ahmedabad regarding Satyagrahi Lawyers and my comments thereon has been heard and judgment has been pronounced. **Both the editor and the publisher have been severely reprimanded.** But the court did not see its way to pass any sentence upon either of us. If I dwell upon the judgment it is only because I am anxious as a satyagrahi to draw a moral from it. I wish to assure those friends who out of pure friendliness advised us to tender the required apology, that I refused to accept their advice not out of obstinacy but because there was a great principle at stake. **I had to conserve a journalist's independence and yet respect the law.** My own reading of the law was that there was no contempt committed by me. But my defence rested more upon the fact that I could not offer an apology if I was not prepared not to repeat the offence on similar occasion. Because I hold that an apology tendered to a court to be true has to be as sincere as a private apology. At the same time I owed a duty to the court. It was no light thing for me to refuse to accept the advice of the Chief Justice especially when Chief Justice was so very considerate in the correspondence with me. I was on the horns of a dilemma. I therefore decided not to offer any defence but simply to make a statement frankly and fully defining my position, leaving it to the court to pass any sentence it thought fit in the event of an adverse decision. **In order to show that I meant no disrespect of the court and that I did not desire to advertise the case I took extraordinary precautions to prevent publicity** and I venture to think that I succeeded eminently in convincing the court that behind my disobedience - if it was disobedience, there was no defiance but perfect resignation, there was no anger or ill-will but perfect restraint and respect: that if I did not apologize, I did not because an insincere apology would have been contrary to my conscience. I hold that it was about as perfect an instance of civil disobedience as it ever has been my privilege to offer. And I feel that the court reciprocated in a most handsome manner and recognized the spirit of civility that lay behind my so called disobedience. The luminous judgment of Justice Marten lays down the law, and decides against me. But I feel thankful that it does not question the propriety of my action. Justice Hayward's judgment recognizes it as an instance of passive. i.e. civil resistance and practically makes it the reason

for not awarding any sentence. Here then we have an almost complete vindication of civil disobedience. Disobedience to be civil must be sincere, respectful, restrained, and never defiant, must be based upon some well understood principle, must not be capricious and above all must have no ill-will or hatred behind it. I submit that the disobedience offered by Mr. Desai and myself contained all these ingredients.

Sedition case

Gandhi published three articles in *Young India* dated September 29, 1921, with a heading 'Tampering with Loyalty', another article on December 15, 1921, with a heading 'The puzzle and solution', and the third article on February 23, 1923, with a heading 'Shaking the Manes'. In these articles, he severely criticized the British administration, and asked the people to rebel against the government, and in particular the Indian sepoy to rebel against the government. For instance, December 15, 1921 contained the following passage.

"A puzzle and its solution"

Lord Reading is puzzled and perplexed. Speaking in reply to the addresses from the British Indian Association and the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce at Calcutta, His Excellency said, "I confess that when I contemplate the activities of a section of the community, I find myself still, notwithstanding persistent study ever since I have been in India, puzzled and perplexed. I ask myself what purpose is served by flagrant breaches of the law for the purpose of challenging the Government and in order to compel arrest." The answer was partly given by Pandit Motilal Nehru when he said on being arrested that he was being taken to the house of freedom. We ask arrest because the so called freedom is slavery. We are challenging the might of this government because we consider its activity to be wholly evil. We want to overthrow the government. We want to compel its submission to the peoples will. We desire to show that the government exists to serve the people, not the people the government. Free life under the government has become intolerable, for the price exacted for the retention of freedom is unconsciously great. Whether we are one or many, we must refuse to purchase freedom at the cost of our self-respect or our cherished convictions. I have known even little children become unbending when an attempt has been made to cross their declared purpose, be it ever so flimsy in the estimation of their parents. Lord Reading must clearly understand the non-cooperators are at war with the government. ..

Because of these writings, a case of sedition was registered against the editor, M K Gandhi and the publisher, Shankarlal Ghelabai Banker on March 18, 1922, in

the district and sessions court, Ahmedabad. The charges were “bringing or attempting to excite disaffection towards his Majesty’s Government established by law in British India, and thereby committing offences punishable under section 124A of the Indian Penal Code”. When the charges were read out in the court, the judge, C N Broomfield called upon the accused to plead to the charges. He asked Gandhi whether he pleaded guilty or claimed to be tried. Gandhi pleaded guilty to the charges and Banker too pleaded guilty to the charges. The judge wished to give his verdict immediately, but the advocate-general, J T Strangaman insisted that the due process of law must be followed. The advocate-general requested the judge to take into account “the occurrences in Bombay, Malabar and Chauri Chauri, leading to rioting and murder”. In respect of Banker, the advocate-general said that the second accused, the offence was lesser as he published them, and did not write them. Therefore, the advocate-general asked for a substantial fine in addition to imprisonment as might be possible. However, the judge asked Gandhi that “would he like to make a statement”. Gandhi agreed to give a statement, and the judge asked for a written statement to be recorded. Gandhi made an oral statement, which was followed by a written statement.

Gandhi said:

Before I read this statement I would like to state that I entirely endorse the learned advocate-general’s remarks in connection with my humble self. I think that he was entirely fair to me in all the statements that he has made, because it is very true and I have no desire whatsoever to conceal from this court the fact that to preach disaffection towards existing system of Government has become almost a passion with me, and the advocate-general is entirely right when he says that my preaching of disaffection did not commence with my connection with *Young India* but it commenced much earlier, and in the statement that I am about to read, it will be my painful duty to admit before this court that it commenced much earlier than the period stated by advocate-general.it is impossible for me to disassociate myself from the diabolical crimes of Chauri Chaura or the mad outrages of Bombay...I do not ask for mercy. I do not plead any extenuating act. I am here, therefore, to invite and cheerfully submit to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a deliberate crime, and what appears to me to be the highest duty of the citizen. The only course open to you, the judge, is, as I am going to say in my statement, either to resign your post, or inflict on me the severest penalty if you believe that the system and law you are assisting to administer are good for the people...

Further, Louis Fischer (1994: 259-260) who authored, *The Life of Mahatma* recorded as follows:

When Gandhi sat down, Mr Justice Broomfield bowed to the prisoner, and pronounced sentence 'The determination of a just sentence,' the judge declared, 'is perhaps as difficult a proposition as a judge in this country could have to face. The law is no respecter of persons. Nevertheless, it will be impossible to ignore the fact that you are in a different category from any person I have ever heard or am likely to have to try. I would be impossible to ignore the fact that in the eyes of millions of your country men, you are a great patriot and a great leader. Even those who differ from you in politics look upon you as a man of high ideals and of noble and even saintly life.'

The judge then announced that Gandhi must undergo imprisonment for six years, and added that if the government later saw fit to reduce the term 'no one would be better pleased than I'. Mr Banker received one year jail and fine of one thousand rupees.

On hearing the sentence, the Mahatma rose and said that the sentence 'is as mild as any judge could inflict on me, and so far as the entire proceedings are concerned, I must say that I could not have expected greater courtesy'.

The two cases reported above illustrate that Mahatma Gandhi never compromised on the principles he enunciated throughout his life. Gandhi considered journalism as a by-product of his activities, and newspaper was a vehicle for him to propagate his views. He firmly asserted that he was writing these articles only to awaken the Indians and to rouse desirable sentiments in them against the British rule while engaging more number of people with nationalism.

(CPS Bulletins – April 2 and June 2, 2019)

"I am a servant of Rama. I will do His work as long as He wills. I shall have won in my mission, if I am granted a death in which I can demonstrate the strength of Truth and Non-violence. If I have been sincere in their pursuit, and acted with God as my witness, I shall certainly be granted that kind of death. I have expressed my wish at prayer that, should someone kill me. I should have no anger to my heart against the killer and that I should die with Rama Nama on my lips."

- Mahatma Gandhi on January 25, 1948

Gandhiji's Concept of Good Governance-its Relevance

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In recent times the concepts of 'Governance' and 'Good Governance' became very popular in the international scene. Governance literally means the way in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources. It is viewed as the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs at all levels. Good Governance means providing opportunities and the proper delivery of goods and services to the people in a fair, just, effective, responsible and transparent way. The core ideals of good governance are fairness and Justice in the institution of civil society. Good governance is characterized by 'high standards of transparency, accountability and accessibility'.

In the light of this background an attempt is made to present Gandhiji's views on Good governance. As Mahatma Gandhi regards the state as the organization of violence, he felt that, 'that government is best which governs the least'. Carried out it further he believed that, 'that government is best which governs not at all'. Thus Gandhiji's rejection of the state is based on two classical anarchist arguments: the state represents an authority that poses a threat to the liberty of the individual and the state represents violence in an organized form. Yet for the achievement of the ultimate aim of the individual-self-realization i.e. complete development of the manifold possibilities of human nature, he accepted the state as an indispensable evil.

Gandhiji's ideal is the classless and stateless society-Ramraj or perfect Society-state of self-regulated enlightened 'anarchy' in which social cohesion will be maintained by internal and non-coercive external sanctions. But as this ideal is not realizable, he has an attainable middle idea – the predominantly non-violent state. The non-violent state adopted by Gandhiji has certain characteristics. They are i) It is a federal state ii) Secular state iii) Democratic form of government with a) Suitable constitution b) Elected Head of the state c) Responsible unicameral legislature d) Parliamentary Executive e) Independent and impartial Judiciary f) Provincial Administration and g) Village Administration.

Having rejected the Benthamite view of democracy-the greatest good for the greatest number-Gandhiji was uncompromising on the absolute need of the good for all. He observed "I do not believe in the greatest good of the greatest

number.....It is a heartless doctrine and has done harm to the humanity. The only real, dignified human doctrine is the greatest good for all, and this can only be achieved by uttermost self-sacrifice". For realizing good governance, Gandhiji recommended certain structural changes. Centralization of powers is an obstacle to swaraj i.e. complete or real democracy. Hence his ideal state will be a federation of decentralized, democratic, more or less self-sustained and self-governing interdependent satyagrahi village communities. Centre is not to dominate and control the bottom. What is required is decentralization of power. Decentralization in Gandhian sense means distribution of political power among the villages. Gandhiji declared, 'India's soul lives in villages'. Therefore he advocated Gram Swaraj or Gram Raj or Village Republic. He wanted each village to grow as an autonomous and self-reliant republic. The village needed to gain both economic and political self-reliance. Swaraj in India would be truly meaningful only when village republics blossom.

In a federation of Gandhi's Ideal State there will be no centralization of authority of any kind. He says, "The structure will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by bottom. It is a oceanic circle embracing a number of concentric circles". Thus Gandhiji is against all centralization because it connotes force and anything based on force is opposed to freedom and morality. Voluntary cooperation of individuals is the essential condition of Gandhiji's non-violent state. In such a state, everyone is his own ruler, but he rules himself in such a way that he is never a hindrance to his neighbours.

Gandhi wanted to adopt democracy in his ideal State. According to him democracy remains unachieved in the western nations more on account of the prevailing belief in the efficacy of violence and untruth than on account of mere institutional inadequacy. If people accept the way of non-violence, the democratic State that emerges will be inspired by the ideals of truth and non-violence. He says, "Western democracy is on its trial. If it has already proved a failure, may it be reserved to India to evolve the true science of democracy by giving a visible demonstration of its buttress. Corruption and hypocrisy ought not to be inevitable products of democracy, as they undoubtedly are today. Nor is bulk the true test of democracy. True democracy is not inconsistent with a few persons representing the spirit, the hope and the aspirations of those whom they claim to represent. I hold that democracy cannot be evolved by forcible method. The spirit of democracy cannot be imposed from without. It has to come from within".

The State is mere means and not an end. The ultimate end or purpose of the non-violent State will be to advance "the greatest good of all". To that end it will give

to the individual maximum opportunity for growth. But the State is rooted in violence and by enforcing action restricts the scope for self-rule on the part of the individual. So, in a predominantly non-violent society, the state will govern the least and use the least amount of force.

The state will perform its functions with the minimum use of coercion. In the non-violent state, civil disturbances will also be minimized. He also deals with police force. But according to Gandhi, the police force will be composed of believers in non-violence. "They will be servants, not masters of the people...Infact the policemen will be reformers". There will be no need for army to save the country from any kind of external aggression. The State of Gandhi's dream will have an army consisting of the entire non-violent populace, who meet the aggressor by offering non-violent resistance upto death and to the last man like true Satyagrahis.

The state will also intervene in the economic field in order to ensure social justice, to bring about economic self-sufficiency and to equalize the economic condition of the people. The state will promote small-scale industries. It will control forests, minerals, power resources and communications in the interests of the people. Another important duty of the State would be the education of the young. Gandhi attached great importance to education as a means of social regeneration and would make education free and compulsory during the primary stage from the age of seven to fourteen. The non-violent state will co-operate with an international organization based on non-violence.

However, in the ultimate analysis the practicability of the Gandhian ideal rests on the individual. A non-violent state can evolve only when men become accustomed to the Gandhian ideals. This is recognized by Gandhi himself when he said, "the evolution of the stateless non-violent democracy depends on the average individual evolving genuine non-violence and acquiring personal Swaraj.....The individual is above all the soul and in any scheme of social progress the first step always lies with him".

Thus Mahatma Gandhi was deeply concerned with the emancipation and empowerment of common man and especially that of downtrodden and the weaker sections in the society. He was emphatic that the minimum needs of man should be fulfilled. According to him 'earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed'. Hence it is the duty of the government to mobilize the physical, economic and spiritual resources for the well being of all people in the society. The real test of good governance according to Gandhiji is 'Do the policies help the poorest and weakest man in the society'? if yes, that is good governance.

Relevance of Mahatma Gandhiji:

Even after six decades after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, Gandhiji's ideals and leadership hold an extremely relevant to the contemporary society. He led the greatest mass movement and the most peaceful revolution in human history. It was the unique non-violent movement under his leadership that earned for India freedom from the colonial rule. He was interested in liberating his people not only from political bondage but also from social injustice and economic exploitation. The Gandhian technique of mobilizing people has been successfully employed by many oppressed societies around the world under the leadership of people like Martin Luther King in the United States, Nelson Mandela in South Africa, Julius Nyrere in Tanzania and now Aung Saan Suki in Myanmar which is an eloquent testimony to the continuing relevance of Mahatma Gandhi. In recent past as Banki-Moon, the Secretary-General of the United Nations rightly felt, "the principle of non-violence preached by him helped topple tyrannical regimes from Tunisia to Egypt, as people in these countries proved that it is more effective to fire off a tweet than to fire a gun".

Gandhiji was the first political thinker who understood the importance, role and place of villages in the Indian political system. He openly declared that "India is to be found not in few cities but in its 7,00,000 villages". His objective assessment of the role of villages in the socio-economic and political panorama of India, has made him to bring them into the main stream and ultimately win the freedom. According to him, the growth of big cities was not a sign of progress. They were signs of degeneration 'the real plague spots of India'. He considered urbanization as an evil in so far as 1) It is based on the exploitation of the rural folk. 2) It is totally divorced from the rural way of life rooted in nature. The unwieldy expansion of urban conglomerations along with abnormal growth of the slums as we witness today clearly justifies the views expressed by Mahatma Gandhiji. He firmly believed that the uplift of India depended solely on the uplift of the villages. But contrary to his views, the policy initiatives taken by the successive governments in India have ignored the Gandhian teachings, which ultimately resulted in rural deprivation and agrarian crisis. Even after sixty-five years of Indian independence, agriculture is in doldrums-with hundreds of farmers committing suicides and declaring crop holidays' across the country. The number of people, especially in rural areas, going to bed partially hungry now is more than the entire population of India in 1947. Maladies like corruption, violence, red tapism and nepotism are eating into the vitals of the democratic system. The decline of institutions, of professional autonomy and above all erosion of values in public life has seriously affected public trust and faith in the

democratic political system. The governments having failed to fulfill the basic needs of the people in the society made the people to look towards Gandhian preachings.

Gandhiji adopted the ideals of simplicity and high thinking and became the man of universe for the common man. The message of love and peace, of non-violence and Satyagraha, of the equality of all people, of harmony between all religions was a universal message for all societies and peoples. In view of its relevance, the United Nations has adopted a resolution in 2007 to commemorate 2nd October, Mahatma Gandhi's birthday, as International Day for Non-Violence. It is a big tribute to Mahatma and recognition of the relevance of Gandhian principles and ideas in today's trouble-torn world.

The ambition of the 'Father of the Nation' was "to wipe every tear from every eye". The poor and the exploited were Gandhiji's main concern. Its goal was the removal of poverty and human misery. The real India-the India of toiling masses and farmers-today desperately needs a Gandhiji to fight communal hatred, poverty, rampant greed, widespread violence and terrorism, consumptive style of living, the corrupt bureaucrat-politician nexus and the shining India of the rich. Thus the Gandhian model and the Gandhian teachings are still relevant to the present day society. As the great seer Sri Aurobindo prophesied in his tribute to the Mahatma, "the light which led us to freedom, though not to unity, still burns and will burn on till it conquers". Gandhiji did not belong to an era or an age. He belongs to the humanity for eternity.

(CPS Bulletin, April 2 - June 2, 2013)

"This day, 26th January is India's Independence Day. This observance was quite appropriate when we were fighting for independence, and we had not seen or handled it. Now that we have seen and handled it, we seem to be disillusioned. At least, I am disillusioned. What are we celebrating today? Surely not our disillusionment! What we are entitled to celebrate is the hope that the worst is over, and that we are on the road to showing the lowliest of India's villagers that it means his freedom from being a serf, and that he is no longer a slave born to serve the cities and towns of India, but that he is entitled to use city-dwellers for the finished products of his well thought-out labours. He is the salt of Indian earth."

- Mahatma Gandhi on January 26, 1948

Power, Violence and Society - A Gandhian Approach

Shri B.P. Rath

(A Gandhian from Orissa)

Prof. S.N. Ray, the eminent editor of the highbrow Bengali magazine JIJNASA, confesses that a question haunts him throughout his life. This prominent question was put to him by the wife of a reputed communist leader of Germany. Her question runs like this:-

“Prof. Ray! My husband Mr. August, M.N. Ray, Rosa and many others were the cream of the world society of those days. They had plenty of knowledge, intelligence as well as dedication. They sacrificed their all for a dream of a new society. Why did their dream turn into a nightmare and how could a man like Stalin usurp power and a totalitarian society started crippling the soviet citizenry”?

Why does a revolution devour its children? Why does a revolutionary of today turn into a counterrevolutionary tomorrow? Mao tried to answer the question and the thesis of permanent revolution came into being. When he tried to implement his theory in practice, by giving the call of the Cultural Revolution, there was havoc in society. Consequently China lost a decade.

Why does this anomaly occur? A revolutionary is a product of a unique individual's propensities and a particular historical change of situation bring about a seachange in the character of the individuals who had fought earlier as revolutionaries.

In India, Gandhi led the struggle for independence. After we got independence, Gandhi did not want to wield state power. Gandhi gained greater stature after India became independent. So much so, that at the time of his death, he was recognized by some as the tallest man of the millennium. Like Gandhi, J.P. also shunned power. India's democracy owes not a little to him. M.N. Ray, though a member of a different camp gave up power politics though he never ceased to be active in the field of culture. Royists have always acted as the watch-dogs of democracy. During the different ages, the world's intellectuals stressed two types of paths for ushering in a better society. One was the path of violence and state power. European genius from Plato to Marx advocated the use of state power to usher in social changes. Even Confucian China believed in the redeeming authority of the state. Indian intellectuals wanted to hold a balance between the state power and society. They wanted the best among

them to become the leaders of society, a society which gave non-violence, followed by truth, the highest position among the coveted values for humanity.

In the field of religion, too these thoughts had their influence. Christ wanted to separate both. Neither should interfere in the domain of the other. "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's," said he. This idea later grew into that of secularism. Islam marched to glory by combining state power with religious power. When individuals heading the state lost their skill to manage, there was decline.

Ancient India wanted the society to have greater power than the state. No state can prosper without military power. So overt violence remains embedded in the structure of the state. Another danger today lurks in the wings. Checks and balances devised to curb state power are ceasing to wield their contrarian influences. Today in this consumerist society, the people manning these balancing organs have become members of the same clubs of haves, flaunting the same type of culture. Today corporations are ruling the world and neither the legislature nor the executive or judiciary remains untouched by corporate power. The media, too, lacks requisite independence of will. Gandhian culture of non-consumerism bordering on austerity, stresses on the leadership of the society rather than the state. It may provide a way of escape for the present world, where virtual democracy, supported by technocratic illusions, reigns even in the developed first world.

American hegemony, through world organizations, has resulted in states depriving wider populations of their legitimate rights to livelihoods and cleaner environments. The last half-a-century is witness to the greater and greater concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer hands. In these days states have lost their sovereignty because of this total domination of financial capital. When all the states of the world have become agents of global exploitation, who will bell the cat of corporate power?

Is the alternative not societal power built on the Gandhian principles of austerity? To have womenfolk as a major constituent of such social power is it not necessary to lay stress on the non-violent approach? There are many who expect NGOs to take the lead in the field of social power. But the NGOs have constraints in-built in their structures. There are questions of funding, the luxurious life style of the executives, and the lack of democratic principles in the day to day functioning of the NGOs.

There is the question of independent means of livelihood, what the Buddha out-lined as SADJIBJKA. How much scope is left for this? Already countries like Columbia and Afghanistan nurture large sections of populations living on the

cultivation of poppy and cocoa. In the U.S, the income of some of its population is dependent on the mercy of corporations. It is a stressful and alienated society which can easily be turned into a Jingoist one. Gandhi, J.P., Lohia and M.N. Roy dreamt of decentralised societies. The Greens of Germany also advocated decentralization of political and economic power.

Is decentralisation of power a blessing for village society where inequality is embedded? How can the Dalits be accommodated with full dignity? Land reforms should be brought about followed by the nourishing village handicrafts. But these artisans must receive protection at the hands of society, if not governments, which are handicapped because of international pressure.

Today many states in India are going alcoholic, thus endangering the dignity and well-being of particularly women and children. There are states encouraging the opening of casinos. Tomorrow states may run brothels as it is in Amsterdam. What will be the impact of such measures on the institution of family?

