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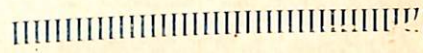


# **ONLY THE MESSAGE OF MAHATMA GANDHI CAN SAVE THE WORLD**

If we follow the ideals propounded by Mahatma Gandhi it can bring about revolutionary changes in social, economic and political fields in our country and influence the entire mankind. It may not be possible for all of us to follow all ideals dear to Gandhiji, but even if we try to follow some of his ideals, we can benefit ourselves and the country as a whole will be benefited. Besides truth and non-violence, one of his great ideals was that right means must be adopted to achieve a right end. Dishonest means should not be adopted even for an expediency. But this ideal is being deviated more than followed. Dishonest means are often adopted for acquiring wealth as this is the easy way. In the political field extremists are sacrificing truth and non-violence resulting in conflict and unrest. Violent weapons have threatened the very existence of the human civilization. All the right thinking people have now realised that only the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi can save the world. It has been decided by the State Mahatma Gandhi Centenary Committee to install inscriptions bearing the eleven messages of Mahatma Gandhi in every Block of the State, but that is not enough. Even inscriptions of Asoka are still there but these great messages are more deviated than followed in life. It will, therefore, be more useful if we follow these messages in practice.

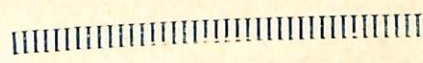
**SHRI R. N. SINGH DEO**  
CHIEF MINISTER, ORISSA





Generations to come will scarce believe that such a one as this, ever in flesh and blood, walked upon this earth.

—Einstein







The beginning of freedom movement in Orissa. Gandhiji is seen addressing a meeting on the Kathjori river bed in 1921 in which Utkalamani Pandit Gopabandhu Das was present

A true friend of Harijans, Gandhiji stepped into the cottage of a Harijan in village Lekhanpur in Cuttack district in course of Harijan tour





# Voice Of Bapu

## FEARLESSNESS

Fearlessness is the first requisite of spirituality, said Mahatma Gandhi. Here, in his own words, are his thoughts on the gospel of fearlessness.

Fearlessness is the first requisite of spirituality. Cowards can never be moral. Where there is fear there is no religion. Fearlessness is a *sine qua non* for the growth of the other noble qualities. How can one seek truth or cherish love without fearlessness? Fearlessness connotes freedom from all external fears—fear of disease, bodily injury or death, of disposses- sion, of missing one's nearest and dearest, of losing reputation or giving offence, and so on.

Fear is a thing which I dislike. Why should one man be afraid of another man? Man should stand in fear of God alone and then he can shed all other fears. Let us fear God and we shall cease to fear a man.

Perfect fearlessness can be attained only by him who has realised the Supreme, as it implies, the height of freedom from delusion. But one can always progress towards this goal by determined and constant endeavour and by increasing in

"Let us forget all thoughts of I am a Hindu, you a Muslim, or I am a Gujarati, you a Madrasi. Let us sink 'I' and 'mine' in a common Indian nationality. We shall be free only when a large number of our people are determined to swim or sink together."

MAHATMA GANDHI



oneself. As for the inner foes, one must never walk in their fear. We are rightly afraid of animal passion, anger and the like. External fears cease of their own accord when once we have conquered these traitors within the camp. All fears revolve round the body as a centre, and would, therefore, disappear as soon as one got rid of attachment for the body.

All fear is baseless fabric of our own vision. Fear has no place in our hearts when we have shaken off the attachment for wealth, for family and for the body. The wealth, the family and the body will be there, just the same, we have only to change our attitude to them. All these are not ours but God's. Nothing whatever in this world is ours. Even we ourselves are His. Why then should we entertain any fears? When we thus cease to be masters and reduce ourselves to the rank of servants, humbler than the very dust under our feet, all fears will roll away like mists; we shall attain ineffable peace and see Satyanaryan (the God of Truth) face to face. Fearlessness does not mean arrogance or aggressiveness. That in itself is a sign of fear. Fearlessness presupposes calmness and peace of mind. For that it is necessary to have a living faith in God.

Each individual must be taught the art of self-defence. It is more a mental state that has to be inculcated than that our bodies should be trained for retaliation. Our mental training has been one of felling helpless. Bravery is not a quality of the body, it is of the soul. I have seen cowards encased in tough mussels, and rate courage in the frailest body.

In this country of self-suppression and timidity, almost bordering on cowardice, we cannot have too much bravery, too much self-sacrifice..... I want.....the greater bravery of the meek, the gentle, and the non-violent, the bravery will mount the gallows without injuring, or harbouring any thought of injury to a single soul. There is no bravery greater than resolute refusal to bend the knee to an earthly power, no matter how great, and that, without bitterness or spirit and in the fullness of faith that the spirit alone lives, nothing else does.

We have two choices before us. We can become a great military power, or if we follow my way, we can become a great non-violent and invincible power. In either case the first condition is the shedding of all fear.

"We may call ourselves Christians, Hindus or Mohammedans. Whatever we may be, beneath that diversity there is a oneness which is unmistakable. As far as my experience goes, at one time or other, we the Mohammedans, Christians or Hindus discover that there are many points of contact and very few points of difference."

MAHATMA GANDHI



# HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

Hindu-Muslim unity must be our creed to last for all time and under all circumstances, said Gandhiji.

Here, in his own words, is what he has said about HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY.

Hindu-Muslim unity means not unity only between Hindus and Mussalmans, but between all those who believe India to be their home, no matter to what faith they belong.

Everybody knows that without unity between Hindus and Mussalmans, no certain progress can be made by the nation.

What can be more natural than that Hindus and Mussalmans born and bred in India having the same adversities, the same hopes, should be permanent friends, brothers born of the same Mother India?

Love is the basis of our friendship as it is of religion. I seek to gain Mussalman friendship by right of love. And if love persists even on the part of one community, unity will become a settled fact in our national life.

Toleration is the only thing that will enable persons belonging to different religions to live as good neighbours and friends.

If I could call myself, say, a Christian, or a Mussalman, with my own interpretation of the Bible or the Koran, I should

"Truth is the exclusive property of no single scripture."

MAHATMA GANDHI



not hesitate to call myself either. I do believe that in the other world there are neither Hindus, nor Christians, nor Mussalmans. There all are judged not according to their labels, or professions, but according to their actions, irrespective of their professions.

Religion is no test of nationality, but a personal matter between man and his God. In the sense of nationality they are Indians, first and Indians last, no matter what religion they profess.

If not during my lifetime, I know that after my death both Hindus and Mussalmans will bear witness that I had never ceased to yearn after communal peace.

I have the same love for the Mussalman as for the Hindu. My heart feels for the Mussalmans as much as for the Hindu. If I could tear it open, you would discover there are no compartments in it, one reserved for the Hindu, another for the Mussalman and so on.

Hindu-Muslim Unity has been my passion from early youth. I count some of the noblest of Muslims as my friends.

The golden way is to be friends with the world and to regard the whole human family like members of one family. He who distinguishes between one's family and another's miseducates the members of his own and opens the way for discord and irreligion.

"If the seven lakhs of the villages of India were to be kept alive, and if peace that is at the root of all civilization is to be achieved, we have to make the spinning wheel the centre of all handicrafts."

The lawlessness (of communalism) is a monster with many faces. It hurts all in the end, including those who are primarily responsible for it.

Just as we do not break one another's heads in respect of civil matters, so may we not do even in respect of religious matters.

There is no room for goondaism in any religion worth the name, be it Islam, Hinduism or any other.

I am convinced that the masses do not want to fight, if the leaders do not. If, therefore, the leaders agree that mutual rows should be, as in all advanced countries, erased out of our public life as being barbarous and irreligious, I have no doubt that the masses will quietly follow them.

Each must respect the other's religion, must refrain from even secretly thinking ill of the other.

No propaganda can be allowed which reviles other religions. To revile one another's religion, to make reckless statements, to utter untruths, to break the heads of innocent men, to desecrate temples or mosques is a denial of God.

The key to the solution of communal tangle lies in everyone following the best in his own religion and entertaining equal regard for the other religions and their followers.

MAHATMA GANDHI



In trying to explore the hidden treasures of ancient culture, I have come upon this inestimable boon that all that is permanent in ancient Hindu culture is also to be found in the teachings of Jesus, the Buddha, Mahomed and Zoroaster.

Hinduism has absorbed the best of all the faiths of the world and in that sense is not an exclusive religion. Hence it can have no quarrel with Islam or its followers.

Islam means peace. The peace cannot be confined to the Muslims. It must mean peace for the whole world.

Everybody is agreed about the necessity of this (communal) unity. But everybody does not know that unity does not mean political unity which may be imposed. It means an unbreakable heart unity.

If Hindu-Muslim unity is endangered because an Arya Samaj preacher or a Mussalman preacher preaches his faith in

obedience to a call from within, that unity is only skin-deep.

This (Hindu-Muslim) unity therefore cannot be a mere policy to be discarded when it does not suit us. We can discard it only when we are tired of *Swaraj*. Hindu-Muslim unity must be our creed to last for all time and under all circumstances.

We may think we are living, but disunited we are worse than dead. The Hindu thinks that in quarrelling with the Mussalman he is benefiting Hinduism and the Mussalman thinks that in fighting a Hindu he is benefiting Islam. But each is ruining his faith.

Let all of us Hindus, Mussalmans, Parsis, Sikhs, Christians live amicably as Indians, pledged to live and die for our motherland. Let it be our ambition to live as the children of the same mother, retaining our individual faiths and yet being one, like the countless leaves of one tree.

## HINDU MUSLIM UNITY

"That unity is strength is not merely a copybook maxim, but a rule of life is in no case so clearly illustrated as in the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity. Divided we must fall. Any third power may easily enslave India so long as we Hindus and Mussalmans are ready to cut each other's throats. Hindu-Muslim unity means not unity only between Hindus and Mussalmans, but between all those who believe India to be their home, no matter to what faith they belong."

*Young India*, May 11, 1921)

"Untouchability is repugnant to reason and to the instinct of mercy, pity and love."

MAHATMA GANDHI



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DR. R. R. DIWAKAR

## Social Change and Non-violence

Whenever I thought or had opportunity of going abroad, I had definite objectives in mind. In fact, in 1960 when I toured the U. S. A., I insisted that my programme should be in consultation with me though it involved one more trip from San-Francisco to Washington and back.

This time, two main interests guided me to hold conversations with those in charge of Gandhi Centenary observance abroad and to contact people and institutions who were committed to peace and non-violent means.

London was the first point of contact in Europe. I have already said something about the London School of Non-violence conducted by the Dr. Martin Luther King Foundation.

A symposium on the above subject under the auspices of the King Foundation was very interesting in many ways. Delegates from about 25 countries, mostly European, sat deliberating for three days on the theme. They were not all committed to any particular means of social change. But all were of the conviction that a real change in the structure of society, on all levels, economic, educational and political was necessary. The present structure did not respond to the inner urges of progressing humanity, even in the most affluent societies. The strong disaffection and several types of agitations, both violent and non-violent, especially among the younger generation, indicated radical change.

Well-known figures like the Reverend Canon Collins of Christian Action Group,

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"The voice of conscience is the voice of God and it is the final judge of the rightness of every deed and every thought.

MAHATMA GANDHI



the Italian Gandhi Daniel Dolci, Devi Prasad of War Resisters International, were all there. The Gandhian point of view was represented by me and Shri Devendra Kumar Gupta. One of our friends spoke in Hindi and it was translated in English. Daniel Dolci spoke in Italian and it was also translated.

The discussions boiled down to the criterion or test which should prevail in judging the progressive nature of the new society we all want.

I put forth the proposition that man, his freedom, his dignity, his equality and equal opportunity with all other men, without reference to race, creed, sex should be the criterion. This means that all exploitation must stop, no suppression or oppression or injustice should prevail. Fundamental human rights must have priority. Man everywhere and in all political and other systems must be able to participate in discussions and decisions concerning himself and society.

This was agreed to. It is because this criterion is not there, there are all kinds of injustice. One of the delegates pointed out that the degree of exploitation and injustice between man and woman was the highest. I readily agreed and added that Gandhi was not a feminist or a suffragist; but he saw to it that they became equal partners.

The big part that women played during the freedom struggle in India and their

subsequent holding of big offices in Cabinets, etc., was due to Gandhi's strong views in this matter.

Regarding the means of social change, some of the European delegates argued that non-violence may have been alright in an underdeveloped, mainly rural, country like India. But can that kind of non-violence be of use in a highly industrialised, computer-using, complicated society like that of Europe ?

I said that the type of non-violence and the actual form it should take will have to depend upon circumstances, leadership, and so on. Gandhi himself gave different turns to his methods but they were always non-violent; for instance, in 1940, when the War was on, he started Individual Satyagraha, under which thousands went to jail. In 1942, he gave a call for Mass Satyagraha.

Gandhi's greatest contribution in respect of fighting evil and injustice, was the organisation of non-violent forces to the extent of bringing overwhelming pressure on powers-that-be, and to infuse people with the courage to non-co-operate with unjust methods of Government.

There was a general and firm consensus of opinion in the participants of the Symposium that non-violence was the only way if violent dictatorship or authoritarian rule, which is the greatest evil, is to be avoided after revolution.

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"Government of the people, by the people and for the people cannot be conducted at the bidding of one man, however great he may be."

MAHATMA GANDHI



## LAWS OF FRIENDSHIP

"..... There must always be two sides for a dispute to arise. When one party commits an error, it behoves the other to remain calm. Only then can Hindu-Muslim unity survive. To remain good provided the other side remains good—this is no law of friendship, nor of war. It is but a bargain. In friendship there is no room for bargaining. Friendship can exist only between brave parties and bargaining between weak parties. We are both weak and strong. Consequently, the relationship of Hindus and Muslims is both one of friendship and of bargaining. Let us hope that day by day, the element of bargaining will disappear and that of friendship grow. If each side progressively purifies itself and becomes stronger, this friendship will become permanent.

"Bravery does not mean browbeating others. He is not a brave man who uses his strength to terrorize others. The brave man is he who, though possessing strength, does not use it to intimidate others but, on the contrary, protects the weak. Can a brave man know fear? Muslims are physically strong. Even if they have the support of the whole world, Hindus should not be afraid of them, but, placing their trust in God, should refrain from deviating by a hair's breadth from the path of justice. Muslims, too, should be ashamed to seek help from outside and should trust the Hindus despite the latter's numerical superiority. However, even if both sides do not act in this civilised manner and only one side does so, there need be no disruption of Hindu-Muslim unity. That is, even if one side is firm in doing its *dharma*, there will be no enmity between the two. He alone may be said to be firm in his *dharma* who trusts his safety to God and, untroubled by anxiety, follows the path of virtue. If Hindus apply this rule to the Moplah affair, they will not, even when they see the error of the Moplahs, accuse the Muslims. They will help those Hindus who have suffered losses and will enable them to stand on their feet.

