

The Gandhi Way



Gandhi and a young friend (photo in Woodbrooke Archives)

Newsletter of The Gandhi Foundation

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Gandhi Foundation AGM

Saturday 16 May 2015

at Kingsley Hall, Powis Road, Bromley-By-Bow, London E3 3HJ

AGM at 2pm followed by a film *Cotton for My Shroud* about farmer suicides in India and the culpability of the multinational Monsanto and the Indian Government. With discussion.

Please register with: william@gandhifoundation.org or 07910215651

Also at Kingsley Hall

Muriel Lester History Evening

Wednesday 13 May 6-9pm

Tours of the building; a play about Muriel Lester; book event by Seth Koven, author of *The Match Girl and the Heiress*

Please register with William Rhind as above.

GF Summer Gathering 2015

Gandhian Values in the Digital Age

Saturday 25 July - Saturday 1 August

at The Abbey, Sutton Courtenay, Nr Abingdon, Oxfordshire

In the morning sessions we shall be looking at the dangers and opportunities of our increasing access to information technology.

There will be a variety of practical activities as well as walks, discussions etc.

Prices for the week range from £150 to £260 depending on the accommodation

– children and full-time students come at half price.

Further details & booking: william@gandhifoundation.org

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Caring for the Future of People and Planet Different Faiths, Ecology and Spirituality

This was the subject of the talk given by Professor Ursula King, Professor Emerita of Theology and Religious Studies and Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies, University of Bristol. She was speaking to an audience of about fifty at the Gandhi Foundation Multi-Faith Celebration held on 31st January at the London Inter-Faith Centre, an event held annually to mark the anniversary of Gandhi's assassination in 1948.

Dr King pointed out that the different faiths have insights relevant to care of the planet although concern about the harm caused by human activity is much more recent. There was little awareness in Gandhi's time of the threat to the natural world but his teaching and lifestyle exemplified sustainable living.

The first section of her talk defined sustainability and went on to show how the acceptance of the principle would affect every aspect of society. A fundamental change in our thinking was needed so that people saw all humankind as part of Nature rather than seeing the natural world only as resources for our use. For this reason Dr King preferred to use the term 'ecology' rather than 'environment' as the former word places humans as part of the web of life.

Secondly, Dr King outlined bad news and good news. She listed eight major threats to the planet caused by human economic activity. On the other hand there had been a revolution in the availability of knowledge about the natural world and in ways of learning about it. The first photo of the earth taken from space led to a heightened awareness that we lived on a single planet with finite resources alongside many other life-forms, all interlinked in a delicate balance. In many areas, she said that this rise in earth consciousness is being linked to spirituality.

Thirdly, Dr King referred to some of the reports and statements that have been issued by individuals, international gatherings and faith communities. She said that no religion has the whole truth and that therefore multiple perspectives were required. We needed to reinterpret our beliefs in relation to current and past experience. New concerns must be accommodated. Elements of different religions should be synthesised and finally, new ideas and practices developed.

In the fourth section of her talk, Dr King called for our thinking on 'eco-spirituality' to be more dynamic. Our thinking was still far from the culture of the Native American tradition which saw the earth as our Mother, the source of all life. Jews and Christians shared the concept of stewardship but it needed to be developed into a demand for transformation. She commended Sufi thinking of God as a hidden treasure who has created humankind in order to be known. Gandhi's simple life-style was related to his view of the earth as a living unity with all its life forms interconnected.

All parts of Dr King’s talk were illustrated with well-chosen quotations. A shortened version of her text can be downloaded from the Gandhi Foundation website: www.gandhifoundation.org



Ursula King speaking in the London Interfaith Centre and (below) part of the audience



In response to a variety of questions, Dr King referred to Thomas Berry’s idea that there exist four important streams of wisdom that we should draw on. They are the cultures of indigenous peoples; the experience and values of

women; the classical traditions of philosophy and religions and, finally, modern science – described by Berry as the “yoga of the west”. In reply to a question about capitalism she said that this was totally incompatible with the ideal of deep ecology. In order to disengage as far as possible from the capitalist system we needed to unite with kindred spirits, nurture hope and try to live a life of honesty, truth and simplicity as Gandhi did. The fundamental message of all religions was that individual action can make a difference. A source of hope was the development of ecological movements in other parts of the world. What was needed in this country was a greater emphasis on ecological issues in the National Curriculum and quality teaching at all levels.

Graham Davey

Martin Luther King’s Dream: how can we end racism today?

50 years ago, Martin Luther King preached a sermon at St Paul’s Cathedral on his way to collect the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo. On 4 December 2014, an impressive service at St Paul’s was held to reflect on that anniversary.

It was hosted in partnership with the Runnymede Trust, the UK’s leading independent race-equality think tank, and donations were invited for the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust. That Trust was set up by Stephen’s mother to help disadvantaged young people study architecture as Stephen could not, and to create a positive and dynamic legacy in his honour.

Gandhi’s name was not mentioned during the evening, or his influence as an example for Martin Luther King’s practice of nonviolence. The focus was mainly on racism in the UK, 50 years ago and today, with speakers also alluding to the angry protests in Ferguson and New York over recent racist behaviour in the United States.

The programme contained a quotation from Dr King, speaking at a press conference before his sermon in 1964: “There are growing racial problems in Britain as a result of the large number of coloured persons from the West Indies, from Pakistan and India who are coming into the country. And it is my feeling that if Britain is not eternally vigilant and if England does not in a real sense go all out to deal with this problem now it can mushroom and become as serious as the problem we face in some other Nations.” Those words about immigration and the need for vigilance against the rise of racism, as resonant today as when they were spoken, summed up the challenge addressed by the speakers in the Cathedral that evening.

Corey Samuel of the Renaissance Foundation spoke first, with a tribute to Dr King expressing his relevance to young people today. Heidi Safia Mirza, Professor of Race, Faith and Culture at Goldsmith’s College in London, outlined the content of

Dr King's sermon with reference to our situation now: the need for everyone to affirm, "I am somebody"; the need to resist media-fuelled division; and the need for a sustaining faith. She quoted an elderly lady from Dr King's time refusing a lift saying, "my feet is tired but my soul is restless"; and she celebrated Malala Yousafzai being awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize.