Castro's Cuba probably is the only country successfully resisting American hegemony. Under the pressure of circumstances Cuba has accepted the Gandhian principles. "There is enough for human need but not enough for human greed". Cuba's doctors, scientists, and sportsmen are truly acting as trustees of their talents. Castro has introduced organic agriculture. Tractors lie idle because of lack of petrol while horses cultivate fields.

Cuba has become a walking or bicycling society. Castro frankly confesses that revolution can only come through culture and ideas. This land of eleven million people has solved the problem of unemployment. Cuba lacks resources, but has made it up through human ingenuity. Add genuine democratic principles and we have a good Gandhian country in Cuba.

The question of culture gains importance in a logo-centric advertisement – driven society. Religious fundamentalism is be devilling the lives of minorities in many parts of the world. How can we change the faith – based religions to value – based ones is the question that haunts us. Gandhi took a major step in this direction when he declared "Truth is God". Gandhian truth is a composite of truth and nonviolence - Jainism, Buddhism and the Mahabharata or Tirukural-based. "Hindusim in India are our rich legacies. The world will profit much if the legacies are vitalized through communicative action.

While communities are disappearing because of the onslaught of individualism, the institution of family is under strain. We have to preserve communities without endangering individualism by giving the individual the right to exist under trying situations. The two institutions, family and community, where they are forces, have not eschewed covert violence and exploitation. These can be saved only if status and self-sacrifice are made inseparable twins as exemplified in the writings and life of Gandhi.

As far as the place of technology in the life of society is concerned, we Gandhians, have only one desire we do not want any human being to be deprived of his right to livelihood. If 20% of workers can provide enough for the whole world, how will the 80% of unemployed get their livelihood? If the problems of the world are to be tackled in right earnest, we must have a group of leaders of different societies fired by the vision of the unity of mankind. Gandhi and Tagore were such leaders. J.P. and Lohia were also dreamers of world fraternities. The world has experimented with the two universal ideas of liberty and equality and failed. Never was there greater danger to human liberty and equality. Technology and religion have each contributed to such a sorry state of affairs. Why cannot we in the 21st century experiment with the great ideas of fraternity and make it the guiding star of the human beings. India experimented with it and produced the Rishi culture. Buddha and Gandhi were both in that line. Christ, too was a leader in the same grain. In the field of philosophy, India's great contribution to the 21st century is ANEKANTAVAD. Gandhi and Buddha were true votaries of this great philosophy leavening Jainism. When we are thinking of world leaders of different societies, problems of modern psychology confront us. How can we expect these leaders to remain steadfast to their cause, when undreamt-of wealth, power and status are available to them. Indian Rishi culture provides an answer. These leaders should shun wealth, power and status. They should risk their all in the cause of the whole of humanity, Gandhi, when he wanted Pakistan to be given its share of Indian treasury Jaya-Prakash when he wanted justice to be given to the Nagas and to Sheikh Abdullah, rose to great-heights.

Gandhi paid dearly with his life for the cause of the whole of humanity. J.P. was condemned as a leader devoid of patriotic sentiments. That this type of behaviour is not exceptional, can be proved by what Manusmriti prescribes for the elite (ii-162). Unless the world nurtures a culture that produces such world leaders, the future is bleak indeed, with the present enslaved states and criminalized or alienated individuals and societies and the proliferation of jails and the murderous mobs. We will have much wealth but the three great values of the French Revolution will languish to the point of extinction.

Decentralised societies will be the nurseries of such leaders. Hope rises in our breasts when we hear about leaders like Fidel Castro, who could bring about the fusion of many Marxist and Gandhian principles in the tiny state of Cuba. There lives a Gandhian in Castro when he pardons the enemy soldiers at great risk, in the teeth of contrary views expressed by most of his confighters, in a crucial phase of Cuba's history when a single error might have jeopardized the entire venture.

Gandhi was a product of the East and West. So also were Nelson Mandela, Lohia, M.N. Ray and Tagore. We often hear about Nelson Mandela. There was Julius Nyerere of Tanganiaka, All of them have or had world vision. What we need today is a churning of ideas, milking all cultures, the linking of dreams with reality by taking up radical stands by the activist-intellectuals among the toiling deprived sections of fighting humanity. That there are such young people working at the local level is a heartening sign. Grassroot activists are working amongst the Adivasis of Kasipur in Orissa fighting against the mining TNCs. Devranjan, Saroj and Ravi are the leading intellectual – activists in Kasipur area. India has a wonderful tradition of producing a galaxy of global-level society – centric leaders. With the states of the world increasingly acting against the interests of large sections of humanity to serve corporate interests, it is society-centric leaders alone on whom lies the burden of redeeming oppressed mankind.

21st century states are going to become more and more repressive. With states, digital surveillance becoming almost all pervasive, the elite may become more and more alienated and parasitical, the media may become more & more manipulative. Real social activism may become more and more prohibitive as the perks and privileges enjoyed by the elite become more money – centric and corporate – employment based. The pressure of family may become so great on conscious intellectuals, that their guilty consciences may be satisfied with mere sops available through high-level discussions in luxurious surroundings while an activist's role in poverty-stricken areas may remain forbidden regions for them. Prof. Galbraith in his book "Culture of Contentment" shows his disappointment with the privileged intellectuals. Gandhians have not lost hope in them. They can inspire local-level activists through their writings and provide financial help. The affected people of the whole world together may lay the foundations of a better global society by rescuing the different social institutions from the slavestatus or oblivion or by building new decentralized institutions.

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PINAKINI SATYAGRAHA (GANDHI) ASHRAMAM

Shri Raviprolu Subrahmanyam

M.A. (GandhianThought)

In Andhra Pradesh this Ashramam stands as the foremost establishment based on Gandhian values and ideology. Soon after Gandhi's arrival in India in 1915 at Poona he was met by Sri Digumarthi Hanumantha Rao, a member of the "Servants of India Society" of Sri Gopalakrishna Gokhale, the political guru of Gandhiji. Sri Hanumantha Rao was born at Aska, Berhampur, Ganjam District on 23-09-1890 in the well known and highly respected DIGUMARTHI family there. In the wake of Vandemantharam Movement of 1907, the nascent patriotism induced him to dedicate his life for the services of the nation and subsequently joined Gopala Krishna Gokhale in the Servants of India Society. Sri Hanumantha Rao was incharge of Madras Royapettah Branch of the Society and also the editor of Madras Journal of Cooperation. Charturvedula Venkata Krishnaiah, a resident of Pallipadu village, Nellore District and member of the "Servants of India Society" met Gandhiji in 1915 and stayed at Sabarmathi Ashramam. Until then Mr. C.V.Krishnaiah was deeply associated with the extremist group of Balagangadhar Tilak, Vennelakanti Raghavaiah and Ponaka Kanakamma of Nellore. For the convenience of keeping the required ammunition away from the eyes of the British Police, Kanakamma and C.V.Krishnaiah purchased a land of 14 acres on the river banks of Penna/Pinakini River at Pallipadu village eleven kilometers from Nellore. Sri Charturvedula Raghavaiah father of C.V.Krishnaiah an orthodox Brahmin was a resident of Pallipadu village. He started "Tilak Vipraavidyalaya" (A Sanskrit Teaching School) at Pallipadu village. He groomed his only son C.V. Krishnaiah to be the follower of Tilak treading the extremist path for achieving the independence in quick time.

C.V.Krishnaiah joined hands with Ponaka Kanakamma, a dynamic follower of Aurobindo Ghosh to intensify the extremist activities at Nellore. They stored ammunition and pistols in thatched houses built in their land at Pallipadu and made it a convenient rendezvous for their activities. When the extremist activities assumed a low profile on being targeted by the police C.V. Krishnaiah dissociated himself from that activity and joined Mahatma Gandhi at Sabarmati Ashramam in 1915 and became an active follower of Gandhiji in the constructive activities at the Ashramam. Sri Digumarthi Hanumantha Rao met him when he

came to join in Sabarmati and subsequently both of them resigned from “Servants of India Society” and stayed at the Ashramam. Hanumantha Rao was an ardent follower of naturopathy, a pet subject of Mahatma. Hanumantha Rao’s expertise and talent in alleviating the majority of the deceases through naturopathy was a special attraction to Gandhiji. By the time Hanumantha Rao settled down in Sabarmati Ashramam he was already married to Butchi Krishnamma, sister of Damerla Rama Rao, a renowned artiste from Rajahmundry. She participated along with her husband Hanumantha Rao in the erstwhile activities of “Servants of India Society” and later on followed him to Sabarmati Ashramam to live as a favourite disciple enjoying the affection of Gandhiji and Kasturba. She and her husband C.V.Krishnaiah were ardent followers of Gandhiji’s Ashrama Dharmas. Gandhi chose them to participate in and propagate the spirit of Satyagraha following their agitation against “Rowlatt Act”. Gandhiji fixed 6th April, 1919 for starting the agitation and sent them to South India as representatives to ensure that people observed hartal and propagated swadeshi and Hindu Muslim unity. Gandhi wanted to start an Ashramam on the similar lines of Sabarmati in South India. They selected Pallipadu where Ponaka Kanakamma and C.V.Krishnaiah purchased the land. Ponaka Kanakamma, already met Gandhiji in 1918 at Sri Rajagopalachari’s house in Madras. Since then she identified herself with the ideals of Satyagraha and non-violence. She started Sujana Ranjani Sabha at her native Potlapudi village for her social activities and started a big library there. This Sabha was frequented by stalwards like Cattamanchi Ramalinga Reddy, Rayaprolu Subba Rao, Deepala Pitchayya Sastry, Komarraju Lakshmana Rao, Vennelakanti Raghavaiah, Kasinadhuni Nageswara Rao and Gadicherla Hari Sarvottama Rao. In 1923 she opened Kasturi Devi Girls’ High School with her own funds, inaugurated by Sri Tanguturi Prakasam. In 1921 when Gandhi came for inauguration of the Ashramam she donated all the gold ornaments she had and since then she never wore any gold ornament.

They constructed some more thatched houses there at Pallipadu village and invited Bapu to inaugurate the Ashramam there. Gandhiji readily accepted and on 7th April, 1921 he came with Kasturba and inaugurated it under the name “Pinakini Satyagraha Ashramam”. Hanumantha Rao, his wife Butchi Krishnamma, C.V.Krishnaiah and Kondaparthi Punnaiah formed a Committee for the Ashramam in Pallipadu village, then a Brahmin Agraharam where the Brahmins were property holders. They practised untouchability and other castes were not permitted even to

pass through their street. Gandhiji after coming to know of this Brahmin dominance made it a pre-condition for his visit to the village that Brahmins would allow Harijans to accompany him for the inauguration of the Ashramam. The practice of untouchability should end, said the Mahatma to Krishnaiah and others. The Mahatma made it clear to all that orthodoxy and untouchability must be eradicated and the barriers between the Brahmins and the others totally removed in consonance with the principles of Sarvodaya. Thus when Gandhiji put forth the conditions, the Brahmins there in the village relented and went all the way to Nellore and invited Gandhiji promising to obey and observe his principles and instructions. Gandhiji visited the Pallipadu village in a big procession singing patriotic songs and Bhajans along with Harijans and people of low castes, all passing through the Brahmin street.

The Inauguration was attended by thousands of villagers surrounding Pallipadu and Mahatma gave a lecture on the importance of Hindu-Muslim Unity, cow protection and eradication of untouchability. His eleven vows were elaborately stated and the villagers started practising the same. Ashramam with four committee members and two invitees executed a deed wherein the Ashramam was to be run on strict principles of Sarvodaya and on *Swayamposhaka* (self-reliance) for its own sustenance. C.V.Krishnaiah was a devoted constructive activist who started swadeshi centre at Nellore from where Khadi material was supplied to all other places. Weavers were kept in Ashramam and Krishnaiah stayed in Harijan Colony at Pallipadu where he developed a school and hostel for Harijans. In 1926 "Adi Andhra Maha Sabha" was held at Pallipadu Ashramam. For the residents of the Ashramam the activities were agriculture, weaving Khadi and looking after village sanitation and teaching Hindi by Hindi Prachara Sabha for the benefit of the students. Hanumantha Rao's exemplary demeanour, service-oriented principles and expertise in naturopathy practice earned for him several admirers when he stayed with Gandhiji at Sabarmathi Ashramam. They came forward with munificent donations and C.V.Krishnaiah with his local contacts took the initiative to further develop the lands and other resources. Many philanthropists from Nellore notably Tikkavarapu Ramireddy, Smt. Ponaka Kanakamma, Vennelakanti Raghavaiah and Oruganti Venkata Subbayya contributed copiously not only their riches but their services to the Ashramam. On the suggestion of Gandhiji, All India Congress Committee extended financial help of Rs.10,000/- to Ashramam. On November 25th, 1921 Ashramam Trust Deed was registered for the management and protection of Ashramam properties. The Trust was constituted

with six members. Four of them (1) Digumarthi Hanumantha Rao his wife (2) Digumarthi Butchi Krishnamma (3) C.V.Krishnaiah and (4) Kondaparthi Punnaiah were Life Trustees. The other two members were to be elected every year. A glorious chapter in the history of Ashramam began with the stay of illustrious men with their families like Sri Khasa Subba Rau, Vadrevu Jagga Raju, Digumarthi Venkata Rama Swamy, his wife Janakibayamma. On the suggestion of Gandhiji a businessman of South Africa, Rustumjee donated Rs. 10,000/- for establishment of a building in place of thatched house for the comfortable stay of Gandhiji and Kasturba. The existing Ashramam building is named a "Rustumjee Bhavan". The Ashramam stood as an example to the entire state for the manufacture of a fine fibre of Khadi and this was possible due to the devoted service of freedom fighters Sri Rentala Krishnaiah and his wife Venkata Subbamma. An event that occurred in 1923 bears testimony to the non-violent spirit of the Ashramites. When most of the male members were away from Ashramam the lonely ladies were once attacked, injured and robbed of their gold ornaments by local bandits. Smt. Butchi Krishnamma and others fought with the bandits and suffered severe injuries. Even though they did not themselves opt for reporting this matter to the police it came to the notice of the authorities and they caught hold of the bandits and registered a case against them. Smt. Butchi Krishnamma was called as a witness to the court to identify the stolen ornaments. Her reply was that those ornaments bore a resemblance to their own jewellery but she was not sure that they were their own. She did this in accordance with her total identification with Gandhian principles of non-violence and Satyagraha and her total love for fellow human beings. She did not want any punishment to be given to the bandits even though she suffered injuries. The bandits broke down and prostrated before Butchi Krishnamma and pleaded guilty before the bench being ready for the punishment. Gandhi came to know of this incident and praised Butchi Krishnamma and others for their commitment to his principles. Gandhi wrote a letter to them "The beauty of the women does not lie in their display of ornaments but only reflects in their character and in their simple life".

In 1925 when activities were in full swing Digumarti Hanumantha Rao, a source of inspiration and ideal leader suddenly fell ill. He refused to accept allopathy treatment and continued to rely on naturopathy until he breathed his last in March, 1926. With the demise of Hanumantha Rao a brilliant chapter in the history of Ashramam came to an end. In May, 1929 Gandhi visited Pallipadu Ashramam with

Kasturba and Butchi Krishnamma stayed at Ashramam for a day and handed over the responsibility of upkeeping the Ashramam to Konda Venkatappayya a dynamic Congress Leader. Gandhiji declared in the meeting at Butchireddy Palem that he was seeking alms on behalf of many of the Daridranarayans, surrounding him. He addressed several letters to the inmates of the Ashramam on different occasions showing tremendous interest on the people as well on the day to day activities of the Ashramam. In 1946 in the "Harijan" he wrote that while stalwarts were leading Pallipadu Ashramam it became a model to the whole nation but he was disappointed to find that activities at Ashramam were at a low profile for want of such committed and dedicated Satyagrahees. Konda Venkatappayya was incharge of the Ashramam until 1933. In 1930 from Pallipadu Ashramam Salt Satyagraha procession was started by Oruganti Venkata Subbayya, Konda Venkatappayya, Tikkavarapu Rami Reddy and others and their procession ended after picking up the salt at Mypadu beach. Sri Oruganti Venkata Subbayya stayed at the Ashramam and started an ayurvedic hospital and served the people of the village. From 1951 onwards Butchi Krishnamma took full incharge of the Pallipadu Ashramam staying at Seethanagaram Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust Ashramam. She was incharge of Kasturba Trust with Head Quarters at Seethanagaram and sent Grama Sevikas Mid Nurses Village level workers health assistants and the teachers to Pallipadu Ashramam. She also periodically sent eminent Kasturba Trust Pratinidhis (1) Dr. Mallemadugu Vijaya Lakshmi, (2) Smt. Racharla Samrajamma (who is now at the age of 94 living in Visakhapatnam), (3) Smt. Prabha (now staying in Sevagram with her rural industry) Marupuru Rukminamma, W/o. Kodanda Rami Reddy of "Jamin Rytu", Nellore also served the Ashramam. Smt. Butchi Krishnamma started Grama Seva Centre, Health Centre, Balwadi, Meternity Nursing facility, Harijan Boys Hostal etc., at Pallipadu Ashramam. She had run all these activities constructing bamboo kuteers and administered efficiently bringing back old glory to the Ashramam. My father Sri Raviprolu Rama Murthy, Village Karanam was Convenor of the Ashramam and close associate of Butchi Krishnamma and virtual administrator of all activities pertaining to the Ashramam with the coordination of committee formed by Butchi Krishnamma until she died in 1991 Adult Education Dakshina Bharatha Hindi Prachana Sabha, stitching embroidery, honey making were the main attractions of the Ashramam and all the villagers were involved, educated and trained in all these disciplines. In 1989 Butchi Krishnamma gave the Ashramam for establishing a school to Sri M. Siva

Ram, the disciple of Sri Jiddu Krishna Murthy. Sri Sivaram with his Srujana Educational Trust started a school with a foreign collaboration "Activated" and run the school with his own innovative Gandhian Syllabus upto X Class and run the school in a very disciplined way and became a model school with a help of a British Lady Teacher Smt. Elina. Butchi Krishnamma appointed local and natives of Pallipadu as Life Trustees in 1989 and among the trustees Mamillapalli Srinivasa Chakravarthy took the management of Ashramam efficiently until his death handing over the Ashram to Pinakini Educational Trust.

Basic Training School on the lines of Nai Talim of Gandhiji was started in 1937 at Sevagram and it started its branch in Pallipadu Village very near to Ashramam. The system of basic education was the best way to develop the students physically, mentally and morally. In 2005 when no activity was there in the Ashramam and on a representation to the Governor of Andhra Pradesh the Ashramam was handed over to the District Collector of Nellore who appointed Nellore Red Cross Society as Conveners and chosen Red Cross Members to form Committee of the Ashramam. Red Cross Society is presently running the Ashramam on Gandhian Lines and organizing Organic Farming, Sewing Naturopathy Medicines to Villagers, Yoga and Hindi Teaching to students. District Collector took initiative along with the Committee Members to bring back the old glory to the Ashramam by running the Ashramam on the traditions, culture and principles of Gandhiji. Local Philanthropists donated sufficient amounts needed for the renovation of the Rustumjee Gandhi Bhavan as the building came to the stage of almost collapse. The building was renovated with the help of Archaeological Survey of India Engineers since the whole structure with the premises was declared as a heritage site by Government of India. The members started propagating the ideals of Gandhiji's thought and philosophy through educating the students in several schools and colleges near Nellore. Several eminent personalities devoted to Gandhian ideals visited Ashramam and delivered lectures on important occasions. A guest house was subsequently constructed under the supervision of Sevagram engineers with their technology of not using concrete structures and providing only the synthetically made tiles from Sevagram Ashramam. The Pinakini Satyagraha (Gandhi) Ashramam is being run by dedicated Committee members with service motto of upholding the Gandhian path laid down by the erstwhile elders of the Ashramam. Now the Pinaki Satyagraha (Gandhi) Ashramam is called second Sabarmathi Ashramam and declared by Govt. of India as a heritage site.

Gandhi BEFORE INDIA

RAMACHANDRA GUHA

ALLEN LANE an imprint of PENGUIN BOOKS in 2013, PP673, Rs899/-

Seven years after publishing *INDIA AFTER GANDHI* which earned for him national and international acclaim Ramachandra Guha has brought out *GANDHI BEFORE INDIA*, the inspiration for which came in 1998 on the campus of University of California at Berkeley. "A decade ago," explains the author, "after teaching that course in Berkeley, I decided I would write a many-sided portrait of Gandhi, which would explore his words and actions in the context of the words and actions of his family, friends, followers and adversaries." That has culminated in this fascinating story of "Gandhi's journey from Gujarat to London to Natal and the Transvaal and then back to Gujarat." The focus is on those crucial years in South Africa between 1893 and 1914 where he went to practise law for his livelihood and became the saviour of countless number of oppressed and exploited people. As a South African friend wrote to the author: "You gave us a lawyer; we gave you back a Mahatma." A month before his farewell to South Africa in 1914 Gandhi himself felt that satyagraha which was born in South Africa became "perhaps the mightiest instrument on earth."

Ramachandra Guha unveils his massive work of meticulous research with a thought-provoking prologue in which he states his idea of portraying 'Gandhi from all angles.' Guha is more than a historian of repute. He is a social scientist and humanist as well, enormously gifted and trained in the art of unravelling the forces underlying human struggles against injustice and exploitation. In South Africa it was the struggle of the oppressed and migrant people during 'the first phase of globalization' and Gandhi's heroic fight against the oppressive ruling classes holds out lessons which are relevant in today's globalized world. An interesting parallel is drawn between Gandhi and his religious hero Lord Ram. The similarities between the two include 'long journeys, long periods in exile' and support received from their loyal, though not always well-treated, spouses and circumstances that forced them to take on powerful adversaries. Guha prefers not "to push the parallels too far". Lord Ram and Gandhi, he points out, strove to uphold dharma in different times, one 'in myth and the other in reality', 'both having enjoyed a vigorous and contentious after-life.'

