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needed today than ever**



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THE RADICAL HUMANIST

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Editorial :

Chandrayaan—3: From Scientific Achievement to Religio-Political Twist

Vinod Jain

“Vikram lands at 6.03 pm, making India the 4th country to successfully park on the moon, and the 1st in history to reach the lunar south pole,” said the headline in an important daily newspaper, on the morning of August 24, 2023.

It also said “Chandrayaan—3’s touchdown — which completed an extraordinary arc of decades of scientific perseverance culminating in the automated choreography of 12 big and small rocket engines executed to clinical precision — also opened new vistas for the country’s space programme in the lucrative market of space exploration and commerce.”

“India is on the Moon” said S. Somnath, the chief of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

But India’s great leader would quietly have his way. While effusive in his emotional praise of the mission and of those who executed it, he quietly introduced a religio-political purpose in the whole thing. He named the place on the Moon where Vikram landed and called it “Shiv Shakti”. Now what has ‘Shiv’ to do with it? Shiv is one of the trinity of the Hindu pantheon — Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh (Shiv). He is worshipped by many Hindus throughout the country. Nobody

ever suggested that he could safely put such a scientific machine on the surface of the Moon.

Four years ago in 2019 when Chandrayaan — 2 at the last touchdown moments, crashed

on the surface of Moon nearabout the same place where Chandrayaan—3 successfully soft—landed now, no Shiv came to help it, just as no external agency came forward to help now. After the failure of 2019 our large team of scientists worked hard to understand the error or errors that might have caused the crash. After pinpointing the errors they started working on a foolproof way out. After working on it for the next 4 years they not only launched Chandrayaan—3 but soft-landed it as well.

This entire mission is human and scientific. All the men and women scientists at Isro deserve the credit themselves. There is no need to stealthily introduce a religio-political terminology or symbol and confuse the people of India, unless the purpose is to make political capital out of it.

If it has to be ‘Shakti’, then let us call it ‘Manav Shakti’ or ‘Vigyaan-Shakti’. That will enthuse our generations to come. 

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‘The Radical Humanist’ is now available at

<http://www.lohiatoday.com/> on Periodicals page, thanks to Manohar Ravela who administers the site on Ram Manohar Lohia, the great socialist leader of India.

— Mahi Pal Singh

Articles and Features :

Mahatma Gandhi's Leadership - Moral And Spiritual Foundations

Y.P. Anand

Mahatma Gandhi is universally accepted as an exemplary model of ethical and moral life, with a rare blending of personal and public life, the principles and practices, the immediate and the eternal. He considered life to be an integrated whole, growing from 'truth to truth' every day in moral and spiritual status.

He believed in a single standard of conduct founded on dharma of truth and nonviolence. He successfully led nonviolent struggles against racial discrimination, colonial rule, economic and social exploitation and moral degradation. So long as these manifestations of violence remain, Gandhi will remain relevant. Gandhi was "a good man in a world where few resist the corroding influence of power, wealth and vanity".¹

Among the vital messages of Gandhi's leadership are: even one person can make a difference; strength comes not from physical capacity but from an indomitable will; given a just cause, nonviolence and capacity for self-suffering, and fearlessness, victory is certain; leadership by example is the one most effective. He asserted: "We only wish to serve our fellowmen wherever we may be..." (CWMG 54:233)

Considering Gandhi's unique and multi-faceted leadership, an attempt has been made to study his leadership under three main headings:

Ethico-social Parameters of Gandhian Leadership;

Gandhian Leadership - The Vision and the Way; and

Gandhian Political-Economic-Social Order.

(I)

Ethico-Social Parameters

Gandhi spoke in a low tone and was a hesitant public speaker. Yet people of all classes were drawn to him and instinctively felt him to be a leader of deeply spiritual and moral perceptions, which he sought to realize through the pursuit of Truth. Over 54 years of Gandhi's public life were lived as an open book. He lived in South Africa for 21 years and then in India from 1915. All through his life he remained a seeker after Truth.

A central quality of his leadership was its natural evolution through intense interaction with the people and the events. He was acutely

conscious of his own imperfections. "One great reason for the misunderstanding lies in my being considered almost a perfect man...I am painfully conscious of my imperfections, and therein lies all the strength I possess, because it is a rare thing for a man to know his own limitations" (CWMG 21:457-9). The more he realized about human fallibility, the more he tried to evolve morally and spiritually. When nothing else availed, he would seek refuge in God and yet carry on.

Gandhi single-handedly made nonviolence a universal substitute for violence and the bedrock of his leadership. His nonviolence was the way to counter injustice and exploitation,

and not run away from a righteous battle. He associated the qualities of humility, compassion, forgiveness and tolerance as corollaries of nonviolence. Humility, to him, is “an indispensable test of ahimsa. In one who has ahimsa in him it becomes part of his very nature,” and, it must not be “confounded with mere manners or etiquette,” but it “should make the possessor realize that he is as nothing” (CWMG 44:205-6).

To Gandhi the spirit of service and sacrifice was the key to leadership. For the spirit of service to materialize we must lay stress on our responsibilities and duties and not on rights. He illustrated it through the example of “concentric circles”: one starts with service of those nearest to one and expands the circle of service until it covers the universe, no circle thriving at the cost of the circles beyond. Service to him implied self-sacrifice. He said: “Sacrifice is the law of life. It runs through and governs every walk of life. We can do nothing or get nothing without paying a price for it...in other words, without sacrifice” (CWMG 4:112).

The commitment to service, however demands a strong sense of conscience (moral imperative), courage (fearlessness, bravery, initiative), and character (integrity). To Mahatma Gandhi, ‘inner voice’ was synonymous with conscience. Leaders need to develop and follow their conscience even more than ordinary people as they set the path for others. Hence, he wrote: “None of us, especially no leader should allow himself to disobey the inner voice in the face of pressure from outside. Any leader who succumbs in this way forfeits his right of leadership (CWMG 34:363-4). For a leader to follow the right path requires courage and its associated qualities: “Courage, endurance and above all, fearlessness and spirit of willing sacrifices are the qualities that are required today in India for leadership” (CWMG 21:152).

Gandhi in his time wielded more power over the minds of people than any other individual but it was not the power of weapons, or terror, or violence; it was the power of his convictions, his pursuit of truth and nonviolence, fearlessness, love and justice, working through incessant service and sacrifice for fellow human beings. His power came from empowering the weak, to lead the masses in the fight against injustice, exploitation, violence and discrimination. Satyagraha elevated the struggle for survival to the highest moral-spiritual levels and ordinary, emaciated people turned heroes. His power arose through the people whom he gave a sense of self-respect, purpose and moral strength.

We may thus conclude that Gandhi’s leadership was a running ethical lesson to his followers as well as his opponents on ‘how to live’. An outline of the basic ethical tenets of Gandhian leadership, proceeding from the eternal verities towards the more applied principles of conduct are given below:

1. Truth
2. Nonviolence
3. Right Means and Right Ends
4. Primacy of Duties over Right
5. The Deed, not the Doer
6. True Religion (Universality and Brotherhood)
7. Aparigraha or Non-possession (voluntary Poverty)
8. Yajna (Sacrifice and Service)
9. Satyagraha or Nonviolent Conflict Resolution

(II)
The Vision And The Way
Gandhi’s Vision

Mahatma Gandhi was not an armchair academician or a cloistered visionary. He was deeply concerned with the world around him. He disclaimed being a visionary. He said: “Mere discipline cannot make leadership. The

latter calls for faith and vision" (CWMG 72:217). The core of his vision for the people of India was contained in his concept of Swaraj, the fountainhead from which the whole range of the concepts of Gandhian philosophy flow. It necessarily starts with political self-rule as a means to achieving economic, social and moral freedom. It applies equally to the individual, the society and the state.

His concept of freedom was self-rule, i.e. self-restraint and not freedom from all restraint which "independence often means" (CWMG 45:264). "Swaraj means freedom not only for oneself but "for your neighbour too" (CWMG 60:254), because, "Men aspiring to be free could hardly think of enslaving others. If they try to do so, they would only be binding their own chains of slavery tighter" (CWMG 87:162). He defined Swaraj as a social state "in which the poorest shall feel it is their country in whose making they have an effective voice....no high class and low class of people....all communities shall live in perfect harmony....no room in such an India for the curse of untouchability or....of intoxicating drinks and drugs. Women will enjoy the same rights as men" (CWMG 47:389).

Inherent in his vision of Swaraj was his vision of democracy: "Democracy, disciplined and enlightened, is the finest thing in the world" (CWMG 47:236).

Gandhi's Way: Satyagraha

The philosophy of Satyagraha has been explained in simple terms by Gandhi himself, as appearing in the 'Congress Report on the Punjab Disorders, chap. IV: Satyagraha' (see CWMG 17:151-58):

"The principles of satyagraha, as known today, constitute a gradual evolution. Its root meaning is 'holding on to truth'; hence truth-force. I have also called it love-force or soul force. In the application of satyagraha, I discovered in the earliest stages that pursuit

of truth did not admit of violence being inflicted on one's opponent, but that he must be weaned from error by patience and sympathy. For what appears to be truth to one, may appear to be an error to the other. And patience means self-suffering....Satyagraha....has been conceived as a weapon of the strongest, and excludes the use of violence in any shape or form ...I feel that nations cannot be one in reality, nor can their activities be conducive to the common good of the whole community, unless there is this definite recognition and acceptance of the law of the family in national and international affairs...Satyagraha has therefore been described as a coin, on whose face you read love and on the reverse you read truth...A satyagrahi does not know what defeat is..."

"And as a satyagrahi never injures his opponent and always appeals, either to his reason....or his heart....satyagraha is twice blessed; it blesses him who practices it, and him against whom it is practiced. Satyagraha....is essentially a....process of purification and penance. It seeks to secure reforms or redress of grievances by self-suffering."

In the Gandhian philosophy of satyagraha, dialogue and compromise—except on basic principles—play a vital part. He writes in his Autobiography: "All my life through, the very insistence on truth has taught me to appreciate the beauty of compromise. I saw in later life that this spirit was an essential part of satyagraha" (CWMG 39:122).

