

## 2. GANDHISM AND SOCIALISM

A great man, if he is connected for half a century or more with public life, must have made contradictory statements, Mahatma Gandhi, with his rare insight, made nevertheless certain conflicting assertions on the British Empire, the caste system and capital and labour relationships.

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

These are statements so contradictory of one another that if they had come from another man, the charge of inconsistency would be levelled against him. It will, therefore, be necessary on our part to examine Mahatma Gandhi's specific statements in order that we can apply them in their entirety, in their essence, to situations of an allied character which may arise in the future, and to discover, if it is at all possible, the continuity of his thought and action. It will be necessary also to imagine how he would conduct himself in a situation of a different kind. A mere record of his wishes with reference to his writing of an earlier period would probably contradict certain assertions that he made from time to time as he developed.

Gandhiji is more specific than Buddha or Christ, whose sayings have been liable to various interpretations according to persons and climes. At the same time, he is more general than, let us say, Karl Marx, whose writings in themselves have given us an elaborate system; more specific than the prophet, more general than the philosopher. Furthermore, the only treatise

which Mahatma Gandhi wrote in order to elaborate what he thought was a system, is rarely read at any time by any considerable number of people: the Hind Swaraj. Mahatma Gandhi has influenced his generation in India and in the world not so much by his writings, certainly not by any systematic writing, as by his living and his action and what he said in illustration of them. There are persons with whom the written or the spoken word is what matters and their life is but a secondary annotation to what they have said. Mahatma Gandhi also wrote and spoke voluminously, but whatever he wrote and spoke was a commentary on how he lived and how he acted.

To seek, therefore, the meaning of his life one would have to go more to his life and action, and the written or the spoken word merely as an illustration of what he did. Efforts may still be made to devise some kind of a system out of his action. Persons of that type are not wanting. "Gandhism" and "Gandhites" are still fairly attractive terms in our country. However, it would be some time before a system could come into existence, and should of course come, but none exists today. I do not know how it could emerge but its desirability is unquestionable, based as it would be on so dynamic a life as Mahatma Gandhi's.

The world today is in the grip of two systems and the third one is in the making. Capitalism and communism are almost fully elaborated systems, and the whole world is in their grip, and the result is poverty and war and fear. The third idea is also making itself felt on the world stage. It is still inadequate, and it has not been fully elaborated, but it is open. In an open system there is still some chance of truth and progress, while a closed system does violence to facts and wishes them away in order to prove their meaninglessness. Open systems live in accordance with the facts, and in any case expect such systems to revitalize themselves with obstinate or changing situation. This idea is the Socialist idea. Instead of seeking to elaborate a new doctrine of Gandhism, it would be far more desirable if the contents of Gandhiji's life and action were to operate on

systems that already exist on the stage of the world. As to capitalism and communism, one may doubt if these can be influenced, considering that they are closed. But for socialism Gandhiji's action may well act as a filter through which socialist ideas flow and get rid of their dross or as the strain which may colour them generally. Nobody would be happier than I if Gandhiji's ideas were also to influence the other two systems, capitalism and communism, but one may reasonably doubt that this can be done. In what lies the specific value of Gandhiji's action?

Everybody knows that tens of millions throughout the world saw in him their spokesman, the solace and the remedy for their sufferings and their distress. No matter to what part of the world one might go, one would find numberless people who look upon Gandhiji as the world's greatest symbol for resistance to oppression and injustice and even solace in suffering, suffering that may have nothing to do with government and laws, suffering that may result out of the very fact of living.