Hugh Muir, a *Guardian* columnist, said the Windrush generation had been here for 10 years when Dr King paid his visit and he did not like what people told him. One of many notable changes has been the fact that the fastest-growing ethnic group in the 2011 census was of "mixed heritage"; and it is good that such people are now in the Cabinet and the House of Lords. He thinks Dr King would have been "astounded" by the change – but it is not the whole story.

Baroness Doreen Lawrence, OBE was the final speaker. She recalled Dr King's dream that one day his four little children would live in a nation where they were not judged by the colour of their skins but the content of their character. In Britain today, the future does not hold equal promise for everyone and we need more than individual progress; we need a sea change. We should, she said, follow Dr King's example and choose the path of Unity and Hope.

The clearest answer I took to the question "How can we end racism today?" was that power of example: the examples of Martin Luther King, Doreen Lawrence, and by implication of Gandhi too.

Alison Williams

Gandhi's Search for Social Harmony

Annual Lecture Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association, 30 September 2014

Antony Copley

Can I begin by asking you to mark the death of our founder and first President Lord Attenborough. Some of you may be here because of his film *Gandhi*.

It was the interest the film inspired in Gandhi that led the Historical Association to commission my own book on Gandhi, *Gandhi: Against the Tide* (Blackwell 1987, OUP 1993) and it led to an invitation by Surur Hoda – one of the most charming men I've ever met – to join the Foundation and I've been a member ever since. He introduced me to members of the Railway Trade Union in India but that's another story.

It was a surprisingly easy book to write partly because I'd been involved in teaching about Gandhi in a course at the University of Kent which examined the freedom struggle, mainly because I'd been involved in researching the career of the great South Indian statesman, C Rajagopalachari, Gandhi's outstanding ally in the south, though they were to fall out over the Quit India movement of 1942 and CR got Gandhi awkwardly involved with Jinnah in

their 1944 talks. Still CR more than anyone else foresaw the outcome of the partition. I'm glad to say CR's achievements are currently being recognised by a 10 volume set of his writings by the Nehru Memorial Library.

Gandhi is of course a perfect choice of subject for an Inter-Faith organisation. I have been reading with great interest your literature and I'm absolutely sure Gandhi would have been at home in Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association (EIFA). I have argued that it makes a lot of sense to place Gandhi in the Hindu religious reform movements for in many ways he sought the same imaginative insights into other world religions as Ramakrishna – though he was unable in 1902 to meet Vivekananda, then at death's door, and has similarities with the extraordinary spiritual path of Aurobindo – possibly India's greatest spiritual teacher in the 20th century. But Gandhi was in South Africa when Aurobindo was a leading figure in the Swaraj movement and when he tried to meet him much later, they differed on attitudes towards the war, and Aurobindo, a natural recluse anyway, declined to meet him. Gandhi was, of course, out of sympathy with the Arya Samaj movement, becoming ever more popular in North India, and pursuing, along with its caste reformist ideas, an aggressive Hindu communal agenda.

I know some EIFA members have an interest in the tensions between religion and spirituality, (incidentally the theme of my latest book, *Music and the Spiritual: Composers and Politics in the 20th Century*), and it would be perfectly possible to explore Gandhi in terms of his spirituality, and I think we are in part doing so when we harness Gandhi's ideas to the whole debate on environmentalism and climate change. But I have been persuaded by Anthony Parel that at the heart of Gandhi's *sadhana* was politics, an endeavour through a commitment to *artha* to find *moksha* or salvation. Here Gandhi followed Annie Besant in breaking a taboo on the religious reform movements participating in politics. And how sad that Gandhi and Annie Besant fell out, the remarkable if ultimately tragic President of the Theosophical Society parting company with Gandhi over the non-cooperation campaign in favour of liberal constitutional change. (For a brief summary of the Hindu Religious Reform Movements see my entry Reform Hinduism in Volume 2 of the *Encyclopedia of Global Religion*, Sage 2012)

It's usual to talk about the legacy of Gandhi in terms of those who have been influenced by Gandhi's ideals and their contemporary relevance but I'm adopting a different approach, looking at certain aspects of his ideas, controversial at the time, and which continue to resonate today.

So to understand Gandhi we have to turn to politics. From South Africa he brought to India in 1915 an already tested new mode of protest, satyagraha, there in favour mainly of Indian rights, but in India to be the means of national independence. The story from 1915 to Gandhi's assassination 30 January 1948, is dominated by two fatally entwined issues, the freedom struggle and the partition. Gandhi passionately believed in the unity of

India's multifarious population, more so it can be argued than in independence and I want now to turn attention to the way Gandhi desperately struggled to maintain unity of the caste Hindu community with two of India's largest communities, the Muslims, as it happens the largest Muslim community at the time in the world, and the untouchables or as they wish to be known, the Dalits. By extension they also embrace the forest peoples, the Adivasis, currently the subject of the greatest human struggle for survival in India today. In both cases this had led to a highly controversial legacy.

One really sad aspect of Gandhi's last days was his belief that his satyagrahas had not really worked, they were but passive resistance movements of the weak, not the non-resistance of the strong and courageous. It was just because they were not the true version that all this antipathy between religious communities had been building up and broke out in the communal violence of the India holocaust between 1946-48. (Appropriating the concept Holocaust for the Partition maybe be questionable, for no genocide was planned, but it is difficult to find a word for a million slaughtered and some 14 million migrants.) Gandhi always had a keen insight into the nature of violence and from an early stage in responding in 1909 to Savarkar in London saw the risk that the freedom struggle would deteriorate into terrorism, hence his remarkable tract *Hind Swaraj*. But it could be argued he also saw the inherent risk of any peaceful mass nonviolent movement also giving way, through its latent sense of self-righteousness, into forms of moral coercion and hence at risk of spilling over into violence. This is what happened at Chauri Chaura in 1922. Hence Gandhi's increasing insistence on a dedicated band of satyagrahis, thoroughly trained in its moral values, to be leaders of any mass struggle, ready to leach out of the movement any tendency to coercion. This was brilliantly demonstrated in the Salt March of 1930. (And here I am indebted to the ideas of Yale academic Karuna Mantena.) Gandhi, however, never lost faith that a true satyagraha campaign would work, however much he struggled to find ways of reacting to mounting communal divide and to war.