The twenty two chapters that follow in this tome of 672 pages present a gripping account of Gandhi's life from his home town Porbandar which according

to an English visitor 'had received from Nature an unimaginable splendor of sea and sky'. After taking the oath on his 'mother's knee' that he would not 'touch a strange woman, or drink wine or eat meat' young Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi sailed for London on September 4, 1888. In London Gandhi wrote in support of vegetarianism as 'the logic of vegetarianism is not chemical, but moral, social, hygienic'. Back home the London trained lawyer could not make a mark in his profession at Rajkot or in Bombay. Dada Abdullah, a Porbandar Muslim trader with successful branches in South Africa, invited Gandhi to take up his legal cases and "the invitation from South Africa allowed him an escape from the political intrigues at home and to earn a decent sum of money." That was a turning point in the life of Gandhi and in the history of his country and of the century that followed.

No leader or public figure ever suffered such savage physical attacks and public assaults as Gandhi in South Africa. Guha narrates how 'Gandhi was beaten, but not bowed. Blood was flowing down his neck, but eye-witnesses state that he bore himself stolidly and pluckily through the trying ordeal'. Gandhi was 'the target of the collective anger of (virtually) all the whites in Natal, expressed continuously for several weeks at a stretch'. Death stared at him several times but he remained unwavering in his commitment to Hindu-Muslim unity. "I may have to meet death in South Africa at the hands of my country-men. If that happens you should rejoice. It will unite the Hindus and Mussalamans... The enemies of the community are constantly making efforts against such a unity. In such a great endeavour, someone will have to sacrifice his life. If I make that sacrifice, I shall regard myself, as well as you, my colleagues, fortunate" he declared. The harder the blow was the firmer Gandhi became in his resolve to fight oppression and racial discrimination through satyagraha.

The same South Africa provided for Gandhi spiritually uplifting and ennobling experiences beginning with the 1893 Maritzburg incident when Gandhi was thrown out of the railway compartment described by Fischer as 'the most creative experience.' A decade later was born satyagraha.

As the aptly titled chapters describe 'A Tolstoyan in Johannesburg' and 'A son departs and a mentor arrives' it was here that he found his mentors and inspirational leaders notable among whom were Tolstoy, Gokhale, Pranjivan Mehta. The relationship between Gandhi and Pranjivan Mehta is described interestingly: "Pranjivan Mehta was to Mohandas Gandhi what Friedrich Engels was to Karl Marx, at once a disciple and a patron, who saw, very early that the friend of his youth had the makings of the heroic world-transforming figure he was to later become. Their friendship was

consolidated by a shared language and culture – it mattered that Engels and Marx were both Germans, and that Mehta and Gandhi were both Gujaratis. There were differences: Engels believed Marx would redeem a class (the proletariat); Mehta believed Gandhi would save a nation, India. Both, however, had a deep, almost unquestioning faith in their compatriot's genius. Both were prepared to reach deep into their pockets to activate and enable it."

Gandhi believed that self-scrutiny and self-criticism should constantly guide his approach to issues. 'Praise is everyone's enemy' he said. As his mentor Gopal Krishna Gokhale summed up Gandhi's distinctive combination of personal saintliness and social meliorism was necessary to safeguard the position of Indians in South Africa.'

Guha narrates several poignant moments in his own lucid and simple style like for instance the relationship between Mohandas Gandhi, the demanding father and Harilal, the rebellious son . "You did not allow me to measure my capabilities; you measured them for me," protests Harilal against his father's decisions. A touching moment it was when the father pats the son on the cheek saying "Forgive your father, if you think he has done you wrong".'

Ramachandra Guha's indefatigable energy for original research brings to light several interesting things about support from all parts of India for the movement in South Africa. " A Telugu weekly in Guntur reached for mythic parallels – Gandhi, the leader of the resistance, was like Arjuna, brave and fearless, while Gokhale was like Krishna, providing sage advice from behind the scenes," records the historian who ends his treatise of epic proportions with the chapter titled How the Mahatma Was Made.

This is a magnificent work, the first of a trilogy, on Gandhi's early life and work in South Africa before his return to India in July 1914. It should be read to understand the genesis of satyagraha and nonviolent protest movement against racial discrimination, social injustice and exploitation of the weak and downtrodden. The making of the Mahatma is no ordinary story and to have constructed it with such deep research and narrated it so brilliantly Ramachandra Guha deserves our grateful appreciation. At a time when the world after World War I was being dominated by such ideologies as capitalism, communism, Nazism and Fascism, Gandhi offered to humankind a refreshingly different approach based on satyagraha and non-violence which is still accepted at all levels as the only way out of darkness and violence. Therein lies the uniqueness of Ramachandra Guha's masterly work.

A.Prasanna Kumar
(CPS Bulletin April 2, 2014)

Book Review:

WHY GANDHI STILL MATTERS- AN APPRAISAL OF THE MAHATMA'S LEGACY

- RAJMOHAN GANDHI

(Aleph Book Company PP 201 Rs.499, 2017)

Rajmohan Gandhi has come up with yet another eminently readable book on his grandfather. Though short in size he hopes to present a relevant, fallible, amazing and accessible Gandhi." The size of the little book is, in many ways, similar to William Shirer's *Gandhi A Memoir* published in 1979 to which a reference is made by Rajmohan Gandhi in the second chapter of the work. In just two hundred pages both Rajmohan and Shirer encapsulate the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi who as a Nobel Laureate in Medicine Albert Szent Gyorgyi wrote "chased out almost single handed the greatest military power on earth." Rajmohan Gandhi's earlier works on Gandhiji *THE GOOD BOATMAN A Portrait of Gandhi* in 1995 and *MOHANDAS A True story of a Man, his People and an Empire*, a meticulously researched massive volume of 745 pages were significant contributions to the pax Gandhiana. *WHY GANDHI STILL MATTERS* is the result of the author's lectures delivered at Michigan State University in 2016. The main purpose of this work is to make an appraisal of Gandhian legacy and the place of Gandhian values and ideas in these troubled times dominated by greedy politicians, hate groups and casteist bodies.

In the introductory note Rajmohan Gandhi refers to the flaws of 'the imperfect Gandhi' was an astonishing human being' a multi dimensional and complex person .The nine chapters that follow begin with 'The Legacy of Gandhi, Three things constitute the Gandhi legacy: nonviolence as weapon of struggle, the independent nation of India, and signposts for life today anywhere on earth. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. whom the author met in Washington DC gave 'a remarkable sermon on 22nd March 1959' when he just turned thirty. A line from King's sermon is quoted: "Gandhi was able to achieve for his people independence from the domination of the British Empire without lifting one gun or without uttering one curse word". Four years later in 1963, Dr. King led a march on Washington and delivered his 'I Have a Dream' speech, according to Rajmohan Gandhi. The author refers to the influence of Gandhi on such famous persons as Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Nelson Mandela,

Martin Luther King Jr., the Dalai Lama and Aung San Suu Kyi in the first chapter titled 'The legacy of Gandhi'.

Writing on Gandhi's Passions in the second chapter, Rajmohan 'how the spinning wheel empowered the weak and equalized the 'untouchable' with the Brahmin, demolishing every caste barrier' and how it taught elite, rich and privileged Indians to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow. Rajmohan quotes the Arab poet Mikhail Noema: "A spindle in Gandhi's hand became sharper than the sword; the simple white sheet wrapping Gandhi's thin body was armour plate which guns from the fleets of the master of the seas could not pierce; and the goat of Gandhi became stronger than the British Lion.

Another interesting narrative is on Gandhi's gift and his God, the struggles of Gandhi in South Africa beginning with the most important of all, his inner conflicts and contradictions. In one line Rajmohan sums it up all 'The inconsistent Mahatma was also a very human and very Indian, Mohandas Gandhi'. In the chapter of 'Ahimsa and Gandhi' the influence of Henry David Thoreau, 'one of the greatest and moral men America has produced, on Gandhi is traced. *Hind Swaraj* written in 1909 and the significance of *Ahimsa* and *Satyagraha* are discussed in the seventh chapter. Gandhi's adoration of his God Rama finds a place along with his admiration for Jesus Christ's 'perfect sacrifice'. He made it clear that 'there is no superiority or inferiority in the Hinduism' of his conception.

Ahimsa and Satyagraha, explains Rajmohan became synonymous. It is a multi-pronged weapon to fight oppression and national evils like untouchability and Hindu-Muslim discord. The 'twin components' of Gandhi's non-violence were 'fear not' and 'hate not' which were difficult to practice and the first found wider acceptance than the second. The author aptly diagnosed that hatred proved more resistance than fear. The Mahatma's conquest of communal riots through love and fasting was the triumph of spirit over force. The words of Rajaji are quoted: "In my considerate opinion, there has been nothing, not even independence which is so truly wonderful as his victory over evil in Calcutta."

There is an interesting reference to Sardar Patel's letter to B.R.Ambedkar when he married Sharada Kabir, a Brahmin doctor, (his first wife died in 1935), in which the former wrote to the latter "I am sure if Bapu were alive he would have given you his blessings." Ambedkar replied "I agree that Bapu, if he had been alive,

would have blessed it". The reference to Gandhiji's faith in Ramanama is touching. "It is my hope," said the Mahatma, "that when I die I shall die with Ramanama in my heart. I am sustained by Ramanama. If I am perfectly fit, it is due to Rama's grace."

On the blurb of the book, it is written 'Taken together, the author's insights present an unsentimental view of aspects of Gandhi's legacy that have endured and those that have been cast aside by power-hungry politicians, hate groups, castiest organizations, venal industrialists, terrorists and other enemies of India's promise'. After reading Rajmohan Gandhi's WHY GANDHI STILL MATTERS the only question that one ventures to ask: Will Gandhi ever cease to matter in this world of growing violence and hatred?

A.Prasanna Kumar

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He is a social scientist because he follows social truth by the scientific method of observation, intuitional and intellectual hypothesis, and experimental test. He once told me that he considered Western scientists not very thorough because not many of them were willing to test their hypotheses on themselves. He, however, always makes the first test of an hypothesis on himself, before he asks anyone else to try. That is so, whether the hypothesis relates to a matter of diet, sanitation, spinning-wheel, caste reform, or Satyagraha. The title he chose for his autobiography was *My Experiments with Truth*. He is not a mere scientist: he is a great scientist, in the realm of social truth. He is great because of his choice of problems, because of his methods of solution, because of the persistence and thoroughness of his search and because of the profundity of his knowledge of the human heart. His greatness as a social inventor is shown by the close adaptation of his methods to the culture and modes of thought and feeling of the people and to their economic and technological resources.

Richard B. Gregg

(*Mahatma Gandhi* - Edited by Dr.S. Radhakrishnan)

GANDHI AND APPLIED SPIRITUALITY

Prof. K. Ramakrishna Rao

Indian Council for Philosophical Research

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"As Mahatma Gandhi showed by his own example," writes His Holiness the Dalai Lama in his foreword to Prof. Ramakrishna Rao's book on Gandhi and Applied Spirituality, "non-violence can be implemented not only in politics but also in day-to-day life. That was his great achievement." The Dalai Lama hoped that this book would 'inspire readers to develop practical ways in which children and adults can be educated in the paths of nonviolence, kindness and compassion' to become worthy inheritors of the Mahatma's legacy to us.

Gandhiji called himself 'a practical idealist' with a firm disclaimer that he had not 'discovered anything new or original.' But such was the impact of Gandhiji's life and work that distinguished philosophers, scholars and scientists sought to understand and explain the philosophical foundations and scientific approach of his thought and action. If Ernest Barker saw in Gandhi 'a great bridge' between 'a great Indian tradition of devout and philosophic religion and the western tradition of civil and political liberty in the life of the community' Richard Gregg found in Gandhi "a social scientist because he follows social truth by the scientific method of observation, intuition and intellectual hypothesis, and experimental test. He is not a mere scientist: he is a great scientist in the realm of social truth. Describing Gandhi as 'a religious actualist' Erik Erikson explained how Gandhiji made an alliance of his 'inner voice' and the 'voice of mankind.' Scholarly works continue to come out regularly on Gandhi and as K.Swaminathan aptly wrote "the Gandhi story is inexhaustible like the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha combined." According to Aldous Huxley the Mahatma showed how 'man's physical and intellectual limitations are compatible with a practically infinite capacity for spiritual progress.'

To that genre of writings belongs this recent work of Prof K.Ramakrishna Rao on Gandhi and Applied Spirituality, dealing with "the spiritual foundations of Gandhian philosophy and practices and their relevance to today's world troubled by terror and violence." As the Chairman of the Indian Council of Philosophical Research Rao brought out this book, fulfilling, to a large extent, his long cherished wish to "indigenize

Indian psychology and to make service an integral part of our education.” His 1969 publication on Gandhi and Pragmatism Rao bore testimony to his deep interest in Gandhian studies and keenness to explain and emphasize their relevance for our troubled times. Rao who holds a Ph.D. degree in philosophy and D.Litt in psychology rose to become an internationally acclaimed authority on parapsychology. He straddles the two fields of knowledge, philosophy and psychology, with as much ease as he travels between the United States where he taught and worked as Director of the Institute of Parapsychology and India where he has performed varied roles as Vice Chancellor, Chairman AP State Council of Higher Education and more recently Chairman ICPR. With the objective of bringing the East and the West closer to each other through academic and intellectual pursuits and blend the essence of Indian philosophical tradition with modern scientific research for ending violence and human conflict Ramakrishna Rao has been tirelessly working for over half a century latest work on Gandhi is a welcome addition to Gandhiana and the eminently readable book begins with a Gandhian reconstruction in philosophy, an overview of the globalized world of today, and a way forward. This is a work of high quality, intellectually stimulating and rewarding even for one not adequately acquainted with studies in psychology and parapsychology. The author’s analytical presentation of diverse themes such as identity, conflict, violence, science, philosophy, psychology, yoga and spirituality and insightful observations on the legacy of the Buddha, Nehru and Gandhi enhance the value of the work. The lucidity with which Rao explains basic concepts and tenets and relates them to Gandhi’s non-violence and satyagraha reveal the depth of his scholarship and intellectual rigour.

From the first chapter titled ‘Towards a Gandhian Reconstruction’ to the twelfth and last the author takes the reader on an intellectual voyage from ancient times of Patanjali et al to the ‘current scenario of wide spread identity conflicts, divided self and general use of violence as a means of conflict resolution and how Gandhi’s spiritual force or truth force is the sole beacon of hope for the troubled humanity.’ Every chapter of this volume is studded with conceptual clarifications and thought provoking observations on issues and problems of contemporary relevance. For instance the BMC model explained in the beginning is applied at the end to the Mahatma as “a mature illustration of the model”. Sarvodaya, the rise of all, literally means the fall of ego. Besides yoga and consciousness and related subjects on

which he has done extensive research, Rao writes cogently on national integration, inclusiveness and Indianness and the eternal relevance of Indian philosophy.

The reviewer does not like to indulge in the usual practice of pointing out printing errors here and there in such a good work though it should have been Gandhi Vardhanti not Jayanthi on January 30 as printed at the end of the preface, and Vasudhaika Kutumbakam not kutumbam on page 163.

“Nothing better has ever been taught or lived since the world first began” wrote Dr. S.Radhakrishnan in the monumental work he edited on Mahatma Gandhi. Ramakrishna Rao writes that “studies of Gandhi, yoga and parapsychology should be pursued together for a wholesome understanding of human nature.” The author of this important book is himself a trend-setter whose work will inspire many to pursue that goal.

A.Prasanna Kumar

OXFORD Vintage VIP car!

There was no road from Wardha to Sevagram; only a dusty cart track which became unusable during the rains. Gandhi was not enthusiastic about a road connection with Wardha; he wanted the national leaders who came to see him to understand the problems of those who lived in villages. Jamnalal Bajaj, had improvised a curious vehicle – which he called ‘Oxford’ – for journeys between Wardha and Sevagram; it consisted of an old Ford motor car drawn by a pair of oxen. This was used by Nehru, Patel, Rajagoplachari and others; it was, however, a fair-weather arrangement. There was no electricity in Sevagram, and kerosene lamps were used; Gandhi tried to reduce dependence on kerosene by encouraging the use of the locally available nonedible oils for lighting lamps. Yet, whether he liked it or not, it was impossible to keep Sevagram insulated from the world. The District Board built a road to connect it with Wardha, and the Postal Department opened a cottage post -office.

(B.R. Nanda - *The Making of a Nation*)

GANDHI, NEHRU AND INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE

A. Prasanna Kumar

They had very little in common to become so closely identified with a cause or to get so intensely involved in India's struggle for independence, the greatest mass movement in human history. In birth, upbringing and social status too the contrasting backgrounds against which they grew up hardly suggested any hint of their coming together to shape India's destiny. When the Indian National Congress was launched in 1885 Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was a lad of sixteen summers and four years later was born Jawaharlal Nehru. They were separated by twenty years in age, besides the diverse backgrounds and dissimilar temperaments. Destiny, however, ordained that Jawaharlal was to become Gandhi's link with the younger generation and his window on the world.' (B.R.Nanda *The Making of a Nation*, p 239). Gandhi who adopted 'the saintly idiom' for 'the spiritualization of politics' and Jawaharlal Nehru possessing an 'impetuous and rebellious spirit,' who was described by Gandhi himself as 'an extremist', came together mainly because of their common goal of liberating India from foreign rule and the people from poverty, backwardness and exploitation. "To the question why two men with such diverse backgrounds and temperaments remained together," wrote B.R.Nanda(*ibid*) "the simple answer is that they needed each other. In 1919 young Nehru needed Gandhi to provide an outlet to his passionate but pent-up nationalism, and Gandhi, about to enter the Indian political arena, was on the look out for able lieutenants."

The influence of education obtained in good schools on young minds is revealed from Gandhi's early years. He was a boy of twelve when he felt convinced that 'complete brotherhood' was possible among Hindus, Muslims and Parsis. That was 'before the Congress was born.' Gandhi recalled his school days when he joined the Alfred High School in Rajkot which had Hindu, Muslim and Parsi boys and Hindu and non-Hindu teachers: "At the time that communal unity possessed me I was a lad twelve years old" recalled Gandhi (Rajmohan Gandhi- Mohandas, p6) whose boyhood dream of communal harmony later became his life's mission, for the benefit of not a few communities or two strife-torn countries of the sub-continent but for humanity as a whole.

It is generally accepted that Ahimsa, nonviolence, was born on May 31, 1893 in South Africa when Gandhi was traveling by train. On that cold night when the train stopped at Pietermaritzburg at 9 p.m. Gandhi was thrown out of the first class compartment in which he was traveling and ordered to get into the van compartment. Gandhi was determined to fight spiritually 'the arrogance of power and the arrogance

of race' and as Rajmohan Gandhi writes the two impulses, political and spiritual 'had fused and spoken to him as one.' (Mohandas, p 66) His dilemma was resolved and 'his will to God and his will to politics could flow together as one force.' (ibid, p 67) That was the beginning of Gandhi's confrontation with violence 'virtually everyday of his long life.'

Gandhi, the empiricist, found answers to the many dilemmas that confronted him everyday in his 'inner voice.' His sharp mind was allied to a noble heart always overflowing with love and compassion. His humility cast a spell on the high and the mighty evoking the instant admiration of all those who came to see him. He would put everyone at ease with such honest declarations: "I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills. I have been truthful but not nonviolent. It was in the course of my pursuit of truth that I discovered non-violence. There is no dharma higher than truth. Ahimsa is the highest duty." He explained how he conducted experiments in daily life and learnt from the errors he committed in his pursuit of truth and non-violence and in the process "learnt some lessons in truth and nonviolence in the form of love and service to our fellowmen." Satyagraha and Ahimsa, Gandhi was convinced, would ennoble the human spirit. "God has chosen me as His instrument for presenting non-violence to India for dealing with her many ills..Ahimsa is supreme law. By it alone can mankind be saved. Non-violence is the weapon of the strongest and the bravest," he declared. It is more powerful than all the armaments of the world, argued Gandhi and declared that "to the God-fearing death has no terrors." Fearlessness was one of the main tenets of the Gandhian philosophy. Hiren Mukherjee thought that Gandhi's Abhaya was greater than Gandhi's Ahimsa.

Jawaharlal Nehru was also known for his fearlessness. Born and raised in affluence by a doting father, Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal went to England for higher studies where he "secured a second class degree but first class English education." (Shashi Tharoor) Even before he became the acclaimed master of the art of letter-writing, Jawaharlal, then just twenty, wrote to his father about his idea of education. "To my mind education does not consist of passing examinations or knowing English or mathematics. It is a mental state." Impressed by Jawaharlal's qualities of head and heart Motilal predicted a big role for his son in India's struggle for emancipation. Motilal's "defection to the Gandhi camp was perhaps as much due to the Mahatma's logic as to the passionate pleading of his son Jawaharlal who had completely fallen under Gandhi's spell," wrote Nanda.(p 142) "If Jawahar lives for ten years," said Motilal in 1928 " he will change the face of India. But such men do not usually live long; they are consumed by the fire within." That was the time when Rabindranath

Tagore likened Jawaharlal to *rituraj*, the spirit of spring. When the younger Nehru was elevated to the Congress Presidency, Sarojini Naidu said to Jawahar : " I wonder if in the whole of India there is a prouder heart than your father's or a heavier heart than yours."

Gandhi's religious idiom, it seems, 'jarred' on Jawaharlal Nehru at a time when his young mind came under the influence of radical philosophy. The writings of Karl Marx had an impact on Jawaharlal's mind and among his earliest works was a book on Soviet Russia . He attended the Brussels International Congress against colonial oppression and imperialism in February 1927 and confirmed his conversion to socialism. He was convinced that socialism was as necessary as democracy for human development. He abhorred fascism and imperialism, for that matter authoritarianism of any type. "I am very far from being a communist. I dislike dogmatism," he explained and did not hesitate to admit that he was a little vague in his ideological stance and would like to call himself 'something of a vedantin.' Notwithstanding his empathy with leftist philosophy Nehru felt that only Gandhian approach would free India from bondage. Nehru, like Subhas Bose, disagreed with Gandhi during in the early years and even questioned the wisdom of the Mahatma's stance on some issues. Nehru's bold and open disagreements did not hurt Gandhi who even conceded on a few occasions that the younger leaders, Nehru and Bose, could be right.