It is not as if our world has not abounded in persons who have resisted oppression. If our century has known barbaric cruelty, it has also known heroic resistance to oppression. Why then should this name be singled out by the peoples of the world to act as their solace? The explanation is obvious. In the modern world, organization has become so embracing and powerful that the individual is completely subservient to it. No matter where the origins of modern civilization lay, it is today the civilization of the collective, where the individual is only a number in the mass and his effectiveness exists in so far as he is a part of the mass. Europe too resists injustice but only when there is an organization. Europeans have been known to carry out epic acts of resistance but only when they are assisted by an organization and, I would like to add, weapons. An individual in Europe feels helpless; he cannot act unless he is supported. He is very often an isolated item surrounded by a hostile world and, when a suitable organization is lacking, he is

reduced to the status of the rats.

When Herr Hitler came to power in Germany, it was easy enough to notice how those brave and valiant and thinking Europeans belonging to the Socialist and Communist Parties had lost all their manhood and, although I regret to have to say this word they behaved more or less like rats, scurrying to and fro for shelter from Hitler. Individuals unsupported by organization and weapons are negligible in the context of modern civilization. And in the context of this modern civilization Mahatma Gandhi came along and said that even if you do not have an organization to support you, even if you do not have arms to wield, you have got something inside you which enables you to resist oppression and injustice and also to bear suffering manfully. It was this strange and powerful quality of Gandhiji's actions in his last thirty years that fascinated the attention of modern man and made him believe that the future might still contain the ingredients of a new world.

Gandhiji also had other qualities, which I will not elaborate yet, which made a woman who had lost her son or a man who had lost his sweetheart find a little solace in him. It is a most peculiar phenomenon, but there it is. All those who were distressed and suffering found some kind of a solace in that man, and when he died the volume of personal and poignant grief that tens of millions shivered with throughout the world has perhaps never been equalled. Their little stories from Paris or New York or Berlin, and I imagine also from Moscow, although they are not known to us, would convey to you how the taxi man or the porter or the labourer or the farmer or the school teacher felt his absence from this world.

This enabling the individual to resist oppression by himself and without any support is, to my mind, the greatest quality of Mahatma Gandhi's action and life.

Some persons at this stage may be inclined to think of means and ends. The doctrine of means and ends has naturally much to do with the quality of Gandhiji's action. Means and ends, according to the philosopher John Dewey, are more or

less convertible. Means are ends in the short run and ends are means in the long run. Whatever method one employs in order to achieve one's desired aim tends to become the end in the long run and whatever aim one desires to achieve, if one goes about the process intelligently, the means are piecemeal achievements of the end. It is not possible to achieve the victory of truth through falsehood, of health through murder, of one world through the sacrifice of national freedom, of democracy through dictatorship. These are pretty obvious propositions, for the means employed are ends in the short run, and if a system believes or acts so that dictatorship or sacrifice of national freedom or falsehood is expected to achieve the victory of its opposite, it is going against a very simple, easily understood, and perfectly obvious proposition that whatever one does in the immediate goes into the total of what one achieves in the future. No special logic is necessary to prove that. Ends and means may not be wholly convertible but they are so interrelated that opposites stay opposites and cannot be reconciled. That is why Gandhiji was often inclined to say "one step enough for me". This doctrine of "one step enough for me" ties up with the doctrine of ends and means and is perhaps even bigger than the latter.

The world today is inclined to think so much of the future and whatever aims are laid in the future that the present is sacrificed. One does not pay enough attention to the immediate steps that one undertakes, with the result that a certain mysticism has begun to operate in collective life. When asked as to how an immediate and a particular act is related to the end in view, one is told "wait for the next act," and when one has waited for the next act and is still waiting to get an answer, one is again told, "wait yet for the next act". The chain of acts goes on lengthening and no single act is a justification in itself. Its justification is continually sought in the succeeding act that never occurs, and the chain goes on lengthening, and in the name of truth and world peace, wickedness abounds. The extent to which the world of today has forgotten this

lesson “one step enough for me”—to that extent has it surrendered itself to the dark forces of—I do not like to use the word “mysticism,” “mystic” is a good word—to the dark underground forces of illogic or whatever you call them. Such systems, incidentally, pride themselves on their science and their logic. That is not, however, to say, that those who subscribe to the doctrine of immediacy should be unaware of the end that they have in view. The immediate step is, of course, related to the distant aim in view, but it should not be considered to be a passing and transitory stage to which one need not pay attention.