Gandhi's attempt to maintain communal harmony between Hindus and Muslims is fascinating and ultimately tragic. He established good relations in South Africa, even if Muslim merchants were none too keen on going to jail. Brilliantly he was to fashion an alliance with the Muslim League under the leadership of Mohammed and Shaukat Ali and the Congress in the Khilafat movement 1920-22. Indian Muslims were almost unique world-wide in rallying to the defence of the Caliphate, vested in the Ottoman Sultan, the Ottoman empire itself threatened with dissolution by the Allies at Versailles, themselves determined to wrench some territorial gain as compensation for the appalling waste of the First World War. The Indian Muslim leadership at the time were not natural sympathisers with nonviolence and were to overstep the Gandhian mark with an appeal to the army to mutiny. But, far worse, the social unrest unleashed by the non-co-operation campaign led to a

class and ultimately communal breakdown in the 1922 Malabar rebellion and good relationships between Hindus and Muslims never really recovered. Secular-minded Ataturk anyway dissolved the Caliphate in 1923. And, very regrettably, Gandhi had alienated the most brilliant leader of the Muslim community, Jinnah, a highly sophisticated lawyer with constitutional law expertise, who favoured the way of the Indian Moderates over what he saw as Gandhi's anarchic policy. Ayesha Jalal has seen him as woefully misconstrued as the villain of partition, and that it makes much more sense to see him as one of its tragic victims. As he said, all he had achieved was 'a moth-eaten Pakistan'. Arguably all along he'd hoped for a strong Muslim presence in some federal structure.

So Gandhi faced an appalling task in from 1946 onwards to stem the ever escalating violence. He succeeded in doing so in Calcutta alongside the maverick ML leader Suhrawardy and under the benign protection of West Bengal's new governor, Rajagopalachari. Then from his base in Birla House he desperately tried in his *yajna* from 9 September till his assassination to do the same in Delhi, awash with Hindu and Sikh refugees from West Punjab and bent on looking for recompense with the property of Delhi Muslims and of course in the Punjab itself. Gandhi hoped that communities would not migrate, that Muslims would prefer to be citizens in a plural India. He did not spare the Muslims in West Punjab for instigating violence against Hindus and Sikhs but his mantra throughout was non-retaliation. When Hindus and Sikhs failed to listen he accused all communities of betraying their faiths. He did have some insight into the particular tragedy of the Sikhs, and as it happened the best armed community, at the break-up of their historic state of Punjab. Gandhi is often accused of contributing to the communal conflict through his belief that religion has a role to play in politics and worse of a Hinduisation of the Congress. (Perry Anderson is a recent example – see my critique 'Contra Anderson' in *Gandhi Marg* Vol 34 July-December 2012.) But this is to miss the point that Gandhi stood for some kind of universalist religion, based on the idea of dharma, of moral conduct, though it would seem he failed to convert Indians to this vision. He was a pragmatist, however, came to accept the fait-accompli of partition and insisted that India hand over Pakistan's share of the national assets. This insistence led to the last of his fasts, 13-18th of January, and Nehru's government gave way, but it proved the final straw for his assassin, Nathuram Godse, confirming his belief that the Father of the Nation was betraying Mother India. Did Gandhi die with the word Ram on his lips? The ultimate tragedy of what could be seen as his exemplary death is the ongoing breakdown of communal harmony and three wars between India and Pakistan. Even in today's *Scotsman* there is a report of communal violence in the Gujarat town of Vadodora.

The Congress party in the 1916 Lucknow pact had conceded separate electorates to Muslims and this was formally granted in the Montford reforms of 1919. For Gandhi this was vivisection. When the same separate electorates

were offered to the 'untouchable' community in the 1932 Communal Award, Gandhi saw red. He went on to a fast unto death in 1932 at Poona, and quite probably would have gone all the way had Rajaji not persuaded him of the immorality of suicide. But Ambedkar also backed down. Gandhi had never encountered before in Ambedkar, a member of the upwardly mobilising Mahar sub-caste, so highly educated an untouchable and was out of his depth. They approached the question of the outcastes differently. From the Vykom satyagraha of 1924 onwards, one on behalf of the right of untouchables to worship in caste Hindu temples, Gandhi seemingly privileged religious and cultural change over economic and sought to re-incorporate the untouchables within the caste Hindu system. Ambedkar came to reject the caste system outright and worked for their economic and social uplift as a separate community. In fact Ambedkar won significant electoral concessions at the time but the rupture was never healed. Gandhi went on an all-India campaign in 1934 to enhance untouchable status and blamed the Bihar earthquake on the continuing stigma of untouchability. Ambedkar became Law Minister in Nehru's administration and made a major contribution on the framing of the Indian constitution which of course outlawed untouchability. But the ramifications of his quarrel with Gandhi have rumbled on. Recently Arundhati Roy has attacked Gandhi: "it is time to unveil a few truths about a person whose doctrine of nonviolence was based on the acceptance of a most brutal social hierarchy ever known". This is in her introduction to Ambedkar's 1936 speech *The Annihilation of Caste*.

The Gandhi Foundation itself ran up against this continuing breach between Gandhians and the Dalits. There is a protracted struggle currently to protect the interests of the Adivasis in their sacred forest lands. There was a campaign led by Gandhians, Medha Patkar outstanding, to limit the damage of the Narmada dams, the Sardar Sarovar project, to those sacred lands, a campaign with marvellously named monsoon satyagrahas, but, in the end, the Supreme Court gave the go-ahead for raising the dam. A like struggle is currently raging in the forest areas of new tribal states, Chattisgarh and Jharkand and in areas of Andhra Pradesh, against the intrusions of Indian capitalism and globalisation. Civil conflict between the Indian army and a Maoist rebellion constitutes India's worst internal unrest. The GF wanted to honour the remarkable work of Dr Binayak Sen in medical work and in the field of human rights in Chattisgarh, work for which he was accused of treason and threatened with life imprisonment. His account of the plight of the Adivasis is terrifying, portraying a decline in their health indicative of their living in famine conditions and so fulfilling a definition, based on WHO criterion, of genocide. (See his acceptance speech in Korea of the Gwangju prize, published in *The Gandhi Way* No 108 Summer 2011.) When we offered him our International Gandhi Peace Award for humanitarian work on behalf of the Adivasis, angry voices were raised in India at what was seen as honouring Gandhians for work that should be equally attributed to local

Adivasi leadership. I'm glad to say all was resolved and Dr Sen gave a very moving speech in the House of Lords but it was an eye-opener on how two sets of well-meaning reformers still find it hard to work together.