The Gandhi-Nehru exchanges of those times, for that matter throughout their long association, remind one of the relationship between Plato and Aristotle, two great philosophers who defined the relationship between the teacher and the pupil. "I adore my teacher," declared Aristotle, " but I adore truth more than my teacher." Nehru knew that though "Gandhi was deeply religious, his politics were completely secular," (Nanda, p xxv) and his concept of religion " amounted simply to an ethical framework for the conduct of everyday life." Gandhi made it clear that he would oppose 'any proposal for a state religion, even if the whole population of India had professed the same religion.' He held his prayer meetings not in temples but under the open sky. God, he stated, would never appear in person but always in action. Religion to Gandhi was not a Sunday show or hourly exercise or ritual. He experienced God's presence and support in every activity, every hour and every minute. The magic of Gandhi cast a spell on the masses, more importantly on the Indian National Congress passing through turbulence then. Nehru, like his colleagues and countrymen, realized that " Gandhi could do without the Congress, but the Congress could not do without him."

As Rajaji put it Gandhi taught nothing that he did not practise. Jawaharlal Nehru knew that Gandhi's intellectual conviction attracted people from far and near. The scholar and the scientist were convinced that beneath the Mahatma's simple exterior lay a strong mind allied to a scientific temper. Gandhi, the scientist, conducted his experiments in the laboratory of his mind and through the 'science of Satyagraha' he pursued his quest for Truth that is God. The true scientist always keeps an open mind, never claiming any finality about his conclusions, wrote Gandhi. Truth and God were one and the same, the pursuit of which was done in seemingly simple but amazingly superhuman way. Sarojini Naidu described it in words of enduring beauty as : " the rare and exquisite courtesy, and compassion and courage, wisdom, humour and humanity of this unique man who taught the Gospel of Truth." 'A religious actualist' was how Erikson described Gandhi who made 'an alliance of the inner voice and the outer mankind.'

Probably influenced by Jawaharlal Nehru's writings, Hiren Mukherjee argued that Gandhi's 'abhaya' was greater than his 'ahmisa'. Nehru wrote in *The Discovery of India* that "The essence of his teaching was fearlessness and truth, and action allied to these, always keeping the welfare of the masses in view. The greatest gift for an individual or a nation, so we had been told in our ancient books, was abhaya (fearlessness) not merely bodily courage but the absence of fear from the mind. Janaka and Yajnavalka had said, at the dawn of our history, that it was the function of the leaders of a people to make them fearless." For Jawaharlal Nehru the advent of Gandhi was "like a powerful current of fresh air that made us stretch ourselves and take deep breaths; like a beam of light that pierced the darkness and removed the scales from our eyes; like a whirlwind that upset many things, but most of all the working of the people's minds. He did not descend from the top; he seemed to emerge from the millions of India, speaking their language and incessantly drawing attention to them and their appalling condition. Get off the backs of these peasants and workers, he told us, all you who live by their exploitation; get rid of the system that produces this poverty and misery. Political freedom took new shape then and acquired a new content." (ibid) However Nehru's regret was that the Congress did not accept and follow fully the path shown by Gandhi, though he was "always there as a symbol of uncompromising truth to pull us up and shame us into truth."

In Gandhi, Nehru found both the strength and hope of awakened India. Gandhi too knew that Jawaharlal was not a 'blind follower' and had a mind of his own and as Nanda observed "Gandhi wanted to harness Nehru's great talents and energies and was confident of containing his impetuous and rebellious spirit." (p238) 'He is undoubtedly an extremist', wrote Gandhi after catapulting Jawaharlal Nehru to the

Congress Presidency in 1929 'thinking far ahead of his surroundings.' (ibid) Described as Gandhi's favourite disciple Nehru also seemed to have grown in confidence about the role of the Congress under Gandhi's leadership in the struggle for freedom. He wrote in 1931 that "There was a time not long ago when an Indian had to hang his head in shame; today it is a privilege to be an Indian." (Nanda p326). Nehru had two distinct advantages over other Congress leaders, his mastery over English language and knowledge of history. He was both a writer and maker of history. Fascinated by the range and continuity of Indian civilization, India, he wrote, is 'a curious mixture of amazing diversity and abiding unity.' Shashi Tharoor described Nehru as 'a moody idealist intellectual who felt a mystical empathy with the toiling masses.' There was something more than that, a mystic bond between Nehru and India that lasted till his end. His Will And Testament bears testimony to it with his praise of the 'smiling and dancing' Ganga, a symbol and a memory of the past of India, running into the present and flowing on to the great ocean of the future' being the highlight of the classic document. He was proud of the great inheritance and the nature of Indian civilization. "India has always seemed to me," he wrote "to have broadly more the feminine qualities predominate—gentle and peaceful." The life and work of Ashoka the Great who left behind 'a deathless memory' and great legacy had a deep impact on Nehru's mind. Gautama Buddha's concern for humanity, Ashoka's spirit of renunciation and Gandhi's non-violence constituted the core of Nehru's philosophy.

Jawaharlal Nehru began to give the Congress a new direction, radicalizing its policies, in spite of his colleagues not agreeing with him. In 1931 at the Karachi Congress he spoke strongly in favour of fundamental rights and foresaw the need for a constituent assembly. He was the first among the Congress leaders to stress the role of science and technology and industrialization as vital for India's economic development. He was throughout consistent in his stance on the core elements of the Indian polity. Democracy would be meaningless if people were not guaranteed fundamental rights. He and Dr BR Ambedkar defended later the parliamentary system as it would ensure greater responsibility on the part of the rulers than the presidential type. Socialism, Nehru felt, would ensure equality and justice and was a panacea for social and economic ills. Democratic socialism was the best mechanism for achieving an egalitarian society, though progress would be slow, according to him. Andre Malraux identified four pillars of Nehru's policy

1) democratic institutions, 2) staunch pan-Indian secularism 3) socialist economy and 4) foreign policy of non-alignment. Nehru was a staunch believer in large scale industrialization.

India, Nehru was convinced, was destined to play a major role in bringing nations together and began to articulate India's future goals such as universal peace and global harmony in the 1930s. Interestingly that was the time when war clouds were gathering ominously with the big powers intensifying their rivalries. It was observed that in enunciating India's foreign policy goals Nehru "had been the mentor of Gandhi and the Indian National Congress on international affairs." Hiren Mukherjee remarked that "none of his Congress colleagues, howsoever resistant to some of his ideas, could challenge his authority in this field." At the Haripura and Tripuri Congress sessions The Congress, led by Jawaharlal Nehru, articulated India's foreign policy goals. Nehru declared that 'the people of India desired to live in peace and friendship with all countries and that India would work for international cooperation and goodwill.' It was during the war period, as Bimal Prasad put it, that the Congress developed 'a sophisticated world view' reconciling the apparently contradictory pulls of nationalism and internationalism and chalked out an independent path in world affairs.' In consonance with that policy Nehru, as Vice President of the Interim Government, reiterated that India would follow an independent policy keeping away from the power politics or groups aligned one against the other." In March 1947 Nehru summoned the first Asian Relations Conference at Delhi heralding the beginning of a new era of Asian consciousness in world affairs. After becoming the Prime Minister he pursued his 'independent, straightforward, honest' policy not conditioned by the wishes of other countries, as S.Gopal observed. His policy of non-alignment was hailed as 'a sophisticated policy of retaining maximum available options at any given time in a bipolar world.' In the words of Escott Reid India could effectively play the role of 'an honest broker in the relations between China and the West- a role which the West found very helpful.' Probably in response to western criticism, that of US in particular, he chose to explain the nuances of India's foreign policy in his address at the Columbia University in 1949 "The pursuit of peace, not through alignment with any major power or group of powers, but through an independent approach to each controversial or disputed issue , the liberation of subject peoples; the maintenance of freedom, both national and individual; the elimination of want, disease and ignorance which afflict the greater part of the world's population." the quote could be longer, as it is seems incomplete. This proclamation of a global vision by the leader of a just liberated poor country must have irritated and annoyed the western powers, the US in particular, though Bertrand Russell was moved to say "Perhaps it will be he who will lead us out of the dark night of fear into a happy day." Egypt's leader Nasser saw in Nehru "the expression of human conscience itself." Biographer Gopal wrote that Nehru "seemed to enjoy the rare distinction of being of

advantage to his own country as well as to the world.” The usually hostile western press hailed Nehru’s democracy as ‘the Athens of Asia, the school of democracy’ and Geoffrey Tyson wrote that Nehru did not need to go to New York to address the world press; it came to Delhi to hear him.

The launching of ‘the simultaneous change model’ by India under Nehru’s leadership was unprecedented in the history of the modern world. Opting for universal adult franchise, adopting the planning model for speedy economic development, providing for social justice through the policy of reservation for the socially disadvantaged sections, and raising institutions for the development of education, science and technology, all to be achieved simultaneously, were among the major policy decisions taken at a critical time in the country’s history. Sardar Patel was then devoting his time and energy for the gigantic task of integrating the nearly six hundred Princely states with the Indian union. Dr.Ambedkar, BN Rao, Alladi *et al* were engaged in crafting the Constitution combining lofty idealism with commendable pragmatism.

During those turbulent times our leaders unmindful of their problems of health and personal safety, displayed courage, determination and vision to ensure India’s safe and smooth transition from bondage to freedom. The month of August conjures up memories of that midnight hour of 14th when Jawaharlal Nehru made his great ‘tryst with destiny speech’ — “at the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom”. Nehru’s immortal words resonated across the length and breadth of India, thanks to the live radio broadcast. Somewhere ‘in one of the poorest corners’ of Calcutta, Mahatma Gandhi spent that night anxiously in a poor Muslim house pursuing his mission to bring Hindus and Muslims close to each other during those horrendous days of communal clashes. The Prime Minister celebrating the advent of independence by hoisting the tricolour in Delhi amidst scenes of jubilation and the Father of the Nation fasting, praying and doing penance in Bengal for his people’s frailties! The great Indian paradox!

The dawn of independence for over 330 million people of India at the midnight hour of August 14 was a transition from ‘darkness to light’ as Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru metaphorically declared hoisting the tricolour. It was indeed ‘Freedom at Midnight’ — the result of the greatest non-violent revolution in human history, ‘a glorious triumph of noble and spiritual powers over all the material forces that the world can boast of.’ (Shriman Narayan) Independence came sooner than expected. Notwithstanding the countrywide jubilation and celebrations, millions of people became victims of the tragic partition riots. Mahatma Gandhi was far away from Delhi, the centre of hectic political activity and celebrations. He was in Calcutta,

spending the time in the house of a poor Muslim family, fighting communal madness and arresting the spread of the virus of hate and violence. Fasting, mourning and praying most of the time, the 78 year old Mahatma walked and worked day and night in pursuit of his mission. It was 'a one man army' as Mountbatten said successfully doing what '55,000' soldiers were unable to do in Punjab.' Still Gandhi was sad at the double tragedy that shattered his dreams and hopes of keeping India united. India was partitioned and communal clashes continued to take a heavy toll of life and property. Both he wanted to prevent at any cost. Only a few months earlier he was going all out to save India from breaking into two, with a number of suggestions and submissions to the feuding political rivals and the scheming British government. "Cut me to pieces first and then divide India" said Gandhiji in 1940. Partition then looked improbable though many Congress leaders knew that Jinnah and the Muslim League would not accept anything less than a separate state, as per the two-nation theory. Rajaji was more forthright than the other Congress leaders and said that partition was inescapable.

Gandhiji, however, was hopeful of bringing together the Congress and the League through some mutually acceptable formula to prevent the break-up of India. As Rajmohan Gandhi writes "a Jinnah-led Muslim League government in Delhi, if installed with Congress agreement, could address all of them. ..a Congress-supported Jinnah government could preserve the unity not only of the Punjab and Bengal but also of India as a whole. "(Mohandas) But tide and time began to move more rapidly and furiously than ever before and Gandhi and his loyal friends like Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, protagonists of a united India, could not swim against the current. Gandhi's 'ill-conceived plan' as Rajaji put it, was rejected. Lord Mountbatten, the Viceroy, tried to mediate between the Congress and the League. Jinnah, obviously not interested in these talks and negotiations, gave an ultimatum to Mountbatten: "Either India will be divided or it will be destroyed by the Moslems." (William Shirer - *Gandhi A Memoir* p 184). Partition became inevitable. Gandhiji conceded "I find myself alone. Even Patel and Nehru think I am wrong. May be they are right and I alone am floundering in darkness." (William Shirer op cit)

The frail and ageing body that housed the great spirit, *maha atma* had to put up with many other setbacks and disappointments. A Dalit woman or man should become India's first President proposed Gandhiji. In the words of Rajmohan Gandhi " the proposal was sparked off by the death, at the end of May, of Chakrayya, a talented young Andhra Dalit who had been with the Sevagram ashram from its inception. Gandhi had nursed high hopes for Chakrayya. 'I feel like crying over his death, but I cannot cry.' On June 2 he said at his prayer meeting : " The time is fast

approaching when India will have to elect the first President of the Republic. I would have proposed the name of Chakrayya, had he been alive." On June 6 he repeated the thought in conversation with Rajendra Prasad suggesting that some prominent leaders should stay out of the government. In his prayer meeting Gandhiji said that Harijan like Chakrayya or a Harijan girl should be made the nation's first President and Jawaharlal should become the first Prime Minister. Similar arrangements can be made in the provinces too..." (Mohandas p620)

For him there was no celebration of Independence on August 15. But that was the day he gave the sternest caution, if not warning, to the newly sworn in ministers of Bengal government in a few lines that should be read every day by all who occupy positions of power and seats of authority. "Beware of power; power corrupts. Do not let yourselves be entrapped by its pomp and pageantry. Remember you are in office to serve the poor in India's villages.'

Independence for Gandhi should lead to 'Swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions' He defined Swaraj 'in terms of empowering the weak.' (Mohandas p 633) In a recent article (Seminar September 2009) Sunil Khilnani explains Gandhi's concept of Swaraj succinctly: "Swaraj for Gandhi was a condition of the self, an internal relationship; freedom was, first and last, self-rule and self-mastery." Freedom itself is not free, wrote an American judge, unless it implies responsibility.

The 1st celebrations of August 18, three days after India won freedom, in which millions of Hindus and Muslims joyfully took part, gave Gandhi immense satisfaction and hope for the future. He planned to visit Pakistan where he vowed to fight for communal harmony. "I shall die for the Hindus and Sikhs there. I shall be glad to die there. I shall be glad to die here too." He said (Mohandas p 645) Another poignant line from Gandhiji in October 1947: "Jesus Christ prayed to God from the cross to forgive those who had crucified him, It is my constant prayer to God that He may give me the strength to intercede even for my assassin." The prophet made no secret of his premonitions. In November he said that "when I die I shall die with Ramanama in my heart. The faith becomes stronger in me each day."

The new year began with a heavier agenda for Gandhiji. His biographer records that "as a new year commenced Gandhi recognized his restiveness." He had to attend to a number of pressing problems that appeared likely to destabilize the infant democracy. First he chose to set at rest doubts about unity between Nehru and Patel saying that they were 'an inseparable pair. Neither can do without the other.' (Mohandas) He took up the issue of transferring Pakistan's share of the 'sterling balance' of Rs 55 crore that the Indian government decided to withhold and got it

transferred against the wishes of Sardar Patel and others. Later Patel nobly conceded that Gandhiji was right as 'he took a long range view.'

He cautioned Dr Pattabhi Sitaramayya, one of the leading figures of the separate Andhra movement, then a member of the JVP Committee studying linguistic redistribution of provinces, against balkanization of the country. The letter of another senior Andhra leader Konda Venkatappayya whom Gandhiji always respected, caused considerable unhappiness. Venkatappayya wrote that because of "the moral degradation of the Congress legislators who made money by protecting criminals the people were saying "that the British government was much better." Rajmohan Gandhi records that the Mahatma "found the letter too shocking for words."

"To Rama" is the title of the last chapter of Rajmohan Gandhi's biography of his grandfather 'Mohandas.' The last line is a moving and an apt tribute to Gandhiji and a perfect evaluation of the Mahatma's life and legacy. "That Gandhi, the spirit that wanted to bless and forgive his assassin, even as he wanted to bless and forgive all the grudge-bearing residents of India, Pakistan and the world—the spirit that brought the chadriya's hands together and wanted to take the name of God at the moment of death, that Gandhi the bullets did not kill. They only released that Gandhi for the ages and the continents." (Mohandas) Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan had conveyed the same message forty eight years earlier in equally memorable words: "nothing better has ever been taught or lived since the world first began."

(CPS Bulletins – June 2, August 2 and October 2, 2009)

God has chosen me as His instrument for presenting non-violence to India for dealing with her many ills.....my faith in non-violence remains as strong as ever. I am quite sure that not only should it answer all our requirements in our own country but that it should, if properly applied, prevent the bloodshed that is going on outside India and is threatening to overthrow the Western world.

-Mahatma Gandhi

(Mahatma Gandhi - Edited by Dr.S. Radhakrishnan)

Mahatma on India after Aug15, 1947

The Father of the Nation was distressed to find free India drifting away from the path of non-violence and adherence to the high ideals of the freedom struggle. He proposed several measures for course correction. The Hindu's reports on 'the last two hundred days' of Gandhiji are of inestimable value. The following selected reports from The Hindu show how the Mahatma was busy till his last, helping the government with suggestions for solving several problems confronting the nation.

On education:

"The education through which our country has passed for over a century was designed for a particular purpose. To feed the interests of capitalism, the entire basis of economic life in India was changed by the foreigner. The city was made to be the centre of gravity, and not the village. The village was dethroned from its earlier state of supremacy. It was virtually converted into a slum, and kept as far removed from the city as possible. The country's economy was thus made lop-sided and the educational system made to serve it. If now we want to create a new India, our outlook must be changed altogether. We must build up a new Indian democracy inch by inch. It must spread in all parts of our economic, social and political life. The magnitude of this task requires the application of stout hearts working steadily, and on and on." That, Gandhiji explained, was the larger, fundamental aspect of the problem.

(August 22, 1947)

The inner voice:

He referred to from time to time as a deep "inner voice" speaking quietly and intimately to him. This inner voice was his link to God as well – God as the truthful Sri Rama, trustful in whom Bapu possessed a never-failing talisman of powerful protection.

"When Ram Dhum was sung now, men in the audience responded and beat time rhythmically with the music, but very few women did so. Those with some spiritual experience know the power of Ram Dhum, the reciting of God Rama's name from the heart."

Consolidating communal harmony:

"The brotherhood between the communities we are witnessing today will prove to be a passing show if we do not consolidate it by suitable action in the social and the political fields. If government officers and members of the public together undertake

responsibility for constructive action and work whole-heartedly to create a secular state, then India will become the glory of the world."

Gandhiji (August 23, 1947)

Purpose of religion:

"We are in a mess, and created poison for ourselves. To safeguard Hinduism, one cannot treat as enemies the Muslims in India. My days in this world are numbered. Soon I shall be gone. Then you will realize that what I said was right. The same rule applies to Muslims. Islam will be dead if Muslims tolerate only Muslims. The same goes for Christianity and Christians. All the religions of the world are good, for they teach righteousness and friendship; those that teach enmity between man and man are not religions at all."

Gandhiji
(December 19, 1947)

On productivity:

"If the country's production does not increase, and we go on increasing our expenditure, where shall we be? Let us first produce results. Let us all sit down and assess how much more of grain, cloth, industrial goods, etc. we have produced after Independence."

Gandhiji
(December 20, 1947)

Discipline - the need of the hour:

"Yet, what are the strikes and varieties of lawlessness we see now, but a deferring of our strong and bright hope? These are symptoms of our weakness and sickness. Let labour realize its dignity and strength. Strength and dignity the man in the street also has. In a well-ordered democratic society, there should be no room, or occasion, for lawlessness or strikes. In such a society, there will be ample lawful means for vindicating justice. Violence veiled or unveiled, should be taboo for us. Strikes mean material loss to the whole of society, not excluding the strikers themselves. I also wonder if in our independent India we can be free of the fever of power politics, and the bid to be in power which afflicts the world, East and West."

Gandhiji
(January 28, 1948)

His sense of humour:

When adverse comment was raised about his walking up the flight of Buckingham Palace in London, clad in dhoti and shawl only to meet King George the Fifth, the self-lamprooning Bapu chuckled and said: "Yes, they were all in plus-fours, and I compensated in my minus-fours." Spontaneous wit-pistol-cracks like this delighted him enormously.

Mahatma's spirit of sacrifice : S. Radhakrishnan

"Mahatma Gandhi realised that freedom could be won only by sacrifice, and not by entreaty. He took hold of ordinary men and women who were an incredible mixture of heroism and conceit, magnificent and meanness organised them and led an unarmed revolt against British rule. August 15th marked the successful end of that struggle. But all talk of India's freedom is useless so long as men starve and go naked to the country, pining away in voiceless anguish. Gandhiji's charkha is a symbol to warn us that we must redeem the common man from the evils of poverty and ignorance, disease and squalor."

In one of those magnificent well-constructed periods he was noted for, Dr.Radhakrishnan concluded. "The price of partition has not yielded the expected communal peace. If the situation is not to worsen, if the two dominions are not to merit the ridicule of the world, if we wish to disappoint Mr.Winston Churchill and his friends, if we are to settle down as good neighbours, we must turn over a new page, remove from our hearts every trace of bitterness and resentment, and shake off that pride which prevents us from confessing our faults and makes us unwilling to open our hearts to one another. Friendship begets friendship. Gandhiji is doing his best to undo the effects of the poison instilled in men's minds in recent years, or he will die in the process of making Hindus and Muslims live in peace. If Gandhiji has been able to rid himself of all rancor and hatred, to develop that flame of love which burns away all impurities, if he fears no evil even though he walks in the valley of the shadow of death, if he represents to us the eternal voice of hope, it is because he believes in the heritage of India, the power of the inward life of the spirit.

(CPS Bulletin – October 2, 2019)



EDITORIALS



MAHATMA GANDHI'S LAST BIRTHDAY

At his evening prayer meeting on October 1, 1947 Gandhiji said: "My prayer to God is that He should take me away," and undertook a 24 hour fast of self-purification. That poignant statement encapsulated the anguish and agony of the Father of the Nation at the unending communal clashes and mindless killing of people in several parts of India. "I have already said that we should wake up from our madness. You may or may not accept what I say. As for me I do not wish to be a witness to these sad happenings. I do not wish to see a terrible downfall for religion and humanity," he lamented. (*The Hindu*)

Early in the morning of October 2, 1947, on his 79th birthday, 'he plied the Charka, listened to the Gita being chanted and sat in silent meditation.' After receiving the greetings of the Governor-General Lord Mountbatten, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and other VVIPs, Gandhiji attended a special prayer meeting at which there were readings from sacred texts of many religions for peace for India and Pakistan and for the entire humanity. Many people came to greet him and receive his blessings. Gandhiji felt that they should pray for ending the present conflagration or God should take him away. "I do not wish another birthday to overtake me in an India still in flames," he declared.