"Swaraj means that even if a person is in a minority of one he may oppose the rest and be unafraid. Hindus should not depend wholly on the Muslims' good sense. Nor should the Muslims be frightened by the meanness of some Hindus. Each community should rely on its own strength and help the other. Why should a single Hindu have run away on account of the Moplahs' atrocities? Why should even one Hindu have reported the whereabouts of the Moplahs out of fear to the British troops? No Hindu was bound to report where the Moplahs had taken shelter. Why should a single Hindu have made a show of going through Islamic religious rites out of fear of the Moplahs? The rule which we follow in our fight against the British rule, viz., **laying down our lives, should be followed in all cases of oppression.** If we are ready to die at the hands of the tyrant rather than do his bidding, we shall be stronger than even the lion. Anyone who overpowers a tyrant by killing him will one day be tempted to become a tyrant himself, for, instead of looking to God for support, he will have learnt to depend on his own brute strength. A person who regards himself as God is bound to be destroyed. He can never be free because he has sought to usurp God's place and, in consequence, has lost his own rightful place. He has yet to strive and know what he is."

(Navajivan, Jan. 16, 1822)

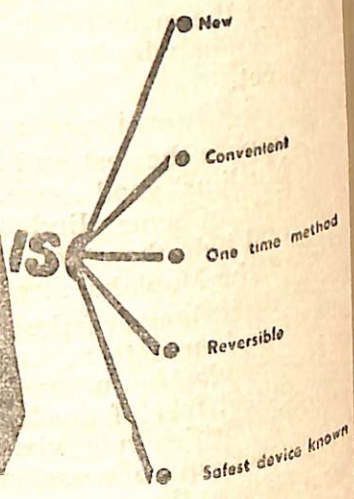
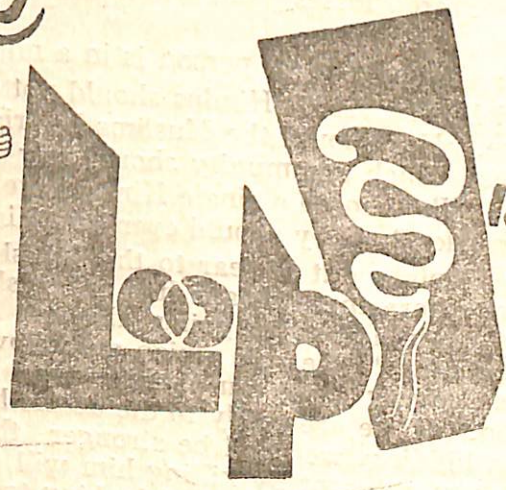


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# Mahatma Gandhi: Harbinger of Industrial Peace

As inflation and galloping rise in prices of essential commodities corrode off the real earnings of the working classes in India, industrial unrest, sitdown strikes, *gheraos*, and violence begin to multiply. Good industrial relations, so well-established and practised during Gandhiji's association with the trade union movement in Ahmedabad have almost vanished from the industrial scene of Independent India. In spite of a plethora of labour legislation, sound labour-management relations have had no stable growth. Working conditions, safety measures, worker productivity, welfare facilities have deteriorated. Employee morale is at a low ebb; employer-employee relations are increasingly becoming strenuous.

It is in this context that labour and management can do well to recall

Gandhiji's teachings on industrial relations. The programme of action that the Mahatma practised to establish industrial harmony has greater relevance in the India of today than it had ever before.

## THE TRUSTEESHIP CONCEPT

The basic philosophy underlying Mahatma Gandhi's views on industrial relations was that capital had a moral duty towards labour, and labour too was morally bound to do an honest day's work. The inter-relationship and inter-action was to be on the moral plane.

Gandhiji advised the industrial magnates to act as trustees of the enterprises under their ownership or management. As trustee-managers they were to provide basic welfare facilities for their employees,

"Communal hatred was, perhaps, the worst kind of leprosy imaginable."

MAHATMA GANDHI



in addition to satisfying the needs of consumers, and protecting the interests of the shareholders. A situation where mill-owners were to roll in luxury, and the mill-hands were to live in slums in abject poverty was abhorrent to Gandhiji. It was immoral for a society to permit such gross inequality, injustice, and unjustifiable disparity between labour and capital.

Likewise, Gandhiji advised the labourers to behave as trustees. On several occasions while addressing workers' meetings he used to advise : ".....I would ask you to regard yourselves as trustees for the nation for which you are labouring. A nation may do without its millionaires and without its capitalists, but a nation can never do without its labour."<sup>1</sup>

### GANDHIJI'S IDENTIFICATION WITH LABOUR

Gandhiji identified himself with labourers, be they workers in the farm, or in the factory ; be they *kisans* or *bhangis*, or textile workers. He established a close bond between himself and labourers since the time as a young barrister he handled the lawsuit of Bal Sundaram, an indentured labourer in South Africa. Gandhiji treated himself in no way different from an honest and sincere worker. He was involved in many labour movements, and was one of the greatest well-wishers of labour. In meetings consisting of

workers in mill-towns, he used to address them as "Fellow labourers." He used to emphasize that labour is a big force, it possesses great Power. He advised labourers to carry on self-purification, to give up drinks and drugs, to stop eating carrion, and to shun gambling and debts.

Gandhiji prided in declaring that he was himself a labourer. He said : "I entertain such great respect for the dignity of labour that I have thrown in my lot with the labourers and for many, many years now I have lived in their midst like them labouring with my hands and with my feet."<sup>2</sup>

On another occasion at a workers' meeting, Gandhiji said that he was a labourer by conviction and *bhangi*. "As such his interests were bound with those of labour. As such he wished to tell them that violence would never save them. They would be killing the goose that laid golden egg. What he had been saying for years was that labour was far superior to capital. Without labour, gold, silver and copper were a useless burden. It was labour which extracted precious ore from the bowels of the earth. He could quite conceive labour existing without metal. Labour was priceless, not gold. He wanted marriage between capital and labour."<sup>3</sup>

### ROLE OF INDUSTRIAL STRIKES

Although Gandhiji was involved in workers' strikes and had to undertake a

"My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest."



## MY VISION

"Before I ever knew anything of politics in my early youth, I dreamt the dream of communal unity of the heart. I shall jump, in the evening of my life, like a child, to feel that the dream has been realized in this life. The wish for living the full span of life, portrayed by the seers of old and which they permit us to set down at 125 years, will then revive. Who would not risk sacrificing his life for the realisation of such a dream? Then we shall have real Swaraj. Then, though legally and geographically we may still be two States, in daily life no one will think that we were separate States. The vista before me seems to be, as it must be to you, too glorious to be true. Yet, like a child in a famous picture drawn by a famous painter I shall not be happy till I have got it. I live and want to live for no lesser goal. Let the seekers from Pakistan help me to come as near the goal as it is humanly possible. A goal ceases to be one when it is reached. The nearest approach is always possible. What I have said holds good irrespective of whether others do it or not. It is open to every individual to purify himself or herself so as to render him or her fit for that land of promise. I remember to have read, I forget whether in the Delhi Fort or the Agra Fort, when I visited them in 1896, a verse on one of the gates, which when translated reads: If there is a paradise on earth, it is here, it is here, it is here. That fort, with all its magnificence at its best, was no paradise in my estimation. But I should love to see that verse with justice inscribed on the gates of Pakistan at all the entrances. In such a paradise, whether it is in the Indian Union or in Pakistan, there will be neither paupers nor beggars, nor high nor low, neither millionaire employers nor half-starved employees, nor intoxicating drinks nor drugs. There will be the same respect for women as vouchsafed to men, and the chastity and purity of men and women will be jealously guarded. Where every woman except one's wife will be treated by men of all religions as mother, sister or daughter according to her age. Where there will be equal respect for no untouchability and where there will be equal respect for all faiths. They will be all, proudly, joyously and voluntarily, bread labourers. 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. Let this assure the doubters and sceptics that I have not the slightest desire that the fast should be ended as quickly as possible. It matters little if the ecstatic wishes of a fool like me are never realized and the fast is never broken. I am content to wait as long as it may be necessary, but it will hurt me to think that people have acted merely in order to save me. I claim that God has inspired this fast and it will be broken only when and if He wishes it. No human agency has ever been known to thwart, nor will it ever thwart, the Divine Will."

(*Harijan*, Jan. 18, 1947)



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st in the interests of the mill labourers Ahmedabad, Gandhiji never believed at the principle of brute force or 'Might Right' can be successful for accomplishing trade union objectives. Gandhiji has turned labourers against undesirable, violent strikes. He wrote: "Strikes, cessation of work and *hartal* are wonderful things no doubt, but it is not difficult to use them. Workmen ought to organize themselves into strong labour unions, and on no account shall they strike work without the consent of these unions. Strikes should not be risked without previous negotiations with mill-owners."<sup>4</sup>

For all those who are interested in industrial harmony in this country, Gandhiji's advice about how to prevent industrial disputes is worth pondering over. As early as 1920, Gandhi wrote: "Leaders, if you are interested in ameliorating the condition of labour, if you want to befriend the workman and love him, you will see from the above that there is only one royal road before you, viz. to elevate the workmen by creating between the two parties family relationship. And to secure this end there is no path like truth. Mere increase of wages should not satisfy you, you must watch by what means they get it and how they spend it."<sup>5</sup>

How should capitalists behave with workers and deal with strikes? Gandhiji's views on this issue have been soundly stated. He said: "Strikes ought to be

impossible when there is perfect understanding between capital and labour, mutual respect and recognition of equality .....my advice to employers would be that they should willingly regard workers as the real owners of concerns which they fancy they have created. They should further regard it as their duty to equip employees with sound education that would draw out the intelligence dormant in them and gladly promote and welcome the power that this combination of the workers gives them."<sup>6</sup>

At a meeting at Geneva while Gandhi was in Switzerland, Gandhi was asked how workers can get justice without resorting to violence. A questioner asked Gandhi—'capitalists use force to suppress trade unionism; shouldn't the workers also retaliate in violence?'

Gandhiji answered that his life's mission was to eliminate this law of the jungle in labour-management relations as in all other human affairs. As the Chief Adviser of the Labour Union at Ahmedabad, he had successfully implemented non-violent methods in dealing between labour and capital for nearly fifteen years. Gandhiji explained: "In my humble opinion labour can always vindicate itself if labour is sufficiently united and self-sacrificing. No matter how oppressive the capitalists may be, I am convinced that those who are connected with labour and guide the labour movement have themselves no idea of the

Courage, endurance, fearlessness and above all—self-sacrifice are the qualities required of our leaders."

MAHATMA GANDHI



resources that labour can command and which capital can never command. If labour would only understand and recognize that capital is perfectly helpless without labour, labour will immediately come to its own.....we have come to believe that capital is all in all on this earth. But a moment's thought would show that labour has at its disposal capital which the capitalists will never possess....."7

In another connection, Gandhiji also suggested the same non-violent approach to capital-labour disputes. He said: "..... exploitation of the poor can be extinguished not by effecting the destruction of a few millionaires, but by removing the ignorance of the poor and teaching them to non-co-operate with their exploiters. That will convert the exploiters also. I have even suggested that ultimately it will lead to both being equal partners."8

### TRADE UNION'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Samuel Gompers, the celebrated trade union leader of the U. S. A. was once asked during the last century: 'What does labour want?' Gompers' now-famous brief answer in one single word was—**MORE**. In other words, labour wants more and more of everything. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century this was the attitude of trade union organizers. They demanded *more pay, more housing, more security for union members.*

This was also the prevalent attitude of trade union leaders in India during the early years of the trade union movement. This attitude has not changed even today. Enlightened labour leadership is yet to emerge in India. Leaders of labour unions are apt to emphasize their rights and make demands against the employers. In general, the tendency is to develop a fighting attitude.

But trade unions cannot best serve their own interests by always asking for *more*, or for a larger share of the cake. To get a larger share of the cake, labour must produce a large-size cake, and improve its productivity constantly. Labour must fulfil its own obligations and contribute its own share to increase the national output. Production must increase first, before the distribution of a large share is claimed or can be received.

Gandhiji wanted trade union organizations to develop on sane, and responsible lines. Gandhiji underlined this idea of responsible trade unionism in the following words. "Whilst you have a perfect right to demand from your employers good treatment, adequate wages and decent convenience, it is expected of you that you will render proper, honest service for the wages that you get.....you must take pride in working for the concern as if it were your own."9

### MINIMUM LIVING WAGES

The demand for higher wages and still higher wages often becomes the central

"I think the political life must be an echo of private life and that there cannot be any divorce between the two."



issue in labour-management disputes in India. Gandhiji advised the employers to pay decent wages to the working man. In all the industrial and commercial enterprises over which Gandhi had some influence, wages were fixed on a satisfactory basis. The All India Village Industries Association was advised by the Mahatma to fix minimum living wages for spinners and for other artisans working in their various units all over the country. It was agreed to ensure for all workmen a level of wages which could provide at reasonably balanced diet to each. Mahatma Gandhi declared: "If we find that it is not possible for any industry to pay this minimum living wage, we had better close our shop. We should see that in any industry that we handle, the wages cover a reasonable maintenance allowance."<sup>10</sup>

The Council of the All India Spinners Association decided that it should give wages on the basis of a scale sufficient to enable the spinner to have, besides minimum clothing requirements, adequate nutritive diet for eight hours' efficient work..... This wage is, however, related to efficient work and can be actually earned only if the requisite standard of output and quality of yarn is attained by the spinner."<sup>11</sup>

In 1939, the Council decided to give a wage of eight annas for eight hours' work to each spinner. At that time, nowhere in rural areas did labourers or artisans earn this amount. Under the inspiration

of Mahatma Gandhi, the Spinners' Association introduced a system of progressively increasing wage payments. In those days it was really a pioneer movement. The objective was not merely to lay down a standard, but to enable the *bulk of the spinners* to actually earn the high wages.

#### BETTER HOUSING FOR WORKERS

The industrial relations programme enunciated by Gandhiji included progressive method of wage payment as well as provision of better housing for workers. Gandhiji used to visit the residential areas of factory workers, mine workers, and plantation labourers. Usually he inspected housing colonies provided for sweepers by municipalities. Everywhere he emphasised the need for improved housing. Speaking at a mass meeting of the mine-workers at Kolar Gold Fields, Gandhiji observed: "he had paid a hurried visit to the labour huts which seemed to him too small, too ill-lighted, and too low-roofed to be fit for human habitation....."<sup>12</sup>

Gandhiji had heard that living conditions of labourers in Mussoorie were deplorable. "They lived in small, overcrowded, dirty and evil-smelling rooms....." Commenting on this poor housing he said in his post-prayer speech "I do not grudge the rich their riches provided that they do not forget the poor and share their riches with them and provided their riches are not gained at the expense of and the impoverishment of others."<sup>13</sup>

"Service can have no meaning unless one takes pleasure in it. When it is done for show or for fear of public opinion, it stunts the man and crushes his spirit."