There is a danger that those who adopt the doctrine of immediacy may lose the end from view. That again would be as disastrous as the fallacy of not paying any attention whatever to immediacy. At times, when I have tried to think of Gandhiji, he has come to me in the shape of an image; a series of steps mounting upwards, all set in a specific direction, but the top of it never yet completely formed, and ever continuing to go up, a man who goes along with cautious but firm steps and leads with him millions of his countrymen; “one step enough for me.”

There are other parties and creeds which have a fully formed idea of the ultimate destination, and they are probably in a far better position to relate their immediate steps to their destination. They sometimes hasten towards their destination so quickly that millions of their followers are unable to follow them. But here is a doctrine in which one step goes on leading to the next step in such a fashion that not alone a great man but millions alongside of him mount up the unending ladder going into a specific direction. This is the image that has sometimes formed itself in my mind when I have thought of Mahatma Gandhi. But, as all images go, one should not take it as a completely adequate one, for it may well be that there were occasions when Gandhiji should have acted differently from what he actually did. When one thinks of individuals like Mahatma Gandhi one is prone to the fallacy of thinking of the

ideal in terms of the actual, and I confess to you that at times I have thought like a Communist or a Catholic with regard to Mahatma Gandhi. A Communist is one who allows his ideal to be embodied in a particular individual or a country or a particular age so that his critical faculties are destroyed and he is unable to see the mistake of his embodied ideal. I have tried to get into the communist mind at times and have finally succeeded only when I got into my own mind with regard to Mahatma Gandhi. I do not think I have liberated myself completely from it because certain elements of unthinking loyalty must still obtain, for no devotion can be freed of them entirely. Nevertheless, I warn you against this danger. Luckily, however, there were only two or three occasions when I made mistakes because of assimilating the ideal with the actual.

This doctrine of ends and means, together with the doctrine of immediacy, has given to modern man a weapon of unexampled strength. This weapon is being used in increasing fashion by the world. The freedom forces of Tunisia are using it, the dark races of South Africa are using it, and, if for the time being a momentary eclipse seems to have come over it in our own country, do not forget that a great man's ideas and teachings are not to be judged by what has happened three or four years immediately after his death but what may happen in the rest of the century and after. Before this weapon came into frequent use in our political or collective life, the world had known alone of two other modes of operation, the parliamentary and the insurrectionary. There was either the parliament to remove wrongs or if the parliament proved faulty the masses could mount the barricades and try to defeat authority. Friedrich Engels of the earlier period said that history was made by the people and that parliaments could not achieve anything worth much. Ultimately the mass of the people so thought Engels, would have to rush to the barricades in order to defeat authority. After the experience of the German parliament and the victories achieved by Lassale's social democratic party, Engels revised his opinion and thought

that parliamentary means could be sufficient and that revolutionaries would do well to look upon parliament as an agency of change. In this statement of Engels, the contrast is between parliament and insurrection, between democratic constitutional life on the one hand and barricades on the other. The European mind was unable to go beyond these two alternatives until Gandhiji came on the scene and showed that there was a third course of action.

I believe that parliament may not always prove to be a satisfactory agency of change, and I am not prepared to subscribe to the reactionary view of Engels that parliament is capable of achieving the revolution, particularly in the modern world where two-thirds of the world is so steeped in misery and poverty that parliamentary means will often be found to be inadequate. In India and, of course, other similarly situated countries, the extent of under-employment, dismissals, starvation, and even deaths due to famine would indicate that to depend upon parliamentary means alone would be in the ultimate instance to defeat parliament. If the mass of the people began to believe that the country's sane politics depended on parliament alone, they would rush to insane political parties that showed them another way out. If it were suggested that legislation in assemblies and parliament alone would afford redress to all kinds of grievances, whether increasing prices or increasing starvation, and the sole remedy offered were an election once in five years, the mass of the people would perhaps lose their patience and distress would pile upon distress and their minds would lose all balance, so that when a party or creed came along and said, now rush to the barricades, if not to the barricades, to the dagger and the acid bulb — yes, that is the latest fashion — and the pistol and the revolver, the mass of the people would perhaps resort to or at least welcome those methods.