(III) *Gandhian Political-Economic-Social Order Spiritualizing Politics*

Mahatma Gandhi never sought a public or political office or title. He was in politics for spiritual reasons. He explained in a speech in London (23.9.1931) "...although to all appearances my mission is political...its roots are—if I may use the term—spiritual...I claim

that at least my politics are not divorces from morality, from spirituality, from religion...a man who is trying to discover and follow the will of God, cannot possibly leave a single field of life untouched. I found through bitter experience that, if I wanted to do social service, I could not possibly leave politics alone" (CWMG 48:50). Later he said: "The call to lead India did not come to me in the nature of a sudden realization. I prepared for it by fasting and self discipline. My political work grew out of my spiritual preparation" (CWMG 48:63)

He was misunderstood when he said, "I cannot conceive politics as divorced from religion. Indeed, religion should pervade every one of our actions." He explained that, "Here religion does not mean sectarianism. It means a belief in the ordered moral government of the universe. This religion transcends Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc. it does not supercede them. It harmonizes them and gives them reality" (CWMG 71: 177-8).

"....if I seem to take part in politics, it is only because politics encircles us today like the coil of a snake from which one cannot get out....I wish therefore to wrestle with the snake....I have been experimenting with myself and my friends by introducing religion into politics...Religion which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and which ever purifies (CWMG 17:406).

Early after arrival in India he had exhorted in a speech (8.5.1915): "You and I have to act on the political platform from a spiritual side and if this is done we should conquer the conquerors" (CWMG 13:82).

Patriotism, Nationalism and Internationalism

Mahatma Gandhi's patriotism and nationalism were not narrow-minded or exclusive, but were part of his search for truth through unity in diversity and through service. These were expressions of his swadeshi spirit,

which seeks food of the nearer society as a part of the global good. "I am patriotic because I am human and humane. It is not exclusive. I will not hurt England and Germany to serve India" (CWMG 19:427). For nationalism he said: "Internationalism is possible only when nationalism becomes a fact...It is not nationalism that is evil, it is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane of modern nations which is evil (CWMG 27:255). To him nationalism was a step towards internationalism.

He believed in the ideal of self-reliance along with that of interdependence and cooperation. He said: "Individual liberty and interdependence are both essential for life in a society. When a man has done all he can for the satisfaction of his essential requirements, he will seek the cooperation of his neighbours for the rest. That will be true cooperation" (CWMG 82:396). Even his struggle for India's freedom was imbued with this spirit: "I want freedom of my country so that other countries may learn something from this free country of mine...so that the resources of my country may be utilized for the benefit of mankind" (CWMG 28:129).

The concept of sacrifice under Gandhian thinking became a continuous chain from the individual to the world. He described this in a idiom thus: "The logical conclusion of self-sacrifice is that the individual sacrificed himself for the community, the community sacrificed itself for the district, the district for the province, the province for the nation, and the nation for the world. A drop torn from the ocean perished without doing any good. If it remains a part of the ocean, it shared the glory of carrying on its bosom a fleet of mighty ships" (CWMG 86:23).

A New Meaning of Democracy

All through his public life, Gandhi was thinking how to institutionalize swaraj or true

democracy, including Gram swaraj and village panchayats. To him democracy meant “the art and science of mobilizing the entire physical, economic and spiritual resources of all....in the service of the common good of all” (CWMG 69:50).

In an interview (9.1.1927), he defined the required qualities of leaders under swaraj thus: “My ideal is that every person should realize dharma. In that case there would be no need left for any representatives. That is the ideal swaraj...” (CWMG 35: 528-31).

He was acutely conscious of the pitfalls and corruption in parliamentary democracies, and continued to lay stress on purification of the public life and political process. As early as 1934, he would write: “....corruption and hypocrisy ought not to be the inevitable products of democracy as they undoubtedly are today; nor bulk a true test of democracy” (CWMG 59: 11-2)

Towards a Humanistic Social Order

Gandhian vision of swaraj covered all aspects of human life, including the vital area of ‘Political Economy’. Gandhian economics is normative, a means to obtaining a non-violent, egalitarian, sustainable, progressive and happy social order.

To him economics and ethics go together: “True economics never militates against the highest ethical standard, just as all true ethics....must at the same time be also good economics. As economics that inculcates mammon worship and enables the strong to amass wealth at the expense of the weak, is a false and dismal science...True economics....stands for social justice; it promotes the good of all equally, including the weakest and is indispensable for decent life” (CWMG 66:168).

He had made his first major statement on socio-economic order in his paraphrase of John Ruskin’s ‘Unto This Last’ (1860) in his booklet

titled ‘Sarvodaya’ (‘Welfare of all’, 1908). He summed up his understanding of the lessons of Ruskin’s book in his Autobiography as:

“1. That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.

2. That a lawyer’s work has the same value as a barber’s, in as much as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.

3. That a life of labour....is the life worth living” (CWMG 39:239).

In a speech delivered (22.12.1916) at Muir College Economic Society, Allahabad, he defined ‘real economics’ thus: “In a well-ordered society, the securing of one’s livelihood should be and is found to be the easiest thing in the world. Indeed the test of orderliness in a country is not the number of millionaires it owns, but the absence of starvation among its masses... These are real economics” (CWMG 13:312).

Conclusion

The spiritual and moral foundation of the whole range of Gandhi’s leadership may be best summed up in his own words written at the end of his Autobiography:

“To see the universal and all-pervading Spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. And a man who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life. That is why my devotion to truth has drawn me into the field of politics...those who say that religion ahs nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means....identification with everything that lives is impossible without self-purification; without self-purification the observance of the law of Ahimsa must remain an empty dream; God can never be realized by one who is not pure at heart.

But the path of self-purification is hard and steep. To attain to perfect purity one has to become absolutely passion-free in thought, speech and action; to rise above the opposing

currents of love and hatred, attachment and repulsion. I know that I have not in me as yet that triple purity, in spite of constant ceaseless striving for it....I must reduce myself to zero. So long as man does not...put himself last among his fellow creatures, there is no salvation for him. Ahimsa is the farthest limit of humility.

Albert Einstein's message on Gandhi's 75th birthday sums up the essential character of his leadership: "A leader of his people, unsupported by an outward authority, a victorious fighter who always scorned the use of force, a man of wisdom and humility who has confronted the brutality of Europe with the dignity of the

simple human being and at all times risen superior..."

Mahatma Gandhi remains the ultimate leader, from whose life and thought there is so much that every one of us can learn and try to absorb in our lives.

Reference:

1. P.A. Nazareth, Gandhi's Outstanding Leadership, Bangalore: Sarvodaya International Trust, Gandhi Centre of Science and Human Values & Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, 2006

Source: Anasakti Darshan, Vol. 3, No. 2, July-December 2007 

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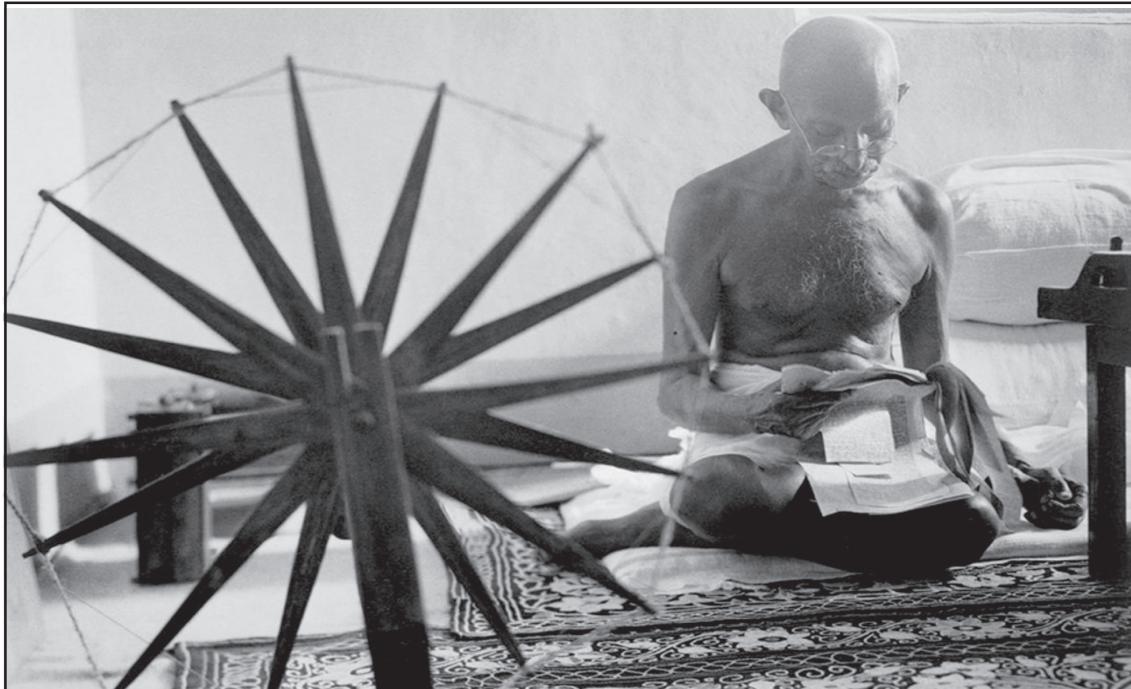
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Vinod Jain

Chairman

Gandhi and His Spinning Wheel: The Story Behind an Iconic Photo

Ben Cosgrove



Gandhi and His Spinning Wheel: the Story Behind an Iconic Photo | Margaret Bourke-White—The LIFE Picture Collection/Shutterstock

Few public figures of the 20th century were and remain as instantly recognizable to literally billions of people around the globe as Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, born on October 2, 1869, and no single picture has become more closely associated with his life, and his way of life, than Margaret Bourke-White's 1946 portrait of the civil-disobedience pioneer beside his cherished spinning wheel.

In 1946, during the run-up to the historic 1947 partition and independence from Great Britain for both India and Pakistan Bourke-White spent time in India working on a feature, ultimately titled "India's Leaders," that would run in the May 27, 1946, issue of LIFE. She made hundreds of

photographs, including many of Gandhi himself: with his family; at his spinning wheel; at prayer. More than a dozen of her pictures ran in the "Leaders" article in the May '46 issue. Only two were of Gandhi, and neither of them was the well-known spinning-wheel picture.