The Mahatma said at the evening prayer meeting : "Ever since I came to India in 1915, I have made it my profession to work for communal harmony. I wish that though our religions are different, we may live in amity as brothers. But today we seem to have become enemies. In such a situation, what place do I have in India, and what point is there in my being alive? I have stopped thinking about living for 125 years, or even for 100 or 90 years. I am entering my 79th year and even that pains me. Let me tell those who understand me, we have to give up our bestiality. If you really do want to celebrate my birthday, it is your duty not to let anyone be possessed by this madness. If there is anger in your heart, you must remove it. If you remember this much, it will be good. That is all I wish to tell you. God be with us." (*The Hindu* October 3, 1947)

There was no respite for him in his relentless crusade for communal harmony. For the Mahatma living in the midst of unstoppable violence was excruciatingly painful. On his last birthday began his march to martyrdom. The 120 days that followed gave him great disappointment, if not sadness. Reports of growing corruption, 'from trustworthy sources', disagreement between Nehru and Patel and agitations for separate statehood

in some parts of the country so distressed him that he disavowed his wish to live for 125 years. Said the Mahatma: "If I had earlier had the impertinence to state my wish to want to live to be 125, I must now have the humility under the changed circumstances openly to shed that wish. In stating my new wish I have done no more. And I have done so not in a state of depression. The more apt term perhaps is helplessness." Radhakrishnan explained the source of Gandhiji's spiritual strength: "When problems, material and spiritual, crowd upon him, when conflicting emotions shake him, when troubles oppress him, Mahatma Gandhi retires into the recesses of the soul, the secret corridors of the spirit, to gain strength and nourishment. Such men as he, who are filled with spiritual poise and who yet take upon themselves the task of shouldering the burden of suffering humanity, are born rarely, and at long intervals in the history of humanity's progress."

Seventy two years ago, on his last birthday, the Mahatma fasted and prayed for communal harmony and for peace on earth. Today on the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the message of his life and work, resonates all over the world with the UN celebrating it as International Day of Non-Violence. Prayer for peace is the true tribute to the Father of the Nation.

(CPS Bulletin – October 2, 2019)

Fulfillment of his wish

Dear to me is Rama's name. It is my hope that when I die I shall die with Ramanama in my heart (Mohandas, P.546/656)

Last words

'Raam,Raa.....m,' (Mohandas, P.680)

Last dream

A fortnight before he was assassinated Gandhiji wrote: " I hope everyone who listens to me or reads these lines will forgive me if stretched on my bed and basking in the sun, inhaling life-giving sunshine , I allow myself to indulge in this ecstasy". When I was young and never even read the newspapers, could read English with difficulty and my Gujarati was not satisfactory, I had the dream that if the Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Muslims could live in amity not only in Rajkot but in the whole of India, they would all have a very happy life.

If that dream could be realized even now when I, an old man on the verge of death, my heart would dance. Children would then frolic in joy."

(CPS Bulletin – October 2, 2018)

Man, Machine and the Mahatma

"How can I be against all machinery when I know that even this body is a most delicate piece of machinery? The spinning-wheel is a machine; a little toothpick is a machine. What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour-saving machinery. Men go on saving labour till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour not for a fraction of mankind but for all," said Mahatma Gandhi, explaining that his objection was not to machinery as such but to the craze for it. Justifying Mahatma Gandhi's stand on machinery and technology philosopher Radhakrishnan said it was 'a check against increasing mechanization of life' and that 'in a highly industrialized society men's minds act like machines and not as living organisms' and the spirit of man becomes lost in the wilderness of living'. Radhakrishnan observed that scramble for power and money and craze for machinery would adversely affect 'the grace of life and the dignity of civilization'.

American philosopher Richard B. Gregg was no less emphatic in his acclamation of the Gandhian approach when he wrote that 'a technological system exists presumably for the benefit of the entire mass of people who live under it' adding that modern industrialism has reduced the social function of work to a rather more primitive stage than it was when handicraft prevailed. Aldous Huxley asserted with characteristic forthrightness that "the mistake of most of Gandhiji's contemporaries was to suppose that technology and organization could turn the petty human animal into a super human being". Only a year ago Rajmohan Gandhi in his book *'WHY GANDHI STILL MATTERS'* wrote that Gandhiji's opposition was not to 'tall buildings or large factories or to generation of electricity but to 'reckless industrialization or development, not technology but its misuse through greed'.

Gandhiji's clarification of his position then is more relevant now than when he said "I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all. To-day, machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might. The machine should not tend to atrophy the limbs of man....."

What the Mahatma feared a hundred years ago may well happen sooner than later in this age of digital dictatorship. Helen Dixon writes in the latest issue of *Foreign Affairs* September-October 2018 that "Today, technology is being used to control

what we see, what we can do, and, ultimately, what we say, the cryptographer and privacy specialist Bruce Schneier has written. “It makes us less safe. It makes us less free”. She adds that in the Internet age, ordinary people have become extraordinarily vulnerable because participating in the digital economy and broader society now frequently involves revealing personal information to large organizations that can easily store it, process it, and share it without any input from individuals.

As Gandhiji warned long ago ‘technology feeds our pleasure centres but is squeezing out our human spirit, intensifying our search for meaning’. For the Mahatma ‘the supreme consideration is man’. The Mahatma once described himself as a practical idealist. Aldous

Huxley said that “this idealist was the most practical of men”. The world devastated by the first and second World Wars looked up to him to show humanity the way out of darkness. In this age of awesome technological power dominated by greed and lust for power those in distress and pain draw solace from the fact that such a man as Mahatma Gandhi ‘in flesh and blood walked on the earth’ inspiring iconic leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela. His life and work will remain an ever-glowing beacon of hope for humanity for centuries to come.

(CPS Bulletin – October 2, 2018)

“We used to find the struggle against the British a hard task. But today it seems to me that that fight was a comparatively simple matter. Our struggle today is much more difficult. We made a mountain of a molehill during the regime of the British. But today we are cutting at our own roofs. Now, when duty calls to us we run away from it. We cannot establish a good government for ourselves without purification. We have deserved what is happening to us because we have not purified ourselves. What we have, in my view, is not Swaraj. True Swaraj means that we will be under own government, and live a simple life, allowing others too to lead such a life.”

- Gandhiji on December 31, 1947

INDIA — SEVENTY YEARS AFTER MAHATMA GANDHI

“Be humble. Be forbearing....Now you will be tested through and through. Beware of power; power corrupts. Do not let yourselves be entrapped by its pomp and pageantry. Remember, you are in office to serve the poor in India’s villages” advised Mahatma Gandhi when West Bengal’s first Chief Minister Prafulla Ghosh sought the blessings of the Father of the Nation on August 15, 1947. Five months and fifteen days later Gandhiji shed his mortal coil. Explaining the impact of Gandhian legacy on Indian democracy Ernest Barker famously wrote that Mahatma Gandhi was ‘a great bridge between a great Indian tradition of devout and philosophic religion and the western tradition of civil and political liberty in the life of the community’. The renowned political scientist thought that Gandhiji had ‘a Platonic feeling that governing and administrative persons should live on a simple pittance, content with the opportunity of service, and not expecting great rewards’. The Mahatma’s wise words must be the signpost for all those in seats of power and authority.

During the first ten years when India was hailed as ‘Asia’s role model democracy’ there was near unanimity among the political parties and leaders on the purpose of politics and the importance of public participation in democracy. Almost all the parties had leaders of impeccable integrity and cadres committed to disciplined service. Outstanding regional leaders strengthened the sinews of the young democracy with the largest electorate in the world. The successful conduct of the first and second general elections, despite low literacy, confirmed the stability of Indian democracy and the maturity of its electorate.

A combination of tragic and unexpected events— aggression from across the border by China in 1962 and Pakistan in 1965 and the sudden death of the first prime minister and his successor a year and a half later severely jolted the nation. Kamaraj, the self-effacing statesman from the south ensured two smooth successions, first in 1964 and the second in 1966, through consensus. The rot, however, began to set in sooner than feared. Constitutional norms were flouted, conventions set aside and corruption was institutionalized. States came to be treated as vassals of the union. As Sunil Khilnani put it “Politics and the State once seen as the prophylactic that would invigorate the country, were now seen as the disease.” The national

emergency imposed from June 1975 to March 1977 was the darkest period of Indian democracy. With indomitable spirit, despite failing health, Jayaprakash Narayan, a moral colossus and rare statesman, led India out of the crisis with the people of India throwing the prime minister and her government out of power. Experts wonder how India functions as a democracy with such 'a high level of political violence' and with 'highly competitive and distinctly adversarial system of politics.' 5000 elected representatives including members of parliament continue to let down the people of India in their quest for progress. The selected civil servants, expected to lend their creative energy for national development, have done no better. As Kuldeep Mathur and Bjorkman wrote, 'instead of becoming an instrument of change the bureaucracy has grown into an obstacle to development'. Institutions have declined and professional autonomy has collapsed. The credibility of the judiciary too has plummeted and it is absurd to argue that the crisis of the Supreme Court imperils the future of Indian democracy. As Nani Palkhivala observed 'the people of India are the sole keepers of the Constitution.' They are, indeed, the saviours of Indian democracy.

The stable BJP government led by an energetic prime minister is brimming with confidence. Still the goal of good governance remains elusive. Among the challenging problems are widespread corruption, frustration of the jobless younger generation, the plight of the poor farmers and the feeling of alienation among the minorities and disadvantaged sections of the people. Will 'young India' rise to the occasion and place the nation on the pathway to greatness?

(CPS Bulletin – February 2018)

Gandhiji on Nehru

"Panditji is a man who will do anything for the suffering people. If there is only one bed available, he will offer it to a refugee to sleep on, and himself go without sleep. He says there is no room left in his house, and still he says that he will spare one or two rooms for refugees! If other Ministers as well as officers follow his example, no one will be left unhappy. I congratulate him, and I congratulate you, the people, on possessing such a jewel."

- Mahatma Gandhi on January 22, 1948

Mahatma Gandhi and the power of Satyagraha

‘Satyagraha is, perhaps, the mightiest instrument on earth’ said Mahatma Gandhi before leaving South Africa in June 1914. “From my childhood my life has been a struggle to extract good from evil. We should draw out gold and diamond even from mud,” he once said. His stay and struggle in South Africa where he was insulted, abused and even physically assaulted have been movingly narrated by Ramachandra Guha in his monumental work *Gandhi Before India*. Gandhi was in his thirties when he was told that some of his own countrymen were conspiring to kill him. He replied with instant happiness that he would welcome it if his death would end Hindu - Muslim discord. The highest tribute given to Gandhiji was a line written to Guha by a South African friend. “You gave us a lawyer; we gave you back a Mahatma.”

The Quit India Movement, the 75th anniversary of which is being celebrated all over the country this year, had severely jolted the colonial government. According to Rajmohan Gandhi, Viceroy Linlithgow reported to Winston Churchill that “Quit India was by far the most serious rebellion since that of 1857.” The British Prime Minister replied with characteristic hubris that he had not become the Prime Minister of His Majesty’s Government to preside over the liquidation of the British empire. Sir Winston, who went on to win the Nobel prize for literature for his writings and for ‘upholding human values’, asked Viceroy Wavell, with unforgivable meanness, why Gandhi had not died yet! The ‘privilege of presiding’ over the empire’s end, and of conceding independence to India went to the unostentatious British prime minister Clement Attlee.

That Gandhiji could convert men/women of clay into heroes and inspire the meek and the weak to strive with dignity and self-respect for freedom was one of his lasting contributions. The world was passing through turbulent times when Gandhiji arrived on the global stage. The first world war ended with the traumatized innocent people crying ‘never again.’ The Russian revolution, inspired by Marx and led by Lenin, opened the door to a new philosophy while American President Woodrow Wilson went to Paris peace conference amidst pomp and hopes of peace with his famous Fourteen Points. Italy was rising as the champion of Fascism. India heralded

the advent of Gandhi, with Satyagraha as his weapon, showing the way out of global gloom.

Gandhism was hailed as the answer to Wilson's capitalism and Lenin's communism. B.R. Nanda described Gandhi as a thinker as well as a man of action. 'He was Marx as well as Lenin of the Indian Revolution,' wrote Nanda praising Gandhi's genius for organization. In a memorable line he said that Gandhiji "converted the thirty five year old Indian National Congress from a Christmas week spectacle into a live political party." It reminds one of the famous words of Harold Laski that Marx found 'communism a chaos and left it a movement.' As William Shirer summed up Gandhiji 'left an indelible imprint through Satyagraha, his supreme achievement, and demonstrated that there was a greater power in life than force.' The Mahatma showed to humanity how the power of love and truth is beyond time and space.

(CPS Bulletin – October 2, 2017)

"When we were fighting for our freedom, we bore a heavy responsibility. But, today, when we have achieved our freedom, our responsibility has grown a hundred-fold. What is happening today? There are many places where a Muslim cannot live in security. Miscreants kill, and throw Muslims out of running trains for no reasons other than that they are Muslims. There are several such instances. We cannot absolve ourselves of responsibility for such happenings. We have to fight this insanity, and find a way out of it."

- Mahatma Gandhi on November 14, 1947

Nonviolence is a 'living force'

"The world is terminally ill with violence", writes Arun Gandhi in his foreword to 'The Search for a Nonviolent Future' by Michael N. Nagler, adding that "when the disease assumes a virulent form we plead for a remedy; but when we are cured we go back to our old destructive ways." Nagler, initiated early in his life into the study of Mahatma Gandhi's life and work, began to realise that "Gandhi was at once much greater and yet more relevant - even to my own little life - than I had imagined." Convinced that Satyagraha does not suppress reason but frees it from inertia, Nagler writes that Satyagraha does not 'enslave, it compels reason to be free.' His mission is to make more accessible 'the vast unexplored possibilities of that force which establishes its sovereignty over prejudice, hatred, and other baser passions'. To a world divided by hatred and conflicting ideologies and devastated by World Wars and mindless violence, Mahatma Gandhi's panacea was Nonviolence. Satyagraha launched by him generated intellectual excitement and debate among philosophers, thinkers, scholars and scientists across the world.

Amazed by Gandhiji's 'invincible' calm and imperturbability', Edward Thompson declared that 'not since Socrates has the world seen his equal for absolute self-control and composure'. Probing the philosophical foundations of Nonviolence C.E.M.Joad raised and answered the question 'what consists the most characteristic quality of our species? Some would say, in moral virtue; some, in godliness; some, in courage; some, in the power of self-sacrifice. Aristotle found it in reason'. But Aristotle's answer gives, according to Joad, part of the truth, but not the whole. 'The essence of reason lies in objectivity and detachment', said Joad who found in the 'virtue of detachment from self the source of Gandhi's authority'. Hailing Gandhi as a 'moral genius' Joad wished that Gandhi's method should grow 'more powerful than the forces of destruction, if civilization is to survive.'

In the words of Nagler, it is a science if there ever was one but it cannot make predictions as nearly as mechanics or electricity, for Satyagraha is what Gandhi called "a living force," not a physical one. He is a social scientist, explained Richard Gregg, because 'he follows social truth by the scientific method of observation, intuitional and intellectual hypothesis and experimental test. Unlike western social scientists he tested the hypothesis on himself. He is not a mere scientist; but a great social scientist because of his choice of problems, because of his methods of solution, because of his persistence and thoroughness of his search and because of the profundity of human heart.'

When asked about the experiences that influenced his life, the Mahatma replied “Such experiences are a multitude. I recalled particularly one experience that changed the course of my life that fell to my lot seven days after I had arrived in South Africa. At Maritzburg when the beds were issued, the guard came and turned me out and asked me to go into the van compartment. I would not go and the train steamed away leaving me shivering in cold. Now the creative experience comes there. I was afraid for my very life. I entered the dark waiting-room. There was a white man in the room. I was afraid of him. What was my duty, I asked myself. Should I go back to India, should I go forward, with God as my helper, and face whatever was in store for me? I decided to stay and suffer. My active Nonviolence began from that date.” From that day in 1893 till that fateful Friday, 30th January 1948, Gandhiji was confronted with violence in its virulent and subhuman manifestations—abuse, ridicule, insult, physical assault, and eventually assassination. The Mahatma remained unperturbed throughout these fifty five years. Instead he prayed and pleaded with the authorities concerned not to punish them, whether it was the sentry who kicked him off the footpath or the white racists who thrashed him mercilessly or his own countrymen who conspired to eliminate him physically. Nonviolence is ultimately a way of life that men and women live by said Martin Luther King, because ‘of the sheer morality of its claim.’ If the world is to have peace, declared Gandhiji, nonviolence is the means to that end and there is no other. That living force which has inspired millions of people including Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela continues to glow as a beacon of hope and peace for humanity.

(CPS Bulletin – October 2, 2016)

“I do not want my home to be walled in on all sides, and my windows to be stuffed. I want the culture 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 a religion of the prison-house. It has room for the least among God’s creations. But it is proof against the insolent pride of race, religion, colour.”

- Mahatma Gandhi on October 22, 1947

GANDHIAN LEGACY

light in the midst of darkness

‘At the time that communal unity possessed me, I was a lad twelve years old,’ said Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi whose ‘boyhood dream’ was ‘amity’ between Hindus, Muslims and Parsis. (Rajmohan Gandhi *MOHANDAS* p.6). It was no ordinary coincidence that the Indian National Congress founded by an Englishman four years later had a Hindu as its first president in December 1885 at Bombay, followed by a Parsi at Calcutta in 1886, a Muslim at Madras in 1887 and an Englishman at Allahabad in 1888. The continuation of this pattern in the years that followed marked the consolidation of cultural pluralism and secularism. The exhortation of the founder of the Indian National Congress Allan Octavian Hume to India’s youth ‘to act upon the eternal truth that self-sacrifice and unselfishness are the only unfading guides to freedom and happiness’ was timely and appropriate.

Mohandas, the boy from Porbandar who imbibed such values as cultural pluralism and oneness of human spirit at the Rajkot school, knelt at his mother’s feet promising to lead a life of purity and discipline before going to England to become a barrister. South Africa, where lawyer Gandhi spent more than two decades of his early life braving a torrent of insults and physical assaults, transformed Mohandas into a crusader for the downtrodden and champion of non-violent movement against arbitrary and racist authorities. 1906 was a turning point in his life and in the history of the modern world as well. Satyagraha was born in South Africa. Its power was such that as Ramachandra Guha quotes from a Kannada weekly “not a sword was drawn not a gun fired.....but heroism displayed by Mr.Gandhi in making inequity’s defeat its own end is without a parallel.” As Guha sums up quoting a letter of a South African friend ‘you gave us a lawyer and we gave you a Mahatma.’ Gandhi himself described satyagraha as ‘perhaps the mightiest instrument on earth.’

India was in a state of disarray, if not chaos, when Mahatma Gandhi returned to his motherland. His mission was to liberate the groaning millions of his countrymen from the yoke of foreign rule and to emancipate them from exploitation and injustice. The suit-wearing barrister from England who had become an iconic crusader for the nonwhite oppressed South Africans returned to India to a hero’s welcome. He swung into action with his weapons of satyagraha, non-violence and love. As Rajmohan Gandhi movingly narrates the transformation quoting an Arab poet Mikhail Noema: “The spindle in Gandhi’s hand became sharper than the sword; the simple white

sheet wrapping Gandhi's thin body was an armour plate which guns from the fleets of the Master of the Seas could not pierce; and the great goat of Gandhi became stronger than the British lion". The rest is history, brilliantly summed up by Romain Rolland thus: "Mahatma Gandhi has raised up three hundred millions of his fellow men, shaken the British Empire and inaugurated in human politics the most powerful movement that the world has seen for nearly two thousand years."

Gandhiji epitomized the power of love, compassion and forgiveness. In personal life there were occasions when he sought the forgiveness of even his kin when he felt that the occasion demanded it. To his angry and protesting son he once gently said "Forgive your father, if you think he has done you wrong." His saintliness stunned and silenced his harshest critics, be they the venom-spewing political adversaries or sulking near ones. He was likened to the Buddha and Christ. No wonder that some Christian missionaries from England said during their visit to India that they saw Christ in Sevagram.

The question that haunts humanity in the world of today afflicted with lust for power, endless greed for wealth, violence, corruption and growing poverty is whether there is any hope for the future. The answer lies in the legacy bequeathed by Mahatma Gandhi that is light in the midst of darkness. As Kingsley Martin put it "Gandhi's life and death will remain a witness to the faith that men may still overcome misery, cruelty and violence by Truth and Love." This day, every year, we reaffirm our faith in those timeless values that constitute a beacon of hope for the future.

(CPS Bulletin – October 2, 2015)

"Restraint will add to our strength. If you copy what happens in Pakistan, then on what moral basis can you take your stand? What will become of your commitment to non-violence? If you approve of all that has happened, then you must change the very creed and character of the Congress.

- Mahatma Gandhi on November 15, 1947

MAHATMA GANDHI ON KHADI

"Khadi to me is the symbol of unity of Indian humanity, of its economic freedom and equality and, therefore, ultimately, in the poetic expression of Jawaharlal Nehru, "the livery of India's freedom", said Mahatma Gandhi. 'Khadi is a symbol of truth and Ahimsa' proclaimed the Mahatma. It became a part of Satyagraha that 'combined the greatest love with the greatest opposition to wrong.' Khadi's 'economic and humanitarian significance' was elaborately explained. On Charkha Gandhiji said: "The spinning wheel is not only the very symbol of passive resistance, it is also means of meditation. And so long as the peasants spin they have their self- respect and a measure of independence." The two things, wrote C.F. Andrews, "whereby Mahatma Gandhi's name will live, hundreds of years hence are 1) his khaddar programme, and 2) his practice of Satyagraha." As Andrews pointed out khadi production was put forward as means of employment to 'millions of agricultural people' when it was not possible for them to work in the fields during the off season months. Khadi would usher in economic and social change in rural India and Gandhiji's message spread far and wide, reaching out to remote corners of the country.