I do not have to tell you how robbers and dacoits can win the applause and affection of the people. I mean ordinary dacoits and robbers like Bhupat and Mansingh. They are

simple dacoits and murderers and robbers, and yet when they loot certain property in certain areas they distribute about 20 or 25 per cent of it to the poor and also enable needy fathers to marry off their daughters, particularly when there is the system of dowry, and so on and so forth. If parliament and constitutional methods were the only way to achieve salvation, I have no doubt in my mind that two-thirds of the world, particularly Asia, will rush to systems and creeds that believe in insurrection or violence of the dagger and the acid bulb. It is here that the third course of action suggested by Mahatma Gandhi comes to be singularly effective. It is not necessary for a people suffering from starvation or large-scale dismissals to depend on parliament or to wait expectantly for another general election. They have this priceless, matchless weapon of civil disobedience in their hands when injustice and oppression go beyond bearable bounds. When constitutional methods have proved incapable of achieving redress, it should be open for the people to violate unjust laws and wrongs and injustices that are inflicted upon them.

To violate laws, to court imprisonment, to invite punishment by authority, even to the extent of death, although that is not a very happy thing, is the only satisfactory way of effecting change. I believe that any creed or party wanting to achieve something worthwhile in the world must be ready for death, not in speech but death as a matter of course like life. At the very moment when one has to die, one does feel rotten about it, but the worth of a party consists in making a person feel rottener if he were not ready to die when he should. In any case this is the specific contribution to political action which Gandhiji made.

The way has been opened to the mass of the people, to the individual, to groups of people to violate laws. I will not go into that rather elementary discussion as to whether *satyagraha* is permissible in a state of freedom, whether it was permissible only when British rule prevailed, and all that kind of rather childish prattle. *Satyagraha* as a weapon will prevail as long as

injustice and oppression prevail, and it should prevail, because if it does not, the gun or the bullet will. That is the specific alternative which India in the last thirty years has placed before the world: Civil Disobedience or the Bullet? The alternative is not between parliament and insurrection, between the bullet and the ballot, which poisonous doctrine learned men are trying to place before the world. The alternative is between satyagraha and the bullet. The ballot has its own place. It is supreme in its own sphere. The people exercise their vote, they express their will, and this expression prevails for five years. In that sphere there is no challenge to the ballot. But with regard to injustices and oppression, when they have assumed unbearable proportions, the alternative is between the bullet and civil disobedience. Should our century, before it dies out, learn this lesson all the world over, that the individual as well as the mass have had placed in their hands this unique weapon of civil disobedience to defeat their tyrants, we may be ushering a new civilization.

It is true that civil disobedience or satyagraha must register many more victories before they are recognized as effective and universal weapons like the bullet. When I cite to you the example of South Africa and Tunisia or the Negroes of the U.S.A., where whites and Negroes are trying to violate unjust laws, I do not deny that much of that may be due to expediency. Let no one imagine that the Tunisian or the South African has grasped the effectiveness of civil disobedience also with regard to building up a good and worthwhile civilization. They are probably using it because they have no other weapon in their hands.

Even that is enough. "One step enough for me." They have come to it after a long exercise; they will probably begin to see its usefulness for building up the future world.