In fact, that picture would not appear in LIFE until months later and even then, it ran as a small image atop an article in June 1946 that focused on Gandhi's fascination with what the magazine called "nature cures" for the sick.

"At the age of 76," LIFE wrote, "Mohandas Gandhi has embarked on a new career as a doctor. It is characteristic of the Mahatma that, at this moment when his lifelong crusade for a

free India seems to have reached its final crisis, he is taking time out from a busy political life to preach a nature cure. Gandhi has no license to practice, of course, but to ask the Mahatma for such a document would be like requiring President Truman to produce his airplane ticket when he boards [the first presidential airplane, nicknamed] *the Sacred Cow.*"

After Gandhi's assassination in January 30, 1948, the photograph was given pride of place in LIFE's multiple-page tribute to Gandhi. Filling a half-page atop the article, "India Loses Her 'Great Soul,'" the picture serves as a stirring visual eulogy to the man and his ideals.

In typed notes that accompanied Bourke-White's film when it was sent from India to LIFE's New York offices in the spring of 1946, the significance of the simple spinning wheel is explained:

[Gandhi] spins every day for 1 hr. beginning usually at 4. All members of his

ashram must spin. He and his followers encourage everyone to spin. Even M. B-W was encouraged to lay [aside] her camera to spin.... When I remarked that both photography and spinning were handicrafts, they told me seriously, "The greater of the 2 is spinning." Spinning is raised to the heights almost of a religion with Gandhi and his followers. The spinning wheel is sort of an Ikon to them. Spinning is a cure all, and is spoken of in terms of the highest poetry.

Of the most famous portrait Bourke-White ever made of Gandhi, meanwhile, the memo to LIFE's editors simply states: "Gh. [a common shorthand for Gandhi in the notes] reading clippings spinning wheel in foreground, which he has just finished using. It would be impossible to exaggerate the reverence in which Gh's 'own personal spinning wheel' is held in the ashram."

Courtesy **Life Magazine** 

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Gandhi for the world, Godse for India?

Sagarika Ghose

One of the most striking images of the recently concluded G-20 diplomatic spectacle in New Delhi was of world leaders gathered at Rajghat, Mahatma Gandhi's memorial. Gandhi was cremated here after being assassinated by Nathuram Godse, a Hindu supremacist with ties to right wing Hindutva groups. Gandhi remains India's biggest global "brand". At the G-20, US President, Joe Biden, voiced a heart-felt tribute to the Mahatma's notion of 'trusteeship'. The BJP has used the Mahatma's spectacles to publicise Swachh Bharat, and PM Modi has been photographed spinning a Charkha. However, in a supreme irony, while the ruling party appropriates Gandhi and his legacy to build its image abroad among international leaders, at home, it lends tacit support to the cult of Gandhi's assassin, Godse.

Every year on January 30, the day Gandhi was shot dead, social media armies aligned to Hindutva groups circulate tributes to Godse. There is almost a note of celebration over the death of Gandhi, whom they hold responsible for Partition. In fact, in 2021, Modi announced that August 14 would be marked as 'Partition Horrors Rememberance Day' to remind future generations of the Hindu-Muslim riots that accompanied Partition, a tragedy for which Hindu right has always blamed Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Yet, however much the Hindu right seeks to constantly vilify and attack Gandhi, it is he who is responsible for the respect and goodwill that India attracts worldwide, which was so evident at the G-20 meet.

The BJP propagates Gandhi abroad but nurtures those who support Godse at home. In 2019, the BJP's Bhopal MP Sadhvi Pragya Thakur praised Godse as a patriot, remarks

for which she was later forced to apologise. Modi said at the time that he would never forgive her, but beyond that there has been no action against Sadhvi Pragya.

Modi welcomes world leaders to Rajghat and invokes the name of Gandhi for his personal leadership cult. But do Modi and his party believe in upholding Gandhian values of non-violence, communal harmony or reconciliation and dialogue with rivals and enemies? At Rajghat the Modi government arranged for all world leaders to sign on the 'Peace Wall' in the Leaders' Lounge. Do Modi and his government uphold the central Gandhian belief of upholding peace between religions.

In 2017, Modi said, "If land is given to *kabristan, shamshan* must get it, too," and openly religion-tinged statement ahead of the UP elections, referring to Hindu and Muslim burial grounds and cremation sites. In 2019, Modi declared that those creating violence "could be identified by their clothes". In 2019 Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath asserted, "If they have faith in Ali, we have Bajarangbali." Adityanath described the 2022 Assembly polls as a battle between "80% vs 20%" in an open reference to majority Hindus and minority Muslims. In 2014, campaigning in Delhi, BJP minister Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti said voters must choose between *ramzadon* and *haramzadon*. Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma recently blamed 'Miya Muslims' for price rise.

Are all these calls to communal politics and these not-so-subtle hints at Hindus and Muslims being in perpetual civil war, aligned to the values of Gandhi? At G-20, the hymn 'Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram' was played. Gandhi popularised this bhajan and, added the line, 'Ishwar Allah tero nam' to underline his

passionate conviction that ‘God is one, and Truth is God’. It’s all very well for a smart BJP government to play this hymn to impress visiting world leaders but does the BJP endorse the line, ‘*Ishwar Allah tero nam*’, or a belief that every religion is a manifestation of the same divinity?

The ruling establishment has gone out of its way to endorse the personality cult of VD Sarvakar, a fierce opponent of Gandhi. The BJP has held Sarvakar Gourav Yatra in Maharashtra. Modi has lauded Sarvakar publically as a “great freedom fighter” and hailed his “sacrifice, courage and resolve”. Modi also said he had been to Sarvakar’s jail cell in the Andamans. No doubt, for many Sarvakar was a revolutionary thinker, but his notion of a militant Hindutav-inspired nationalism had nothing in common with Gandhi’s passionate ideals of the co-existence of all faiths.

Gandhi believed fervently in reaching out to adversaries in a spirit of reconciliation and dialogue as he did with BR Ambedkar and MA Jinnah. But does the Modi government follow this Gandhian principle? No. Instead, the Modi-led regime is known for its particularly ferocious relations with the Opposition, a refusal to dialogue across the aisle and even give the highly undemocratic call for an ‘*Opposition-mukt Bharat*’. Unleashing enforcement agencies on the opposition, refusing to invite Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge to the G-20 official dinner, or refusing to dialogue with the Opposition on

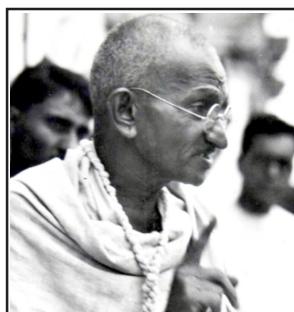
the upcoming “special session” of parliament, are acts of petty political hostility, the very antithesis of Gandhian principles of solutions from dialogue. Gandhi said: “Resist me always when my suggestion does not appeal ... I shall not love you less for that resistance.” The Modi dispensation invokes the phrase *Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam* or ‘the world is one family’ abroad, but bullies its opponents at home.

Gandhi believed both means and ends must be moral and ethical. Gandhi called off the Non-cooperation Movement of 1921-22 when violence broke out at Chauri-Chaura. For Gandhi, without the benchmark of ethical and moral means, the ends degenerate into power lust. Does the Modi-led BJP follow this Gandhian principle of means and ends? Not really, as seen in the rather brazen way governments are toppled and defections are engineered, simply for the sake of securing power. Non-violence was a cardinal principle for Gandhi. Today, when the political establishment in BJP states sanctions the use of bulldozers to raze down homes without due legal process, the principle of non-violence is bulldozed, too.

Reducing Gandhi to an international photo-op for world leaders, while at the same time practicing domestic politics which is antithetical to Gandhian principles, is nothing but abominable political hypocrisy.

(The writer is a senior journalist and commentator based in Delhi)

Courtesy Deccan Herald, 12 September 2023. 



You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.

- Mahatma Gandhi

THE PATH OF GANDHI: PEACEFUL WAR

Koganti Radha Krishna Murty

After the World War II the world was resounding with slogans that it was a war to prevent wars in future. The forces that fought and won the war were preparing to sign the peace treaties in Versailles. In that context Gandhi tried to introduce his new concept of politics for human welfare.

When a government passes laws that are detrimental to the people and harsh on them and refuses to take note of the requests made through their representatives, there could be two ways of resistance. The first was an armed revolt against the government. But it would not be worth as violence brings destruction to both sides. The other was passive resistance. People refuse to cooperate with government. No government could rule over the people who do not themselves submit to the ruler. The strength of people lies in the legitimacy of their demands. You feel indignation as some injustice was done to you and you feel you are within your rights to refuse to surrender. Out of this righteous indignation comes the passive resistance (satyagraha). It is the way adopted by the individual in his own right, of his own accord to subject himself to the inconveniences of it and suffer the agony that would follow. It is intended to bring moral pressure on the oppressor to make him see reason and honor your demands because they are legitimate. Thus it is basically different from violent revolt. It gives no excuse for the oppressor to apply any force against the satyagrahi, the resistor. Everybody who is participating in passive resistance must be prepared to undergo any punishment that may be given for his defiance. The punishment itself may be unjust. But it must be resisted peacefully by surrender and not by violent reaction. Such

resistance and consequential trouble will not make them slaves. They suffer but remain self-respecting individuals. It is expected to bring some sense of justice in the oppressor and do justice ultimately. That was how Gandhi explained his path of passive resistance and non-Violence. An individual who is burning with a sense of righteous indignation only can resort to it. Once the individual is prepared to take consequences of his actions knowingly, there would be no fear or hesitation in him.

It is no doubt an unfortunate development that all the countries in the modern world are accustomed to apply technology and their natural resources to fortify their armed forces and to produce weapons of mass destruction. It may facilitate an armed revolt. But such a revolt would never establish a government of the people. It happened frequently in history that the government established for the people turned out to be oppressive, albeit in the name of democracy. The only way out appears to be to enlighten people and involve them in getting the government of their choice and keep an eternal watch on the activities of such government.