It seems inevitable to me that a world historical figure like Gandhi will attract controversy. This was true in his life-time and it is a measure of his continuing stature and influence that this continues today. I love the way we keep learning new things about Gandhi, that he would have watched cricket matches at Rajkot as a boy, that George Orwell was born in Champaran where Gandhi launched his satyagraha in India in 1917. I think EIFA is absolutely right to see Gandhi as such a seminal figure. I thank you for your attention.

(You can read responses by Rajmohan Gandhi and Narinder Kapur to recent criticisms of Gandhi by Arundhati Roy on our website. www.gandhifoundation.org)

Proposal for a Gandhi Institute

Narinder Kapur

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Roger Sperry, Nobel Laureate, 1981

It becomes increasingly evident that the prime, urgent need of our times is not for more science and improved technology, medical or otherwise, but for some new ethical policies and moral guidelines to live and govern by.

This document presents an outline rationale for improving health, education and psychological well-being in developing countries, for promoting high ethical standards, and for the study of nonviolent solutions to disputes, by having a focused entity, called the *Gandhi Institute*, where relevant research and practice would take place. In addition to salaried staff, the centre would take advantage of frequently untapped sources of support, such as retired academics and retired health care professionals, who could offer their services both directly, and also indirectly through means such as the internet. Such a centre would additionally serve as a psychological catalyst to encourage other professionals, society leaders, etc to think in terms of promoting the principles and ethos of Gandhi's philosophy.

Precedents

A number of leading universities have centres for South Asian Studies – e.g. Oxford, Cambridge. In addition, both these universities and Imperial College have centres for Indian Business Studies. The University of Bradford has a well-established Centre for Peace Studies. The University of Ulster has a Centre for Conflict Studies. More recently, Kings College London has established an India Institute, with a Chair of India Studies. Cambridge University has a well-established Humanitarian Centre which focuses on international development issues, a centre for South Asian Studies, and also a dedicated Cambridge-India partnership advisory group of 25 senior academics in the university who have

close links to India. The advisory group meets four times a year. Australia has a major India institute, based at the University of Melbourne (www.aii.unimelb.edu.au). A *Gandhi Institute* could form a natural focus for links with emerging powers such as India, and benefits that accrue may well be generalizable to other countries with similar needs and problems. When the Nobel Committee announced its 2014 Peace Prize, it specifically cited Gandhi and his values (<http://tinyurl.com/okn59re>).

Why have a Gandhi Institute?

Apart from accidents of nature (e.g. earthquakes, floods, etc), and apart from accidents caused by human error (e.g. road traffic accidents), there would appear to be four main threats to the well-being of the human race – poverty, disease, ignorance, and violence. Reducing poverty is a multi-faceted problem which involves a number of variables, many of them political and economic. In the case of human disease, a number of bodies such as the Gates Foundation, Oxfam, etc have made major contributions towards helping to improve physical well-being by the reduction of disease and the alleviation of its effects. The domains of ignorance and violence remain areas to be tackled. Lack of knowledge interacts with other variables to contribute towards the occurrence and persistence of disease. Disease can occur naturally, or it can result from violence (e.g. from use of biological forms of weapons of mass destruction).

The purpose of the *Gandhi Institute* would be to harness the goodwill, knowledge and experience of many dedicated individuals, together with the power of the internet, and to use it as a focus for activities that dealt with reducing ignorance, preventing disease, and encouraging measures that made it less likely for the occurrence of man's violence to man. A key feature of the work of such an institute would be to draw on scientific research as a foundation for many of its activities, and also generate relevant scientific research of its own.

There is also an intangible element to the benefits of a *Gandhi Institute* – it would help to focus people's minds on 'giving' rather than 'getting', on 'good work', and would thus encourage a change in thinking amongst leaders and individuals across society, a change that encouraged reflecting on the needs of others who are less well-endowed, rather than on the needs of oneself.

Why call it the Gandhi Institute?

There are many existing institutions, both in India and abroad, which have taken on the name 'Gandhi' as part of their remit. The Gandhi Foundation is based in London and was founded shortly after the Richard Attenborough film, *Gandhi*. There has been a Gandhi statue in Tavistock Gardens for many years, and a further statue is planned for Parliament Square.

Although the name 'Gandhi' is synonymous with nonviolence, Gandhi's writings and teachings had a much broader remit. He advocated three core principles in guiding human activity, phrased in his philosophical approach – 'Truth', 'Love' and 'Self-Sacrifice'. Gandhi's autobiography, published in the 1930s, is in fact subtitled 'My Experiments With Truth'. As a trained lawyer, and as someone who respected Einstein and was in turn respected by him, Gandhi was very aware of the deep and wide-ranging philosophical ramifications of the concepts of 'truth', 'love' and 'self-sacrifice'. He equated 'truth' both with his perception of God and of nature. He saw

'love' as an entity which included concern for the welfare of one's enemies . He saw 'self-sacrifice' as a path for showing one's devotion to the concepts of truth and love (e. g. his many hunger strikes were a form of 'self-sacrifice' intended to turn people away from violence).

Thus, to associate the name 'Gandhi' with such a centre would help to focus people's minds on the key Gandhian concepts of truth, love and self-sacrifice, and on practical ways in which they can be implemented for the betterment of humankind. It also would help to turn people away from a materialistic-led society, one where ends justify means, to one where values and principles are enshrined.

How would a Gandhi Institute operate?

A *Gandhi Institute* would have both a humanitarian and an academic focus. A prototypical form of some of the humanitarian activities envisaged in the proposed *Gandhi Institute* can be found in the work of the Humanitarian Centre at the University of Cambridge (www.humanitariancentre.org). Specific topics of academic focus could include – morality and ethical standards in commercial, health, educational and political domains; the psychology of altruism; the psychology of peaceful means of persuasion; psychological aspects of poverty and attempts to alleviate poverty; the use of technology to improve well-being in the developing world; compliance issues relating to health care in developing countries; how surplus and waste can be re-engineered for the benefit of mankind. Research studies could include topics such as the science of morality and the science of 'good work' carried out by psychologists at Harvard University. The proposed centre would have a strong academic foundation, and one might envisage a Chair of Gandhian Studies to be an integral part of the centre, perhaps with the title of the chair prefixed by the name of any sponsor.

The centre could also be a focus for the demonstration of peaceful means to achieve political ends. It could research psychological aspects of terrorism and related forms of violence.

How much would it cost to set up and run?