This principle of immediacy must not, however, be restricted to the weapon of civil disobedience. It spreads further; it goes into economics and politics, and has, so far Gandhiji is concerned, given us two concepts, one of the self-

sufficient village and the other of the village republic or village government. These two concepts are based on decentralisation. The self-sufficient village is to run on the basis of an economy more or less fulfilling its own needs and depending upon machines or tools like the spinning wheel. The idea of village government is also an experiment in achieving democracy of the first grade, for democracy in the modern world is of the second grade. A student of Greek politics may well think of the Athenian and other republics where democracy of the first grade prevailed, at least in so far as citizens went. I wish there were similar descriptions of democracy prevailing in our country or elsewhere, of remote antiquity, but the only illustrations that are common are those from Greece and it was first-grade democracy, where the mass of the people operated on the political scene and governed itself without the mediation of representatives. Representatives of course are not always undesirable. Some of them may be eminently good persons. But, in any event, if you have to govern yourself through the medium of a person whom you have elected, it is no longer direct democracy, it is indirect democracy. And if direct democracy were possible even in limited areas for limited subjects, that would be a great achievement. Gandhiji put forward the idea of the self-sufficient village and the autonomous village republic in order that the mass of the people might be able to decide their fate, govern themselves, order their own interference. I have over-generalized. Naturally, with a proposition such as this, it would be utterly possible to discover quotations from Gandhiji which would deny it. For instance, Gandhiji had subscribed to rather complicated machines. He subscribed to the aeroplane, to the locomotive, to the railway industry, and so forth. It would be possible to find quotations from him which would deny the complete validity of what I have said, but, as I have said, it is the general direction of his thought and action which matters and not the specific assertions which he may have sometimes made on the subject of machines or on the subject of

representative government.

The general direction of his mind leaves no doubt that it tended to go towards the self-sufficient village and the village republic. How can this be related to a creed or a system which would usher the new world? A great difficulty arises, for I do not believe that the modern world with all its faults will let us create a new world which dispenses with its tools altogether. There has been a surfeit of tools. Man has become a slave of tools. That fact has to be recognized. Modern man in Europe and in the U.S.A. lives very often and in a large part of his life as to possess the things that he does. Radios, cars, television, vacuum cleaners, are not slaves to the modern man or to the housewife, who indeed are slaves of the things they own. This may appear to be a fanciful proposition because we of India do not own those things, and people and persons who do not own the good things of life cannot believe that those who own them in surfeit may have become utterly dissatisfied with them. I do not for moment assert that the people of India or similarly situated countries should not go in for things. They have to, if they want to achieve a decent standard of living, but those people who for the past three hundred years have been thinking in terms of a continually increasing standard of living have now come to a debacle, where they are no longer master of things they possess but the things have begun to possess them. In a public meeting in the U.S.A. certain Americans tried to twit me over this subject and I thought that I would have a hostile audience before me, but when I tried to talk about housewives and how they were related to various objects in their home, I found that there was applause of rather massive proportions.

Tools have multiplied, but to dispense with them altogether is bound to lead to a situation in which the spinning wheel, however much it may come in for ceremonial attention on a specific day, let us say Independence Day, when the President of the Republic spins in a public park and hundreds or thousands spin along with him, is dead or dying out. It

would, therefore, be neither logical nor worthwhile to go on singing praises of the self-sufficient village and the spinning wheel and simultaneously enabling the erection of huge factories for the production of cloth or cement or something, and that is precisely the situation which the people of India have to face today. The village republic may also be heading towards a similar disaster, for when the Constituent Assembly of Gandhi-India met to frame the Constitution for India, it had over three hundred articles for division of power between Delhi and Hyderabad, between the President of the Republic and the Governor, between parliament and the state assemblies and similar matters, but it had no time to consider the concept of village government and village republic, until some one at the very end thought that the foundation of Gandhism had been missed and suggested the inclusion of an article about village government. Any student can go through the Constitution of India, and will find that out of 392 articles just one article enunciates how extremely desirable village government is. What is it? How is it to be worked out? What powers are to be distributed? All that is awarded to village government is ceremonial attention and that too as an afterthought. Here then is a situation where the mind must exercise itself and cannot be content with any specific solutions which Gandhiji himself may have offered. It is the direction alone that matters, and the direction is one of decentralization, a decentralized economy and decentralized political system.