MAHATMA GANDHI



## INDUSTRIAL SAFETY & ACCIDENT PREVENTION

Mahatma Gandhi visualised a decentralised economy where costly and complicated machinery and capital equipment would not be the most usual instrument of production. But in such industries where complicated or dangerous machinery had, of necessity, to be used, adequate safety measures were to be provided for the safety of the employees. Gandhiji drew attention to the safety devices and protective measures adopted in mills and factories in the United Kingdom. He emphasised the role of the Government in programmes of industrial safety. He mentioned the care "with which the lives of employees are regarded by the Government in England and to drive the truth home that such meticulous care is exercised in devising methods of not only protecting employees engaged in dirty or injurious trades but also of protecting the public." 14

## GANDHIAN CONCEPT OF INDUSTRIAL PEACE

The labour unions, and the mill-owners who were influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of industrial relations blazed the trail of a new era of industrial peace and harmony in our country during Gandhi's lifetime. The mill-owners fully realised that co-operation of the Unions for the betterment of the living standards of employees was the surest way to promote workers' efficiency, and the mill's prosperity.

The Unions also displayed a remarkable sense of responsibility and awareness of the task facing them. This sensible attitude of the employees' organizations revealed in an annual report of the Ahmedabad Labour Union. It says: "We understand that we have to come to the mill perfectly prepared to commence work right at starting time. We should not leave the workroom more frequently or for a minute longer than is necessitated by urgent demands of nature. We should assure to the mills flawless work, careful handling of machinery, and minimum waste of materials and stores."<sup>15</sup>

Industrial peace in a country can be guaranteed only when labour and capital deal with each other on mutually satisfying terms. How many Unions in India at present are pledged to assure the mills flawless work or minimum waste of materials?

The keynote of the present day industrial relations policies and programmes in the U. S. A. is that the top management is becoming employee-oriented. It is the commitment of top management that ensured an enlightened labour policy in the U. S. A. The employee oriented labour policy of the U. S. resembles to some extent the industrial relations practices of the Gandhian era in India.

An employee-oriented, morally justified labour policy can root out many of the present day evils associated with industries.

"The soul of religions is one, but it is encased in a multitude of forms. The latter will persist to the end of time. Wise men will ignore the outward crust and see the same soul living under a variety of crusts."

MAHATMA GANDHI



trial unrest in our country. But first the employers and industrialists in India must be prepared for this *mental* revolution. The unions must also be prepared for total commitment to a policy of responsible unionism and collective bargaining.

Gandhiji has given a clarion call for this revolution in men's minds: "We have ignored the proletariat for centuries, and whilst we have arrogated to ourselves the right of commanding their labour, the thought had never crossed us that they have a right to dictate their wage, that labour is as much their capital as money is ours. It is time we begin to think in terms of their needs, their hours of work and leisure and their standard of living."<sup>16</sup>

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"Performance of one's duty should be independent of public opinion."

MAHATMA GANDHI



## ECONOMIC EQUALITY

"Let there be no mistake about my conception of Swaraj. It is complete independence of alien control and complete economic independence. So at one end you have political independence, at the other the economic. It has two other ends. One of them is moral and social, the corresponding end is *dharma*, that is, religion in the highest sense of the term. It includes Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc., but is superior to them all. You may recognise it by the name of Truth, not the honesty of expediency, but the living Truth that pervades everything and will survive all destruction and all transformation. The moral and social uplift may be recognised by the term we are used to, that is, non-violence. Let us call this the square of swaraj, which will be out of shape if any of its angles is untrue. In the language of the Congress, we cannot achieve this political and economic freedom without truth and non-violence or, in concrete terms, without a living faith in God and hence moral and social elevation.

"By political independence, I do not mean a mere imitation of the British House of Commons or the Soviet rule of Russia or the Fascist rule of Italy or the Nazi rule of Germany. They have systems suited to their own genius. We must have ours suited to ours. How that can be is more than I can tell. I have described it as Ram Raj, that is, sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority. The Congress constitutions of Nagpur and Bombay, for which I am mainly responsible, are an attempt to achieve this type of Swaraj.

"Then take economic independence. It is not the product of industrialization of the modern or the Western type. Indian economic independence means to me the economic uplift of every individual, male and female, by his or her own conscious effort. Under that system, all men and women will have enough clothing—not the mere loin cloth, but what we understand by the term necessary articles of clothing—and enough food, including milk and butter which are today denied to millions.

"This brings me to socialism. Real socialism has been handed down to us by our ancestors who taught: "All land belongs to Gopal, where, then, is the boundary line? Man is the maker of that line and he can, therefore, unmake it." Gopal literally means the State, that is, the people. That the land today does not belong to the people is too true. But the fault is not in the teaching. It is in us who have not lived up to it.

"I have no doubt that we can make as good an approach to it as is possible for any nation, not excluding Russia, and that a without violence. The most effective substitute for violent dispossession is the wheel, with all its implications. Land and all property is his who will work it. Unfortunately, the workers are or have been kept ignorant of this simple fact."

(From Speech at Faizpur Congress, December 27, 1936)



# Gandhi's Revolutionary Significance

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born at a time when the West like a Colossus bestrode the entire world. Not only were western powers politically dominant, their supremacy in the economic, cultural and intellectual fields was equally unquestioned. India and indeed the whole of Asia and Africa suffered from the loss of political independence, economic buoyancy and spiritual energy. In India, the last attempt of the Mogul Emperor and his adherent to revive past glory was defeated after the revolt of 1857. Turkey was looked upon as the sick man of Europe and her empire was in the process of rapid disintegration. New burdens had been imposed upon China after her defeat in the Opium War. Japan had received a rude awakening from the incursions of the emerging United States. Russia was

pushing her frontiers into the heartlands of Asia and pressing east and south in search of an opening into the warm seas. Imperialism of the Western world was active on all sides and for the first time in recorded history, many Asians and Africans had begun to feel as if there was something preordained in the supremacy of the West.

Before Gandhi died, this mood of despondency had vanished. In its place was a new expectancy and hope, eager, confident and at times impatient. All countries of Asia and Africa stirred with a new life and claimed their rightful place in the mansions of Man. Not a little of the credit for this transformation belong to Gandhi. He was chiefly instrumental in restoring the self-respect of the Indian

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"If we are to make progress, we must not repeat history but make new history."

MAHATMA GANDHI



people and making the ordinary man feel a new sense of dignity. The awakening of India evoked a new thrill from far-flung regions of Asia and Africa. Rarely has a member of a subject nation achieved such position and prestige in his contemporary world. Within ten years of his death, imperialism was everywhere on the retreat.

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

Gandhi was one of the leaders of the new challenge to Western domination but

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

#### MACHINE

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

The abuse of the machine had led to the concentration of wealth and the growth of a soulless industrial civilization. Gandhi sought an escape from both these evils by his emphasis on the autonomous and self-

"To err is human, to own up one's error and so to act as to be proof against it, is manly."

MAHATMA GANDHI



contained village as the unit of society. In such small units, the human relationships between individuals cannot be ignored. Impersonal relationships replace human contacts when the social unit grows so large that individuals can no longer know each other as persons. The stress on human relationship would on the one hand ensure against the danger of licence or anarchy and on the other provide conditions for the growth of individual freedom. The small village community would thus avoid the risk of dictatorship of the State and anarchy of Statelessness.

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

### SOCIALISM

The difference in the socialist and the Gandhian solution is not difficult to understand. It is derived from the difference

in their attitude to the individual. For the socialist, the individual is secondary and socialists are prepared to impose equality political, economic and social—by violence if necessary. Gandhi on the other hand held the individual to be of supreme importance. Any imposition on his freedom was therefore to be avoided as far as possible. Equality which is the basis of economic independence must therefore be achieved through peaceful and non-violent methods. Socialists hold that political liberty may be achieved and has often been achieved through bloody revolution. In Gandhi's opinion only the form but not the substance of freedom can be achieved in this way. The results of a violent revolution are always liable to be lost by a more violent counter-revolution. Besides, those who have taken to the sword have more often than not perished by the sword. It was because of his awareness of this danger that Gandhi urged that the economic and political freedom of man must be attained without resort to violence. All violence is, according to him, born of hate and hence the only way of resolving human conflicts is through a conquest of hatred.

Gandhi's attitude to violence makes his message of special significance to the modern age. The fact that he developed his philosophy, not by denying current trends of thought, but by drawing upon various elements in them and forming a new combination compels both attention and respect. He was an inheritor to the liberal tradition and regarded personal liberty as one of the greatest values of

"Even a man's reforming zeal ought not to make him exceed limits."

MAHATMA GANDHI



life. With the philosophical anarchists he believed that the State should interfere as little as possible with the individual. He also believed in the tradition of collectivisation inherent in socialist thought. He imbibed all these teachings but gave a new turn to everything he learnt. He believed in personal liberty but felt that rights accrue only from the performance of duties. He was in favour of decentralisation only from the performance of the State. He pleaded that the good things of life must be shared but he was not prepared to advocate the use of violence for achieving this end.

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

### TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

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

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

Conflict or war for assuring survival is therefore no longer necessary. On the contrary war today threatens the very existence of man. Weapons of destruction have been fashioned which can destroy not only the warring parties but the entire world. The U. S. A. and the U. S. S. R. have enough atomic weapons

"Restraint is the law of our being. For highest perfection is unattainable without highest restraint."

MAHATMA GANDHI

ORISSA REVIEW, OCTOBER, 1969



to destroy themselves and everybody else. Today, any large-scale war may become global and lead to the annihilation of man. Science and technology have created conditions where mankind must feel and act as one or perish.

Not only has war among nations become an anachronism in the modern world but also class conflicts within the same nation. Major powers have withdrawn from the brink time and again because of their realization that a full-scale global war will destroy mankind. There is today a balance of terror which maintains an uneasy peace. This is some gain but there is still lack of realization that violence within the community may pose an equal threat. One reason is that no internal conflict today remains wholly internal. There are so many affiliations within and among nations that an internal conflict in one place may and does attract interference from outside. The Spanish civil war began as a conflict between two Spanish groups but soon developed into a rehearsal for the second world war because of intervention by major powers. Vietnam is a cruel reminder that great nations cannot refrain from interfering in the affairs of less powerful states. In western Asia, the problems can be resolved if the Great Powers do not intervene. There can thus be no assurance for the future unless violence, internal and international, is eliminated. Human conflicts began when Cain repudiated his responsibility for his brother. Today the logic of events has

compelled an increasing number of men and women throughout the world to realize that everyone must accept responsibility for everyone else.

### MAJOR CONTRIBUTION

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

"Every good movement passes through five stages : indifference, ridicule, abuse, repression, and respect."

MAHATMA GANDHI



Searching for causes, Gandhi concluded that justice and inequality among individuals and nations are the basic causes of tensions and hatred. The State seeks to reduce causes of internal tension by assuring equality of all in the eye of law. Progressive taxation to reduce inequalities in wealth is intended to serve the same purpose. The growing contacts among nations demand the application of similar methods to ensure justice and reduce glaring inequalities. It is a paradox of the modern age that the more the world is coming together through technological advances, the more barriers are being set up by Nation States to prevent the free intercourse of men.

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

Gandhi was a revolutionary who sought to transform human nature itself. He was

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

The supreme example of Gandhi's faith in non-violence and the importance of the individual is found in his own thought and action in the last days of his life. The years 1937-47 were years of stress and strain in India. As political independence drew nearer, the clashes of interest among different sections of the people reached a new intensity. India became free but at the cost of her unity. The transition to freedom was marked by violence and murder on a large scale. Gandhi stood firm against the rising tide of communal bitterness and passion. After helping to assuage tempers at first in Noakhali and then in Bihar and Calcutta, he came to Delhi where communal riots had broken out in the aftermath of the partition of India.

With characteristic courage, Gandhi faced the fury of the mob and preached

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"There is no school equal to a decent home and no teachers equal to honest virtuous parents."

MAHATMA GANDHI



the message reconciliation and friendship. His prayer meetings became a source of strength and solace to countless men and women in the capital and outside. Passions had become so inflamed that some misguided men tried to prevent these meetings but in spite of opposition, threats and attacks he continued fearlessly. There had been a murderous attack on him in Calcutta in September 1947. There were further attacks in Delhi and continuing threats. Nothing however could daunt him. With exemplary courage and patience, he pursued his chosen path of understanding, compassion and brotherhood. There was a stamp of greatness on everything he did from the time he opposed tyranny in South Africa but

perhaps even Gandhi had never reached the heights he achieved in his last six months. A new sweetness and strength welled out of all his words and action. Everyone who came in contact with him came away a purer and better man. The forces of evils were also gathering strength and on January 30, 1948 Gandhi paid the supreme price for his love of his fellow-men. An assassin's bullet struck him down and he died a physical death but spiritually he was renewed and joined the band of immortals whose names shine like stars in the firmament of human history.

(From MAHATMA GANDHI 100 YEARS)

### TRUE NATIONALISM

"There is nothing wrong in making a knowledge of Hindustani compulsory, if we are sincere in our declarations that Hindustani is or is to be the Rashtrabhasha or the common medium of expression. Latin was and probably still is compulsory in English schools. The study did not interfere with the study of English. On the contrary, English was enriched by a knowledge of the noble language. The cry of "mother tongue in danger" is either ignorant or hypocritical. And where it is sincere it speaks little for the patriotism of those who will grudge our children an hour per day for Hindustani. We must break through the provincial crust if we are to reach the core of all-India nationalism. Is India one country and one nation or many countries and many nations?"

"Bravery is not a quality of body, it is of the soul."

MAHATMA GANDHI



## UNITY IN DIVERSITY

"We may call ourselves Christians, Hindus or Mohammedans. Whatever we may be, beneath that diversity there is a oneness which is unmistakable. As far as my experience goes, at one time or other, we the Mohammedans, Christians or Hindus discover that there are many points of contact and very few points of difference.

"I know that Christian girls and Christian boys, at least some of them, consider that they have nothing in common with the vast masses of people. That is mere ignorance. No good Christian nowadays says that, and, I am sure, no one here in charge of your education gives you that training and teaches you that you have nothing in common with the masses. No matter to what religion you belong, I say that you were born in India, take Indian food and pass your life in India. Your life would be incomplete in more senses than one unless you can identify yourselves with the masses. What is that bond between the masses and yourselves?"