In 1921 Gandhiji toured Andhra desa for 45 days and stated that "Andhra has limitless possibilities for Khadi production." On April 1, at the AICC session at Bezwada, called blazewada for its heat, Andhra leader Konda Venkatappayya presented Gandhiji a khadi piece of cloth made at Ponduru, a small village in Srikakulam district in north Andhra. The Mahatma wondered how such fine quality khadi was spun on charkha in villages in the backward region of Andhra desa. Impressed by the quality of Ponduru khadi Gandhiji sent his son Devdas to visit those villages to gather details about the khadi produced in and around Ponduru. Devdas Gandhi visited Bonthalakoduru and Ampolu villages and submitted a report to his father on the skill of the artisans, many of whom were women. Young India edited by Gandhiji carried an article on Ponduru khadi in its issue of May 18, 1921. During his tour of Srikakulam district in 1927 Gandhiji witnessed the spinning of fine yarn on charkhas by women in these villages. Srikakulam town gave a civic reception to Gandhiji and presented a citation printed on Ponduru khadi cloth. Gandhiji put it up for auction and gave away the amount of Rs 250 it fetched for Harijanoddharana funds. The small and remote villages attracted national attention. Decades later Acharya Vinobha came and laid foundation stone for the Ponduru Weavers Association Building on October 1, 1955. Mahatma's granddaughter Tara Bhattacharjee visited

Ponduru and unveiled Gandhiji's statue in the khadi bhandar building premises. Praising the quality of Ponduru khadi Tara Bhattacharjee said, it seems, that "if khadi is Ganga Ponduru khadi is Gangotri."

Ponduru khadi not only survived the onslaught of booming modern textile business but continued to attract global attention, being exported to USA, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Japan and other advanced countries. U.S. President Bill Clinton was presented with Ponduru khadi during his visit to Hyderabad in 2003. People who wear khadi prefer Ponduru texture for its high quality and softness. Ponduru khadi wear, it is claimed, provides "coolness in summer and warmth in winter." It is hand made and woven mostly by women. The charkha is the same as the one used in Gandhiji's time.

The Mahatma called 'khadi a bridge between the rich and the poor.' At least five thousand families depend on khadi production for their livelihood in about 30 villages of the area. Women outnumber men as it is a source of empowerment and symbol of self-reliance and self-respect. That a journalist has written a book (in telugu) titled Porbandar in Ponduru bears testimony to their faith in and respect for the legacy Gandhiji left behind.

(CPS Bulletin – October 2, 2014)

"The brotherhood between the communities we are witnessing today will prove to be a passing show if we do not consolidate it by suitable action in the social and the political fields. If government officers and members of the public together undertake responsibility for constructive action and work whole-heartedly to create a secular state, then India will become the glory of the world."

- Mahatma Gandhi on August 22, 1947

GANDHIJI'S DREAM

Gandhi's dream of 'complete brotherhood' among Hindus, Muslims and all other communities dates back to before the Congress was born in 1885, according to his grandson Rajmohan Gandhi author of *Mohandas, A True Story of a Man, his People and an Empire*. 'At the time that communal unity possessed me, I was a lad twelve years old,' wrote Gandhiji. That was his dream as a student of Alfred High School, Rajkot. Sixty six years later the Mahatma recalled his childhood dream fondly hoping "If that dream could be realized even now when I an old man on the verge of death, my heart would dance. Children would then frolic in joy." That was on January 14, 1948, two weeks before his assassination. Only a day earlier he had begun his last fast swearing that 'he would not end it until the Moslems and the Hindus in Delhi agreed on a truce.' People of different faiths went on fast in empathy with Mahatma. Among them were Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Arthur Moore, former Editor of *The Statesman*. India's 'one man army' succeeded for the umpteenth time in restoring peace and communal harmony, this time in the capital of India.

The Mahatma's dream was accompanied by disillusionment and disappointment over reports he received of misrule and corruption from different parts of the country. As a lawyer decades earlier Gandhiji had firsthand experience of 'the arrogance of power' and how people resorted to 'sycophancy' and 'bribery' to please British officials. That was why he thought it appropriate to caution the Bengal ministers against the misuse of power when they called on him on August 15, 1947. When Delhi was celebrating the advent of independence the Father of the Nation was praying and fasting in riot-torn Calcutta in the house of a poor family.

Deeply worried about the rise of divisive forces in free India, Gandhiji warned at his prayer meeting five days before his assassination that "India's independence would lose its meaning and with it would vanish the freedom of the various units." On January 26 when India was celebrating Independence day he 'asked what was the cause of their rejoicing' and said "Now that we have independence we seem to be disillusioned. At least I am, if you are not." He referred 'to violence and corruption growing around him.' Two days later he asked his secretary to get him all important letters. "I must reply to them today, for tomorrow I may not be." In quick succession occurred dream, disillusionment and death, between January 14 and 30, 1948.

Radhakrishnan wrote poignantly about Gandhiji's 'tender and tormented' heart in his work *Mahatma Gandhi- Essays and Reflections on his life and work*. In the words of Radhakrishnan "This lonely symbol of a vanishing past is also the prophet of the new world which is struggling to be born. He represents the conscience of the future man." A footnote added in that context is a moving portrayal of the partial fulfillment of the Mahatma's dream at his funeral. On January 31st Robert Stimson said in a news talk: "... I shall remember the eight Muslim workmen who helped build the pyre in the centre of the green common near the river Jumna. As these workmen piled up the logs of sandalwood they told me that they loved the Mahatma because he was a true friend of the Muslims. There was an untouchable who shyly picked up a twig before the pyre had been completed; thinking that no one was watching him, he stole forward and placed the twig on the wood that was already there. In a whisper he said: 'Gandhiji, bless me and my people.' Listener, February 5, 1948.

That noble deed of the nine men conveyed a message of lasting relevance. Only such little known poor and honest people, not the VVIPs who assemble at Rajghat and other public places to offer formal and ritualistic homage in front of cameras on Gandhi Jayanthi, can translate the dream of Gandhiji into reality. Hope lies in the fact that hundreds of such people among all age groups and in all parts of India are determined to usher in India of Gandhiji's dream.

(CPS Bulletin – October 2, 2013)

THE TRIBUTE OF A FRIEND

Mahatma Gandhi is essentially a man of religion. He can never think of any complete release from evil apart from God's grace. Prayer is, therefore, of the essence of all his work. The very first requirement of one who is a Satyagrahi – a striver after Truth – is faith in God, whose nature is Truth and Love. I have seen the whole course of his life changed in a few moments in obedience to an inner call from God which came to him in silent prayer. There is a voice that speaks to him, at supreme moments, with an irresistible assurance; and no power on earth can shake him when this call has come home to his mind and will as the voice of God.

- C.F. Andrews

(*Mahatma Gandhi* - edited by Dr.S. Radhakrishnan)

FATHER FORGIVE US!

On October 2, every year we have a plethora of functions and meetings to 'celebrate' Gandhi Jayanthi. Not all of them can be dismissed as ritualistic exercises. Nor can one generalize that only the senior citizens, those born before India became free, are genuine about the sanctity of such occasions when the nation pays homage to the Father of the Nation. Many of the younger generation are keen to work for the promotion of Gandhian ideals. It is soothing indeed to hear children chanting Raghupati Raghav Rajaram....Ishwar Allah tere naam.. every Friday morning in some of our schools. There are also the so called intellectual exercises on the 'relevance' of Gandhi for our times. That smacks of intellectual arrogance and moral bankruptcy. Gandhi does not need to be revalidated annually through sermon and ceremony. Gandhi jayanthi, like Martyr's day, is a solemn occasion for introspection and rededication to the ideals Bapu lived and died for—emancipation of the downtrodden, communal harmony and nonviolence in thought, word and deed. The man who walked thousands of miles, fasted on hundreds of days for peace and harmony, practised what he preached, and spent all his time and energy to liberate his countrymen from political bondage, social exploitation and economic misery, described himself with endearing humility as 'a servant of humanity .' Let us pay our homage to the Father of the Nation through prayer and honest admission of our failures, individual and collective.

Mahatma! When India became free you proclaimed: " I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which there shall be no high class and low class of people; an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony. There can be no room in such an India for the curse of untouchability or the curse of intoxicating drinks and drugs; women will enjoy the same rights as men. This is the India of my dreams." On your jayanthi today, Mahatma, we seek your forgiveness for failing to fulfill your dreams. Not one, at least, to be honest. There are today as many people, if not more, as there were when you brought us freedom, whose tears of sorrow and

suffering have not been wiped out. Women continue to be ill-treated and gender inequality is one of India's biggest social problems. The curse of intoxicating drinks you vowed to eradicate has become the lubricant for the wheels of government to function. A large number of our younger generation are afflicted with the curse of drug addiction. We erased the difference you taught us between need and greed. We have distorted your satyagraha into asathya and duragraha to spread hatred and violence. When we were busy with midnight celebrations of Independence on August 14-15 you were fasting and praying for communal harmony in the house of a poor family in Calcutta. That day when Bengal ministers led by Prafulla Ghosh called on you for your blessings and guidance you said to them: "Be humble, be forbearing. Now you will be tested through and through. Beware of power, power corrupts. Do not let yourself be entrapped by its pomp and pageantry. Remember you are in office to serve the poor in India's villages." Most of our ministers and officials are doing exactly the opposite in India of your dreams!

The inspiration for this supplication comes, of course, from the memorable editorial of The Hindustan Standard of January 31, 1948. The leading English daily of those times left the entire black-bordered editorial page blank with only these three lines in the middle: "Gandhiji has been killed by his own people for whose redemption he lived. The second crucifixion in the history of the world has been enacted on a Friday—the same day Jesus was done to death one thousand nine hundred and fifteen years ago. Father, forgive us." Mahatma, you always wanted to forgive even your assassin. We know you would, now from heaven, up above. That is why we offer this prayer now. Father, please forgive us for disowning you and dishonouring your legacy.

(CPS Bulletin – October 2, 2012)

GANDHIJI'S SATYAGRAHA

Satyagraha and hunger strike have become not only the most bandied about terms in political discourse but also the most frequently adopted techniques of protest by parties, groups and individuals to convey their disapproval of governmental decisions or organizational lapses. Bandhs, hartals and protest rallies paralyze normal life almost every day in some part or the other of the country.. Even essential services come to a grinding halt. The worst affected are, of course, the poor and lower middle classes. There are some, especially those born in free India who wrongly assume that all this hardship is the result of Gandhian legacy.

In South Africa in 1907 the term 'Satyagraha' was coined. His grandson Rajmohan Gandhi writes how Gandhiji did not approve of the term 'passive resistance' and how he gave a prize for an alternative word 'sadagraha' meaning 'firmness for the good' which eventually was changed to 'satyagraha' meaning 'firmness for the truth' By then Gandhi had already come under the influence of the concept of aparigraha preached by the Gita and imbibed the essence of the Ramayana. " Nothing elates me so much as the music of the Gita or the Ramayana by Tulsidas. Only in Rama can the weak find strength." He left convinced. The Bible and the writings of Thoreau and Ruskin also influenced Gandhi. . "Truth and *ahimsa* are as old as the hills he used to say" always disclaiming credit for discovering anything new or original. In the laboratory of mind he tested their power and capacity to fight battles big and small, personal and political, for the I of Truth(God)and fulfillment of his goal of liberating the people, the poor and the downtrodden in particular from bondage of all types. Gandhi accepted the English translation of Satyagraha as 'truth-force', or 'love-force' or 'soul-force'.

The inner voice of the Mahatma evoked the curiosity and admiration of the seer and the scholar. "The inner voice" explained the Mahatma in "1906 is something that cannot be described in words. The time I learnt to recognize the voice was, I may say, the time when I started praying regularly. That is, it was about 1906". Psychologist Erik H. Erikson who made an-in-depth study of it in his book Gandhi's Truth explained how Gandhi tried to link the 'inner voice' of the frail, simple man to the 'outer voice' the

voice of humanity. Gandhi was 'determined to spread truth and non violence among mankind in the place of violence and falsehood in all walks of life'.

Satyagraha's progress from then on till his exit from the world passed through many stages. The Mahatma himself wrote that his satyagraha passed through five stages, — indifference, ridicule, abuse, repression and respect. In 1933, distressed by misuse and misunderstanding of Satyagraha Gandhiji wrote:

"I should also remind that the word 'satyagraha' is often loosely used and is made to cover veiled violence. But as the author of the word I may be allowed to say that it excludes every form of violence, direct or indirect, veiled or unveiled, and whether in thought, word or deed. It is breach of satyagraha to wish ill to an opponent or to say a harsh word to him or of him with the intention of harming him. And often the evil thought or the evil word may, in terms of satyagraha, be more dangerous than actual violence used in the heat of the moment and perhaps repented and forgotten the next moment. Satyagraha is gentle, it never wounds. It must not be the result of anger or malice. It is never fussy, never impatient, never vociferous. It is the direct opposite of compulsion. It was conceived as a complete substitute for violence". (Collected Works Vol 55) He warned against misusing it for selfish ends. Satyagraha is inconsistent with the slightest violence said the Mahatma.

The Mahatma's message is that those who resort to satyagraha, and hunger strike should ensure that there is no place for violence in thought, word and deed and no inconvenience to the public and that self-restraint and discipline are vital for peace and progress.

(CPS Bulletin – October 2, 2011)

"Real passive resistance has been miscalled a weapon of the weak. After all, Jesus Christ is the Prince of all Passive Resisters. Can he, in any sense of the term, be called weak? Soul Force, the weapon of the truly non-violent, is actually a weapon of the strong."

-Gandhiji on January 28, 1948

SERVANT OF HUMANITY

"Let me remain what I am - a striving servant of India and through her of humanity," wrote Gandhiji in his reply when he was likened to rishis by Andhra leader Ayyadevara Kaleswara Rao. "Rishis are made of sterner stuff," said the Mahatma in his reply to Kaleswara Rao's letter in 1944. This was among the many lessons in humility and civility that his disciples learnt from Gandhiji's tours, lectures and letters. Writing to Pattabhi Sitaramayya in 1946 Gandhiji said "Whatever the case we have to be civil in the face of incivility. This is the secret of non-violence." It is the lack of civility and humility that leads to violence, be it the home or the society or the world at large.

Despite the world looking at him with awe and veneration, even disbelief, he did not claim to be the mythical Atlas carrying the burden of humanity on his shoulders. Instead he vowed in utmost humility and unwavering faith to remain the servant, a striving servant, of India and of the entire humanity. Rajmohan Gandhi saw in his grandfather the epic hero, Rama, who went into exile when he should have been crowned! Like the Buddha and Christ centuries before him Gandhi lived and died for the poor.

He never preached what he did not practise. Social and religious equality would be impossible to achieve without gender equality. To deny women equal status is to reject *ahimsa* and *abhaya* the two key concepts of Gandhian philosophy. "A woman's intuition has often proved truer than man's arrogant assumption of superior knowledge," he declared and narrated instances of Kastur Ba correcting and guiding him. "Ba was in no way weaker than I," he wrote, "in fact she was stronger. If I had not had her cooperation I would have been sunk. It was that illiterate woman who helped me to observe all my vows with the utmost strictness and kept me ever vigilant. Similarly in politics also she displayed great courage and took part in all the campaigns." (Rajmohan Gandhi's *Mohandas* p619)

History accords exaggerated importance to the exploits of conquerors and rulers and the accumulation of wealth by the rich while poets and writers consume 'oceans of ink and forests of paper to flatter them in huge volumes. Governments and politicians excel them all by raising statues and memorials all over. But seers, savants, saviours and servants of humanity do not need memorials and monuments to be reverently remembered by humanity.

Gandhiji's first fast was for Hindu-Muslim unity. His last was also for communal harmony. On his last birthday, October 2, 1947, he said: "With every breath I pray God to give me strength to quench the flames or remove me from this earth. I, who staked my life to gain India's independence, do not wish to be a living witness to its destruction." There seemed to be no end to his agony. On January 12, 1948 he spoke again of the only solution to "the rot that has set in beloved India". "Death for me would be a glorious deliverance rather than that I should be a helpless witness of the destruction of India." Only eighteen days he had to wait for the fulfillment of his wish.

Jawaharlal Nehru saw in Mahatma Gandhi the 'greatest symbol of the India of the past and of the future' and said that the light that shone in this country was no ordinary light, light that illumines the path of India and entire humanity, showing the way out of darkness. As Sri Aurobindo prophesied "the light which led us to freedom, though not yet to unity, will burn on till it conquers."

(CPS Bulletin – October 2, 2010)

"This day, 26th January is India's Independence Day. This observance was quite appropriate when we were fighting for independence, and we had not seen or handled it. Now that we have seen and handled it, we seem to be disillusioned. At least, I am disillusioned. What are we celebrating today? Surely not our disillusionment! What we are entitled to celebrate is the hope that the worst is over, and that we are on the road to showing the lowliest of India's villagers that it means his freedom from being a serf, and that he is no longer a slave born to serve the cities and towns of India, but that he is entitled to use city-dwellers for the finished products of his well thought-out labours. He is the salt of Indian earth."

- Mahatma Gandhi on January 26, 1948

GANDHIJI'S IDEA OF INDEPENDENCE

As we celebrate the 140th birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation, apart from the official ritual so routinely and uninspiringly performed on October 2 every year, our minds are filled with sadness over the utter disregard shown to Gandhiji's ideals during the last sixty two years and considerable anxiety about the future of India. In this age of globalization, reckless spending and lavish living those who talk of Gandhian ideals, even if it is for an hour before a small gathering, might be labeled uncivilized and medieval in their mindset.

But the bright new younger generation who constitute more than fifty percent of India's billion plus population and who are ordained by destiny to shape India's future in the first century of the new millennium would certainly love to know about the legacy the Mahatma bequeathed to us and the relevance of Gandhian ideals and values. Today's youth may be in a great hurry to achieve their goals through hard and innovative work despite being hard pressed for time. But they are also sensible enough to apply their sensitive minds to learn about the roots of our culture and the value foundations of our system so that course correction, wherever and whenever necessary, can be done without further delay. The younger generation would feel proud to know that the greatest minds of the last century, scientists like Einstein, philosophers like Russell, literary giants like Bernard Shaw and Nobel laureates of different hues, saw in Gandhi a beacon, an extraordinary light that would show humankind a way out of the darkness.

Likened to the Buddha and Jesus Christ, Gandhi lived and died for the poor, the entire humanity. The words of an Arab poet, Mikhail Noema quoted in Rajmohan Gandhi's classic Mohandas, sum it up: "the spindle in Gandhi's hand became sharper than the sword; the simple white sheet wrapping Gandhi's body was an armour plate which guns from the fleet of the Master of the Seas could not pierce and the goat of Gandhi became stronger than the British Lion."

We need to answer the basic question that every youngster is asking today six decades after India became free. Is this the Independence for which Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders fought and which we celebrate pompously twice a year on August 14 and January 26? What are our leaders so religiously praying for on October 2 and January 30, sitting in front of the Rajghat in Delhi and Gandhi statues all over the country? What according to Gandhi was Swaraj or Independence? Would the

Father of the Nation have rejoiced at India's achievements if he were living in our midst today?

They need to be told that Swaraj for Gandhi was empowerment of the weak and the disadvantaged sections of the society. Sad but true almost as many people as those who woke to freedom on August 15, 1947, about 330 million, are today living below the poverty line! Independence, Gandhi defined, means 'self- mastery, self –discipline', not the greed and selfishness that permeate every walk of life and every branch of government. Commending the Gandhian philosophy of simple living and high thinking Aldous Huxley had warned not only India but the entire world not to suppose 'that technology and organization could turn the petty human animal into a superhuman being and could provide a substitute for the infinities of spiritual realization."

From May 1893 on that cold night in Pietermaritzburg in South Africa when he was thrown out of a railway compartment till that fateful Friday, January 30, 1948 when the treacherous assassin's bullets killed him, Gandhi's life was a fight against violence, greed, injustice and exploitation. Probably no single individual in human history suffered and sacrificed for so long and so intensely as Gandhiji did. That is why young minds of today, like the great Einstein prophesied, would rub their eyes in disbelief hearing the Gandhi story. And we, the fading generation, have a duty to tell the younger generation of what little we know and how much we all and the future generation owe to Mahatma Gandhi.

(CPS Bulletin – October 2, 2009)

"I have always claimed to be a Sanatani Hindu. It is not that I am quite innocent of the Scriptures. I am not a profound scholar of Sanskrit. I have read the Vedas and the Upanishads only to translations. Naturally therefore, mine is not a scholarly study of them. My knowledge of them is in no way profound, but I have studied them as I should do as a Hindu and I claim to have grasped their true spirit. By the time I had reached the age of 21, I had studied other religions also".

-Mahatma Gandhi

(*The Writings of Gandhi – A Selection*, edited by Ronald Duncan)

WHAT GANDHIJI MEANS TO US

India was an infant democracy, having won independence only five and a half months earlier. Still, it was a nation that was thrown into a state of shock and disbelief on that fateful Friday evening, January 30, 1948, when the news spread about the assassination of the Father of the Nation. Mahatma Gandhi was a different father. He had little time for his own family. His family was the largest in the world. It had no caste or religion. It transcended boundaries and borders. Three hundred and thirty three million people of India wept and many of them went without food that night. The radio, the only available medium for quick transmission of news those days, wept throughout broadcasting doleful music and messages of grief.

We were boys then who did not immediately understand the reason for such mourning and overwhelming grief when we returned home from the playground after a game of cricket. Some of us even heaved a sigh of relief as the sun set on the horizon as there would be no school the following day. Shocking it was to see our elders crying, glued as they were throughout that night to the radio set. Food was not cooked in the house and almost all the elders fasted in grief. Tears rolled down everyone's cheeks when the radio broadcast a sobbing Jawaharlal Nehru's "Light has gone out of our lives" speech. Friday, January 30, 1948 was the gloomiest day in every Indian home. 31st was no less. Millions of people cried inconsolably hearing, Melville de Mellow's commentary, broadcast live by All India Radio, on the funeral of Gandhiji that Saturday evening.