What would be a socialist's application of this principle? Such an application will have to make use of tools, not necessarily those already in use but tools that may have yet to be invented and manufactured. As to the decentralization of political power, the principle may be laid down straightaway as one of the maximum divisible powers to the village or the city consistent with the integrity and unity of the country. The principle may not be worked out in elaborate detail at a shot. It may in fact take the rest of the century to work it out. If it is

acknowledged that the individual residing in his village where he can practice democracy of the first grade will be given abundant powers so as to decide his own destiny, that principle is accomplished.

Any socialist ideology would have to consider immediacy with regard to economy as well as political administration, not necessarily in terms of the spinning wheel or those of the village republic but perhaps in those of the small-unit tool, which would not require enormous blocks of capital, and also those of autonomous village government. I have deliberately used the word "autonomous" rather than "independent." The concept of self-sufficiency had better be eliminated. The village must stay in close relationship with numerous other villages and also the world at large. At the same time the concept of divisible political power would have to be treated so elastically that it becomes capable of continual stretching consistent with the integrity of the country.

I do not have to tell you that the modern tool has become so complicated that it violates the principles of democracy, that the kind of civilization it has built up is dependent on certain driving forces, for instance, on the concept of an increasing standard of living, or ever-increasing output. Modern civilization of the late 300 years can be distinguished from all those that went before it with regard to certain points. One is that every modern individual wants a house, clothes, and furniture that are increasingly expensive. Such a demand exist that the total output keeps on increasing, and so the ever-increasing produce of a nation is invested in other tools which further increase output. All this is dependent on a sound application of science and technology and inventions of all kinds. It is a patent fact that these driving forces are no longer applicable to the world as a whole. Two-thirds of the world has no use for them, and where these have been forced upon the people, the result has been a stunting in the material and moral growth of a nation.

Going, therefore, into further detail will serve no useful

purpose, and I would assert that the India that we must try to build should be of a truly different character. In place of an ever-increasing output, we should aim at a decent standard of living; in place of the desire of modern man to increase the comforts of life within the frontiers of his own nation, the wish of the new man to achieve the desired comforts for the world as a whole. This is where Gandhiji's life and action can prove to be of great benefit to us all, provided his action is fully understood. It must be an independent course of action and point in the direction that he wanted. I would not worry too much whether this particular direction can be proved in detail from Mahatma Gandhi's writings. That should not be of vital consideration, so long as it is understood that the modern world is without principles, so long as it is understood that the Russian and the American of today, no matter if they belong to very divergent systems, are both motivated with the same animal drives and fight to increase their comforts within the frontiers of their own nations, the American within the frontiers of the United States, and the Russian within the frontiers of Russia. In place of that, the Socialist should place before the world three programmes for a decent standard of living for the world as a whole.

Socialism is an open doctrine, while the two systems of capitalism and communism are closed. The new world must get ready to strive for a decent standard of living for all humanity. I believe that decent living rather than prosperity is the keynote of the day.

I will now go on to certain other aspects of Gandhiji, but only briefly. So soon after his death there has been an eclipse; I believe that it is a temporary eclipse. There is a great deal of ceremonial mention of his name and erection of monuments, but so far as the great effect of his teaching is concerned, it has been absent or comparatively absent after his death. What is that due to? Is something lacking in what Gandhiji did and said and wrote? Perhaps so, and if this is true, there is no use blaming alone the men of today for their doings.