(From a speech at Women's Christian College,  
Madras, March 24, 1925)

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## Gandhiji and Leprosy

Mahatma Gandhi once said "Leper is a word of bad odour. India is perhaps a home of lepers next only to Central Africa. Yet they are as much a part of the society as the tallest among us. But they do not absorb our attention though they are least in need of it. I am tempted to call it heartless which certainly is in terms of non-violence". Leprosy is one of the oldest diseases of mankind. The disease has been prevalent for many centuries. It probably originated in Africa and spread very early to India. The earliest description of the disease can be found in ancient Indian literature. A reference of the disease can be found in Medieval European, Chinese, Japanese and Egyptian literature of the 7th and 8th centuries. References are found in the Bible, Zarath of the old Testament and lepra of the new testament.

The past of a leprosy patient is a sad story of hardship and cruel suffering at the hands of fellow beings. In England a person suffering from leprosy was declared dead to the world. In the Medieval Europe no leper ventured abroad save he carried his wooden clappers to warn others of his approach, while he called aloud his dreadful cry "Unclean, unclean". In Africa some barbarous tribals buried alive patients. Often shameful laws were imposed upon the leper depriving him of his home, his citizenship, his freedom and sunting him away from society. Gandhiji said, "If any one deserves special representation in our legislatures, it is the leper patient, for he has no voice of his own nor is there any one to voice his sorrow and right".

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"Ahimsa, is not a policy with me, but a creed, a religion."

MAHATMA GANDHI



In the midst of sad pictures of lepers in society there are examples of compassion from religious persons. As for instance Jesus Christ showed compassion towards lepers. He said, "Come thou I will clear thee". Another example of sacrifice is that in the Island of Molokai during the days of Father Damien the lepers were cast aside like filth. Father Damien lived with them and contacted the disease and he writes that his looks were, "not just what they were".

In the beginning of the nineteenth century there came a change in society cutting down the fear, prejudice and stigma. There is a growing interest in leprosy all over the world. The sulphone drugs brought the possibility of effective treatment, control and rehabilitation of the disease. The deformity can be prevented and corrected by Physiotherapy and Surgery. India has been marching forward to fight the leprosy problem and ultimately eradicate the disease. Mahatma Gandhi's great concern for leprosy sufferers created sensation in Government and voluntary organisations. The first All India Leprosy Workers Conference was held in Wardha from 30th October 1947 to 1st November, 1947 under Gandhiji's inspiration. Gandhiji had always striven to lessen suffering and unhappiness of the person suffering from leprosy. Gandhiji in his Ashram at Sewagram kept Sri Parchure Shastri who became a leprosy patient and he himself used to dress the ulcer of Shastriji. Gandhiji said, "Leprosy

work is not merely medical relief, it is transforming the frustration in life into the joy of dedication, personal ambition into selfless service. If you can transform the life of a patient or change his values of life you can change the village and country. One photograph showing Gandhiji dressing the ulcer of Parchure Shastri and another showing Gandhiji looking at Lepra Bacilli in a microscope have focussed the attention of the people.

Leprosy is neither a hereditary disease nor a curse of God. It is caused by small germs called Lepra Bacilli. A healthy person can acquire infection by coming in repeated skin to skin contact with an infectious leprosy patient. It was believed some years ago that children are susceptible to the disease but the adults are immune. But it is accepted now that no age is really immune. Out of 450 million people in India, the population at risk is about 300 million with 25 lakhs of leprosy. 20 per cent cases are infectious and 80 per cent cases are non-infectious. Out of 25 lakhs, 25 per cent of cases are undergoing treatment and the rest are not taking treatment for the fear of society and ignorance about the disease. There are about 2 lakhs of beggar leprosy patients out of 25 lakhs of cases in India. Mahatma Gandhi said, "If India was pulsating with new life, if we were all in earnest about winning independence in the quickest manner possible by truthful and non-violence means, there would not be a leper or beggar in India uncared for and unaccounted for".

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"Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind."

MAHATMA GANDHI



In India problems of leprosy are manifold. Government of India is expanding the leprosy control measures. As leprosy is a socio-economic disease, the general public and the voluntary organisations should co-operate with the Government in the Leprosy Control Programme. India has made some progress in Leprosy Control Programme but much remains to be achieved.

### AN ENGLISHWOMAN'S TRIBUTE TO GANDHIJI

I knew very little about Gandhiji when I began. I was a small child when India gained her independence. I thought of Mahatma Gandhi as a benevolent father figure in a dhoti. This rather vague figure came sharply into focus almost as soon as I began work. It seemed to me that his honesty and integrity made their impact at once and that the significance of his message was immediately apparent.

It was quite extraordinary the effect he obviously had upon people. I get the impression that merely to meet him was to become a friend. No one I interviewed questioned his sincerity. Even those who had, at the time, reservations about the independence movement thought Gandhiji was a marvellous, quite unique person.

One of the people I interviewed was Major Patrick Quinn, who was Gandhiji's jailor during one of his spells of imprisonment. Major Quinn was full of affectionate memories of Gandhiji, told me many stories about him and said that Gandhiji had spent part of his time in jail teaching him (Major Quinn) Gujarati.

Another facet of Gandhiji's character which emerged strongly in the course of my delving was his love of children. He seems to have been able to communicate with them easily and to win their confidence and affection.

*Mrs. Judith Worthy*

"A religion has to be judged not by its worst specimens but by the best it might have produced. For that and that alone can be used as the standard to aspire to, if not to improve upon."

MAHATMA GANDHI



## PURNA SWARAJ

"..... 'Purna', complete, because it is as much for the prince as for the peasant, as much for the rich landowner as for the landless tiller of the soil, as much for the Hindus as for the Mussalmans, as much for the Parsis and Christians as for the Jains, Jews and Sikhs, irrespective of any distinction of caste or creed or status in life. The very connotation of the word and the means of its attainment to which we are pledged—truth and non-violence—precludes all possibility of that Swaraj being more for some one than for the other, being partial to some one and prejudicial to the other. Truth and non-violence leave no room for fraud or falsehood.

"The Congress has attracted the attention of the world for the simple reason that it is pledged to win freedom by means unemployed by nations heretofore. The world has so far been familiar with only one method of achieving freedom and that by the use of physical force. But luckily for itself and the world, India has launched on the method of non-violence and truth for the attainment of its Independence. It is a unique thing in history, and the world which began by regarding it with scepticism is today watching India's great non-violent experiment with bated breath. In physical warfare even chicanery and fraud have a place, but non-violence precludes the use of all other weapons except that of truth and justice. Swaraj under this method, therefore, can never be achieved by usurping the rights of any community, big or small, but by ensuring even-handed justice and fair treatment to all—even the poorest and the weakest in the land. That being so, how can the Congress want to keep even a child out of its own?"

(From *Young India*, March 19, 1933)



## A Day With Mahatma Gandhi

It was the 5th May of 1934. The heat was at its apex due to the hilly region. The news was spread that Gandhiji was about to arrive at Bamur. I was then an employee in the State Government, Forest Department in Rairakhol State. The very news of his coming vibrated my ears—throbbled my heart. The eyes desired to have his Darsan. The heart longed for rendering some service to the great son of India. Could I relinquish my post for his Darsan? I could at length. I went home and transmitted the news of his short-stay at Bamur. The people, irrespective of caste, creed and sex, could take the advantage of it.

Coming from Sambalpur long before the Mahatma's arrival there was a mammoth gathering of villagers from far and near. Raja Kishore Chandra Deb was then the ruler of Athmallik State. He was not

at all an oppressor. He heard about Gandhiji's visit to Bamur. But could he see him?

The pre-independent India was under the British yoke. Drastic measures were being taken by the British India Government for fear of being ousted from this Sub-continent. The clamour for freedom accompanied by peaceful revolution, passive resistance and civil disobedience was heard from every nook and corner of the country.

It was for this reason, the British State administrators and officials were vigilant on the situation of the country. The Raja of Athmallik with great desire to see Gandhiji, was to abandon the hope apprehending the highhandedness of the Political Department.

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"If you will take care of today, God will take care of tomorrow."



At last the Dewan Shri B. Misra arranged a tour to South India and they started. Both the Circle Inspectors of Police of Athmallik and Kishorenagar warned the public that no one could be allowed to see Gandhiji, not even the State Government officials.

But the joy of attending Gandhiji's meeting knew no bounds. Any breach of the police order was to provide sufficient ground for the entry of the common mass to the meeting place.

However, the meeting was arranged at Bamur and it was a gathering of nearly 500 people.

A devotee of Gandhiji named Shri Dukhishyam Misra who was then State Overseer entered the meeting ground with much audacity with his mother. I also with my father Arkhita Behera and mother Pratima Dei followed suit with fortitude for his Darsan.

Probably at about 4 p.m. a German Sahib and few followers of Mahatma got down from a lorry of Shri Chakradhar Misha of Cuttack. The Sahib stood on the lorry and said, "Is there any volunteer?"

No response was received from any corner. I immediately came to the front and replied 'Yes, I am'. He told me to put the luggages in the Bungalow. I did it. We both arranged bed where Gandhiji was to take rest. In course of time I came to know that Sahib was a German national

and toured with Gandhiji. His name was Buto. After making a nice arrangement for Gandhiji's rest, he was to take rest on the dining table. In the meantime Gandhiji accompanied by his grand daughter and other co-workers arrived in a Chevrolet Car which was provided by Shri D. N. Dutta, a Railway Contractor and also a high ranking ex-officer of the Government Forest Department. He was then carrying on his timber business in Athmallik. The Mahatma got down from the car and went straight into the Bungalow.

Knowing that no Government Bungalow was to be offered to Gandhiji, Mr. D. N. Dutta reserved the Bungalow in his name one month prior to his arrival.

At first Dukhishyam Babu and I went with my parents for Gandhiji's Darsan and then got acquainted with him. He talked in Hindi and enquired about the local problems. We talked about *Rajatantra* sasan. In the evening we joined the prayer. Owing to excessive heat I had the opportunity to run the hand-pulled fan to keep him cool.

I prolonged my insignificant service for hours together. This was how I humbly rendered my service during the short visit of Gandhiji.

Soon it was night and there was no arrangement for his night meal. He had brought some fruits from Sambalpur. All took rest.

( See page 38 )

"The voice of conscience is the voice of God, and it is the final judge of the rightness of every deed and every thought."

MAHATMA GANDHI



## Gandhiji's Approach To Socialism

Socialism is considered to be a modern ideology generally evoking adherence and support from the young generation. In England there is a saying that if a man at the age of twenty is not a socialist, he has no heart. This is mainly due to the fact that socialism is based on working class politics, avowing support and sympathy for the downtrodden, and planning for a reconstruction of the society in which the poorer section of the community has a better deal. In scientific language, socialism can be broadly interpreted to mean two things, one, social ownership of the means of production, and two, equitable distribution of income. The philosophical foundation of socialism is materialistic interpretation of history and class war. We need not devote any space in analysing these concepts, at least they are well known among those who are imbued with socialist ideas. Our major consideration

here is to examine whether Gandhiji's ideas are in conformity with socialist ideals. Gandhiji has to be presented in a modern garb, let us say, socialist garb, in order to evoke support and admiration from the younger generation.

Now coming to the major objective of socialism, i.e., equitable distribution of income, Gandhiji is a socialist par excellence. He has himself said, 'Socialism is a beautiful word and, so far as I am aware, in socialism all the members of the society are equal—none low, none high. In the individual body, the head is not high, because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as members of the individual body are equal, so are the members of society. This is socialism'. This analysis of socialism clearly indicates that

"Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong."

MAHATMA GANDHI



Gandhiji had full approval for the concept of equality embodied in socialism.

In fact, Gandhiji stated bluntly that his ideal is equal distribution of income. As he says, "My ideal is equal distribution, but so far as I can see, it is not to be realised. I therefore work for equitable distribution" (YI, 17. 3. 27. 86). And even in his equitable distribution of income, he was more progressive than many of the socialists, because he wanted the disparity of income to be reduced to a reasonable limit of 12 times. In no socialist state, even with social ownership of means of production, the income disparity has come down to such a low level. Not only he wanted to reduce the income disparity, in his 'Swaraj of my dream', he conceived of a state in which the necessities of life would be enjoyed by all. He said, 'I have not the slightest doubt that Swaraj is not Purna Swaraj until these amenities are guaranteed to all under it.'

One question might arise here. Why was Gandhi in favour of equal distribution of income? Was it a part of his political ideology? Was it a part of his love for the common man? Like socialists, Gandhiji's politics was also the politics of common man. And therefore, like socialists, he wanted to end all injustice and improve the economic well-being of those who are now downtrodden. But there was something more than this in Gandhiji. He advocated equality because he was in

favour of the greatest good for the greatest number. According to Gandhiji, the latter is a heartless doctrine and has done immense harm to humanity. The only real, dignified and human doctrine is the greatest good of all and this can be achieved only by means of equitable distribution of income.

Next is the question of social ownership of means of production. Gandhiji's opinion in this regard is generally considered anti-socialist. There is no doubt that Gandhiji was opposed to large-scale social ownership of the means of production. Some of the basic, heavy and strategic industries would of course be socialised. But most of the industries would run on private account with social obligations. There are two reasons for this. First, he did not think that social ownership of the means of production could eliminate all the evils of the capitalist society. As he said, 'I look upon an increase of the power of the state with the greatest fear because, although doing good by minimising exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality which lies at the root of all progress'. Furthermore, he was also afraid of the state because the state represented organised violence. Therefore, he preferred distribution of economic power on the basis of private ownership of the means of production to socialisation or nationalisation as the former was less injurious than the violence of the state.

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"Divine knowledge is not borrowed from books. It has to be realized in oneself."

MAHATMA GANDHI



But even though he believed in private property, he did not want to give unlimited power to property owners. He wanted them to behave like Trustees. This concept has created a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding. But the basic idea behind Trusteeship is social obligation. If somebody does not behave like a Trust, Gandhiji had no hesitation to recommend Government intervention, or even acquisition of private property by the Government for social good, or non-co-operation with property owners. He gave a stern warning to the property owners in the following words :

'If the present owning class did not of its own accord become trustees, force of circumstances would compel the reform, or the alternative would be utter destruction. The present power of the Zemindars, the capitalists and the Rajas can hold sway only so long as the common people do not realise their own strength. If the people non-co-operate with the evil of Zemindari and capitalism it must die of inanition....' (Harijan, 25th May 1947).

He made it abundantly clear that no property owner should possess more than what is absolutely necessary for him, and if he owns more, he should not use it for his own interest. To him, wanting or possessing anything over and above ones minimum needs was stealing. He went further : 'A thing not originally ours must nevertheless be classified as stolen property, if we possess it without stealing it'.

"It is not nationalism that is evil. It is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane of modern nations which is evil."