Gandhi left his native land in search of a living. He could settle in South Africa comfortably. But the white people in power there humiliated him. While he was in occupation of his rightful seat in the rail compartment, he was thrown out just because he did not belong to the race of the rulers who gave special privileges to themselves. That he was forced to spend the night alone in the cold in the railway station was the most humiliating experience of his life. Instead of losing heart, he fortified his decision to fight for equality, which he believed was his right. He asked

himself whether he should ignore the experience and go back to his native land. But he considered it a timid step. He was insulted by the racial hatred and arrogance. "I have to prove the rights of all the people, the right to equality" he said to himself. He preferred to stay back and put up with all the inconveniences and troubles in fighting the government. That was his oath. While continuing his profession as a lawyer he gathered all the Indians belonging to various religions, castes and cultures and made them a united force. That was the origin of Natal Indian Congress. He started the Journal *India Opinion*. He established Ashrams to inculcate discipline. Through that organization he made many representations to the government pleading for equal rights to all. But the government did not agree. He organized peaceful resistance. He was imprisoned for instigating people against the government. He did not yield. He led movements to cross the forbidden boundaries to enter Transvaal. After a long struggle he was invited for direct talks with the then Prime Minister General Smuts. He conducted negotiations as an equal and succeeded in getting recognition to the rights of the people. Certain taxes were withdrawn as a result of it. The religious rituals and marriages of all the people were recognized and honored. Because of his experience he was able to say that violence is not the answer to violence. Non-violence stuck with him. No purpose would be served by violence. On the other hand there would be destruction on both sides. Those who are dedicated to serve the people and the country must adopt abstinence in life, fight for Truth and perform their duties without an eye on the results. There shall be no place for fear. Renounce luxuries and adopt a frugal life, he said.

It formed the raw material for Gandhi to start a movement to fight for equality. When he came to India in 1915, he brought that spirit with him and applied it in his fight for independence. When he stepped on Indian soil he was given a

hearty welcome. He was decided to dedicate himself to the service of India. He visited all corners of the country to understand the ways of life of common men of different religions and regions. He travelled and lived with them to understand their feelings.

He came to know that the people in his native Kathiawar were subjected to heavy taxes unbearable to the poor farmers. He went to Bombay to represent to the Governor there the difficulties of the people.. The personal secretary to the governor tried to dissuade him from meeting as the Governor was too big for him to meet. He insisted on meeting the governor and presented his version of the troubles of unreasonable taxation. The governor gave him a patient hearing, but there was no result of it. Gandhi did not leave it there. He made representations to the Viceroy in Delhi and succeeded in getting the taxes withdrawn. It was taken as the first victory without using violence and it encouraged him and his followers to adopt the same in their fight for freedom.

The Champaran movement in Bihar fortified the confidence of the people in Gandhi. The farmers in the village were cultivating indigo. The conditions stipulated by the landlords and regulations of government were burdensome and reduced the farmers to a state of penury. They approached Gandhi to help them out of the situation. He visited all the villages to understand the situation. There were threats from the landlords who had vested interest in the situation and the rules of government support them. He was not discouraged by the threats. Under his leadership, the farmers were able to resist the demands of landlords and got the regulations changed to more humane level. While it earned the confidence of the people for him, Gandhi realized the value of legitimate demands and peaceful representations to get grievances redressed. "Selfless service to people in any field will help movements. That is what I learnt from Champaran experience" he said.

Draught conditions were prevailing in the Kheda region of Gujarat and people were finding it difficult even for daily meal. They requested the government to drop the demand for taxes for that period. But the government did not agree. Even the request to postpone the collection of taxes was refused. Gandhi took the lead and organized passive resistance. Government did not yield and tried to confiscate the properties of the farmers. Even then the people did not step back. Ultimately, the government had to withdraw the demand for taxes as requested by the people. It was a victory for the passive resistance under the leadership of Gandhi.

The Sabarmati Ashram established by Gandhi was mainly supported by donations from the owners of textile mills in Ahmedabad. The workers in the mills resorted to a strike as their demands for wage increase were not accepted by the managements. It was the first strike organized by the workers in India on such a large scale. The strike was continuing for a long time as the managements did not yield to the demands. Naturally some of the workers began to develop cold feet as expected by the managements. Instead of bringing pressure on the managements, Gandhi resorted to a fast demanding that none of the workers should get discouraged and subvert the strike. His involvement infused confidence in the workers and the strike became more vigorous. The fast continued for three days and then the managements agreed to the demands of the workers. It led to the formation of trade unions for the first time in India which was inaugurated by Gandhi himself. It has to be noted that Gandhi stood for the workers against the managements who have contributed to his Ashram.

From the beginning Gandhi was a sworn enemy of western culture and civilization. He led agitations against the rule of whites in many of their colonies. Non-violence and passive resistance were his only weapons in the fight.

But the same Gandhi tried to help the white government in South Africa when it faced Zulu revolt and in Boer war. He also supported the war effort of Britain at the time of World War I. It was a surprise to many of his followers. “The British empire is fighting for the welfare of the world only. If I want any rights as a subject of the empire it would be my duty to help the empire at the time of need. I believe that India will get independence from Britain. War involves violence. When two nations are involved in war, it is the duty of every non-violent person to help end the war at the earliest. He shall try to continue as a partner in the war and save his country and the world from the menace of war” he stated. That was how Gandhi explained the contradiction in his behavior. But strangely he opposed the Home Rule movement started by Annie Besant in 1915. Even after realizing that it is difficult to follow non-violence in political agitations, he insisted that it shall be the corner stone of all his movements. Gandhi did all this expecting that Britain would grant independence to India after the War. On the contrary they introduced inhuman legislations like the Rowlett Act. The same Gandhi who demonstrated his loyalty to the British Empire had to start a tirade against the same empire and lead a rebellion.

The British government established a “Sedition Commission” under the chairmanship of SAT Rowlett. The Commission gave its report in 1918 stating that India was full of rebels and anarchists and the existing laws were not adequate to meet the challenge. As a result the government passed two legislations in 1919. Martial law was imposed in the name of Rowlett Act. When the bill was discussed in the Council of Viceroy, the efforts made by Indians to resist the bill became ineffective. “Freedom and fundamental rights required for the protection and progress of human society were nullified by the Rowlett Act” said Gandhi. He called for a nationwide hartal(strike). By that he got

involved more completely in political agitations and moved vigorously putting aside his complacency and passive resistance. At that time he was in Madras as a guest of Rajaji. The strike was originally scheduled to start from 30th March. But it was later postponed to 6th April. But the people in Delhi commenced their rallies on 30th March itself as originally scheduled. The people moved like flood comprising of Hindus and Muslims alike. They tried to reach the Delhi railway station. Police resorted to firing to prevent them. Many people were injured. The same incidents were repeated in Lahore, Amritsar and other cities. The agitation in Bombay started on 6th April. People in large numbers came to the streets led by Sarojini Devi and Gandhi. Agitators in Ahmedabad tried to uproot the rail lines. A government officer was assassinated in a village. Martial law was imposed. Trains were stopped and telephone wires were broken. White officers were targeted menacingly.

The government realized that the situation was more serious than at the time of Sepoy Mutiny in 1857. While submitting his report to the King, the Viceroy Lord Chelmsford stated that 'there was a lot of spiritualism and piety involved with this ascetic' referring to Gandhi. But Gandhi himself did not envisage such violence and destruction of life and property. He resorted to fasting to express his disaffection. While the situation was getting cooled, there was an inhuman devastation in the Jallianwallah Bagh in Amritsar. Vast number of people gathered in an open space called the Jallianwallah Bagh. It has access through only one gate and there was dry well in the middle. There were only lectures and discussions without any disturbance. General Dyer entered the gate with his armed forces and ordered the people to get out immediately. Without giving any time for the people to comply he ordered firing on the people. Within a span of ten minutes 1600 rounds were reported to have been fired

on the fleeing people. More than 400 people died and many more were injured. The details of the inhuman act spread all over the country and the people became enraged and uncontrolled. Gandhi who was already regretting the lesser violence that occurred earlier, felt helpless against the unprovoked violence let loose by the British General on innocent people. He broke his fast on 19th April. He blamed himself for starting his fast at that time. The slaughter of innocent people naturally enraged the people and made them restive. Gandhi declared nationwide non-cooperation. Instead of being passive it took an active shape. Courts and colleges were boycotted. The honors bestowed on distinguished persons were surrendered by them. Many of the Indian officers resigned from their lucrative jobs. All the foreign material in the houses was brought out and burnt as a matter of protest. In order to fortify the involvement of Muslims, Gandhi offered support to the Khilafat movement started by Muslims in Turkey.

In the special session of the Congress party held in Calcutta in September, 1920 the resolution for non-cooperation got full support. It was also the same in the Annual conference held later in Nagpur. Till then non-cooperation was directed against the atrocities in Punjab and in support of Khilafat movement. After that, it has become a part of the strategy in the fight for freedom. But then, freedom did not mean disconnection from the government. In the opinion of leaders like Gandhi, Malaviya and Jinnah, they would remain a part of the British Empire. Gandhi suggested that Truth and Non-violence shall be the main weapons in the fight for freedom. But it was not agreed to in the meeting. After a long discussion it was agreed that "peaceful and legitimate" methods would be followed. Gandhi was regretting that if only his suggestion was followed and Truth and Non-violence were accepted, India would have got freedom far earlier. It was his firm conviction.

During 1921-22 Gandhi led a national movement of non-cooperation and defined his program as follows:

1. The distinctions of honor bestowed by the government shall be discarded. Gandhi himself was given two medals for his services in South Africa. He surrendered them to the government in India.
2. Refuse to participate in any program initiated by the government;
3. Boycott of educational institutions and courts;
4. Indian soldiers shall not agree to be sent on foreign assignments;
5. Refuse to participate in the Councils in States and Center;
6. Condemning of all foreign goods utilization.