Sixty years after that, raising the question 'what Gandhiji means to us' might sound odd if not ridiculous. Still it has its own relevance even though some question the 'relevance' of Gandhiji for today's India of a billion

plus people most of whom do not know much about him. We have seldom been a nation during the last sixty years to know the value of the Father of the Nation. We are still a backward country, fragmented socially and culturally with a large percentage of population, larger than the population of the United States, living below the poverty line. There are, of course, islands of prosperity where people feel people differently from the mainstream.

Romain Rolland called Gandhiji “A Christ without a cross.” Gandhi bore a greater burden, a heavier load of human misery and suffering and for much longer time, than Christ had done. He also led as pure and hard a life as the heroes of our epics had supposedly done to protect righteousness. Gandhiji’s religion was for the entire humanity, not for a region or set of people. “Not a Sunday show”, as he himself declared, “but an hourly and minutely mentor and monitor” emanating from a belief “in the ordered moral government of the universe” that is “subject to the acid test of reason.” In short ‘a religion that would free the world of all ills.’

True economics stands for social justice and Swaraj means freedom in terms of empowerment of the weak. Ernest Barker wrote that Gandhi “had a Platonic feeling that governing and administrative persons should live on a pittance, content with the opportunities of service and not expecting greater rewards.” Such ideas would be considered weird and ‘uncivilized’ in today’s India where the salaries of top leaders and civil servants get revised steeply and regularly as they too have to compete with those in the affluent private sector. Gandhiji may not mean much to those in politics, especially those in power. But to the vast majority of people not only in India but all over the world he means a lot. Because “he stirred up loving hearts to action” and “lived *for* as well as *in* mankind.”

(CPS Bulletin – October 2, 2008)

He referred to a deep “inner voice” speaking quietly and intimately to him. This inner voice was his link to God as well – God as the truthful Sri Rama, trustful in whom Bapu possessed a never-failing talisman of powerful protection.

When Ram Dhum was sung now, men in the audience responded and beat time rhythmically with the music, but very few women did so. Those with some spiritual experience know the power of Ram Dhum, the reciting of God Rama’s name from the heart.

Report on Gandhi’s prayer meeting in The Hindu, August 22, 1947

MAHATMA'S MESSAGE

"My life is my message," said Gandhiji when asked to give a message. "I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills," he declared with characteristic humility and gently warned against any attempt to convert his ideas and actions into a creed or doctrine. "There is no such thing as Gandhism. I do not want to leave any sect after me," he said.

Rajmohan Gandhi, the Mahatma's grandson and a scholar of repute, brought out last year *Mohandas —A True Story of a Man, his People and an Empire*, a masterly study of 745 pages. Explaining why he has chosen to write another book on Gandhiji, having already written one volume, Rajmohan says "*The Good Boatman* was not a biography. This one is." "Gandhi the individual is not sufficiently felt, or seen or understood though he looks at us from currency notes, postage stamps and billboards," says the author adding that familiarity is not knowledge. Quoting Einstein's famous words that "generations to come will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth" Rajmohan agrees that in some ways it is an unbelievable story.'

Gandhi's battles, fought first in his mind, began early in his life. "At the time that communal unity possessed me! was a lad twelve years old," wrote Gandhi. The Congress was not yet born. Along with eradication of untouchability, the boyhood dream of 'amity' between Hindus, Muslims and Parsis became his life's mission. His resolve to fight falsehood and violence in all walks of life was strengthened in South Africa where he was insulted and assaulted. Satyagraha, 'truth-force' or 'love-force' or 'soul-force' was born. Non-violence implied non-possession. Service and sacrifice must begin at home and accordingly he made his wife give up, not without an argument, gold and ornaments. KasturBa nobly stood by him in the long and hard struggle the Mahatma fought to liberate his people politically, socially and economically. "If I had not her cooperation I would have been sunk," he admitted. When he opposed partition of India Muslims saw in Gandhi 'their enemy number one.'

But when he walked hundreds of miles to save their families and raised crores of rupees for Muslims traumatised by communal riots they found in Gandhi their true saviour. At the stroke of the midnight hour when Jawaharlal Nehru was making his famous 'tryst with destiny' speech amidst celebrations in Delhi Gandhiji was praying in the house of a poor Muslim family in Calcutta. Five lakhs of Hindus and Muslims

attended his August 15 meeting at Calcutta which he described as 'the joy of fraternization' between the two communities.

An Andhra Dalit, Chakrayya, who lived in Sevagram was dear to Gandhiji who was upset by Chakrayya's premature death. Gandhiji suggested that a Dalit be made the President of India with Nehru, Patel and Rajendra Prasad as ministers, offering his own services as private secretary without salary. Why not a Bhangi girl as the President of India? If a Princess could become the Queen of England why not a Bhangi girl as the President of Indian Republic, he asked? Gandhiji wanted the world to know that in India no one was high and no one low. What the Buddha had taught humankind and what Ashoka had done through his emissaries of peace, Gandhi wanted independent India to convey as her message for universal peace and harmony.

The Arab poet Mikhail Noema's lines find a place in the biography: "The spindle in Gandhi's hand became sharper than the sword; the simple white sheet wrapping Gandhi's body was an armour plate which guns from the fleets of the master of the seas could not pierce and the goat of Gandhi became stronger than the British Lion."

Gandhi's message to the Bengal Ministers led by Prafulla Ghosh who called on him on August 15, 1947 needs to be recalled: "Be humble; be forbearing. Now you will be tested through and through. Beware of power; power corrupts. Do not let yourself be entrapped by its pomp and pageantry. Remember you are in office to serve the poor in India's villages." How necessary it is today to have these lines displayed prominently in all government offices and corridors of power!

(CPS Bulletin – October 2, 2007)

"When problems, material and spiritual, crowd upon him, when conflicting emotions shake him, when troubles oppress him, Mahatma Gandhi retires into the recesses of the soul, the secret corridors of the spirit, to gain strength and nourishment. Such men as he, who are filled with spiritual poise and who yet take upon themselves the task of shouldering the burden of suffering humanity, are born rarely, and at long intervals in the history of humanity's progress."

Dr.S.Radhakrishnan
(*The Hindu*, October 6, 1997)

DEBT OF GRATITUDE

October 2 is a different day. Not just in the lives of the billion plus people of India. In every home and every part of the world where people think and talk of peace and compassion, Gandhi Jayanthi is an occasion to pay homage to the memory of Mahatma Gandhi. Humanity, wrote a famous scholar, owes a heavy debt of gratitude to Gandhiji . The greatest minds of the last hundred years tried to explore and explain the mind, the message and the mission of the Mahatma even if the attempt was fascinating, puzzling and even frustrating to some. But all were agreed that no one, no saint for that matter, "has done so much to lighten the misery of the oppressed and restore their self-respect". Among the extraordinary qualities of his head and heart were humility and humour which endeared him to millions all over the world. " I have nothing new to teach the world," he declared in utmost humility, "Truth and Non-Violence are as old as the hills." These two were the guiding principles of his life, the pursuit of which was his mission till his last breath. Men can overcome misery, cruelty and violence by truth and non-violence. That is the message of his life and death. Satyagraha is both a science and an art of overthrowing evil with good. Happiness does not lie in possessiveness and victory is not success. Gandhiji explained the evolution of Satyagraha and his own travails in propagating it when he referred to the five stages -indifference, ridicule, abuse, repression and respect. It is the soul force that triumphed over an empire on which the sun was expected not to set.

He could laugh at himself and make fun of his own persona. "Mine is a mad house," he once said, " and I am the maddest of the lot. But those who cannot see the good in these mad people should have their eye examined." In a land of paradoxes he described himself as the biggest paradox. Religion to Gandhiji was 'not a Sunday show, but hourly, minutely mentor and monitor.' His religion begins where doctrine ceases, explained a scholar. An authority on psychology Erikson described Gandhiji as ' a religious actualist' who made 'an alliance of his inner voice and the voice of mankind.' His attitude towards religions was' not one of negative toleration but positive appreciation.' He respected all religions though no religion was perfect. " The Allah of Islam is the same as the God of the Christians and Isvara of the Hindus. Even as there are numerous names of God in Hinduism there are names of God in Islam. The names do not indicate individuality but attributes. God is above all attributes, Indescribable, Immeasurable. It would be height of intolerance and

intolerance is a species of violence to believe that your religion is superior to other religions." To him there is no God other than Truth and that can be realised through Ahimsa or non-violence. Death has no terror to the God-fearing. He found no incompatibility between man's physical and intellectual limitations and his capacity for spiritual progress. People of all faiths attended Gandhiji's prayer-meetings and an instance of the Mahatma's hold over them was what a visitor from abroad wrote: "The best Christian in the world today is a Hindu and he lives at Sevagram." Gandhiji undertook fasts for causes big and small. His idea was not to embarrass anyone or authority but 'to sting people's conscience into action.'

Violence confronted him, as his grandson narrated in his biography, at every stage in his long life, right from the hard struggles in South Africa till his last breath on January 30 1948. The answer to violence is non-violence, only non-violence. A week before his assassination Gandhiji told Edgar Snow that non-violence is a political means, not only a matter of personal ethics. That was a few days after a bomb was hurled at his house and seven days before Godse's bullets did what the bomb could not. The frail body gently bled to death and the mortal remains were consigned to holy flames in the midst of inconsolable grief. No one can ever silence that spirit. As Radhakrishnan summed up "nothing better has ever been taught or lived since the world first began."

(CPS Bulletin – October 2, 2006)

Today I am getting news of *satyagraha* being started in many places. Often I wonder whether the so-called *satyagraha* is not really *duragraha*. Whether it is strikes in mills or railways or post offices or movement in some of the states, it seems as if it is a question of seizing power. A virulent poison is leavening society to-day and every opportunity for attaining their object is seized by those who do not stop to consider that means and ends are convertible terms.

- Mahatma Gandhi

(*The Writings of Gandhi – A Selection*, Edited by Ronald Duncan)

HOMAGE TO THE MAHATMA

“The Light which led us to freedom, though not to unity, still burns and will burn on till it conquers,” prophesied Sri Aurobindo in his tribute to Mahatma Gandhi. Hailing it as no ordinary light Jawharlal Nehru said that “the light 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 will give solace to innumerable hearts.” That light represented eternal truths, showing us the right path, according to Nehru. Nothing better has ever been lived or taught since the world began, wrote Radhakrishnan. To Rabindranath Tagore it was “ineffable, like music, like beauty”.

When homage is paid to the memory of the Mahatma on October 2 every year those who were fortunate to bask in the glory of that Light have now a duty to tell the younger generation about the significance of that Light. Gandhiji who led the greatest mass movement and the most peaceful revolution in human history was killed by his own people for whose redemption he lived. Einstein wrote that future generations would find it difficult to believe that such a man in flesh and blood walked on this planet. Four decades after he left us many, as Einstein said, would rub their eyes in disbelief when told about the mesmerizing hold of Gandhiji on the masses during the freedom struggle. As many, if not more, would doubt the relevance of his message in the 21st century.

The answer to the questions cynics and skeptics raise is contained in a simple explanation Gandhiji himself gave. Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills, he said. “No literature or propaganda is needed about it. Those who believe in the simple truths I have laid down can propagate them only by living them,” he said. There is no dharma higher than Truth and no duty higher than Ahimsa. He rejected the suggestion that he propounded a new theory or philosophy. There was no such thing as Gandhism, he asserted.

He was a practical idealist who, as Shriman Narayan put it, had no use of any ideas if they could not be implemented and being acted upon in life. He was in a hurry to liberate his people not only from political bondage but also from social injustice and economic exploitation. “I entertain no fads in this regard,” he declared and clarified that even atomic energy could be used for the benefit of the people. Human labour and dignity should be respected. Unemployment should give way to full and rewarding employment. True economics, he explained, stands for social justice. It promotes the good and equality of all including the weakest.

Every minute of his life was spent for the welfare of the people. His dream was to wipe out every tear from every eye. His dream was communal harmony based on equal respect for all faiths. He talked of that great dream when he launched his movement around the twenties of the last century. Two decades later he again spoke about that dream and poignantly stated that "If that dream could be realized even now when I am an old man on the verge of death, my heart would dance. Children would then frolic in joy." Fifteen days later he fell to the assassin's bullet with God's name on his lips. As Radhakrishnan wrote "We have killed his body but the spirit in him which is light from above will penetrate far into space and time and inspire countless generations for nobler living."

When President APJ Abdul Kalam exhorts school children to translate their dreams into vision and vision into reality, he is reminding us all of the Mahatma's dream. The best homage we can pay to the Mahatma is to promote those ideals that liberated us politically to be taught in every school and college. The custodians of the future need to be educated about the legacy they have inherited and its imperishable value. Not in schools and colleges only but in every home an effort should be made to know about it. Gandhiji himself said that he learnt his first lessons in civic responsibility from his uneducated mother.

(CPS Bulletin – October 2, 2005)

"The education through which our country has passed for over a century was designed for a particular purpose. To feed the interests of capitalism, the entire basis of economic life in India was changed by the foreigner. The city was made to be the centre of gravity, and not the village. The village was dethroned from its earlier state of supremacy. It was virtually converted into a slum, and kept as far removed from the city as possible. The country's economy was thus made lop-sided and the educational system made to serve it. If now we want to create a new India, our outlook must be changed altogether. We must build up a new Indian democracy inch by inch. It must spread in all parts of our economic, social and political life. The magnitude of this task requires the application of stout hearts working steadily, and on and on." That, Gandhiji explained, was the larger, fundamental aspect of the problem.

- Mahatma Gandhi on August 21, 1947

GANDHIJI - 'THE PRACTICAL IDEALIST'

"I claim to be a practical idealist," said Mahatma Gandhi once. Explaining how life and its problems taught him many lessons, Gandhiji dismissed any claim of having discovered a new philosophy or message for humankind. "I have nothing new to teach the world," he declared, "truth and non-violence are as old as the hills." In his tireless pursuit of truth he learnt from his experiments and errors as well. Truth and nonviolence constituted the main tenets of his philosophy. But in a discussion with a Jain seer Gandhiji admitted that by instinct he was truthful but not non-violent. Said the Mahatma: "I have been truthful but not non-violent. There is no dharma higher than truth. Ahimsa is the highest duty".

Cautioning his disciples and followers against making an attempt to promote 'Gandhism' and publicising his ideas, Gandhiji said: "There is no such thing as Gandhism. I do not want to leave any sect after me." Nor was there any need to promote Gandhian ideals through propaganda. "No literature or propaganda is needed about it. Those who believe in the simple truths I have laid down can propagate them by living them. Right action contains its own propaganda and needs no other," he explained. As Ronald Duncan put it Gandhiji was the most practical man who would always drive any thought to its personal implication and practical application.

Satyagraha or Sarvodaya, truth or ahimsa — every ideal he set for himself was first tested in the laboratory of his mind. Science was as important for him as religion. There was no conflict between them. His spirituality synthesized science, religion and philosophy. If Satyagraha ennobles the human spirit, Sarvodaya brings all people—the rich and the poor, the employer and the employee, the tallest and the lowest—together 'in the silken net of love.' The need is to control the root of all problems—the human mind. "The mind," wrote Gandhiji, is a restless bird; the more it gets, the more it wants and still remains unsatisfied." Simple yet meaningful life is possible only when the mind is tranquil. Restraint holds the key to human development. Highest perfection is unattainable without highest restraint, he stated. Explaining the meaning of selfless action, the Mahatma quoted from the Gita and said: "The sages say that renunciation means foregoing an action which springs from desire and relinquishing means the surrender of its fruit."

Politics and economics are vital for human progress. Politics cannot be a taboo for ever. Eschew politics of power but not politics of service, he exhorted. Politics without religion (ethics) is dirt. True economics stands for social justice. It promotes the good of all equally including the weakest and is indispensable for decent life. The goal of both politics and economics is the welfare of all, not of a particular section or even the majority of the people for that matter.

In a land of paradoxes, Gandhiji conceded, he was the biggest paradox. The man with a modern outlook wore just loin cloth and carried the spinning wheel wherever he went. His capacity for enduring pain and suffering and insults and indignities was boundless. That was why Einstein called him 'the miracle of a man.' Gandhiji had also that extraordinary gift of laughing at himself. Referring to the spinning wheel he once said: "People have laughed at my spinning wheel and an acute critic once observed that when I died the wheels would serve to make the funeral pyre. That, however, has not shaken my faith in the spinning wheel." But Gandhiji was quick to add that if "the government can provide full employment to our people without help of khadi and village industries, I am prepared to wind up my constructive work in this sphere." A poignant endorsement of the Gandhian approach was made three years after Gandhiji's assassination by Acharya Vinoba Bhave who declared that if the state could find other avenues of employment he would have "no hesitation in burning his wooden charkha to cook one day's meal!"

The Mahatma was not against machines and modernization. He would welcome the machine that lightens the burden of the people living in cottages and would 'prize every invention made for the benefit of all'. What he opposed was the craze for the multiplication of machinery and accumulation of wealth without any concern for the starving millions. He practised what he preached and preached ideals that can be acted upon. His 135th birth anniversary is an occasion for us to reflect on the everlasting relevance of his work and ideals and offer our gratitude to the Mahatma for bequeathing to us such a treasure. May we grow to be worthy of it !

(CPS Bulletin – October 2, 2004)

REMEMBERING GANDHIJI

Gandhi Jayanti is a day of peace and prayer; an occasion for renewing our faith in the wealth of values he bequeathed to us. The greatest tribute we can pay to his memory, wrote Jawaharlal Nehru, "is to follow reverently in the path he showed us and to do our duty in life and in death." The Mahatma's service and sacrifice secured freedom for India and held out to the war-ravaged world hope in the midst of darkness.

Gandhiji called himself a paradox. He was no ordinary paradox. He sought to blend the saint and the politician and establish the Kingdom of God through nonviolence. In combining intellectuality and pragmatism, courage and compassion, wisdom and humour, correctness and courtesy and ethics and politics, he had few equals in history. By making an alliance of the inner voice and the voice of mankind he taught us the essence of spiritual realization. Milton Mayer observed that Gandhi "was the first Christian politician since Jesus – Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln not excepted." Gopala Krishna Gokhale, Gandhi's mentor, saw in him Indian humanity at its best. A western writer noticed three great modern influences on Gandhi – Tolstoy, a Russian, Ruskin an Englishman and Thoreau an American. He felt that Gandhi's development took place not in India but in England and South Africa. In fact he read Edwin Arnold's English translation of his favourite scripture Bhagavad Gita for the first time in England and that was a turning point in Gandhi's life.

Gandhiji was both a puzzle and paradox. Observers were at times baffled but always fascinated by his words and deeds. To some he was a scientist - "not a mere scientist but a great scientist in the realm of social truth." He was an artist at work, exulted one of his most trusted disciples. Nothing better has ever been taught or lived since the world first began, wrote Radhakrishnan. He was 'a great bridge' explained Ernest Barker 'between a great Indian tradition of devout and philosophic religion and the Western tradition of civil and political liberty in the life of the community.' Aldous Huxley found in Gandhi a warning to people who thought that 'technology and organization could turn the petty human animal into a superhuman being and could provide a substitute for the infinities of spiritual realization.' Bernard Shaw, the sharpest literary mind of the last century, and a great admirer of the Mahatma, received from Gandhi a gentle retort when Shaw expressed his misgivings about nonviolence saying that "the vegetariansim of the sheep makes no appeal to the tiger." To which Gandhi gently replied that he did not believe that "the British are all tiger and no man."

The poor and the exploited were Gandhi's main concern. His goal was the removal of poverty and human misery. Of India he once wrote that "eighty per cent of the Indian population are compulsorily unemployed for half the year". Political freedom, he declared, had no meaning for the millions of Indians who had no food and shelter. He wanted the village to become an equal to the town and the city. The village would provide the basis and the foundation for Indian democracy where every child and every woman would live and work on equal terms with man. Swaraj for him meant essentially Gram Swaraj.

It was India's great good fortune that such a man lived amidst us to lead us from bondage to freedom. His grandson, Rajmohan Gandhi, titled his grandfather's biography 'The Good Boatman' who ferried his people to the shore of safety and freedom. When Gandhiji once called on Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, India's first Nobel Laureate wrote "When you had taken your leave, I found God's footprints on my floor." Neither the passage of time nor pettiness of politics can erase those footprints that have adorned the entire land. They shall continue to serve as a beacon for India and humanity at large.

(CPS Bulletin – October 2, 2003)

Man and Machine:

"How can I be against all machinery when I know that even this body is a most delicate piece of machinery. The spinning wheel is a machine; a little tooth pick is a machine. What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as

such....the supreme consideration is man." The plight of the rural poor:

"Little do town-dwellers know how the semi-starved masses of India are slowly sinking of 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 brokerage are sucked from the masses."

Mahatma Gandhi

(Fifteen days before his assassination)

(CPS Bulletin - October 2, 2017)

MARTYRDOM OF THE MAHATMA

January 30, every year, brings back poignant memories of the martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi. Even though fifty-five years have passed since the Mahatma left us, people in every part of the world continue to derive solace and inspiration from his life and work. The poor and the meek, in particular, have an affinity with the Mahatma because in him they found an expression of their aspirations. Leaders paying homage to Gandhiji's memory at Raj Ghat, official functions and academic discussions are all a part of the annual routine and familiar ritual. It is amusing, if not annoying, to hear some discussing the 'relevance of Gandhi' to contemporary world. Gandhiji found himself out of place when India, for whose freedom he devoted all his time and energy, was celebrating her Independence on the 15th of August 1947. He was away in Bengal mourning the tragic partition of India into two countries and saving the lives of thousands of innocent people. Let us recall what Lord Mountbatten wrote on that occasion:

"My dear Gandhiji,

In the Punjab we have 55000 soldiers and large scale rioting on our hands. In Bengal our force consists of one man, and there is no rioting. As a serving officer, as well as an administrator, may I be allowed to pay my tribute to the One Man Boundary Force."

Gandhiji's first fast was for the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity. His last fast was also for the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity. A devout Hindu 'who sought spiritual communion with Christianity and Islam' Gandhiji was hailed as the greatest Indian since the Buddha and the greatest man since Jesus Christ. The British saw in him their truest friend. His religion was devoid of ritual and dogma. It was based on faith in God and trust in human goodness. There is nothing stronger than the human spirit. "Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will", he explained.