MAHATMA GANDHI

The most important thing in his Trusteeship is this that Gandhiji had infinite faith in the goodness of an individual. According to him each and every individual, whether he is rich or poor, has inherent goodness, and if given opportunity, he will certainly realise his responsibility and behave like a social being. Like socialists Gandhiji wanted to build a classless society by ending all exploitation. But socialists pinned their faith in the goodness of the state and Gandhiji pinned his faith in the goodness of the individual. Therefore he wanted to give an opportunity even to the worst exploiter to change his heart and mend his ways. Once he said, 'My fundamental difference with Socialists is well known. I believe in the conversion of human nature and in striving for it. They do not believe in this .....

This shows that Gandhiji had no quarrel with the basic objectives of socialism, but when it comes to socialist philosophy or method, their views are poles apart. The socialists' insensate worship of matter has given rise to a school which has been brought up to look upon materialistic advancement as the goal of life and which has lost touch with the final things in life. Gandhiji has therefore said that the socialists' one aim is material progress, but he wants freedom for full expression of man's personality. Therefore he is opposed to materialistic interpretation of history and all that it stands for.

Similarly Gandhiji was opposed to socialist method. Socialists frankly believe in violence. This follows from the



concept of class of war through the help of which Marx interpreted the relationship between different classes of the people. As we have already mentioned, Gandhiji had immense faith in the goodness of an individual, and therefore, he could not conceive of the fact that society could not change or progress without hatred or class conflict. Gandhiji firmly believes that it is possible to introduce uncompromising truth and honesty in the political life of the country. To him, the means are just as important as the goal, and in a sense more important in that man has some control over them, whereas he has none over the goal if he loses control over the means. One cannot reach a non-violent society by violence. Violence breeds violence. One

cannot reach truth by untruthfulness. Truthful conduct alone can reach truth. Similarly, there can be no freedom, no equal opportunity, no social justice in an environment of mob rule and lawless behaviour. Gandhiji therefore has a message for the true socialists. It is yet to be seen whether socialists can accept the challenge and remodel their politics and economics on the basis of Gandhian 'humanism'. We guess it is reasonable to expect that in an era of violence, where truth suffers, hate triumphs and love is a waif, socialists would change their outlook and accept what is good and decent even though in the process they have to deviate quite a great deal from the orthodox Marxism.

( From page 34 )

Early at the dawn next morning, morning prayer was conducted. He wished to appear in public at about 6.30 a. m.

The people began to rush. No one was to heed the standing order of the State Government.

Bapuji sat on a small cot with folded hands in the northern side of the bungalow and in his address he said, "Those of you who are addicted to wine, kindly raise your hands."

Shri Rajakrushna Bose, a Congress leader, was entrusted to translate his Hindi speech into Oriya. Only 7 or 8 hands were raised. On seeing the meagre number of wine-takers, Gandhiji seemed pleased and thanked the audience. Gandhiji continued, 'I want to beg from you something for the poor and the afflicted Harijans'. Thus the meeting ended with great enthusiastic ovation to Gandhiji.

He left for Angul leaving us spell-bound, infusing a determination in many of us to keep aloof from social evils such as drinking, untouchability and the like.

Bapuji's speech was so touching that the people seemed to have been greatly moved by it. It left such an impression in the minds of the so-called untouchables that they soon began to do away with their undesirable habits the way the father of the Nation had wanted them to do.

On the way to Angul, he was to stop at Ambapal crossing, four miles from Bamur to give Darsan to the people gathered there. At first a married girl named Panna Dei pushed her way to see him. Gandhiji blessed her by touching her head with a smile. The particular married girl was no other than the devoted wife of mine (Shri Bhagaban Behera), who offered his services to Mahatamaji at Bamur Inspection Bungalow on that day.



## GANDHIJI ON WOMEN

"I have mentally become a woman in order to steal into her heart. I could not steal into my wife's heart until I decided to treat her differently than I used to do, and so I restored to her all her rights by dispossessing myself of all my so-called rights as her husband." So wrote Mahatma Gandhi, the uncompromising fighter for women's rights, in *Young India* 1927.

In the Indian Constitution women are guaranteed equal rights with men. Under the law women enjoy the right to divorce and the right to a share in inheritance. Polygamy has been enforced. In 1961, there were about 59 million women workers, urban and rural. There are over 10 lakhs girls studying in the colleges. There are 10 lakhs girls studying in the colleges of engineering and atomic research, and in social service organisations, women are

found in ever increasing numbers. "In a few countries," says Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, "do women hold higher positions in politics and public life than in India".

All this is due not a little to the work of Mahatma Gandhi. Perhaps the best tribute paid to him by a woman was by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. She placed him on a par with the great religious teachers of the world and said, "He shares with them the quality of bringing hope to the hopeless, of bringing courage to those who are afraid, of uplifting those who have fallen, of soothing down the beastly passions of those who have lost all the sense of sanity and humanity".

Gandhiji held that man and woman have mental capacities in equal measure. She can take part to the fullest extent in

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"A successful village organisation does not depend upon good legislation, but it depends upon good men to work it."

MAHATMA GANDHI



the activities of man. She is entitled to the same liberty and freedom as man. This is the natural order of things and is not dependent on the ability to read and write.

Gandhiji detested the idea of woman being inferior to man. In his view, they were not separate entities but halves of one. Writing in *Harijan* in 1947, he advised women to take to civil rebellion against undesirable restraints. He said, "There is no possibility of harm resulting from civil rebellion. It presupposes purity and reasoned resistance".

Gandhiji regretted that Hindu culture subordinated the wife to the husband, and advocated the merging of the wife in the husband. He admitted that there were certain *Smriti* texts, which assured woman her appropriate place and treated her with respect. But there were other texts which ran counter to them. Gandhiji, therefore, ventured to suggest that an authoritative body should be set up to revise the scriptures. To do away with the portions that do not appeal to the moral sense and the fundamental values of religion and morality, and to place the revised version before the public for their guidance. He was aware that the entire body of Hindus and their religious leaders would not accept it. Nevertheless, he felt confident that "work done sincerely and in the spirit of service will have its effect on all in the long run, and will most assuredly help those who are badly in need of such assistance".

### WOMAN IS SUPERIOR TO MAN

Gandhiji considered it a libel to call woman the weaker sex. He preferred the

term 'female sex'. He said, "If by strength is meant brute strength, then indeed is woman less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior". He asserted that in intuition, self-sacrifice, endurance, courage, silent suffering, humility, faith and knowledge and as the custodian of what is pure and religious in life, woman is any day superior to man". In fact, Gandhiji went further and said that without woman, man could not be.

Gandhiji felt that if a social order is to be built based on truth and non-violence the future lay with women. To him woman is the embodiment of *ahimsa* which implies infinite love, and a limitless capacity for suffering which woman possesses to the maximum extent. Writing in *Harijan* in 1940, Gandhiji said "She shows it as she carries the infant and feeds it during nine months and derive joy in the suffering involved. What can beat the suffering caused by the pangs of labour? But she forgets them in the joy of creation. Who again suffers daily so that her babe may wax from day to day? Let her transfer that love to the whole humanity, let her forget she ever was the object of man's lust. And she will occupy her proud position by the side of man as his mother, maker and silent leader".

It was Gandhiji's view that women have a vital role to play in the all-important task of bringing peace to a war-torn world which was thirsting for that nectar. He considered it degrading and even barbarous that women should give up their hearth and take up the rifle for protection of the hearth.



He held that women should not suffer from any legal disabilities, and that sons and daughters should be treated with full equality. In his view, the son and daughter are entitled to equal shares. For, there can be no distinction between man and woman except what Nature has made and human eyes can see. He wanted that the earnings of the husband should be considered the joint property of the husband and wife. That the wife should be entitled to separate living in the event of unjust treatment by the husband. That both husband and wife should enjoy rights with regard to children till they were grown up.

Gandhiji condemned the practice of dowry as degrading. He went to the extent of saying that boys receiving dowry should suffer from excommunication from society. He believed that it is closely linked with the caste system. "So long as the choice is restricted," he wrote in *Harijan* in 1936, "to a few hundred young men or women of a particular caste, the system will persist no matter what is said against it. The girls or boys or their parents will have to break the bonds of caste, if the evil is to be eradicated".

Gandhiji stood for widow remarriage. He deprecated the custom of forced widowhood in the name of religion. In his view, the voluntary widowhood of a woman, bound by ties of affection to her deceased husband, is no doubt dignified and ennobling. But not the widowhood of little girls married before 15, who have hardly understood the meaning of the marriage rite.

Gandhiji made a fervent appeal to womenfolk to work for the cause of the

Harijans, to banish untouchability and serve Harijan boys and girls like their own children. "If the sufferings of Harijans move you," he wrote, "and you give up untouchability, and, with it, the distinctions of high and low, Hinduism will be purified and Hindu society will take great strides towards spiritual progress".

### THEY RALLIED ROUND HIM

Large numbers of women from all walks of life rallied round the Mahatma, resorted to *satyagraha* and played a significant role in the struggle for freedom.

With regard to the role of women in the independence struggle, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote: "Most of us menfolk were in prison. Then a remarkable thing happened. Our women came to the front and took charge of the struggle. There was an avalanche of them, which took not only the British Government; but their own menfolk by surprise".

In 1930 Maharshi D. K. Karve was astounded to see hundreds of ladies marching to the sea in Bombay to break the salt law. Himself a pioneer of the movement for women's emancipation, he exclaimed: "What decades of my work and work similar to mine has failed to achieve, this wizard of Sabarmati has achieved by a single stroke of imaginative action".

In the *Harijan* dated January 19, 1934, Mahatma Gandhi describes a touching and soul-stirring scene in Kerala in the course of his work among women for the Harijan cause.



He writes : "I had just finished my speech at Badagara. In it, I had made a reasoned appeal to the women present for jewellery. I had finished speaking and was selling the presents received, when gently walked up to the platform Kaumudi, a girl 16 years old. She took out one bangle and asked me if I would give my autograph. I was preparing to give it, when off came the other bangle. She had only one on each hand. I said, 'You need not give me both. I shall give you the autograph for one bangle only'".

"She replied by taking off her golden necklace. This was no easy performance. It had to be disengaged from her long plait of hair. But the Malabar girl that she is, she had no false modesty about performing the whole process before a wondering public, counting several thousands of men and women. 'But have you the permission of your parents?' I asked. There was no answer. She had not yet completed her renunciation. Her hands automatically went to her ears and out came her jewelled ear-rings amid the ringing cheers of the public, whose expression of joy was no longer to be suppressed. I asked her again whether she had her parents' consent to the sacrifice. Before I could extract any answer from the shy girl, some one told me that her father was present at the meeting, that he was himself helping me by bidding for the addresses I was auctioning, and that he was as generous as his daughter in giving to worthy causes. I reminded Kaumudi that she was not to have the ornaments replaced. She resolutely assented to the condition. As I handed her the autograph, I could not help prefacing it with the remark : 'Your

renunciation is a truer ornament than the jewellery you have discarded'".

A retired police officer related to me an incident he had heard from an aunt of his. It reveals Gandhi's deep faith in Indian women. It happened during Gandhi's stay at Balasore. While taking stock of the day's collection of jewellery, it was discovered that there was only one of a pair of gold ear-rings. May be, some woman had donated only one, suggested someone. No, Gandhi insisted. No woman of India would do so. She must have donated a pair of ear-rings, never one. And he was proved right. For, after a search the missing ear-ring was found lying in the compound.

#### REVERED WOMAN LEADER

I interviewed Shrimati Rama Devi, Orissa's revered woman leader and Sarvodaya worker. She broke the shackles of society and stepped forth to fight for the freedom of her country about half a century ago. And the man who pointed out the path to her was Mahatma Gandhi. Rama Devi recalled how she first met Gandhi in 1921 at a women's meeting held at Cuttack. "He had come to collect funds for the Tilak Swarajya Fund at that time. And also for one crore *charkhas*".

"I had many gurus. My first one was Aurobindo. Aurobindo the revolutionary—not the saint. Annie Besant also influenced my thinking as I grew older. Then I wanted to do something for my country. What will I do? was the question troubling my mind. I had this desire since childhood. I got married.



Had my *ghar sansar*. Yet I was seeking the path. And Gandhiji showed me the path," she said.

"We used to ask his advice about so many things," she continued. "I was living at Sewagram for some time. I think it was in 1944 when he had just come out of jail. He said, 'My heart is burning because our country is not yet independent.'

"I asked him what we women could do. He warned us of what power-hungry politicians will do. 'When they get power, you don't go there. Work for the people through the path of *ahimsa*. Live and mix with the poor. Then only you will realise that *ahimsa* is the best path.'

She related an anecdote illustrating Gandhiji's belief in the equality of sexes.

"One day we were sitting in his room. There was a phone call to say that Jammalal Bajaj's daughter Uma had given birth to a daughter. And that she was unhappy about it, because she had wanted a son. Gandhiji laughed and said, 'She had been working with us and she talks like this! Is there any difference between a daughter and son?'

"When my mother died in 1934 he was there at Kendrapara in Cuttack district. He sent four or five people to fetch me. 'I'm sorry your mother died. But where have you the time to weep? You come away and work', he said. And I came to work," Rama Devi said simply.

"My son Bulu got married in Sewagram in 1945 or 1946. But Gandhiji did not come, he only sent his blessings. He said, 'Why should I go? He is not marrying a Harijan girl!'

"Gandhiji used to say women can control society. They could control son, brother and husband," she concluded.

#### FIRST LADY OF THE STATE

The First Lady of the State, Begum Zohra Ansari, wife of Dr. S. S. Ansari, Governor of Orissa, had known Gandhiji for nearly two decades. She is the daughter of Dr. M. A. Ansari, one of India's great freedom fighters, who was also a Congress President. Begum Ansari herself took part in the freedom struggle by the side of her husband and is a keen humanist and social worker as well. I had an exclusive interview with her on September 20, 1969. She said: "He used to write to me in Urdu from jail, asking me to correct his letters." And she showed me a veritable treasure-trove of letters from Gandhiji. They were mostly postcards written in Urdu from Yeravda Central Prison, Poona. And he wrote a fine and polished hand. Only the ink varied in colour—green, violet, blue. Jail supplies, one supposes.

"You taught him Urdu?" I asked her. "No," she said. "He knew it earlier. He just used to write and ask me to correct."

Apropos of this, Dr. Ansari, our Governor, recalled: "When I went to meet him once at the Delhi railway station, he slapped me on the back. 'This is very much against our culture and civilisation', I protested. 'My wife is your *guru*, and you have hit me!'

"He didn't realise that he had hit me so hard. His hand was so hard!" smiled the Governor. "Bapu laughed and said, *Aisa?*'"



Among the letters shown to me at Raj Bhavan, there was one card written in violet ink, dated December 3, 1932. Gandhiji's address was Yeravda Central Prison, Poona.

Referring to it, Begum Ansari said, "I had asked him the meaning of *Harijan*." And Gandhiji wrote :

"Dear daughter Zohra,

*Harijan* means 'a man of God'. Hindus had oppressed them a lot and are raising the problem of untouchability. It is not right to call them untouchables. For this, I call them *Harijans*."