Later on other demands were added like:

7. Hindu Muslim unity;
8. Eradication of untouchability and
9. Refusal to pay taxes and levies.

In his speeches he also stressed on spinning yarn on the wheel, wearing of khadi and encouragement of domestic industries were also added. The non-cooperation as enunciated by Gandhi has become the most important aspect of freedom movement from that time onwards. More than 30,000 volunteers were taken as prisoners and treated as political prisoners. Political awareness percolated to the villages and brought the people out to participate in the freedom movement. For the first time the British government realized that the demand for freedom was not confined to leaders and urban elite only.

In his letter to the Viceroy in February, 1922, Gandhi indicated that this non-cooperation would be entering into the stage of defiance of law and legislations. People would refuse to pay taxes and all the unacceptable laws would be defied. Soldiers and police would be asked to

come out of their services. Naturally, the government was more worried at the consequences of such a development.

In the same month police resorted to lathi(baton) charge in a village in the Uttar Pradesh state without provocation on the people who were gathered peacefully and shouting slogans. Perhaps shouting of slogans itself was taken as a provocation. But the baton charge proved more of a provocation to the people and they retaliated with brickbats and whatever they had with them resulting in the death of 22 policemen. When he received the news Gandhi felt that his followers in the movement deviated from the principle of non-violence and so he called off the agitation. It sent a message to the followers that he considered his convictions more important than obtaining freedom from the colonial rulers and they were deeply disappointed. It was almost a death blow to the movement that was picking up momentum. Government was happy and heaved a sigh of relief.

The movement to refuse to pay taxes was successful in Bardoli in Gujarat under the leadership of Vallabh Bhai Patel. But as the wider agitation itself was withdrawn, they felt their support was subverted. The withdrawal was not justified, they felt. Taking the opportunity the Governor General Lord Reading ordered for arrest of Gandhi. Along with him many other leaders were also arrested. Gandhi advised them to bear with the punishment as it was the consequence of their defiance of law. At the same time he was also stating they were justified in defying the laws that were unjust. One way of colonial powers was that they make laws that were necessary for them to control their colonies and state that they were only following the law when they suppress agitations for freedom. In the court, before pronouncing his judgment, Justice Bloomfield folded his hands before Gandhi and sentenced him to imprisonment. He said "Courts of law do not care for individuals. But it has to be accepted

that you happen to be a person different from whom we have been trying till now and from those we will be trying hereafter. It is a fact that cannot be ignored that you are the patriot and leader followed and venerated by crores of your people. Even the people who differ from you acknowledge your spiritual strength and respect you as a man of high ideals.” That is the enigma of law. The judge who acknowledged him as the patriot awards him a punishment of imprisonment of six years calling him a traitor (to his government). Gandhi accepted it with all humility. That was to be understood as the respect he showed for rule of law. Then who would be the protectors of law? The punishment did not intimidate Gandhi. He issued statement that independence arrives behind the bars of prison and not in the courts of law.

But his unilateral withdrawal of agitation resulted in a split within the Congress party. Those who differed from him decided to participate in the Councils and started a separate party. Swarajya Party came into existence. The suggestion of Gandhi that non-violence shall be the main plank was severely criticized within the Congress party. Again in 1925 his suggestion to restrict party membership to those who spin yarn on the spinning wheel was also rejected. By that Gandhi withdrew from party activities and restricted himself to promote khadi and handlooms up to 1929. The members of the party started to concentrate on rebuilding the party by reviving its political stand. Gandhi tried to mix the immiscible ideals in practice and failed because of the intrinsic contradiction. The pacifism of Tolstoy, the communism of Lenin, religion of Brahmins and aggressive theories of Muslims were sought to be made part of the party policy. But it was proved impossible. Pragmatic leaders of the party did not agree to accept non-violence and the spinning wheel as the main weapons in fighting for freedom.

On 6th April, 1930 Gandhi started the ‘salt satyagraha’ movement, to make salt from sea water in defiance of restrictions by the government. That was his third national movement and it was genuinely supported by the entire nation. It was conducted with utmost discipline and the participants preferred to suffer the baton charge and firing of the police rather than revolting with violence. Lakhs of people were sent to jails. The Viceroy Lord Irwin was upset at the popularity of the leaders and ordered arrest of Gandhi. When he was taken into custody Gandhi called on his followers that “the honor of the country is now in the grip of the volunteers. Even if the grip is broken, the salt in the grip shall not be lost”. The movement reached its zenith. Simon Commission was constituted without representation to Indians on it. There were demonstrations against the Commission wherever they went. As usual police resorted to lathi charge, the minimum they could do to prevent demonstrations. But the behavior of police was so brutal that Lala Lajpat Roy, reputed as the “Lion of Punjab” was severely beaten and he later succumbed to his injuries. It provoked a sense of revenge in the people. The police officer responsible for the atrocity was later assassinated by revolutionaries Bhagat Singh and Raj Guru. (They were later caught and hanged by the government turning them into honored martyrs of the nation.) Finally an agreement was reached between Gandhi and Irwin and the agitation was withdrawn. All the imprisoned volunteers were released.

Gandhi was so adamant on his policy of non-violence that he did not approve of the action of Bhagat Singh and Raj Guru. He said he will not support violence on any ground from anybody. He was prepared to share the blame for the arrest and hanging of the revolutionaries.

Having failed to convince the party to adopt non-violence, Gandhi again kept himself away

from the party in 1934. The differences between Gandhi and the other leaders did not come into the open until the World War I. He refused to accept Bose as the President of the party even if he was elected by the members and did not rest until Bose relinquished his position.

The “Quit India Movement” was the last movement undertaken by Gandhi in the name of the party. He gave a call “Do or Die” to his followers in 1942 which sounded different from his earlier pacifist calls. Those were the days of World War II and the British government was fighting the war for survival. But the government had to face severe resistance from the people in the name of Quit India movement led by Gandhi. Volunteers were thrown into prisons indiscriminately. Lord Linlithgow, the then Viceroy blamed Gandhi for the unrest and violence. But Gandhi expressed his innocence as far as violence is concerned. He said he prayed to God to help the Viceroy see the truth. There might be violence without his knowledge and consent. But he refused to withdraw the movement because of the sporadic violence as he did earlier. That movement depended on the popularity of Gandhi, not necessarily on his non-violence principle.

Apart from the four national movements initiated and led by Gandhi there were innumerable movements confined to different regions to tackle local problems. He suffered imprisonment for 249 days in South Africa and for 2089 days in India on various occasions. In the two countries he undertook to fasting on 17 occasions. He started fasting twice even after India got independence.

Instead of resorting to armed violence, Gandhi advocated passive resistance to make the British realize the injustice in ruling over colonies and leave them. He could muster consent of his followers by regular prayers to alienate them from guns and bombs and violence. Whenever the situation was out of his control, he could convey his agony to the government

and followers by keeping silent for days (mounavrat). He consumed only lime juice during the days of fasting. He could negotiate with the British government on an equal status. “While Hitler used violence, I restricted myself to a peaceful fight” he said.

In South Africa the government resorted to inhuman discrimination against the people and called it implementation of law, but the law itself was discriminatory and so unjust. Applying force on others and being subjected to force by others was known to all. But subjecting one’s self to force or inconvenience without troubling others was something novel that the British government could not digest. It was exactly the intention of Gandhi to make the rulers understand the capacity of passive resistance and show them how unjust they were in ruling over the colonies. Since those days in Africa, Gandhi decided to make passive resistance his weapon in fight against oppressive governments. He was quite conscious of the risks and troubles involved in following the principle. Still he chose it as his way in public life to serve the people. He tried his best to prove non-violence a practicable alternative to violence. “I have full confidence in non-violence. I never had any doubt about its future and utilization. But I realized that there were some drawbacks in my following of the principle in practice. I could not conduct the non-violence movement against the British government on proper lines” he said. But he did not make it clear what the proper way was. The very party that was running under his guidance also refused to adopt the principle. Who else was expected by him to follow?

His intention of resisting an unlawful government was genuine and ethical. But he did not like to start his agitation when the government was already in trouble because of some other problems. In South Africa, having declared to start fasting against government, he desisted from it as the government was in trouble because of the strike of railway employees.

Anybody who wants to get something done by the government, would like to take advantage of the situation and increase the pressure on government with his own actions. But he was not of that type. Then, in India, when the government was fighting the World War II, he declared “Quit India” movement. Earlier, during the World War I, he cooperated with government and helped in recruiting soldiers. In 1919 and 1922 he discontinued his movements that were active, because the followers did not care for his non-violence principle. In the 1942 agitation there was much more violence, but he did not call off the agitation. Does it mean that his confidence in non-violence was diminishing?

It was his cardinal principle to discard violence in all situations and in all forms. But when the Zulus revolted in South Africa, he supported the government that tried to suppress the revolt by force. Even in Boer war he was with the government. During the World War II, he said that he was not prepared to support the British government even if they promise to give freedom to India after the War was over as war is basically involving violence. At that time Azad and Nehru were willing to support government if they promise freedom after the War. Such contradictions in his statements confused the followers and adversely affected his political leadership.

When Czechoslovakia was invaded by Germany, he advised the Czechs to resist it at any cost and uphold self-respect and honor. But when Germany occupied France, he advised them to surrender as freedom has no meaning without life. Perhaps by that time he might have realized how brutal was the fascist force. Within a few days after that, he advised Britain to renounce weapons and start non-violent resistance to Hitler. By that he expected that Hitler also would renounce weapons and become peaceful. He advised Europe not to fight to avoid loss of life. But when China was fighting Japanese occupation, he was

congratulating them. He advised India also to cooperate with the government to preempt Japanese occupation.

Moulana Abul Kalam Azad was the President of Congress party in the times of World War II. In his book *India Wins Freedom*, he made certain revealing statements about Gandhi. Azad argued that it might be possible to adopt non-violence in our fight for freedom against the colonial power. But it would be unrealistic to expect to follow it after we become independent as a nation. Gandhi started his fasting against the war. Vinoba Bhave was the first person to join Gandhi in his fastings. But when Nehru also joined them Azad was surprised as he was with him all the while in that issue.