In addition to the costs of purchasing/hiring a building, there would be staff costs. These would primarily be those of a Director, his/her assistants, and secretarial/administrative staff. There would be technical support staff to support internet activities. There would be some infrastructure costs. A rough estimate of running costs would be £2 million per year. A pilot centre could be run for five years, after which an evaluation could be carried out of its effectiveness, and whether similar centres in other countries should then be established. Thus, the cost of a *Gandhi Institute* over five years would be approximately £10 million. It is possible that philanthropic businessmen may contribute towards funding of the centre. It is likely that many individuals and companies would readily like to have their names associated with such an institute, and one could envisage 'platinum', 'gold', 'silver', etc sponsors (similar to the legal Pro Bono Centre in London). It might indirectly be a general source of funds for a university, since joint appointments with other departments (as in the case of the India Institute at Kings College, London) could fund new posts without the usual costs. There is a major source that could easily contribute to such activities - retired professionals in education, science and healthcare. They form a vast reservoir of surplus, untapped wealth of knowledge,

who have time on their hands, and who may be only too keen to help the developing world / 'give something back to society'.

How would the effectiveness of a Gandhi Institute be measured?

Outcome measures would be based on best business practices, similar to those adopted by the Gates Foundation, so that we could confidently state that the *Gandhi Institute* was both efficient and cost-effective. Thus, one could estimate money saved through the effects of preventing or treating disease, tax generated by having individuals who are educated and in work, money saved through helping to prevent terrorist activity, etc. Einstein once famously remarked – 'not all that counts can be measured, and not all that can be measured counts'. The *prevention* of disease and injury, through education and reduction of the sources of such ills, is more complex and not as immediately obvious as the direct treatment of disease and injury once it has occurred. However, direct and indirect measures of the value and effectiveness of a *Gandhi Institute* would be put in place.

Narinder Kapur is a Visiting Professor of Neuropsychology at University College London and a long time Friend of the Gandhi Foundation.

ALL THINGS FOOD

Mario Molinari



The good thing about food is that it truly ticks all the boxes.

- ✓ Do Food and Study Food capture the essence of living.
- ✓ Food stands for renewal. It is the fons et origo of all knowledge, of culture and traditions, trade, ecology and science.
- ✓ Thanks to food we can create communities, shape

the economy, and foster learning. We link it to water, energy and land activities.

✓ Health and nutrition matter too. Food is embedded in our social institutions. It has written our language, history (including the reasons and causes of conflict) and religion.

✓ Food is a simple proposition and is integral to the notions of upbringing (implying family structures) and education (implying social structures).

5 Food Pledges – One Agenda

- 1) Do Food
- 2) Study Food
- 3) Make Food the entry point for joyful and compassionate living

- 4) Let Food inform the social, educational and economic function of the family group
- 5) Privilege Food and realise the beautiful worlds of work, affections and relationships

Guiding Principles

Our primary need is to satisfy our needs. The guidance the following two principles offer may be sufficient to show us how to satisfy the stated requirements.

- 1) All peoples have the same basic food requirements.
- 2) All households have the same basic energy requirements.

Social Contract

In an ideal world, we can identify the interests of the family group with those of society, the community or the state. The fortunes of one with the fortunes of the other. This ideal world is the starting point for social and political inquiry. For civil society proper, we, identifiable with the family/ social group, must

- be the state
- act like the state
- represent the state
- embody the state

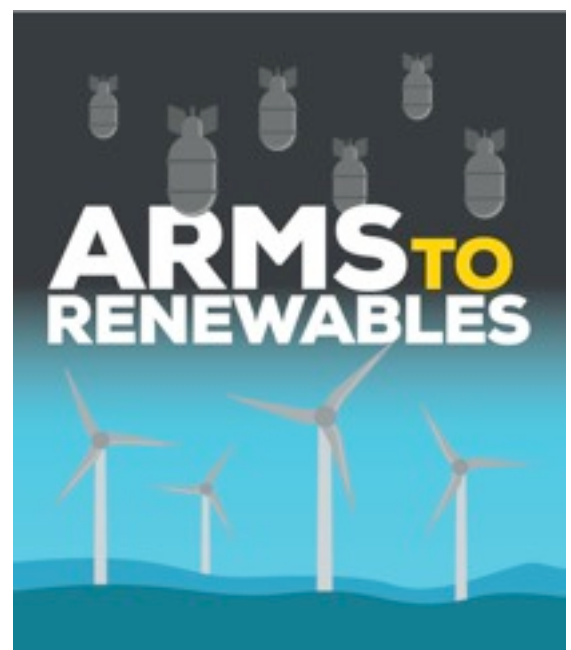
'Start with Food' is an online publication developing the themes of All Things Food. You can contact Mario by email mario@startwithfood.net and refer to his website www.startwithfood.net for the publication.

A life or death decision

We all know about the waste and destruction of the arms trade. We are subsidising arms companies by hundreds of millions of pounds a year to export misery and destruction around the world: from the UK weapons used in Israel's attacks on Gaza to support for repressive Saudi Arabia.

Offshore wind and marine energy have amazing potential in the UK, and Campaign Against the Arms Trade's research shows that they could support more jobs than the entire arms industry – using the skills of arms trade workers.

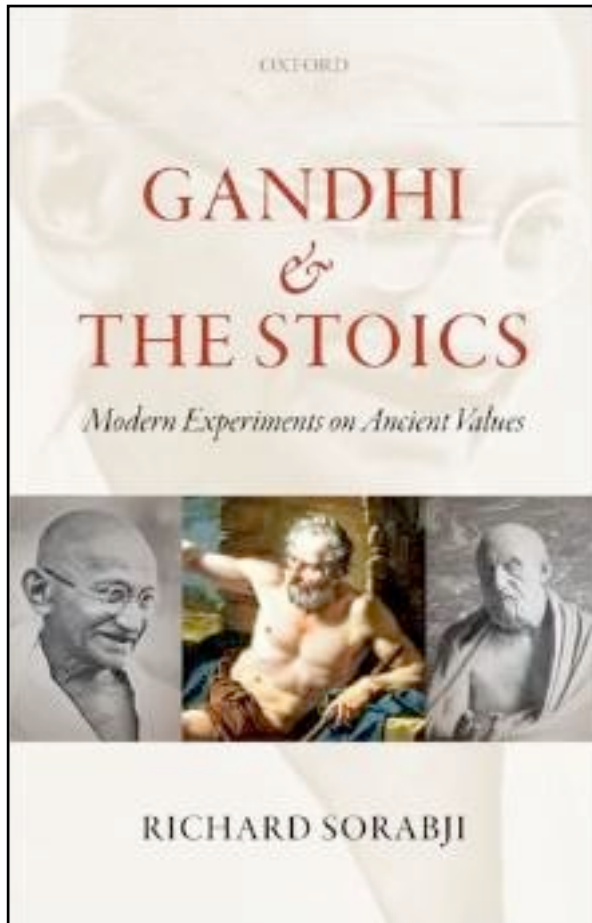
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Book Reviews