In the same card he enquired of this young and only child of his friend about her father who had been taken ill and released from prison. He also sent his salutations to her mother and signed himself as always *Bapu ki dua* or "Bapu's blessings".

"What memorable advice did Bapu give you?"

"*Shakti*," said Begum Ansari. "He said he believed in the *shakti* of a woman. She possesses it more than a man. If she uses it with truth, no power on earth can defeat her."

"So many things he used to tell me. It's so difficult to point out any one thing.....But I remember this very well. He used to say, 'Protest against anything which is not right. Never take it lying down. Always protest against injustice'," concluded Begum Ansari.

There is no doubt that the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi represented the most significant factor in raising the status of women in modern India. He touched the hearts and lives of so many women, present and past, rich and poor. And he has earned the gratitude of untold generations to come. For, he did so much for so many so well.

### EINSTEIN ON GANDHIJI

A leader of his people unsupported by any outward authority.

A politician whose success rests not upon craft nor mastery of technical devices but simply upon the convincing power of his personality.

A victorious fighter who always scorned the use of force.

A man of wisdom and humility, armed with resolve and inflexible consistency who has devoted all his strength to the uplifting of his people and the betterment of their lot.

A man that has confronted the brutality of Europe with the dignity of the simple human being and thus at all times risen superior.....

Albert Einstein



## LANGUAGE NO BARRIER TO UNITY

"Though I consider these Southern languages to be daughters of Sanskrit, they are different from Hindi, Oriya, Bengali, Assamese, Punjabi, Sindhu, Marathi and Gujarati. Their grammar is totally different from Hindi. In describing them as the daughters of Sanskrit I only mean that they have a large number of Sanskrit words in their vocabulary and when they are in difficulty, they go to Sanskrit as to a mother—they seek her help and receive from her in the form of new words the requisite nourishment. They might have been independent in the olden days but now they are enriching themselves with words taken from Sanskrit. There are many other reasons also why they should be regarded as the daughters of Sanskrit. But we may not go into them here.....

"I have always held that in no case whatsoever do we want to injure, much less suppress or destroy, the provincial languages. We want only that all should learn Hindi as a common medium for interprovincial intercourse. This does not mean that we have any undue partiality for Hindi. We regard Hindi as our national language. It is fit to be adopted as such. That language alone can become the national language which is spoken by the majority of the people and which is easy to learn. To our knowledge there has been no opposition to this view serious enough to be taken notice of.....

"If Hindi takes the place of English, I for one would be pleased. But we know well the importance of the English language. Knowledge of English is necessary to us for the acquisition of modern knowledge, for the study of modern literature, for knowledge of the world, for intercourse with the present rulers and such other purposes. As things are we have to learn English even if we do not wish to. English is an international language.

"But English can never become our national language. True it seems to dominate the scene today. In spite of all efforts to resist its hold on us, it continues to occupy a large place in the conduct of our national affairs. But this should not lead us to entertain the illusion that it is going to become our national language.

"We can easily find proof for this from our experience in any province. Take for instance Bengal or South India where we find influence of English to be the largest. Should we want anything done in these parts by the people, we cannot have it done through English, though at the moment we may also not be able to do it through Hindi. With the help of a few words of Hindi, however, we may succeed in expressing our meaning at least to some extent; but through English not even this much.



"Of course, it may be accepted that hitherto no language has been able to establish itself as the national language. English is the official language. That is natural under the prevailing circumstances. But I consider it quite impossible for it to go beyond this. If we want to make India one nation, whether one believes it or not, Hindi alone can be the national language for the simple reason that no other language can hope to have the advantages enjoyed by Hindi. With some slight variations Hindi-Hindustani is the language spoken by about twenty-two crores of people, both Hindus and Muslims.

Therefore the most proper and under the circumstances the only possible thing would be to use the language of the province in the province, to use Hindi for all-India purposes and to use English for international purposes. While the Hindi-speaking people may be counted in crores, the number of those who speak English can never be increased to more than a few lakhs. Even the attempt to do so would be unjust to the people.

*(Hindi & English in the South: National Publishing House, Ahmedabad)*



## RECOLLECTIONS

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

There was a great deal of violence first in the Frontier Province. Non-violence came later. I can tell you that the way of violence led to such severe British repression that even brave people turned into cowards. But when non-violence came, even the cowardly Pathans turned brave. Before that, the Pathans were so much afraid of soldiers and jails, they had no courage to talk to sepoys. But non-violence taught them the necessary courage, bravery and brotherhood.



Children used to go to jail smiling. So courageous were they that they faced the biggest people. You think that the Pathan is brave only if he strikes back, that if I am struck I should strike back or *vice versa*. But that in fact is cowardice. Real bravery is that which refuses to return blow for blow. That is man's greatest virtue. Our way of violence was quickly and effectively suppressed by the British, but our non-violence could not be suppressed either by Britain or Pakistan.

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

Non-violence is love. Violence is hatred. Violence can never solve problems or bring peace to the world. Else there should have been peace after the First World War. Was there peace? No. Then came the Second World War. Did any peace follow in its wake? None at all. Violence is such a thing that after one act of violence, there will be another of even greater violence. Each of the wars was more fierce than the preceding one. The next war may well be the most destructive. The thing is clear; if the world wills it, there can be peace, but only through non-violence. If not, there will be a war more terrible than any before in history because nuclear weapons and the world will be completely destroyed.

When I was released in 1945, I was ill. Gandhiji was in Bombay staying at Birla's

House. He wrote and called me to Bombay. I went. One day he talked of violence. I told Gandhiji: "How spiritedly you give education to people in non-violence. But with you are your workers. There are rich people to give you ample financial assistance. In spite of this there was plenty of violence in most parts of India. In our Province, we have rich people too. They would give one enough to eat, but for the country and people they would not part with much money. Again, we have plenty of the instruments of violence which you do not have. Still we have no violence in the Frontier while you have had plenty here. How did this happen?" Gandhiji laughed at my question. "People say," he replied, "that non-violence is for cowards. But it is in fact for the brave. There was no violence in the Frontier because you people there are truly brave."

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



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

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

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

What was Gandhiji's greatest contribution? It is not easy to single out any; there are so many. First of all, he inculcated in Indians courage in place of cowardice, the courage to demand freedom. The biggest thing he did, however, not only for India, but for the whole world, was to teach the lesson of non-violence. It was through him that freedom came. Gandhiji's non-violence was not of the weak but of the brave. Whatever evil happened was not because of non-violence, but because the people had not fully imbibed or assimilated it. I can only say that India's freedom came through, because

of Gandhiji's method. No doubt a favourable climate for transfer of power developed, but without Gandhiji who could have been ready to take advantage of that change of climate?

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

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

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

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

(From "MAHATMA GANDHI : 100 YEARS")



## Violence in the Heart

It is a paradox that in spite of my intimate connection with Mahatmaji, he is the one subject on which I feel helpless when I begin to write. A cynicism overtakes me. Secular admirers have heaped their tributes on him for having shown the world a new method of solving conflicts by truth and love instead of by violence. They often call it a "technique". As the secularists have understood the Mahatma, a concealed *petiti principii* invalidates the technique. It appears to me that we must get behind Love and Truth and dive deep till we discover what really can make Gandhiji's solution a serviceable reality.

Leaders of men abroad have admired Gandhiji as one who developed an effective new "technique" based on non-violence for struggling against wrong. The very notion that what Gandhiji taught was a "technique" has led to error and of course disappointment. Non-violence is not a gadget to get what we used to try to get through violence and much trouble, in the pre-Gandhian days, as we get cooking energy from electricity instead of from

coal or wood fuel. Mahatma Gandhi's "technique" is no doubt the presentation of Love and Truth in any confrontation against evil. But love and truth are not available in the market. We cannot procure them as we can procure rifles and pistols. They can issue only out of faith in God.

We have changed from animal power to steam and from steam to oil fuel and from oil to electricity. All these variations of energy do not furnish the basis of understanding Mahatma Gandhi's "technique". The moral energy, Soulforce as Gandhiji loved to call it, comes from Faith and true religious devotion. All the time up to his death, Gandhiji laid stress on this source of power. Much of the non-violence practised by ardent devotees who, for the sake of convenience or for avoiding bloodshed, seek to practise what Gandhiji taught are only variations of violence. Non-violence does not consist in merely not calling to aid a lathi or a dagger or a pistol. The positive aspect of non-violence is what has to be realised; and that is firm in the reality



of God's sovereignty. Where this is absent, non-violence will fail. It is generally known that the non-violence way show by Gandhiji demands abstaining from the use of physical weapons. But it is not as generally realized that abstinence from the use of physical violence with hatred and venom burning in the heart is not non-violence such as Gandhiji conceived it.

To enunciate that love and truth are the new tools given to us by Gandhiji to serve as powerful answers to the hatred and falsehood and violence of the enemy is easy. To say that these forces of Love and Truth can solve, and are the only way to solve the racial, economic and political conflicts of the world is easy. But in practice it will be found to be a begging of the question. How can I summon up love for one who has given me so much cause to hate? How can the Negro love the White man? How can a Pakistani patriot love Indians? How can Indian patriots love the Pakistanis? The force of Love cannot spring from nowhere where there is good reason for the opposite of love. It must spring from a firm faith in God and His sovereignty over the hearts of men, if we desire to save Gandhiji's way from becoming an empty doctrine or a disappointing technique. When Mari Antony in Egypt, as Shakespeare has depicted, sent Enobarbus's treasure after him on learning that the latter had deserted and gone over to

the enemy, or when the Bishop in Victor Hugo's novel sent the other silver candlestick also to Jean Valjean who had stolen the first one, the conversion was immediate.


*isvarah sarvabhutanm hrddeserjuna  
tisthati  
bhramayansarvabhutani yantrarudhani  
mayaya*

(Bhagavad Gita. XVIII. 61.)

The *Gita* tells us in the above *mantra* that the Lord dwells in the hearts of every being and by His power moves all beings who are set like marionettes on the machine. The secret presence of God in the hearts of all beings is the secret of Satyagraha. It was not the application of a new technique but the understanding of ancient spiritual teaching and firm faith in its truth. Satyagraha is not for the sceptic, not for one who is content with the phenomenal world and the careful classification of what one sees in that world, which is called science. It may be a beautiful fountain-pen. But if there is no ink in it, or if you fill it only with water the pen can't write. Let us, while celebrating Gandhiji's birth Centenary, reflect and realise his true teaching and the true lessons of his work and not look upon him as a mere inventor of a cheap gadget to displace an old troublesome way. Gandhiji was not an inventor. He was a man of God, and therefore was he called Mahatma.

(from "MAHATMA GANDHI :  
100 YEARS")





## DUTY RATHER THAN RIGHT

"I want to deal with one great evil that is afflicting society today. The capitalist and the zamindar talk of their rights, the labourer, on the other hand, of his, the prince of his divine right to rule, the ryot of his to resist it. If all simply insist on rights and no duties, there will be utter confusion and chaos.

"If, instead of insisting on rights, everyone does his duty, there will immediately be the rule of order established among mankind. There is no such thing as the divine right of kings to rule and the humble duty of the ryots to pay respectful obedience to their masters. Whilst it is true that these hereditary inequalities must go as being injurious to the well-being of the society, the unabashed assertion of right of the hitherto downtrodden millions is equally injurious, if not more so, to the same well-being. The latter behaviour is probably calculated to injure the millions rather than the few claimants of divine or other rights. They could but die a brave or cowardly death but those few dead would not bring in the orderly life of blissful contentment. It is, therefore, necessary to understand the correlation of the rights and duties. I venture to suggest that rights that do not flow directly from duty well performed are not worth having. They will be usurpations, the sooner discarded the better. A wretched parent who claims obedience from his children without first doing his duty by them excites nothing but contempt. It is distortion of religious precept for a dissolute husband to expect compliance in every respect from his dutiful wife. But the children who flout their parent who is ever ready to do his duty towards them would be considered ungrateful and would harm themselves more than their parent. The same can be said about husband and wife. If you apply this simple and universal rule to employers and labourers, landlords and tenants, the princes and their subjects or the Hindus and the Muslims, you will find that the happiest relations can be established in all walks of life and business which you see in India as in other parts of the world. What I call the law of Satyagraha is to be deduced from an appreciation of duties and rights flowing therefrom.

"What is the duty of the Hindu towards his Muslim neighbour? His duty is to befriend him as man, to share his joys and sorrows and help him in distress. He will then have the right to expect similar treatment from his Muslim neighbour and will probably get the expected response. Supposing the Hindus are in a majority in a village with a sprinkling of Muslims in their midst, the duty of the majority towards the few Muslim neighbours is increased manifold, so much so that the few will not feel that their religion makes any difference in the behaviour of the Hindus towards them. The Hindus will then earn the right, not before, that the Muslims will be natural friends with them and in times of danger both the communities will act as one man. But suppose that the few Muslims do not reciprocate the correct



behaviour of the many Hindus and show fight in every action, it will be a sign of unmanliness. What is then the duty of the many Hindus? Certainly not to overpower them by the brute strength of the many; that will be usurpation of an unearned right. Their duty will be to check their unmanly behaviour as they would that of their blood brothers. It is unnecessary for me to dilate further upon the illustration. I will close it by saying that the application will be exactly the same if the position is reversed. From what I have said it is easy enough to extend the application with profit to the whole of the present state which has become baffling because people do not apply in practice the doctrine of deriving every right from a prior duty well performed.

"The same rule applies to the princes and the ryots. The former's duty is to act as true servants of the people. They will rule not by right granted by some outside authority, never by the right of the sword. They will rule by right of service.

(*Harijan*, July 6, 1947)





## The Magic Spell Of Sewagram

As the train approaches the Wardha railway station, a group of huts, amidst natural surroundings, give the travellers the first glimpse of Sewagram. Outside the railway station a signboard reminds them that hallowed village is only nine kilometres away.

After you have driven along the metalled road, linking Wardha with Sewagram, a panorama of scenic beauty unfolds itself. A warm, friendly smile is the first welcome anyone gets anywhere in Sewagram. This is the magic spell of Sewagram.

At Sewagram you can spot out most of the important landmarks: Adi Niwas, Bapu Kuti, Ba Kuti, Akhiri Niwas and the Prayer Ground.

On my first visit, in spite of the compelling attraction of the visual perspective, the memories of days, which are no more, piled one upon the other. It was here that some of the most historic political decisions were taken and the country's destiny

shaped by Gandhiji and his trusted band of co-workers. His spirit still pervades the whole Ashram.

### BAPU KUTI

Bapu Kuti is one such place which touches a visitor's heart by its simplicity. The wooden pillars supporting the walls are natural trunks for Gandhiji felt that to cut them square or polish them would be a waste of time, labour and material. Preserved in the hut are a few pieces of Gandhiji's personal property like "Dhanush Takei," the three monkeys, copies of Ramayan, Gita, Bible and a lantern.