I believe that Gandhiji did not pay sufficient attention to the physical basis of life, physical and economic. I am using these words as in their scientific connotation. He did suffer from some fear which resulted from a heightened awareness of the body. There is no doubt about it that to keep the body clean was his first care and anybody who wishes to follow him would do well to study those precedents. There are also many quaint things Gandhiji said or did about food, clothes, the relationship between man and woman, and the like. Besides, Gandhiji tried to change the habits of his fellow men and undoubtedly was able to influence a large number of his countrymen and was always thinking as to how the people of India could have healthy bodies. He also said that he would rather have just a few followers who put his teachings loyally into practice than have the multitude follow his words with indifference. Together with his excessive concern for the physical and the best ways to purify it, there is a pronounced tendency in him to deny it or at least to reduce it. Apparently the purification and the reduction of the physical and the economic are up to a point interchangeable terms.

Ever since the *Kathopanishad* raised the dichotomy of the lovely and the good, the desirable and the necessary, the pleasing and the ennobling, perhaps for the first time in thought, Indians have been at the problem, and the greatest of them have tended in the general direction of the first answer. The lovely and the pleasing have been sacrificed for the good and the ennobling. Gandhiji also did that, by and large. It is possible to argue for the ascetic austerity, in patches, barrenness of his life also on social grounds. Complete identification between the leader and his people in a poor country like India can perhaps be effected alone on levels of austerity. Under conditions of more relaxed prosperity, the level might have been different.

Nevertheless, it would be futile to deny the element of ultimate philosophy in Gandhiji's austerity. He did not really come to terms with the devil of gold or music or loveliness or

what one may call rising economic standards. Like his great predecessors, he denied or overwhelmingly reduced the material. It may be doubted whether the material and the spiritual, the lovely and the good, in fact, the beautiful and the true can ever come to terms except by a trick of definition in which the one is absorbed by the other. Furthermore, the possibility of a continuing equilibrium in view of the dynamism and the demonism of the material may also be denied. As an American undergraduate once asked me, once we have the materialist bull by the horns, how do we ever let him go? How could we ever live a relaxed existence if the material needed to be controlled permanently? The question stumped me then, as it stumps me now. I have no answer to it except the wills of life and experimentation.

The mainstream of life as outlined by, let us say, Adam Smith and Truman or Karl Marx and Stalin gives them a certain power over men's minds and bodies. When persons like Gandhiji tend to go too far away from prevalent attitudes and objects and offer solutions which are no longer acceptable to mankind, then they reduce themselves to the status of ceremonial remembrance, once a year entertainment or that of half an hour in the course of a day of 24 hours. Gandhiji's name is now reduced to that status of ceremonial remembrance, of presence in reference libraries or a great mention in college rooms and public lectures. But the main stream of life runs without any heed to Mahatma Gandhi, his action and his teachings. The bulk of his followers have become moderate and have settled down to enjoyment of the fruits of this labour towards change of heart. They have no need to change the hearts of the oppressed and to put courage into them. They find it easiest to take to the cosy activity of changing the heart of the oppressor and the exploiter. Their way of life ties up without much difficulty with any of the prevalent world attitude of capitalism, liberalism, mixed economy, or the orthodox varieties of reformist socialism.

The more extremist of his followers have gone on to

embrace the ideas of Karl Marx. They too have abandoned the genuinely revolutionary in Gandhiji, that which made him take to the path of civil disobedience, village government, and controllable tools. They have tried barely to keep alive Gandhiji's passion for identification between the mass and the leaders, and while their ways of conflict are unhemmed, they have acquired the communist's devotion to the current civilization, with its urges and its technology, which is incidentally also the capitalist's devotion.

As a result we have the Gandhian by-products with some saintly variants more particularly of the former, the capitalist and the communist. India, which has been stagnant all these ages, must try to achieve a system of economy and administration in which the basic postulates of Mahatma Gandhi prove workable. Otherwise, Gandhism will be reduced to the ceremonial status of the spinning wheel, and village republics will not come into existence.