When Japan approached the borders of India during the War, Gandhi started vacillating. He was afraid that Allied forces may lose the War. He felt that the British may be willing to grant freedom after the War, if Congress offers support at that juncture. Azad felt it was not a possibility. In the meetings of party working committee Gandhi used to argue against extending support to the government. At one stage he has gone to the extent of demanding resignations from Azad and Nehru. But Patel warned and silenced him.

Gandhi was always against Bose in every aspect. After Bose disappeared from India and spoke over radio from Germany, Gandhi praised his heroic deeds. Azad was surprised at the *volte face*. Gandhi thought that the British government would come to terms because of his Quit India movement as the government was already weak due to involvement in War. But it did not happen. When Cripps came to India to discuss War efforts with Indian leaders, Gandhi was reported to have talked more about the virtues of vegetarianism than about War. When Japan entered Indian soil and threw bombs, Gandhi considered it an affront to the British government and not to India. Japan would not

have invaded India if Britain were not there, he argued. Being impressed by the victory in Salt Satyagraha in 1939, members of the Congress Working Committee enthusiastically supported the Quit India movement also in 1942. But when Gandhi took a stand that violence is not allowed even for self-protection, they were disillusioned and rejected his proposals. There was sporadic violence even during the 1942 movement. But the movement was not called off. It was an indication that the days of non-violence were numbered.

The main intention in exposing the contradictions in the stands taken by Gandhi is to show it as one of the reasons for his failure to carry the party and people with him. How could it be possible to resist dictators like Hitler and Stalin with non-violence? What could be the influence of the principle on the followers of other religions and tribes? Booker (Bubu) the leader of Jews, asked Gandhi whether it is not more honorable to die fighting Hitler instead of dying in concentration camps. In the circumstances prevailing in those days, it might have been argued that passive resistance would have been the better way to fight against governments. But the purpose could have been defeated when linked with non-violence and

unyielding spiritualism. It was necessary for the people to agitate to get their demands realized. For that it was necessary to enlighten them and infuse confidence in them. They must be taught to concentrate on the purpose with discipline. They must be made to realize that mutual suspicions, class and caste conflicts, blind traditions and selfish motives would only help the dictator. It requires constant vigilance and focused resistance to win against a dictator.

It requires more research to understand the implications of non-violence as a weapon in public life as proposed by Gandhi. Particularly in the present atomic age, war leaves only human ash finally if a war materializes. Peaceful resistance might be the only way to avoid violence at that stage. Even if fasting fails to achieve that purpose, it points to the need to do something to avoid the situation instead of trying to escape from it. Gandhi was able to wake up a sleeping nation and make them aware of their rights and to show a way of realizing them. He could not fix his priorities properly and got diverted from his main focus of freedom. He gave undue importance to spiritual aspects that were alien to politics and his purpose could not be achieved fully.

To be continued in the next issue... 

The Launching of Indian Satellites and our Prime Ministers

In 1969, When India's first satellite Aryabhata was launched, Indira Gandhi didn't appear on TV. All credit was given to ISRO scientists.

In 1992, When India's first rocket PSLV was launched, Narasimha Rao didn't appear on TV. All credit was given to ISRO scientists.

In 2004, When India's first educational satellite was launched, Atal Bihari Vajpayee didn't appear on TV. All credit was given to

ISRO scientists.

In 2013, During the successful Mars Mission, Manmohan Singh didn't appear on TV. All credit was given to ISRO scientists.

But in 2023, during the final moments of Chandrayaan-3, Modi's face appeared 20 times on the TV. Even when the Chandrayaan was touching the surface of the moon. Modi tried to eat all the credit but FAILED because Indians ignored his theatrics this time.

M.G. Devasahayam 

One nation, two elections is the way to go here

Swaminathan S Anklesaria Aiyar

Simultaneous state elections are desirable but they should not be clubbed with a general election. Instead, simultaneous state elections should be held two and a half years after a general election

The government has appointed a committee to go into the proposal to have simultaneous elections to Parliament and state assemblies. This has led to speculation that the coming special session of Parliament has been summoned to make the legal and constitutional amendments necessary for the purpose. The slogan 'One nation, one election' is being tom-tommed. This is not the first time the BJP has made such a proposal, but for the first time it may actually have the votes, provided some regional parties lend a hand.

I agree that simultaneous state elections are desirable. But they should not be clubbed with a general election. Simultaneous state elections should be held two and a half years after a general election. This will be somewhat similar to mid-term Congressional elections in the US. Voters should not have to wait a full five years to express dissatisfaction — they deserve a chance every two and a half years. That is why the slogan should be 'One nation, two elections'.

Right now if a government falls and mid-term elections are held, the new assembly has a full five-year life. To ensure simultaneous elections this provision will have to be amended. Any new government should rule for only the remaining part of a five-year term, not a fresh five years. That will ensure that state elections remain simultaneous regardless of how many governments fail to last a full term.

Two major reasons are given are favouring simultaneous elections. First, they will greatly reduce the cost of holding elections – not just

government costs but the private costs of fighting elections. The two together may save over a thousand crore.

Second, India currently has several state elections every year. This means all parties are constantly in election mode and populist giveaways take precedence over long-term development. Simultaneous elections would give both central and state governments five full years to focus on development.

Opposition parties say these are not the real reasons at all. Narendra Modi is far more popular than his party. This is why the BJP fares better in general elections than state elections. The most striking contrast comes from Delhi. In both 2014 and 2019, the BJP swept all seven Delhi seats in parliamentary elections, AAP won 67 of 70 seats in 2015, and 63 seats in 2020.

If simultaneous elections are held for the Centre and states, with voters voting for both in one single ballot paper; Modi's popularity is likely to spill over from parliamentary to assembly seats. That will surely benefit the BJP, and so Opposition parties are strongly opposed. Atal Bihari Vajpayee had proposed simultaneous election in 2003, when he was seen to be very popular, and Opposition parties opposed the move then too, for the same reason. The irony is that Vajpayee lost the 2004 general election. The popularity of a prime minister does not automatically translate into votes for the party even in a general election. However, Modi is clearly more popular than Vajpayee ever was.

Opposition parties claim that simultaneous

elections will go against the spirit of federalism, diluting issues at the state level and focussing attention on central issues. This is a weak argument. Elections were held simultaneously in the 1950s, and nobody claimed that federalism was killed. Then, as state governments fell for one reason or another, every state began to have elections on different dates. That is why we currently have several state elections per year. Separate state elections were not part of the original election design.

The Opposition also claims that the supposed cost savings of simultaneous elections may be illusory as it will require the procurement of thousands of additional electronic voting machines and VVPAT machines (for providing a paper trail to verify genuine voting). In March, the Election Commission had indicated that simultaneous election in 2024 would entail additional spending of Rs. 5,100 crore. The cost would go up to

Rs. 8,000 crore in 2029.

But that has a flaw. A democracy requires that the will of the people is reflected in a fair way. The key question is not the cost of elections but their fairness of representation. Voters should not have to wait a full five years before being able to express their unhappiness or otherwise. Simultaneous state elections will save huge sums compared with having different state elections every few months. These should provide voters with a mid-term vote on not just each state but the nation too.

In many countries, voters can now demand the recall of elected governments. In the US, many states provide for petitions that, with enough signatures, can lead to a referendum on the Governor's continuance. India is not ready for recalls. But the notion of rulers being accountable in between five-year elections is an excellent principle.

Courtesy the **Times of India**, Sep 9, 2023. 

The Guardian view on India's G20 summit: A backsliding democracy gets to play host

Editorial

Western democracies are wrong to overlook a country's descent into electoral autocracy because they believe they need it to contain China

Narendra Modi is an authoritarian figure who, as India's prime minister since 2014, has pushed his country into increasingly becoming a "de facto ethnic democracy", in which Hindus define the national identity and non-Hindus are seen as second-class citizens. Yet as the host of the upcoming talks of the world's 20 largest economies, Mr Modi will be feted by major global leaders – except his absent fellow strongmen Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin.

Mr Modi's dangerous majoritarianism is

too easily overlooked by the west, as the G20 glad-handing will show. India had been considered an exemplary liberal parliamentary democracy among developing countries. This is being slowly dismantled by Mr Modi's brand of Hindu nationalism. State intimidation has seen civil society harassed and critics jailed. A report by a group of prominent lawyers last year warned that "the administration of law has become the means by which ... the Muslim community can be kept in a state of perpetual fear". Since May, the north-eastern Indian state of Manipur has been burning, with its valley Hindus and highland Christians sinking into bloody fighting. Mr Modi's party blames non-Hindus for the violence.

The Indian prime minister shares the

ideological viewpoint of Donald Trump, Marine Le Pen in France and Hungary's Viktor Orbán. Mr Modi claims India suffered 1,000 years of servitude: 750 years of Muslim rule, plus 250 years of British rule. Pulling down, or discarding, symbols of that history – mosques, mausoleums, Lutyens' Delhi buildings – is excused, in this thinking, because this represents a national, Hindu resurgence. Mr Modi tellingly speaks of 1,000 years of rule to come.

The west thinks that it must keep stumm because it needs India to contain China. But at what cost to democracy and human rights?

Mukul Kesavan, an Indian historian, wrote earlier this year that when the White House rolled out the red carpet for Mr Modi, "One of the more entertaining things about [his] visit has been the sight of [Joe] Biden welcoming a foreign leader who had openly campaigned for his predecessor and liberal *bête noire*, Donald Trump."

Last year, Gothenburg University's annual report on the state of global democracy warned of a wave of "autocratization" spreading around the world. Since 2020, the report said, India has not been a working democracy but an "electoral autocracy" similar to that in Russia. All is not lost. India's

next general election will provide a chance for the public to have its say – though how much remains to be seen, given that a peer-reviewed paper suggested that in 2019 Mr Modi won around 11 seats by suppressing the Muslim vote. Its author, a respected economist, quit after his university failed to back him. The arrival of the opposition Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance, otherwise known as INDIA, has also unsettled Mr Modi. Perhaps peeved at being opposed by "INDIA", Mr Modi wants to respond only to the country's Sanskrit name "Bharat".