Gandhi and the Stoics: Modern Experiments on Ancient Values

Richard Sorabji, Oxford University Press 2012



Sorabji is an eminent scholar in the classics, especially on topics related to Stoicism. In the Introduction he asks: “Was Gandhi a philosopher? Yes. He was forever seeking a consistent rationale for all that he did, and more than any philosophers I have encountered he subjected his views to relentless criticism, sometimes his own, but more often that of other people, which he published voluminously in his weekly newspapers.” He does not claim that Gandhi was influenced by the Stoics but thinks that “Stoic values overlapped with Gandhi’s to some extent”. He says that “The Stoics tended to admit that probably no Stoic had succeeded in putting all their ideas into practice.” Similarly Gandhi had spoken of nonviolence as being a science in the making and this is why he spoke of ‘experiments’ with truth.

An experiment can substantiate a hypothesis or otherwise, or the hypothesis can be modified or refined in some way, that is, not totally rejected. It is always risky to say that Gandhi was influenced by x or y for he often found that another thinker articulated more clearly what he himself had already thought albeit in a rather inchoate way. In each imprisonment he was able to get through an enormous amount of reading. When he was in South Africa he records in his Autobiography, “I made too an intensive study of Tolstoy’s books, *The Gospels in Brief*, *What to do?*, and the books made a deep impression on me. I began to realise more and more the infinite possibilities of universal love.” In the Stoics and Gandhi this led to the question of how to reconcile ‘emotional detachment’ with ‘love of family’ and all humans. The author writes that in the third century BCE Stoics maintained that “a certain kind of love, like that found among the closest family members, should be extended to all human beings, even the foreigners who spoke no Greek and to slaves.” That there are different kinds of love is no doubt true, and ‘family love’ may well have been overrated since families can be hotbeds of conflict. Hierocles recommended regarding other

humans as relatives, sometimes that is done in India with encouraging children to use words like 'Aunt' and Uncle' to those who were not actually relatives. Gandhi was taken to task for not privileging his own children. At the same time quasi-fatherhood was given him by more who called him Bapu or father. Both Gandhi and the Stoics have a kind of detached love for all. A perfect Stoic sage and a perfectly nonviolent man might both be ideals rather than realities.

A section entitled 'Gandhi and Tolstoy's nonviolent love for all humans' introduces a subject which has been thoroughly researched by many others. Gandhi read *The Kingdom of God is Within You* in 1894 and it remained a work which he treasured. Pyarelal devotes pp. 627-908 in his *The Early Phase vol.1*, Ahmedabad 1965, to Gandhi's response to this book. But Gandhi and Tolstoy differed on several counts (1), and moreover, Gandhi had never read Tolstoy's greatest work, *War and Peace*.

The author believes that Gandhi and the Stoics 'throw mutual light' on each other. Gandhi put to the test 'ideals of a Stoic type'. More difficult to prove is how detachment can be compatible with pursuing objectives and how attaining *moksha* is to be accommodated along with political concerns. My comment is that *jivanmukti* was also part of the tradition and that a part of what detachment meant was avoiding putting too much weight on success or failure. It is worth remembering that the Stoic Marcus Aurelius who was an emperor had a not totally dissimilar approach.

The text moves to and fro over a variety of themes and my mention of these will necessarily be very selective. The concept of 'universal love' is disturbingly general. Stoic theory maintained that affectionate kinship with all human beings accorded with nature and reference to nature was a background implicate in all Stoic thinking. Out of this emerged a treatment of justice. Mutual love and sociability were natural. In 1936 Gandhi described love as 'the law of life' although he knew very well that whether mankind followed it was another matter. In an imperfect world counsels on perfection served as a pole star which could not be reached but which would help navigators in heavy seas. Likewise, presumably, the concept of a perfect Stoic sage would be something like a regulative idea in the Kantian sense. The Stoic belief that justice should reach all humans including slaves and foreigners was a great one. The very much later conception of rights could hardly add anything to it. The Stoics believed in divine providence. That meant that the natural law was divine. The discourse of rights would be honed in times which had a very different ethos. Gandhi as is well known put stress on duties rather than rights.; in fact duties were primary for him.

Writing on duties, Cicero advises "Everyone should study his own merits and defects and should not be diverted away from his own nature to pursuits that are better or have more gravity (*graviora*) but to which he cannot attain." (2) Gandhi gave the same warning.

The question after all concerns the content of *svadharma*. Mahadev Desai noticed the similarity of this to Stoic teaching. *Paradharmā* (another's duty) should be avoided.

The Stoic stress on seeing others as fellow humans may seem to be a simple formula, but we have only to look at history to see the extent to which whole sections of human beings have been regarded as sub-human and accordingly ill treated or even exterminated.

Gandhi was uncomfortable with the epithet 'Mahatma' and I suspect he would have been even more so if he were to be regarded as a philosopher.

Gandhi and the Stoics is a book which is both learned and exciting – a combination which is not easy to achieve. Richard Sorabji is a brilliant scholar from whom there is so much to learn.

Margaret Chatterjee

1. See my *Gandhi and the Challenge of Religious Diversity – Religious Pluralism Revisited*, Promilla & Co Publishers 2005, p.243ff
2. Cicero, *On Duties*, I.110, I.114

Music of the Spinning Wheel: Mahatma Gandhi's Manifesto for the Internet Age Sudheendra Kulkarni, Amaryllis 2012

The title is unusual. While 'music' of the spinning wheel is understandable, how could the spinning wheel become the manifesto for the Internet age? This needs some explaining and we shall do it at the appropriate place in this review.

This book is a tome running to 725 pages plus 38 pages of introduction. An absolutely brilliant piece of writing. Though running to 773 pages it is not boring at any place as it is so full of information and insights on a variety of subjects.

The book is full of quotes from Gandhi, maybe one fourth of the book. There are also quotes from several other famous personalities like Einstein, Will Durant and almost every scientist/technologist associated with computers and the internet.