Larger and yet larger factories will be erected and the mass of the people will think in terms of increasing standards. India will become a weak imitation of the U.S.A. or the U.S.S.R. Existing civilization will have another stage to play on. But if an effort is made to build Gandhiji's postulates into economic and administrative systems and work them out, it would be possible for India to help in the creation of a new civilization. This is the specific job of socialism all over the world and especially of socialism in India.

Systems that have been so far elaborated, socialism being no exception, would make it necessary for the individual to be good. The transitional individual would just need time in which to make necessary adjustments. Our task now is to elaborate a system in which it would be possible for the individual to be good but also necessary for him to be so. Capitalism and communism have both tried to put before the world certain systems of thought and action where all will be automatically good. It will not be necessary for one to be good. That has been the specific quality of sages all over the world.

To deal with systems and to elaborate them on paper and to change society in accordance with them has sufficed for these sages, but they have invariably failed. What should be done, however, is to take advantage of certain essential virtues of the individual and then to weave them into systems where it would be possible to be good but where the individual will always find it necessary to strive to be good. Socialism has hitherto generally been the system where such necessity did not arise, where the environment alone mattered, where changes in law and in government and administration were sufficient to make the individual good. This is a vice which socialism has hitherto shared with communism and capitalism. I deliberately call it a vice, the vice of environmentalism, where the environment alone is of importance and where with improvement in it the individual is believed to change automatically.

It may well be that Mahatma Gandhi tended to over-emphasize the individual and under-emphasize the environment. Let it also be realized that socialism has tended to over-emphasize the environment and under-emphasize the individual. If a logical system of thought were to be devised, equal emphasis would have to be laid on both, for man is both end and means, and while he may enact virtues which do not change, he has also got to be an instrument of better future. Let me close with the remark that the need today is to combine the sage and the saint.

Socialism has dealt too much with the sage studying environment with discovery of principles of good organization. The saint has emphasized qualities of living and denial of the flesh. Each one of us has latent in him the virtues of the sage and the saint. But the virtue of the sage has tended to degenerate into the vice of cruelty just as the virtue of the saint has tended to degenerate into the vice of narrowness. Sage and saint have both become narrow and cruel. The sage becomes cruel, because he begins to hate all those who are unable or do not wish to think like him. The saint becomes narrow, because there is no effort like the effort to be good or

pure. The distance between cruelty and narrowness is very small. If there is any lesson to be learned from Mahatma Gandhi's life and action, every one of us should strive to bring out the latent qualities of satyagraha and sagehood as well as sainthood. Let us not be frightened of sainthood. Not to wish to deny the flesh is almost always to deny the saint altogether, and that is bad. Knowledge and good conduct, change of environment and change in the individual, revolution and religion, social reconstruction and moral uplift, education of the mind and training of habits have hitherto appeared as antipoles because of man's incurable inclination to monastic solace. Whether or not Mahatma Gandhi was able to combine well the sage and the saint in his own person without being predominantly the one or the other is a speculation of little interest. Among leaders of men, he was the first in world history to be a revolutionary of political and social structures together with being a revolutionary of the inner world and ways of conduct. Frequent mental gymnastics are conducted by persons so as to make some ropes of theory take a strand from Marx and a strand from Gandhi and weave them together. That is a pursuit which to my mind is utterly hopeless and produces no results. But if an effort were made to weave a consistent cloth, whole threads were picked from anywhere, no matter where, but the weaver's sole object were to devise an environment in which the individual could be good if he wished to be good, then, I believe, together with that unique weapon of civil disobedience this doctrine could be incorporated into socialism with great profit to mankind. A separate creed of Gandhism would perhaps not be of a much use to the world. Socialism is already on the world stage.

The doctrine is still open. That gives us hope, and if some of these ideas from Gandhiji's life and action can be woven into a consistent cloth of socialism, the new civilization may emerge and mankind may hope for an age of peace and decent living.

[Speech; Hyderabad, August 1952]