India's prime minister says the G20 should let the global south shape the world's future. As Human Rights Watch pointed out this week, "many proposed summit topics – debt crises, social protection programs, food security, climate change, internet freedom – are at their root about human rights". Britain has its own share of democratic backsliding. But if Mr. Modi desires successful outcomes then he, like all autocratic leaders, should understand why his actions at home undermine the arguments he wants to promote abroad.

Courtesy **The Guardian**, Wed 6 Sep, 2023. 

Articles/Reports for The Radical Humanist

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Please mail your articles / reports for publication in the RH to:- theradicalhumanist@gmail.com or mahipalsingh@hrh@gmail.com or post them to:- Mahi Pal Singh, Raghav Vihar Phase-3, Prem Nagar, Dehradun, 248007 (Uttarakhand)

Please send your digital passport size photograph and your brief resume if it is being sent for the first time to the RH.

A note whether it has also been published elsewhere or is being sent exclusively for the RH should also be attached with it.

- Mahi Pal Singh, Editor, The Radical Humanist

Editors Guild of India tells Supreme Court that Army ‘invited’ it to Manipur

The Editors Guild of India (EGI) on Monday told the Supreme Court that its team had visited Manipur on the Army’s invitation to make an “objective assessment” of the “unethical and ex parte reporting” by the vernacular media.

“We did not volunteer to go there. It is the Army that requested us. We got a letter from the Army,” senior advocate Kapil Sibal, for the EGI, submitted before a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud.

The Chief Justice was puzzled why the Army wanted the EGI to go to Manipur. “They wanted us to make an objective assessment of what is happening on the ground... We published our report on September 2. On September 3 night, we were prosecuted for offences under the Indian Penal Code. The Chief Minister also makes statements against us... How can we be prosecuted for publication of a report,” Sibal asked the court.

The Chief Justice pointed out to Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, for the Manipur government, that this was a case in which the entire First Information Report (FIR) was based on a report by the EGI.

“It is a report after all. The basic question he [Sibal] is arguing is they have only done a report that may be a matter of their [EGI’s] subjective opinion... This is not a case of somebody on the ground having committed an offence... They have published a report,” the Chief Justice differentiated.

The Chief Justice further decided to examine Sibal’s request to allow the EGI to approach the Delhi High Court, instead of the Manipur High Court, with a plea to quash the FIRs. The court scheduled the case on September 15 for hearing on this point. Meanwhile, it extended its September 6 order

protecting the journalists from arrest.

During the hearing, the Chief Justice asked Mehta whether the State would make a statement agreeing to a transfer of the case to the Delhi High Court as a one-off measure.

“We will not quash the FIRs here... but we will examine whether such a plea could be heard by the Delhi High Court,” Chief Justice Chandrachud said. Mehta initially objected to the transfer of the case to Delhi, saying the EGI was trying to make it into a “national, political issue”. He asked why the petitioners were insisting on Delhi, and not States neighbouring Manipur.

He said the Manipur High Court was functioning regularly and allowed virtual hearing of cases. He said mentions about the Chief Minister was a deliberate ploy to make it political.

Sibal countered that going to Manipur would be “hazardous” for his clients. He referred to how the property of two lawyers, who had appeared for Professor Kham Khan Suan Hausing, was vandalised recently in Manipur.

“Allow us to prosecute the matter here in Delhi,” Sibal urged.

The FIRs have accused EGI president Seema Mustafa, Sanjay Kapoor, Seema Guha and Bharat Bhushan of offences under several provisions of the Indian Penal Code, including defamation, defiling places of worship, criminal conspiracy, etc. The complaints, based on which the FIRs were registered, accused the EGI report of “incorrect and false statements”.

The EGI had maintained that its report was prepared by the fact-finding team after extensive travelling and interviews with victims and eyewitnesses between August 7 and 10.

(To be Contd....on Page -29)

Election Commissioners' Appointment Bill: Farewell to Free and Fair Elections?

Bringing the Election Commission under the control of the political executive is repugnant to the concept of an independent election commission enshrined in the constitution.

M.G. Devasahayam

With several state assembly elections and the parliament election coming up in the next one year, the Union government seems to be set on a ‘reform’ mode. On August 10, the Narendra Modi government surreptitiously introduced the ‘Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Bill, 2023’ in the Rajya Sabha. The objective is to replace the present arbitrary system of appointment of election commissioners, which is based on the executive considering a panel of candidates and selecting one considered acceptable from its point of view for approval by the President through a collegium method. Section 7 of this new Bill seeks to set up a selection committee headed by the prime minister, which will have one Union minister, nominated by the prime minister, and the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) as its members. Neither the Chief Justice of India nor any eminent jurist will find a place in this committee. This means that the chief election commissioner (CEC) and other election commissioners (ECs) would be selected by the political executive belonging to the ruling party with the LoP either ignored or overruled. What kind of “neutrality and independence” can be expected from such appointees?

As if providing a fig leaf to this predatory process, Section 6 of the Bill constitutes a search committee headed by the Cabinet secretary with two other secretaries as its members. This committee would consider candidates eligible to be appointed as ECs who “shall be persons

of integrity, who have knowledge of and experience in management and conduct of elections”, and recommend a panel of five such candidates for the selection committee’s consideration.

But the same Bill removes even this fig leaf with Section 8(1) laying down that the selection committee can regulate its own procedure for selecting the CEC or other ECs. What is worse is that Section 8(2) authorises this committee to consider any other person than those included in the panel by the search committee. This means the selection committee can go beyond the search committee’s recommendations and appoint anyone it wants as CEC/EC thus reducing the entire ‘search’ process to a farce and making it ‘functus officio’ from the very start. In the event, sooner than later the CEC/ ECs could become products of the ‘spoils system’ and the Election Commission of India (ECI) may become a den for political practitioners aligned to the ruling party.

Probably in preparation thereof, Section 10 of the Bill downgrades the CEC and EC’s status to that of the Cabinet secretary from the level of the judge of the Supreme Court, as being treated now under Article 324(5) of the constitution. Could this pave the way for the ECI to become an executive authority instead of a constitutional body?

This may not happen as long as the salutary provisions of the Bill – a fixed term for each EC [Section 9(1)], prohibition of an EC being reappointed [Section 9(2)], and a rigorous provision for the removal of the CEC and ECs

except in accordance with the provisions contained in the first and second provisos of clause (5) of article 324 of the Constitution [Section 11 (2)] are in place. But in reality, with the downgrading of the posts of CEC and EC, these provisions can become increasingly tenuous and the ECI's constitutional status would subsist only by a slim thread.

The Bill with this triple whammy is in response to the Supreme Court judgment in WP(Civil) NO.104 OF 2015, pronounced on March 2. While directing the government to consider introducing a more transparent system of appointment of the election commissioners, the apex court said:

"We declare that the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commissioners shall be made on the recommendations made by a three-member Committee comprising of the Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition of the Lok Sabha and in case no Leader of Opposition is available, the Leader of the largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha in terms of numerical strength and the Chief Justice of India.

Keeping in view the importance of maintaining the neutrality and independence of the office of the Election Commission to hold free and fair election which is a sine qua non for upholding the democracy as enshrined in our Constitution, it becomes imperative to shield the appointment of Election Commissioners and to be insulated from the executive interference....

It is desirable that the grounds of removal of the

Election Commissioners shall be the same as that of the Chief Election Commissioner that is on the like grounds as a Judge of the Supreme Court subject to the 'recommendation of the Chief Election Commissioner' as provided under the second proviso to Article 324(5) of the Constitution of India.

The conditions of service of the Election Commissioners shall not be varied to his disadvantage after appointment."

Instead of ensuring the "neutrality and independence of the office of the Election Commission to hold a free and fair election", the provisions of the Bill do the very opposite by making it subservient to the whim of the prime minister of the day, thereby endangering the very purpose for which the commission is being constituted.

Repugnant to the concept of an independent election commission

Bringing the ECI under the control of the political executive is repugnant to the concept of an independent election commission expounded in the Constituent Assembly. In fact,



EVM machines, VVPATs and other election material being distributed among polling officers ahead of the first phase of polling in Tezpur, April 10, 2019. Photo: PTI/File

the committee appointed to deal with fundamental rights wanted the independence of the elections and the avoidance of any interference by the executive in the elections to the legislature to be regarded as a fundamental right and provided for in the chapter dealing with the same.

The House affirmed without any kind of dissent that in the interests of purity and freedom of elections to the legislative bodies, it was of the utmost importance that they should be freed from any kind of interference from the executive of the day. Since the House wanted it to be provided for in some other part of the constitution, the drafting committee removed this question from the category of fundamental rights and put it in a separate part containing Articles 289, 290, and so on.

What Article 289 did was to carry out that part of the decision of the Constituent Assembly by transferring the superintendence, direction, and control of the preparation of the electoral rolls and of all elections to parliament and the legislatures of states to a body outside the executive to be called the election commission.

The primary intent underlying the provisions in the constitution – as later approved by the Constituent Assembly, (Article 324, etc.) – was thus based on the fundamental premise that the Election Commission should be outside the control of the executive, as any element of influence by the executive would result in an authority that would fail to inspire sufficient confidence among the political parties and the public in the impartiality of the commission and its ability to hold elections in a free and fair manner.

Reforming the mode of appointing election commissioners to ensure the “neutrality and independence” of the ECI has been a long-standing demand. But the Bill that has been introduced is a mockery of this demand. According to former Supreme Court judge Madan B. Lokur, “The spirit of the judgement

of the Supreme Court was an expression of the views of the Constituent Assembly. The Constituent Assembly was quite clear that the election machinery should be outside the control of the executive government.”

It is an irony that the present government’s concept of ‘reform’ is to defy the Constituent Assembly decision and judgment of the Supreme Court. This is because the ECI appears to be more beholden to the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) than the people of India, thereby raising doubts about the integrity of India’s electoral process. This Bill will make things worse by making the ECI virtually subservient to the PMO. In which case, we might as well bid farewell to free and fair elections in the “world’s largest democracy”.

M.G. Devasahayam is a former Army and IAS officer and coordinator of the Citizen’s Commission on Elections.

Courtesy **The Wire**, 19 August 2023. 