It was in this *Kuti* that some of the most historic decisions affecting the country were taken. At one time Sewagram was called the *de facto* capital of India.

Simplicity is keynote of the life in Ashram where no man-made differences of race, language, caste, religion or sex are recognised. There is a common mess for all. Just as Bapu and Ba used to take food along with Ashramites so do today's Ashramites and their guests or pilgrims.



## NO SCAVENGER

Faithfully implementing Gandhian concept of dignity of labour all the Ashramites even today look after the sanitation themselves. In the spotlessly clean Sewagram one will not find a scavenger.

The day at Ashram starts at 4 in the morning when prayers are held in the open on the spot where Gandhiji used to hold prayers. In selecting the site, Gandhiji wanted to emphasise that those who had renounced worldly comforts and luxuries should not spend on a prayer house of brick and mortar. Otherwise also he believed that the most fitting prayer house was god's good earth, roofed with the open sky.

The solitary *peepul* tree standing at the edge of the prayer ground was planted by Gandhiji in 1936 while the other tree of *bakul*, nearby, was planted by Kasturba on August 2, 1942—her last gift to the Ashram.

Prayers consist of readings from the devotional songs of all religions and recitations from Ramayan, Bhagawatgita, Quran, Bible and other religious scriptures.

## PARCHURE KUTI

The Ashram bears ample testimony to Gandhiji's warmth and compassion for the little men—the ordinary individual. The Parchure Kuti at the Ashram is one such example.

The hut, now called Parchure Kuti, was built for Parchureji Shastri who was stricken with leprosy. Bapu used to tend him everyday in this Kuti and used to wash his wounds and when he cleaned the

wounds he gave something not only to the victim of the disease but to all those who watched him at the work.

The other thatched cottages include "Ba Kuti"—Kasturba Gandhi's cottage and Akhiri Niwas—the last place of Gandhiji's stay at the Ashram.

Electric lights have been fitted in most of the other buildings in Sewagram. The six memorial Kutis have, however, not been electrified to preserve their identity.

It may be recalled that Gandhiji came to Sewagram in 1936. The original name of Sewagram was Segaoon but since there was another place of the same name, it was changed to Sewagram—"The Village of Service". It was not his intention to set up a separate institution at Sewagram on the lines of his previous Ashrams. He wanted the entire village and its surroundings to become his Ashram, which, in fact they have become.

Some of the close associates of Bapu are carrying on diverse constructive activities, so dear to Gandhiji, in a spirit of dedication with missionary zeal providing at the same time a challenge to people in other parts of the country to come forward and follow the lead given by the Sewagram.

## TALIMI SANGHA

To the north of the Ashram are buildings of Hindustani Talimi Sangh whose all the buildings are built of local material and with the help of local artisans.

Under the Sangh an experimental basic school with spinning as a basic craft is conducted, as Gandhiji always laid stress

(See Page 61)



K. G. SAIYIDAIN

## THE ROAD TO HOLINESS

I had the privilege of meeting Gandhiji several times—usually on business of some kind, very infrequently just for “darshan”. There are thousands of persons in India who met him more intimately and frequently worked with him and are, therefore, qualified to write about him with greater authority. I shall, therefore, confine myself only to giving a personal impression of the man of whom Einstein had said that persons who come after us will scarce believe that such a one walked on earth in our life-time.

The quality that attracted me irresistably on meeting him was his intense humanness. A great leader of this stature who has also the reputation of being a saint may well be stand-offish, either concerned with great affairs of State or pre-occupied with his own sanctity. But Gandhi's greatness was of the prophetic variety—he never had the touch with the common man or with the common qualities that he shared with them. He drew his strength from the common men and women, knew their needs, aspirations and sufferings both by

experience and intuition and he was always easily approachable. There was nothing forbidding about him; and he had a wonderful knack of being able to put any person even the total stranger meeting him for the first time at ease. He had, in addition, a real sense of humour and could laugh at himself.

### FIRST MEETING

I remember really meeting him for the first time in 1937 as a member of the Basic Education Committee, a little hesitant and fearful at this first encounter with the great Gandhi. But the cordiality of his approach, his readiness to hear all points of view, his tolerance of differences, his child-like disarming smile which seemed to transform his face, the feeling that he conveyed somehow of being one with you and not a person set apart by his greatness—all these things, which I felt instinctively and which became clearer in later contacts, dissolved the hesitation and transformed the fear into affection. Why, here was a man to whom you could open out your



heart, however unimportant you may be and, if you were genuine and sincere, he will take you to his heart. And he was always generous in his appreciation of whatever little one was able to do in a good cause provided it was his best. He was merciless to himself, setting before him an ideal target before which men of ordinary clay would quail, but he was quick to recognise any goodness or talent in others and to encourage it generously.

He built up people who came into contact with him, threw on them responsibilities which he thought they could bear and, in this way, step by step, he raised their stature and their capacity to work. Work was all important to him and, therefore, no personal equations or jealousies entered into his dealings with his colleagues. Everyone who worked in the field of service to others—in any sector was dear to him. And, incidentally, no one was his enemy—or, at any rate, he was not prepared to regard him as such.

There is one other point I might like to mention. In Gandhiji there was a rare combination of the *Karmayogi* and the *Dhianyogi*, the man of action and the man of contemplation, the man devoted to the service of his fellow men and the man devoted to what he considered the service of Truth or God. He saw no clash but an

essential unity and continuity, between the two. In fact, his search for God, which he equated with Truth, passed through the gate of service to all His creatures particularly the downtrodden and the underprivileged.

In a recently published book "Markings" by the late Secretary-General of the United Nations ; Hammarskjold, occurs a striking sentence. It says, "In our era the road to holiness necessarily passes through the world of action". Reviewing this book, the reviewer has raised the question. "May it not be that, in our case, the road to action, adequate to the demands of these times, passes through the world of holiness ? Only a spirit tempered in the fires of an unflinching and indomitable inner struggle can yield character capable of the leadership of humanity".

Watching Gandhiji act on the public and the private plane, I had the feeling that he had knocked down the walls between these two worlds, that he passed freely from one to the other, that his life of action gained strength and meaning from the inner spirit in him and his spiritual strength was fed from the sources of his *nishkam* activity. This is what gave him a 'character capable of the leadership of humanity'.



## Gandhiji And The Radio

By temperament Gandhiji kept away from gadgets and machinery. It was with difficulty, therefore, that Sardar Patel persuaded Gandhiji to permit a microphone to be placed before him at his prayer meetings in Birla Bhavan, where hundreds of refugees collected every evening to listen to his soothing, consoling, words. Gandhiji would certainly never have permitted this but for the Sardar's argument that the disc recordings of his prayer speeches thus made in the Control Room of the Broadcasting House would be broadcast by All India Radio carrying his message to thousands and thousands of refugees in and outside Delhi.

And this little act of the Sardar was historic inasmuch as it was responsible for giving to posterity fifty-one hours of the voice of this, the greatest man of our age. But for it, this priceless heritage would be lost to the world.

It was in circumstances similar to those above that Mahatma Gandhi agreed to

enter the portals of Broadcasting House in Delhi to broadcast his first ever radio-talk.

Those were the days of terrible suffering and agony—it was an upheaval in the Indian Sub-continent following Partition and achievement of political independence by India and Pakistan. Thousands of men, women and children were uprooted from their hearths and homes. There was a large-scale migration of population with all its attendant misery, suffering, death and disease. The last few months of the life of Mahatma Gandhi were devoted to this cause of the uprooted people. He used to meet them in thousands, talk to them, sympathise with them, discuss their problems of rehabilitation, and visit Panipat, Kurukshetra and other places where townships and camps had grown.

Gandhiji had made an appointment to meet and talk to the refugees in the camp at Kurukshetra on the 11th of October 1947, and he realised that he could not



keep his appointment that evening as he had to be present at a meeting of the Congress Working Committee and he was unhappy about the situation. Friends suggested that Gandhiji should broadcast his message to the refugees. And so in the forenoon of October 11, 1947 Gandhiji recorded his message, to be put on the air at the scheduled hour and made available to refugees at Kurukshetra on loudspeakers.

Reminiscing on this experience of his, his first broadcast from the studios of Broadcasting House, Gandhiji stated in his post-prayer address on October 12, 1947 ; "I was simply astounded. The Broadcasting House is an impressive, tremendous thing. They tell me that arrangements were so made that my voice will reach those sorrowing, afflicted people. How wonderful it is. It is a miracle. If voice can reach far distance places, it is no small thing indeed."

This spoken testimony of Gandhiji investing broadcasting with divine power in his first Studio-broadcast from All India Radio, is a rare and a proud possession of All India Radio Archives.

Gandhiji's prayer meeting addresses from September 1947 to 29th January 1948 totalling about 51 hours have all been preserved for posterity in the form of metal stampers. A unique and rare collection, these recordings reveal very interesting human aspects of the personality of Gandhiji. He spoke in his prayer meetings in the Bhangi Colony, Sodepur Ashram or Birla Bhavan in an inimitably

personal, direct, conversational style, expounding eternal values of life by which he lived discussing national or international problems or commenting on matters of individual behaviour. The speeches are a moving record of a very crucial, transitional phase of modern Indian history.

A bomb was thrown when Gandhiji was giving his after-prayer speech on January 20, 1948. Gandhiji unmindful of what had happened continued with his prayer address. At his prayer meeting the next day he said that he would consider himself successful in any such future test if he could maintain complete composure and die with a smile on his lips. Whether he had such faith in God, only the future could tell.

Only after a few days came the fateful 30th January. On that day Gandhiji was delayed for his prayer meeting and he came out of the Birla House at a quarter past five in the evening. The microphone on the lawns of Biral Bhawan where the prayer meeting assembled was connected to the Control Room of the Broadcasting House and the crowd noise was being heard. A blank recording disc was ready on the turntable and the Engineer ready to drop the needle at a moment's notice. On his way to the prayer ground, Godse fired his revolver and the shots were heard in the Control Room. Immediately news came that Gandhiji was injured, the Radio called on its listeners to stand by for an important announcement.

AIR gave the shocking stunning news flash ; at 1800 Hrs.



ALL INDIA RADIO DEEPLY REGRETS  
TO ANNOUNCE THE DEATH OF  
MAHATMA GANDHI"

The announcement was repeated on the radio accompanied by melancholy music of

Saranghi. The music was punctuated by important announcements as they came. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, and Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Patel broadcast their obituaries at 20-30 Hrs, the same night.

( From Page 56 )

Khadi and Village industries. The Hindustani Talimi Sangh as a daily class for weaving also.

As self-sufficiency for food is the most urgent task before the country, the Talimi Sangh at Sewagram gives the first importance to food self-sufficiency as an educational programme. Their objective is to develop the farm, garden, and dairy, as a training centre for students, teachers and workers in agriculture, animal husbandry and agro-industries.

RURAL MEDICAL COLLEGE

Close to the Sevagram Ashram is developing a rural medical college known as Mahatma Gandhi College of Medical Sciences and Kasturba Hospital. The College which was inaugurated on September 12, 1969 is based on Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri's idea that medical students trained under rural conditions would be more willing to serve rural areas.

Changeless, yet changing, this Ashram is functioning under Nirmal Bohn, Gandhiji's daughter-in-law, on Mahatma's lines, with pride in the past and faith in the future.

ONE GOD FOR ALL

"...The need of the moment is not one religion, but mutual respect and tolerance of the devotees of the different religions. We want to reach not the dead level, but unity in diversity. Any attempt to root out traditions, effects of heredity, climate and other surroundings is not only bound to fail, but is a sacrilege. The soul of religions is one, but it is encased in a multitude of forms. The latter will persist to the end of time. Wise men will ignore the outward crust and see the same soul living under a variety of crusts. For Hindus to expect Islam, Christianity or Zoroastrianism to be driven out of India is as idle a dream as it would be for Mussalmans to have only Islam of their imagination rule the world. But if belief in One God and the race of His Prophets in a never-ending chain is sufficient for Islam then we are all Mussalmans, but we are also all Hindus and Christians. Truth is the exclusive property of no single scripture."

(Young India, Sept. 25, 1924)



## TOLERANCE THE ROOT OF ALL DHARMAS

"..... Tolerance should be our aim. If all of us hold uniform views, where then is the scope for the generous virtue of views, where then is the scope for this generous virtue of tolerance ? However, this search for uniformity is as futile as looking for flowers in the sky. Hence, the only possible alternative for us is to tolerate one another's views. According to my Muslim friends, I, a born idol-worshipper, a believer in incarnation and rebirth, must necessarily cultivate tolerance for Muslims who do not believe in idol worship, who do not believe in incarnations, and perhaps in rebirth. I, a believer in incarnations do not think that Christ alone was God, or that he alone was the son of God. Nevertheless, I should tolerate the fact that my Christian friends look upon Christ as God, and, similarly, Muslims and Christians should tolerate the fact that I bow in reverence to Kanya Kumari and Jagannath. I can see that the age of tolerance is dawning in my own lifetime, because tolerance is at the root of the dharma of ahimsa. That very same tolerance is also at the root of the dharma of truth. Truth, like God, has a thousand diverse aspects. I cannot therefore insist that my view about the nature of truth is the correct one and those of others wrong..."

## RELIGION A PERSONAL MATTER

".....Hindustan belongs to all those who are born and bred here and who have no other country to look to. Therefore, it belongs to Parsis, Beni Israels, to Indian Christians, Muslims and other non-Hindus as much as to Hindus. Free India will be no Hindu raj, it will be Indian raj based not on the majority of any religious sect or community but on the representatives of the whole people without distinction of religion. I can conceive of a mixed majority putting the Hindus in a minority. They would be elected for their record of service and merits. Religion is a personal matter which should have no place in politics. It is the unnatural condition of foreign domination that we have unnatural divisions according to religion. Foreign domination going, we shall laugh at our folly in having clung to false ideals and slogans."

(Harijan, August 9, 1942)



# Chronology Of Leading Events Of Gandhiji's Life

- October 2, 1869 ... Born at Porbunder, Kathiawar
- 1883 ... Marries Kasturbai
- September, 1888 ... Sails for England
- June 10, 1891 ... Called to the Bar
- June 12, 1891 ... Sails for India
- 1892 ... Starts legal practice and settled at Rajkot as legal draftsman.
- April, 1893 ... Leaves for South Africa for legal work
- May-June, 1893 ... Experiences colour-bar and decides to fight race prejudices in South Africa.



CHRONOLCGY OF....