About the book in the author's own words: Why another Book on Mahatma Gandhi?

Mahatma Gandhi remains a deeply enigmatic figure in India and the world. Easy to admire, difficult to understand in his totality, and almost impossible to follow, even in parts.

The author says further that his book is not the work of idle academic curiosity about an iconic figure of yesteryears. It is a call to action and service, based on his reflections on what Gandhi means to India and the world, today and tomorrow.

The book attempts to answer the following questions:

1. Why Gandhi rejected both capitalism and communism
2. Why he vehemently disapproved of the West's materialistic civilization
3. Why he opposed the Western model of education.
4. Why he was critical of the Western model of industrialization.

The author makes an interesting point that Islam influenced Gandhi's Satyagraha:

Two 9/11s and two different jihads: It is well known that Gandhi's respect for Islam was an important dimension of his universalism. After all, he made Hindu Muslim unity the mission of his life. What is less well known is that Islam played a pivotal role in the genesis of Gandhi's concept of Satyagraha. In Gandhi's words, Satyagraha is Dharma Yuddha and can be made only in the name of God.

In Islam Jihad means Dharma Yuddha. It is of two types: Greater Jihad (Jihad-e-akbar) and Lesser Jihad (Jihad-e-asgar). Greater Jihad means nearly the same as Satyagraha, for it calls for a fight against one's own inner impurities like selfishness, greed and egoism. 'Lesser Jihad' means to fight with the sword, which the Quran sanctions in the rarest of the rare cases. All moderate interpreters of Islam underscore that 'Jihad' is misused by fundamentalists and terrorists to kill innocent people.

A Thought Revolution; Technology for a New Civilization

The Economic basis of colonialism had to be defeated with such a nonviolent weapon that even the poorest of the poor could wield it in this battle (against colonialism). That 'weapon' was the charkha.

The 'cultural message' of the charkha lay in his appeal to the rich also to take it since this act of 'sacrifice' on their part would make the spinning wheel a symbol of their identification with the poorest of the soil.

Friend of the Capitalists and identification with Labour :

Although Gandhi never hesitated to describe himself as 'a friend of the capitalists', he drew a clear distinction between 'my friendship with capital' and 'my identification with labour'. In his address to the workers of Tata Steel, he said: 'As you know, I am a labourer myself. I pride myself on calling myself a scavenger, a weaver, spinner, farmer and what not'. No wonder, he felt more at home staying at Bhangi Colony (scavengers' quarters) than at Birla House in New Delhi.

Nayi Talim: Gandhi's Answer to why India missed its own Industrial Revolution.

He was convinced that the decline and stagnation of India's native industrialization was because of the divorce between the magic of the artisan's hand and the majesty of the scholar's mind. He believed that India had fallen into an unhappy state because 'we looked upon masons, shoe-makers, carpenters, blacksmiths and barbers as inferior to us, we had taken away all courtesy, learning, decency and culture from their trades and homes. We treated skilled work as low and exalted clerical work and thus invited slavery for ourselves'.

Preaching with Practice:

All the inmates in his Ashram, himself included, lent a hand to any work that lay before them. Hindus, Muslims and Christians, Parsis and Jews, Brahmins and Harijans, labourers and lawyers, Indians and foreigners, all lived as members of one big family united by a common purpose and guided by a common leader. All of them ate in a common dining room, and their meals were prepared in a common kitchen.

Decoding the Meaning of the Music of the Spinning Wheel:

In April 1947 a Chinese friend asked him how it was possible for him to find peace of mind in these troublous times. His reply was ‘Take to spinning. The music of the spinning wheel will be as balm to your soul. I believe that the yarn we spin is capable of mending the broken warp and woof of our life. The charkha is the symbol of nonviolence on which all life, if it is to be real life must be based.’

Gandhi and the science of Evolutionary Biology from Man the Brute to Man the God:

In December 2007, *Time Magazine* carried a cover feature titled ‘What Makes us Good/Evil’. Its subscript read: ‘Humans are the planet’s most noble creatures – and its most savage. Science is discovering why’. Revealingly, its message was sought to be conveyed by the photographs on the magazine’s cover of Gandhi and Hitler, representatives of the two contrasting human specimens. Its scholarly author Jeffery Kluger wrote: ‘We are a species that is capable of almost dumbfounding kindness. We nurse one another, romance one another, weep for one another. Ever since science taught us how, we willingly tear the very organs from our bodies and give them to one another. And at the same time, we slaughter one another. That we’re also the lowest, cruelest, most blood-drenched species is our shame – and our paradox’.

What would Gandhi have said about India’s Nuclear weapons ?

In his address to the Inter Asian Relation Conference held on 2nd April 1947, in New Delhi, Gandhi said: ‘We Indians Have a Better Mission to deliver to the world. Zoroaster. He belonged to the East. He was followed by Buddha. He belonged to the East, he belonged to India. Who followed Buddha ? Jesus, again from Asia, Before Jesus was Musa, Moses, also belonging to Palestine, though he was born in Egypt. And then came Jesus, then came Mohammad. I omit Krishna, I omit Mahavir, I omit the lights, I won’t call them lesser lights, but unknown to the west, unknown to the literary world. All the same, I don’t know a single person to match these men of Asia. And then what happened ? Christianity became disfigured when it went to the West. I am sorry to have to say that, but that is my reading. I won’t take you any further through this.’ After reminding the delegates about Asia’s great and unique prophetic heritage, Gandhi urged them to remain faithful to this heritage and not to blindly copy the West’s path of economic growth or militarization.

Why Gandhi would have embraced the Internet

The alternative to the spinning wheel in the twenty first century is the INTERNET. I actually started imagining that the Father of the Nation, if he were living amidst us, would be publishing his *Young India* and *Harijan* on the Internet, writing e-mails to people near and far more prolifically than the scores of postcards he used to pen each day, urging scientists to develop technologies that would depollute the planet and conserve natural resources, and insisting that policy makers bridge the digital divide in a hundred different ways, including through promotion of IT in Indian languages, so necessary to empower the common masses. I was convinced that he would hail the Internet as one of the greatest creations of the human mind.

Can the Internet serve the Khadi spirit ?