Non-violence is the only panacea for a world dominated by greed, hatred, selfishness and violence. To quote Gandhiji: "Non violence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed." He never claimed to have discovered a new religion or philosophy. He sought to synthesize the different and various streams of India's culture and heritage and present to the people of India a practical approach

to tackle their numerous problems. "I am not a visionary," he said, "I claim to be a practical idealist. The religion of non-violence is not merely for the Rishis and saints. It is meant for the common people as well." That is why Jawaharlal Nehru saw in Gandhiji "the greatest symbol of India, of the past, of the present and of the future we could have." The revolution he launched was described as 'much more radical' than any of the revolutions ever suggested. Still, he knew better than anyone the difficulty of the task that lay before him. No one was more aware of his limitations than Gandhiji himself.

He was not opposed to either the machine or to modernization or to even large scale production provided they did not affect the people and the villages they live in. The benefits of the machine and of production must reach the people. The rich cannot prosper at the expense of the poor just as the cities cannot expand at the expense of the villages. Village development holds the key to national progress. His emphasis on discipline is no less relevant. Calling upon the youth to observe disciplined obedience he said: "I beseech you to realize the supreme importance of discipline. Let it not be said that we are a people incapable of maintaining discipline. Indiscipline will mean disaster."

His Satyagraha showed that there was 'a greater power in life than force and that power lay in truth, love and non-violence.' It is "not merely the negative virtue of abstaining from violence but the positive one of doing good." That is why Gandhiji's "sword of spirit pierces to the very heart of the moral problem with which modern civilization is confronted." The New York Times in its tribute to Gandhiji wrote that "He has left as his heritage a spiritual force that must in God's good time prevail over arms and armaments and dark doctrines of violence."

When today's world is threatened by 'dark doctrines of violence' and horrendous deeds of terror, the hope for humankind lies in the spiritual force and power of love the Mahatma bequeathed to us. As the great seer Sri Aurobindo said in his tribute to the Mahatma "the light which led us to freedom, though not to unity, still burns and will burn on till it conquers."

(CPS Bulletin – February 2, 2003)

GANDHIJI, U.N. AND WORLD PEACE

Gandhi jayanthi is a day of renewal of our faith in, and rededication to the values dear to the Father of the Nation. Gandhiji's life, work and death testify to the triumph of Truth and Love over hatred and violence. The spirit and light that emanated from him "extended beyond India and beyond time." India, the world and humanity at large need more than ever before that spirit and that power of non-violent action.

"I worship God as Truth and there is no other God than Truth," he declared. God, said the Mahatma, never occurs in person but always in action. His conception of God and religion transcended all faiths and frontiers. No one understood better than he the essence of every religion and none was more aware of its shortcomings. In his own words: "INI could not accept Christianity either as a perfect or the greatest religion neither was I then convinced of Hinduism being such." The world of today needs the religion of Gandhi because it is not religion that is being practised. It is not religion in the strict sense of the term. It is faith in innate human goodness and the invincibility of human spirit. It is religion based on Truth and Love and religion that thrives on non-violence. It is religion that he preached and practised applying it in daily life to individual problems, to collective work and to political goals as well. Religion is a means to self-realization and politics a means of promoting social good. As such there could be no conflict between religion and politics. Gandhiji asserted the point thus: "Those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means". Satyagraha "his supreme achievement" demonstrated that "there is a greater power in life than force."

October is also the month in which the United Nations was born. At the end of the Second World War was created this world body to promote peace and cooperation among nations. The UN Charter declared that its object was to save succeeding generations of people from the scourge of war. The UNESCO proclaimed its goal as building defences in the minds of men, as war begins in the minds of men. Ironically as many people have been killed by violence since the UN came into being during the last fifty six years as in that terrible Second World War.

The strength of the United Nations lies in two things-its longevity and its numerical strength with all but four of the 193 countries of the world being its members. Beyond that the UN's claims to success are negligible. Its finances are weak, credibility low and influence limited. The UN has been functioning according to the commands of the big powers, especially the United States. Kofi Annan, the suave Secretary General of the United Nations, must be aware of the quip that the Secretary General is more a Secretary than a General! The UN's biggest failure is its inability to curb arms race and proliferation of lethal weapons and to prevent local wars that have taken a heavy toll of life and property in different parts of the world.

The latest menace to world peace comes in the form of terrorism. It means not only the exciting Information Technology but also the most dreaded menace-international terrorism. With money being available in plenty thanks to the rise of drug mafia and legitimacy being provided by dubious religious doctrines and self-proclaimed leaders of bigotry and promoters of hatred there has risen a global network of terrorists threatening world peace and security. The terrorist who kills innocent people is no martyr even if he kills himself in the process. Such a terrorist is a maniac and menace to society. Worse still he has acquired access to latest technology and most dangerous weapons. Therefore, the fight against terrorism is a global fight. Weapons alone are not enough. Collective thinking and common effort at every level, both macro and micro, will have to be generated to light the new menace.

The roots of violence lie in poverty, illiteracy and ignorance. This is where Gandhiji and the United Nations become more relevant now than before. We must turn to the message and mission of Gandhiji to wipe out poverty and injustice. As Pope John Paul II once said development is another name for peace. Who else but the United Nations can undertake such a massive work of eliminating want, disease and ignorance? The American President said that the century's first war is against international terrorism. But the real war should be against the source of all violence and terrorism-poverty, bigotry illiteracy and injustice. And everyone and every nation must join in that war to ensure world peace.

(CPS Bulletin – October 2, 2001)

“NO ORDINARY LIGHT”

Gandhi Jayanti is a day of renewal of our faith in that split that moulded the lives of millions of India and led this great country of ours from bondage to freedom. The light that has shone in this country, wrote Jawaharlal Nehru, was no ordinary light, the light that has illumined this country for many years, will illumine this country for many more years and will give solace to innumerable hearts a Thousand years later.’ The spirit, said Radhakrishnan, ‘Is a light from above which will penetrate far into space and time and inspire countless generations for nobler living.’ It is light that comes from the eternal source of wisdom’ in the words of Rabindranath Tagore.

To those born in the recent past Gandhiji might mean just another great name and to the many trapped in the culture of consumerism, Gandhi may not even appear relevant in the new millennium. When the goal is to become a millionaire or billionaire or crorepati — the disease being aptly called ‘affluenza’ — why bother about such values as truth, love and non-violence? Richard Attenborough’s movie ‘Gandhi’ prompted many men and women in the west to ask the question which the great Einstein had prophesied “Did such a man really walk on this earth?” Neither the passage of time nor the awesome power of science and technology can corrode the indelible imprint he left behind on this earth.

Gandhiji was opposed, not to authority but to the misuse and abuse of power, not to the acquisition of property but to the needless accumulation of wealth, not to industrialization but to indiscriminate mechanization, the “craze” for machinery as he described it, not to the exercise of rights but to the shirking of responsibilities. From his ‘unlettered mother’ he learnt the importance of duties and responsibilities and from his noble wife the value of gender equality. His humility was disarming and selflessness amazing. His radiant presence was a source of comfort as much to his followers as to the numerous foreign visitors always seen around him.

In thought, word and deed, the Mahatma belonged to the poor and the downtrodden. His mission was to wipe every tear from every eye. We may not have either the will or the capacity to wipe the tears of our suffering brethren. But can we not shed at least a tear for them? Gandhiji’s ‘swaraj’ was for “those lolling and unemployed millions who do not get even a square meal a day and have to scratch along with a piece of stale bread and a pinch of salt.” To quote his own words again, even God could not dare to appear before the poor and the hungry except in the

form of a “bowl of rice”. The weakest sections of the society were the closest to his heart. Recall, he exhorted the people, “the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen and ask yourself in the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him.”

To him India’s Independence would be complete only when the landlord and the peasant, the factory owner and the worker, people belonging to all religions, Irrespective of any distinction of caste, or creed or status enjoy freedom. Fifty two years ago Gandhiji left us. His spirit and vision have been a source of strength to us during these eventful, if not Turbulent, years and they will continue to guide us in the years ahead. The light that led us from darkness to freedom is ‘no ordinary light.’

(CPS Bulletin – October 2, 2000)

Dalit Head of State

Gandhiji’s wish on the Dalit question Gandhi proposed a strong symbolic move: appointing a Dalit woman or man as free India’s first President. His objective was to pre-empt a polarization over caste as destructive as the polarization over religion. The proposal was sparked off by the death, at the end of May, of Chakrayya, a talented young Andhra Dalit who had been with the Sevagram ashram from its inception. Gandhi had nursed high hopes for Chakrayya.” feel like crying over his death, he said, but I cannot cry. For whom should I cry and for whom should I refrain from crying?”. On 2 June he said at his prayer meeting:

The time is fast approaching when India will have to elect the first President of the Republic. I would have proposed the name of Chakrayya, had he been alive.

On 6 June he repeated the thought in a conversation with Rajendra Prasad, suggesting at the same time that some prominent leaders should stay out of the government:

If all the leaders join the Cabinet, it will be very difficult to maintain contact with the people at large...That is why I suggested even in my prayer speech that a Harijan like Chakrayya or a Harijan girl should be made the nation’s first President and Jawaharlal should become the Prime Minister... Similar arrangements can be made in the provinces too...

(MOHANDAS - Rajmohan Gandhi)

'A BEACON FOR THE WHOLE WORLD...'

Celebration of Gandhi Jayanthi is seldom confined to India alone. That day, October 2, when India gave birth to a mighty soul is dear to the entire world and as Jawaharlal Nehru said the Mahatma 'shone like a beacon not only for India but for the whole world.' Sad but true the light that emanated from India is today not visible to the Indians. The message of the great Gautama Buddha is not as much known to the people of the land of his birth as to those living outside. Such things happen in India. Aldous Huxley lamented that 'Gandhi's body was borne to the pyre on a weapon carrier' and that 'military and coercive might' as displayed by the presence of soldiers, police and fighter planes, was paraded at the cremation of the messiah of peace! It was 'an inevitable irony,' Huxley felt. Today our leaders, at all levels, perform the ritual of paying homage to the Mahatma, flanked by gun loting security men and the 'inevitable irony' is that the land that gave birth to apostles of nonviolence from the Buddha to Gandhi is afflicted with mindless violence.

The Gandhian path is not hard to follow. We need not wear khadi. Such symbolic gestures do not enhance the credibility of our commitment to the Gandhian ideals. An English writer who was fascinated by the Mahatma's life and message was amused that leaders in India, claiming to be the heirs to the Gandhian spirit, indulge in long speeches and lavish dinners donning huge garlands. That has been the bane of Indian politics since he left us, rather we sent him out of this world, fifty years ago.

We are a nation of small men. Small in every sense of the term-small in thinking and small in not being able to understand the greatness of the Mahatma. Let us try to do only small things at our own level in a humble way like avoiding pomp and extravagance at public functions. Should we waste money, precious public money, on huge garlands, cutouts and processions, in honour of our leaders,

elected, nominated or self-styled? Should we wait for hours for a VIP to arrive and start a meeting or function? Is not a common man's time as precious as that of a VIP? Is it necessary for us to be told by a minister or leader that we should keep our surroundings clean? Can we not organise citizens' welfare measures such as providing medical aid to the ailing poor and to victims of tragedies and disasters? Let us on this sacred day of his birth resolve to honour the memory of the Mahatma by following his advice at the local level. Only by serving the poor and the less fortunate brethren can we claim to be worthy of his legacy. The beacon that illumined the path for all humanity will continue to shine forever. We, on our part, must strive to ensure that the rays of that great light bring cheer to every home and village in the land of his birth.

(CPS Bulletin – October 2, 1998)

“THE GREATEST TREASURE”

“I have a sense of utter shame both as an individual and head of the Government of India that we

should have failed to protect the greatest treasure that we possessed” said Jawaharlal Nehru in the constituent assembly two days after Mahatma Gandhi was slain. In that moving speech Pandit Nehru also described Gandhiji as the greatest symbol of the India of the past and of the India of the future.

History tells us that darkness cannot tolerate the light in the great. It happened in Athens in 399B.C, when Socrates was put to death. It happened again in 32 AD. when in Golgotha Jesus Christ was nailed to the cross. It was reenacted in Delhi on January 30, 1948 when the Father of the Nation, lovingly called Bapu, was killed by his own people for whose redemption he lived and died. What the dark forces extinguished then was only the body of Gandhiji. As Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan put it: “We have killed his body but the spirit in him which is a light from above will penetrate for into space and time and inspire countless generations for nobler living.”

It is that spirit that India must recover and that light that India must seek with renewed vigour and determination in the golden jubilee year of Independence. It was no ordinary spirit and light. The whole world found in Gandhiji a new hope for humankind battered, within a space of thirty years, by two terrible wars. Scholars, scientists, statesmen and seers, poets and philosophers and millions of ordinary people too realised the power of love and non-violence.

Our leaders at the time of Independence, though by the sudden and tragic exit of the Mahatma, stuck to the daunting task of nation-building, drawing inspiration from Gandhiji's life and message. The value system underlying the new policy was largely nurtured. It is a solid and durable value system. Non-violence is the only panacea for the ills of humankind. If it was Hindu-Muslim unity then, it is communal harmony. Integration now. If it was Harijan emancipation that Gandhiji crusaded for, it is social justice today meaning emancipation of not only the Dalits, but of all oppressed classes and women in general. No political party or government can question the essence of the value system that Gandhiji so steadfastly nurtured. Only by reaffirming our faith in the Gandhian approach and by renewing our pledge to pursue those goals, can we hope to free the Indian society from the malaise of apathy, corruption and greed for self and power. Gandhiji is India's greatest gift to the modern world. That is why October 2nd is an important day not only in India's

calendar but for the World at large. The treasure he bequeathed to us is inexhaustible. It is not confined to India alone. It belongs to all those who believe in the uniqueness of the human spirit—all those who accept that love is greater than brute force and that 'man is more valuable than both machine and money.

Necessary for us to remind ourselves that Gandhiji was not opposed either to the use of machine or the growth of Industry so long as it did not deprive the poor and the downtrodden of their livelihood. He knew, better than others, about the difficulties and hurdles that come in the way of the emancipation of the poor. Someone quipped that the meek shall inherit the earth but not its mineral rights.' It was for the poor and the meek that Gandhiji lived and died. Their number has not decreased. Probably it never will. To them all in particular October 2nd is a day to remember.

(CPS Bulletin – October 2, 1997)

"Mahatma Gandhi realised that freedom could be won only by sacrifice, and not by entreaty. He took hold of ordinary men and women who were an incredible mixture of heroism and conceit, magnificent and meanness organised them and led an unarmed revolt against British rule. August 15th marked the successful end of that struggle. But all talk of India's freedom is useless so long as men starve and go naked to the country, pining away in voiceless anguish. Gandhiji's charkha is a symbol to warn us that we must redeem the common man from the evils of poverty and ignorance, disease and squalor."

In one of those magnificent well-constructed periods he was noted for, Dr.Radhakrishnan concluded. "The price of partition has not yielded the expected communal peace. If the situation is not to worsen, if the two dominions are not to merit the ridicule of the world. If we wish to disappoint Mr.Winston Churchill and his friends, if we are to settle down as good neighbours, we must turn over a new page, remove from our hearts every trace of bitterness and resentment, and shake off that pride which prevents us from confessing our faults and makes us unwilling to open our hearts to one another. Friendship begets friendship. Gandhiji is doing his best to undo the effects of the poison instilled in men's minds in recent years, or he will die in the process of making Hindus and Muslims live in peace. If Gandhiji has been able to rid himself of all rancor and hatred, to develop that flame of love which burns away all impurities, if he fears no evil even though he walks in the valley of the shadow of death, if he represents to us the eternal voice of hope, it is because he believes in the heritage of India, the power of the inward life of the spirit.

- S.Radhakrishnan

(*The Hindu*, October 4, 1997)

GANDHI BHAVAN, KAKINADA - A PROFILE

Shri Y.S.V.S.MURTY, M.Sc.,

Vice President,

Gandhibhavan, Kakinada.

Mahatma Gandhi visited Kakinada on 3rd April 1921 during his maiden visit to the Godavari District. He was given a civic reception and the Chairman Sri Yellajyosyula Venkateswarlu read out the welcome address. It was decided to hold the All India Congress Committee meeting at Kakinada in the year 1923. Inspired by Gandhiji's programmes of nonviolence and non cooperation, Dr. Tanikella Satyanarayana Murty and advocate Sri Komanduri Sathakopacharyulu plunged into the freedom movement. They started social service activities for the amelioration of depressed classes but these were run from private houses for a long time.

Later they acquired 7200 square yard site with a building behind the Municipal office in which Sir R.Venkata Ratnam Naidu lived till 1939. Gandhiji and Sevadal volunteers were also associated with that place for some time. This land was purchased from the Maharaja of Pithapuram at a cost of Rs. 4 per square yard. For this Dr. Tanikella Satyanarayana Murty sold his 52 acres of his ancestral property. An extent of 6.35 acres of land was donated by Sri M.Subba Rao of the Merla family of Velangi village and the revenue accruing from it is still being handed over by the family members for feeding the poor children. Thus came into being Gandhi Bhavan which was inaugurated on 1-12-1950 by the then Prime minister of Madras State Sri Pusapati Kumara Swami Raja. In this premises social service activities were continued. A school for weaker sections was set up in the building and the children were given training in tailoring and typing, besides helping them in their preparation for examinations as well.

However, on 7th November 1969 Kakinada was hit by a very severe cyclone and the school building collapsed. Fortunately as the children had left for Divali vacation there were no casualties. The activities were, however, continued in the adjoining tiled building which bore resemblance to the famous Sabarmati Ashram. The reconstruction work was taken up after a long time and the foundation stone was laid by the then AP finance minister Sri K.Rosaiah on 2-10-2006. The construction of 'The Gandhi Dhyanamandir' was completed from the M.L.A. funds and it was inaugurated by Sri Mootha Gopala Krishna M.L.A. on 13-7-2008.

Gandhi Bhavan has been organizing several meetings and social awareness programmes, notable among them being the stopping of the proposed Ship Breaking unit at Kakinada with the help of Green Peace. Kakinada has thus been saved from an environmental disaster and the Mada forests from extinction. Gandhi Bhavan was liberal in awarding a portion of its land, on lease, for the Maharshi Bulusu Sambamurty school for handicapped girls. Another portion of the land was given on lease for The Youngmen's Happy Club for Drama and for training artists.

Several photographs on Gandhiji, his life and message were digitized and a permanent exhibition adorns the walls of the Dhyanamandir. The exhibition was inaugurated by the Deputy Speaker Sri Mandali Buddha Prasad on 9-7-2016. To commemorate Gandhiji's 150th birth anniversary, a bronze statue of Mahatma Gandhi was installed in Gandhi Bhavan with a cost of Rs 4.5 lakhs. A commemoration lecture on "Mahatma Gandhi: His life and message" by Prof. A.Prasanna Kumar M.A.(Hons), Ph.D., President, Centre for Policy Studies, Visakhapatnam was arranged at Adikavi Nannaya University M.S.N.Campus, Kakinada on 26-9-2019. The statue of Mahatma Gandhi in the Gandhi Bhavan was unveiled by the District Collector Sri D. Muralidhar Reddy I.A.S. on 28-9-2019.

Under the auspices of Gandhi Bhavan competitions in essay writing, elocution, drawing and patriotic songs are being being conducted and prizes awarded on Gandhi jayanthi during the last fifteen years. This year a Peace March was held from Gandhinagar Park to Gandhi Bhavan, followed by the customary prize distribution function.

Gandhi Bhavan has a library which contains all the 100 volumes of Mahatma's Collected Works, besides many other relevant and rare books on Gandhiji. Sri D.V.N.Sarma, Secretary Gandhi Bhavan has donated amount for the construction of the library building in memory of his beloved wife, late Smt. Venkataramana. Another building for office purpose has been raised with a donation from the family of Sri Yechury Sitaram, M.P. The Centre for Gandhian Studies is also functioning in Gandhi Bhavan with Prof. I.Dosagiri Rao, former Special Officer, Andhra University Campus, Kakinada, as its Director.





With Best Compliments

GANDHI BHAVAN KAKINADA

~ Founders ~

**Sri Tanikella Satyanarayana Murthy &
Sri Komanduri Sathagopalacharyulu**

**CENTRE FOR GANDHIAN STUDIES,
KAKINADA**

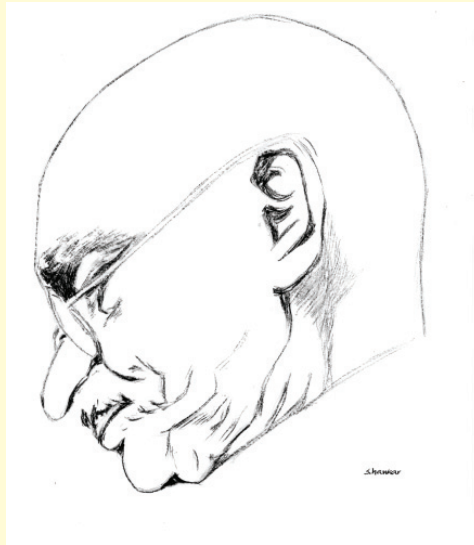
FATHER OF THE NATION

Great as this man of God was in his life he has been greater in his death and I have not a shadow of doubt that by his death he has served the great cause as he served it throughout his life. The only way to express our determination, to pledge ourselves anew to conduct ourselves in a befitting manner and to dedicate ourselves to the great task which he undertook and which he accomplished to a large extent. So we have to work, we have to labour, we have to sacrifice, and thus prove, to some extent, at least worthy followers of his.

Jawaharlal Nehru

To be true, to be simple, to be pure and gentle of heart, to remain cheerful and contented in sorrow and danger, to 'love life and not to fear death, to serve the spirit and not to be haunted by the spirits of the dead, nothing better has ever been taught or lived since the world first began.

S.Radhakrishnan



Bapu gave life to a dead country. Ba lent him a helping hand. Let the picture of both of them be constantly before our eyes.

Vallabhbhai Patel

This small man so full of a large love of men, extended beyond India and beyond time..... There was a mirror in the Mahatma in which everyone could see the best in himself, and when the mirror broke, it seemed that the thing in oneself might be fled forever.

Edgar Snow