- August 22, 1894 ... Founds Natal Indian Congress
- September, 1894 ... Enrolled as Advocate of Supreme Court, Natal
- 1895 ... Issues "The Indian Franchise" an appeal to every Brit in South Africa.
- July, 1896 ... Returns to India and starts agitation on behalf of South African Indians.
- 1898-99 ... Represents to Indian National Congress against restrictions on Indian's Trading Rights in South Africa.
- 1899 ... Raises Indian Ambulance Corps in Boer War
- October 18, 1901 ... Sails for India
- Jan. 28-Feb. 1, 1902 ... Visits Rangoon
- July, 1902 ... Shifts to and sets up practice at Bombay
- November, 1902 ... Is called to South Africa to champion Indians' cause against Anti-Asiatic legislation in Transvaal.
- 1903 ... Founds Transvaal British Indian Association
- June, 1903 ... Indian Opinion commences publication
- 1904 ... Founds Phoenix Settlement near Durban
- 1905 ... Opposes Bengal Partition and supports Boycott of British goods. Leads deputation to Lord Selborne, British High Commissioner concerning Transvaal Indian problems.
- May 12, 1906 ... Supports 'home rule' for India
- June-July, 1906 ... Raises Indian Stretcher-bearer corps in Zulu Rebellion. takes vow of Brahmacharya for life.
- October-November 1906 ... In England on deputation to present Indians' case to Colonial Secretary.
- January 10, 1908 ... Adopts word, 'Satyagraha' in place of "Passive Resistance". Sentenced to two months' imprisonment for failure to leave Transvaal.



- January 30, 1908 ... Summoned to see General Smuts at Pretoria and released on reaching a compromise.
- August, 1908 ... Declares use of violence 'harmful' even useless to uproot British rule in India.
- October 15, 1908 ... Arrested and sentenced to 2 months' rigorous imprisonment.
- December 12, 1908 ... Released from Volksrust Gaol
- January 20, 1909 ... Writes to Press calling on Indians to prepare for final phase of struggle.
- May 2, 1909 ... Transferred to Pretoria Central Gaol
- May 24, 1909 ... Released from Pretoria Central Gaol
- April 4, 1910 ... Sends Tolstoy copy of "Indian Home Rule"; seeks comment.
- October 22, 1912 ... Tour of South Africa with Gokhale; gives up European dress.
- April 12, 1913 ... Kasturba decides to join Passive Resistance struggle
- October 17, 1913 ... Visits Newcastle; urges indentured Indians to cease work till repeal of £3-tax.
- November 6, 1913 ... Leads "Great March" to Transvaal and arrested at Palmford.
- January 13—16, 1914 ... Interviews Smuts, submits proposals
- January 22, 1914 ... Suspends Satyagraha following agreement with Smuts. Fourteen days' fast for moral lapse of inmates of Farm.
- January 9, 1915 ... Reaches India, awarded Kaiser-i-Hind Gold Medal for Ambulance services.
- May 20, 1915 ... Founds Satyagraha Ashram later known as Sabaramati Ashram at Ahmedabad.
- January—March, 1918 ... Takes up cause of textile labourers of Ahmedabad and fasts to secure amicable settlement.



# CHRONOLOGY OF.....

- February 28, 1919 ... Signs Satyagraha pledge to secure withdrawal of Rowla Bills.
- April 6, 1919 ... Inaugurates All-India Satyagraha movement
- April 13, 1919 ... Jallianwala Bagh tragedy at Amritsar
- September, 1919 ... Assumes editorship of the Gujarati monthly, Navajivan
- October, 1919 ... Assumes editorship of the English Weekly Young India joins non-official committee of inquiry into official excesses in Punjab.
- November 24, 1919 ... Presides over All-India Khilafat Conference at Delhi
- December, 1919 ... Advises acceptance of Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms by Congress at Amritsar.
- August, 1920 ... Addresses letter to Viceroy surrendering Kaiser-i-Hind Medal, Zulu War Medal and Boer War Medal.
- November, 1920 ... Founds Gujarat Vidyapeeth at Ahmedabad
- December, 1920 ... Nagpur Congress session adopts his resolution declaring object of Congress to be attainment of Swaraj by the people of India by all legitimate and peaceful means.
- August, 1921 ... Leads campaign for complete boycott of foreign cloth and lights bonfire of foreign cloth in Bombay.
- February, 1922 ... Gives notice to Viceroy of intention to launch Satyagraha campaign in Bardoli (Gujarat).
- March 10, 1922 ... Arrested for sedition at Sabarmati and sentenced (March 18) to six years' imprisonment.
- September, 1924 ... Begins 21 days' fast for Hindu-Muslim unity
- September, 1925 ... Founds All-India Spinners' Association
- March 12, 1930 ... Commences march to Dandi
- May 5, 1930 ... Arrested and imprisoned without trial; Hartal all over India.



- August 29, 1931 ... Sails for England as sole Congress delegate to Second Round Table Conference.
- September 20, 1932 ... Commences fast unto death in jail to secure abolition of separate electorates for Harijans in Communal Award.
- February 11, 1933 ... Finds the weekly paper Harijan, published in English in and Hindi.
- May 8, 1933 ... Commences 21 days' fast for self-purification; released unconditionally at 9 p. m.
- July 26, 1933 ... Disbands Satyagraha Ashram at Sabarmati
- April 30, 1936 ... Settles down at Sevagram, a village near Wardha
- October 22, 1937 ... Presides over Educational Conference at Wardha and outlines his scheme of education through basic crafts.
- August 8, 1942 ... Appeals to British Government to quit India
- August 9, 1942 ... Arrested and interned in Aga Khan's Palace at Poona
- February 22, 1944 ... Kasturba Gandhi dies in Aga Khan's Palace
- January & February 1946 ... Tours Southern India for anti-untouchability and Hindu-stani propaganda.
- May 5—12, 1946 ... In Simla; Simla Conference in session; deliberations prove infructuous.
- August 27, 1946 ... Gandhiji cables British Government warning against repetition of 'Bengal tragedy'. Also writes to Wavell.
- October 28, 1946 ... Leaves for Calcutta. Riots break out in Bihar
- November 6, 1946 ... Leaves for Noakhali; issues statement on 'Partial Fast'.
- April 1-2, 1947 ... Gandhiji addresses Asian Relations Conference in Delhi
- April 15, 1947 ... Issues with Jinnah joint appeal for communal peace
- May 1, 1947 ... Congress Working Committee accepts Partition in Principle.



- June 6, 1947                   ... Gandhiji writes to Mountbatten to persuade Jinnah to amicably settle all outstanding points with Congress.
- June 12, 1947                 ... Addresses Congress Working Committee
- July 27, 1947                 ... Appeals to Princes to regard people's paramountcy as a privilege.
- December 25, 1947           ... Pleads for amicable settlement between India and Pakistan.
- January 12, 1948             ... Decides to fast for communal peace in Delhi
- January 18, 1948             ... Peace Committee signs, presents 'Peace Pledge' to Gandhiji, who breaks fast.
- January 20, 1948             ... Bomb explodes at prayer meeting
- January 30, 1948             ... Is assassinated on way to evening prayer

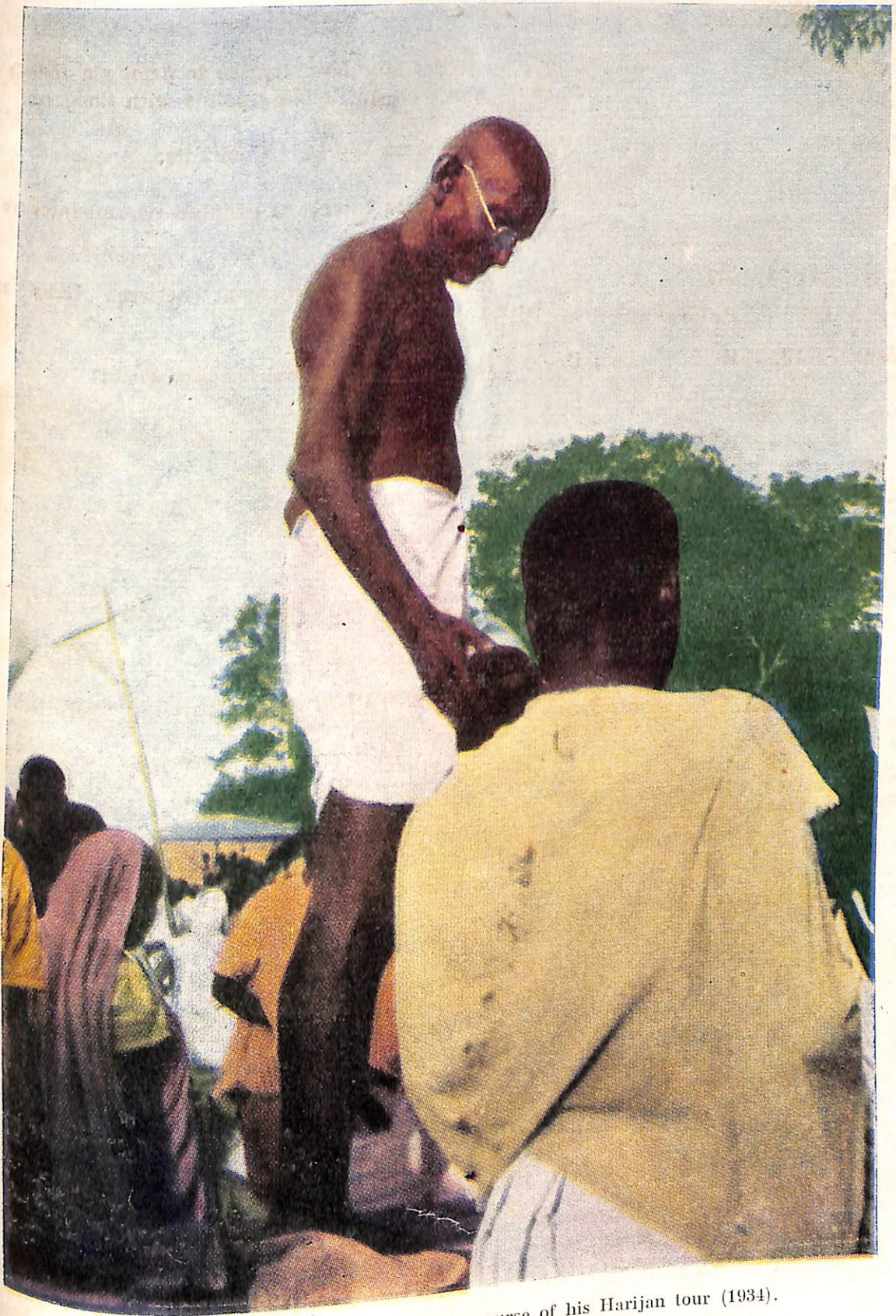
### SOCIAL BONDS AND BARRIERS

"Caste distinctions have taken such deep root amongst us that they have also infected the Muslims, Christians and followers of other religions in India. It is true that class barriers are also to be found in more or less degree in other parts of the world. This means that it is a distemper common to the human race. It can be eliminated only by the inculcation of religion in its true sense. I have not found sanction for such barriers and distinctions in the scriptures of any religion.

"In the eye of religion all men are equal. Learning, intellect or riches do not entitle one to claim superiority over those who are lacking in these. If any person is suffused and sanctified with the purifying essence and the discipline of true religion, he regards himself under the obligation to share his advantages with those who have fewer. That being so, in our present fallen state, true religion requires us all to become ati-sudras by choice."

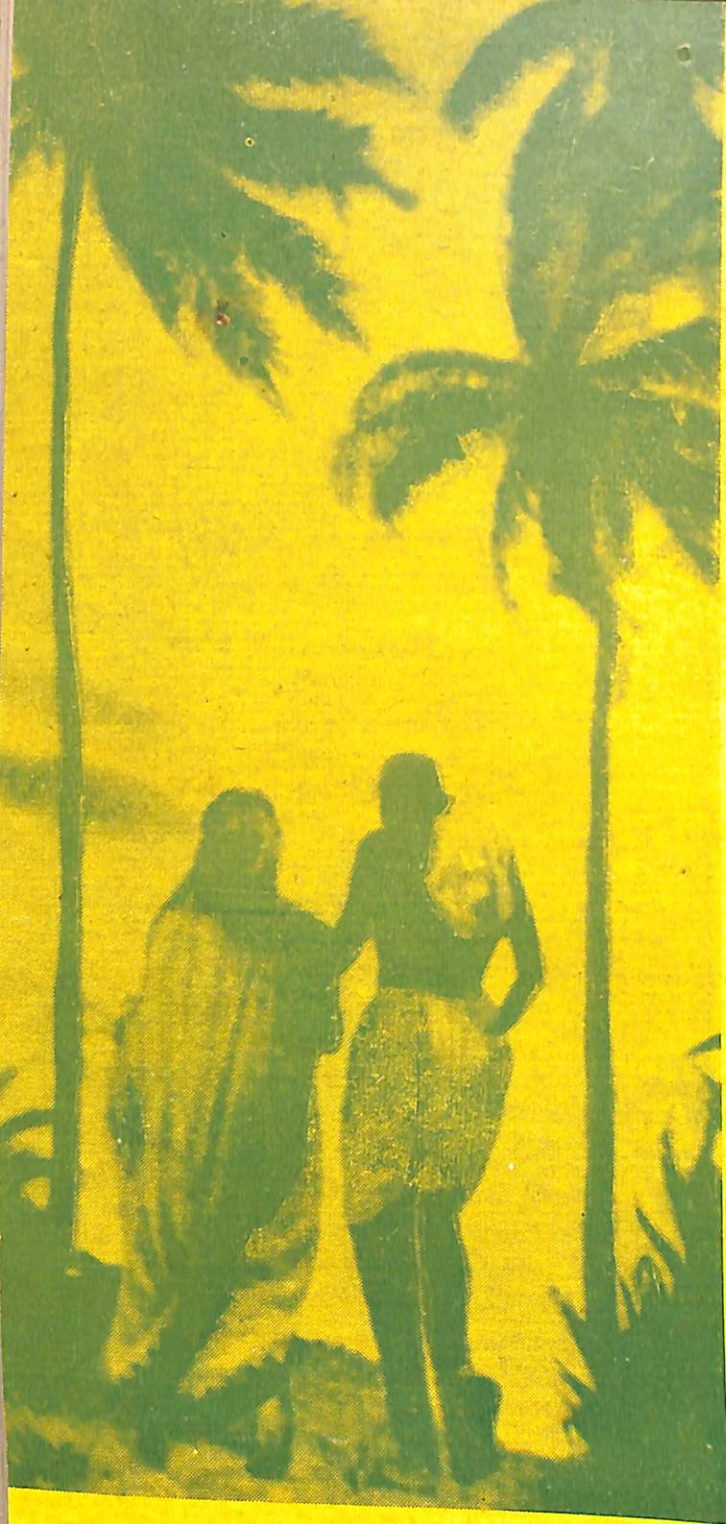
(The Hindu, Sept. 19, 1945)





Gandhiji in a public meeting in Orissa in course of his Harijan tour (1934).





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