The answer lies in what the net is Doing. Techno manifestos is the story of computer scientists, engineers, mathematicians, and other visionaries who raised profound questions of how technology relates to human beings, redefining who and what we are and where we are going. Fueling these revolutionaries is the conviction that computers are tools for communications, creativity and community, not just computation and capitalism. At the beginning of the twenty-first century humans have reached symbiosis with their information technologies. The ethical, political, and economic decisions that thinking people must now face are some of the most difficult. The spirit of humanism underlies the convictions of the information revolutionaries.

Nanotech Revolution: The author makes some interesting observations:

Small will not only be Beautiful, but also Bountiful.

A beautiful quote on plants by Eric Drexler, a pioneer in Nano-technology:

“Trees, though, are not crude: To make wood and leaves, they don’t cut, grind, stir, bake, spray, etch, or grind. Instead, they gather solar energy using molecular electronic devices, the photosynthetic reaction centers of chloroplasts. They use that energy to drive molecular machines – active devices with moving parts of precise, molecular structure – which process carbon dioxide and water into oxygen and molecular building blocks. They use other molecular machines to join these molecular building blocks to form roots, trunks, branches, twigs, solar collectors, and more molecular machinery. Every tree makes leaves, and each leaf is more sophisticated than a spacecraft, more finely patterned than the latest chip from Silicon Valley. They do all this without noise, heat, toxic fumes, or human labour, and they consume pollutants as they go”.

One more quote on Nanotechnology:

If the carbon and other atoms in coal are rearranged we get diamond. However, when carbon atoms and water get rearranged in a plant, we get a flower. This just goes to show how hi-tech Mother Nature is in producing trees, leaves and flowers, and how backward, gross and low-tech modern man is even in his sophisticated system of manufacturing.

Nanotechnology is still a science in its infancy. One of the pioneers of nanotechnology Dr. Harold Kroto who wants to carry it to people in all walks of life is a great believer in nonviolence.

Village and the Global village: How the Internet Harmonises Swadeshi and Globalization.

Swadeshi : The Science of Home Economics.

Gandhi's swadeshi rested on three principles. Firstly, the welfare of man and his immediate community or neighbourhood should be the primary concern of all economic activity. Hence, whatever is made or produced in the local community should be for the use, first and foremost, of members of the local community. Surplus should be shared with those who are in need. Maximum local self-sufficiency through decentralized and cooperative production using local resources, with full employment for all able-bodied members of the community, was the cornerstone of swadeshi. As we shall soon see, this principle needs some modification to reflect today's changed circumstances.

According to the author, village self-sufficiency has become an outmoded idea:

In 1955 seventeen percent of the population lived in urban areas and 83 percent in rural areas of India. In 2011 the urban population increased to 27.9 percent and is projected to reach fifty percent within the next two decades. Moreover, India's villages and rural communities are no longer as isolated as they were in Gandhi's time, their isolation having been hugely reduced by physical connectivity in the form of better roads, transportation facilities, market linkages and social mobility. Indian villages now constitute a sizeable market for bicycles and fuel-driven two-wheelers. Bullock carts have actually become a rarity in many Indian villages ! The spread of satellite and cable television, combined with the incredible expansion in digital connectivity, in India's villages has minimized their isolation even more dramatically. Therefore, if we do not reinterpret swadeshi by contextualizing it in the reality as it exists today, and as it is likely to evolve in the time to come, a very important Gandhian ideal faces the danger of being seen only as a relic of history.

Due to the power of information and communication technologies neighbourhoods and communities which are often international in character, have been created. Therefore, geographically defined local community, small or large can hope to be fully sufficient on its own Global or Universal self-sufficiency is the only realistic ideal in the age of the Internet.

About the Ills of the Internet:

"I (The author) could be faulted for downplaying the ills of the Internet. Secondly, it could be pointed out that my comparison between Gandhi's spinning wheel and the Internet would sound ludicrously naive if I did not acknowledge several fundamental differences between the two. Some ill effects like hacking of others' websites, virus attacks, cyber fraud, cybercrimes, blackmail, theft of information, espionage, cyber terrorism etc. Also Internet addiction can make people aloof and indifferent to the world and can distort over understanding of culture".

The author says "It was Gandhi's belief that the human prevails over the animal in us. The good and beautiful in human nature far outweighs the evil and the ugly. Therefore, this preponderance of the positive over the negative in the real world of human beings can also be seen in the world of the Internet."

The title of chapter 32 is audacious: How Gandhi Awaited the Arrival of Internet.

The author quotes from *Hind Swaraj* to justify this title: In this, he says, there is no room for machines that would displace human labour and that would concentrate power in a few hands. Yet he also describes the kind of machine he would welcome. Every machine that helps every individual has a place. Then comes the curious confession. “But I must confess that I have never sat down to think about what that machine can be”.

What this paragraph unmistakably points out is that Gandhi was indeed seized by the thought of a future machine that would be universally useful. We now know what that machine, which helps every individual and which had made an abstract appearance in the Mahatma’s probing mind, is; it is the INTERNET.

Here is a quotable quote on the present Internet Age:

We are bombarded with so much information, most of which is related to the omnipresent culture of consumerism, that we have become incapable of distinguishing between the essential and the inessential in life. The lament by poet T S Eliot (1888-1965) – Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge ? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information ? – seems far more meaningful today. Eliot had also expressed the same concern in another way.

Knowledge of speech, but not of silence;
Knowledge of words, and ignorance of the Word.
All our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance,
All our ignorance brings us nearer to death,
But nearness to death no nearer to GOD.

The epilogue of the book makes a statement.

“It is Time We Became Internet Satyagrahis”: Naturally, this appeal is placed before those activists and readers who are already influenced, to whatever degree, by the life and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. It is anchored in the central theme of this book now that the practical or economic significance of the spinning wheel has become non-existent in the post-Gandhian era; the Internet has emerged as the tool that potentially embodies the spirit of Khadi and the Charkha. The underlying message of Khadi and the spinning wheel has by no means become outdated. It never will, because it is the universal and eternal message of truth and nonviolence, as enfolded in the Gandhian concept of satyagraha.

Contrary to popular perception, satyagraha is not merely a specific mode of protest against injustice in the external environment. For Gandhi, it was much more than that. It was a means of internal self-improvement and self-cultivation attempted daily – self here understood both as the individual self and organizational self – so that whenever the need arises for collective action for any external cause, it can be carried out with the right mindset, with the right means and for the right ends.

M R Rajagopalan (Managing Trustee, Gandhigram Trust, Gandhigram, Tamilnadu)



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