Contd. from page - (26)

Editors Guild of India tells Supreme Court...

It had voiced serious apprehensions about the right to free speech and personal liberty of the journalists after hearing Manipur Chief Minister Biren Singh’s statements on September 4 in a press conference following the release of the report.

“The Chief Minister said in a press conference he had personally held that the EGI was stoking passions and making provocative statements... Consider the particular dimensions now with the Chief Minister saying this...” senior advocate Shyam Divan, also for the EGI, had submitted in a hearing on September 6.

Courtesy **Hindu**, 11 Sept. 2023. 

Implications of Dr. Manmohan Singh's interview

Prem Singh

An interview of former finance minister and former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh has been published in the English daily 'The Indian Express' (8 September 2023). Information about the journalist/journalists who took this particular interview has not been given. It has been told to the readers that 'The Indian Express' has done this interview of Dr. Singh on the eve of G20 Summit.

In this interview, Dr. Singh, the pioneer of liberalization-privatization policies in India, has encouraged the ruling class by supporting its domestic and foreign policies. At the same time, he recommends integrating India's neoliberal economy more and more with the global economy under the current new world order. He believes that while doing this, India should not think about which side is right and which is wrong. Citizens who believe in the idea of equality (at least possible equality if we use Dr. Lohia's term) within and between countries should go through the interview in order to understand its implications in which 91-year-old Dr. Singh pats the back of his children.

In the intro of the interview, the newspaper has highlighted three statements of Dr. Singh from its part. The first statement is about the Russia-Ukraine war: "In the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war, India has a pivotal role in steering the new world order and has done the right thing in putting its sovereign and economic interests first while also appealing for peace." In the light of his statement the character of the new world order can be understood. Dr. Singh does not say that wars should have no place in the determination and operation of the new world order; That arms manufacturing,

trade and trafficking are bad for world peace and environmental protection; That if there are wars between countries, there will be conflicts between communities too; That in the economy of the new world order, the countries that make and sell weapons will always have the upper hand.

It has been more than a year and a half since the Russia-Ukraine war broke out. Dr. Singh, who talked about building the India of Jawaharlal Nehru's dreams in the Indian Parliament and India of Gandhi's dreams in the American Congress, in his interview has not appealed to stop this war. He seems to consider wars like Russia-Ukraine as an integral part of the new world order. Just as he did not find it wrong in continuing with scams in the neo-liberal economy, in the same way he does not find it wrong in continuing with such wars in the new world order. In the interview, he does not seem to be concerned about the various contradictions and conflicts within the new world order. This means that contradictions and conflicts can also be resolved through wars. So, wars and their associated twin processes of human destruction and environmental destruction have to continue under the new world order?

The second statement is about Dr. Singh being optimistic about the future of India: "Singh said he was more optimistic about India's future than worried, but that optimism is contingent on India being a harmonious society." Dr. Singh has stated the need for social harmony so that the neoliberal economy can flourish in the new world order. No need to say that humans and society are not fundamental to neoliberalists. For them the

market economy is fundamental, which makes all the “right” decisions for humans and society. Neoliberal leaders would need social harmony for the flourishing of neoliberal economy so that foreign/private capital investors remain confident about their profits.

However, what Dr. Singh fails to see is that this perception – peace in the society is necessary for foreign/private investment – dates back to the times of his own and AtalBihari Vajpayee. This perception has completely reversed during the NarendraModi era. Now the environment of social animosity is considered much safer for foreign/private capital investors. People will fight among themselves, and decisions of liberalization and privatization will continue to be implemented without public resistance. Further, the RSS/ BJP has made communal hatred the key to attaining political power. They are not ready to accept any limits on the path of communal hatred. Following this path, they claim to continue ruling the country for the next 50 years. Dr. Singh probably does not know or accept to what extent social harmony in the country has deteriorated in the last decade; And it has a deep relationship with the policies of liberalization and privatization. It’s surprising that he is unaware of the corporate-communal nexus operating in the country which has become a dire threat to the basic human and constitutional values.

The third point in the intro is about Dr. Singh’s advice on diplomacy and foreign policy: “Singh, during whose term the G20, as a leaders’ summit, came into being after the 2008 financial crisis, also struck a note of caution calling for restraint in using diplomacy and foreign policy for party or personal politics.” This is valid advice for every leader and party. However, neither NarendraModi nor his party is going to pay attention to this good advice of Dr. Singh. In fact, in the politics of the neoliberal era, the market-norm of ‘what

is seen is sold’ prevails. Billions of rupees from the government treasury are poured down the drain to advertise themselves as the best product in the political market by leaders. A strong team of neoliberals, stationed in the country and abroad, carefully guards this phenomena of advertisingism (*vigyapanvad*).

In the interview, Dr. Singh has said that he is happy that India’s turn to chair the G20 has come in his lifetime. It would have been better if he had also said that billions of rupees of the country should not have been wasted by making this incident a pageant for the whole year. Perhaps, he could not have said this. Extravagance of leaders and governments has become a necessary ritual in the neoliberal world system, especially in developing countries. You are an emerging economy, so you have to show how lavishly you display your wealth. Further, the crores of people, at whose cost this wealth and glory is displayed, also have to be taken into pressure that the great people of the world are engaged in doing the great job. In personal simplicity, honesty and kindness, NarendraModi is not even the dust of the feet of Dr. Singh. But Dr. Singh has no objection to the royal pomp of his children!

The interview reveals that Dr. Singh is fully convinced that India is going to become an “economic powerhouse” on the path of neoliberalism. The whole world saw the scenario of the country’s population having to become the fuel of this very economic powerhouse for the last 30 years during the Corona period. But Dr. Singh could not see them. They are not his children. The pioneer of neoliberalism in India naturally sees only the big business houses that became richer even during the Corona pandemic period and the Indians who became billionaires. They, for him, are the radiant future of India with their double prosperity, day and night.

Dr. Singh does not deny the existence of hardworking children of Mother India. If India

wants to become an economic powerhouse, it needs an adequate amount of fuel. During his tenure, to keep this fuel alive, a member of a family was given work for 100 days in a year at a daily wage of Rs. 80 under the Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MNREGA). The progressives, who had raised the slogan ‘wealth and land will be divided for sure’, were jubilant on the decision. On the same day it had been decided that two economies would run openly in the country – the main economy for corporate India and the retail economy for toiling subordinate India.

Here the report of Arjun Sengupta Committee can be briefly recalled. This committee was formed in November 2004 during the tenure of Dr. Singh. In its report submitted in April 2005, the committee had said that about 80 crore population of India survives on about Rs. 20 per day. By then 15 years had passed since the neoliberal reforms were introduced. The committee had also categorically stated that in the era of neoliberalism, poverty has increased instead of decreasing as compared to the previous years. The findings of the committee were based on the data of the year 1983.

In the interview, Dr. Singh says “India’s external trade as a share of its GDP doubled in the decade from 2005 to 2015, which benefitted us enormously, lifting hundreds of millions out of poverty.” He further says, “This also means that India’s economy is much more integrated with the global economy.” Only experts of economics can comment on this claim of Dr. Singh. All I want to suggest here is that under the neoliberal regime of new India, the benefits of foreign trade and foreign investment go to the already empowered/ powerful people catered within the main economy of the country.

In the interview, Dr. Singh praises “peaceful large democracy” of India. This democracy, obviously, needs voters to keep it

running in corporate interests. This is possible only if certain “welfare schemes” are made for the voters left out of the corporate-serving economy and they are kept intact in the “praja mode”. So that as a citizen they forget all about their constitutional entitlements forever. In the last three decades of the neoliberal era, an entire army of educated political illiterates has been created in India and abroad. They are the opinion makers, and they have a significant number in the anti-Modi camp as well. By giving two handfuls of rice, this scope of political illiteracy is being spread to the remote villages/countryside.

When the new economic policies were adopted in 1991, Narasimha Rao was the Prime Minister of the country and Dr. Singh was the finance minister. At that time, senior BharatiyaJanata Party (BJP) leader AtalBihari Vajpayee had said that Congress has done our work by implementing the new economic policies. Dr. Singh later also served as the Prime Minister of the country for two terms. But Mani Shankar Aiyar did not write in his book that Dr. Singh was the first finance minister and the second Prime Minister of BJP!

I have written somewhere that Dr. Singh is a classical player of neoliberal economy. Narendra Modi makes blind moves. Apart from being an eminent scholar of capitalist economics, Dr. Singh is also a staunch supporter of the economy based on it. This interview tells that after going through more than 30 years of experience, Dr. Singh does not feel a slightest need for any alteration (leave apart alternative) in the global order or economy for India or the world. That is the reason heblindly approves NarendraModi’s blind moves on the path of neoliberalism.

(The writer associated with the socialist movement is a former teacher of Delhi University and a fellow of Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla) 

Did Muslim Invasions Subjugate Hindu Women?

Ram Puniyani

The rise of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and its opposition to demands for caste and gender equality raised during the freedom movement went hand in hand. When India was a ‘nation in the making’, it sought to grant equality to all, which undermined the older feudal hierarchies. While Indian nationhood sought equality for all, irrespective of caste, class and gender, those who upheld the traditional order asserted themselves, too. Muslim and Hindu conservatives often couched their backwardness in the language of religion.

The Hindu-nationalist RSS created a narrative about a golden past, an age when Manu and his word were law. It also claimed that “Hindu values” meant equal status for all castes, and women had a respectable position in Hindu society. They still claim that Muslim invaders and plunderers caused a decline in these glorious values and that evil invaders cost Hindu women their prominent place in society. They even blame the cruel practice of Sati on Muslim invasions. Such ideas and claims form the core of Hindu nationalist “myth creation” about why Hindu women were restrained.

The RSS sahkaryavah, or general secretary, Krishna Gopal, repeated all such claims on 4 September when he addressed a gathering on women’s empowerment organised by an outfit called Naari Shakti Sangam. He said, “Prior to the 12th century, women were reasonably free to a great extent, but in the middle ages [India’s medieval era], a very difficult time came. The entire country was struggling with subjugation. Women were in danger. Lakhs of women were kidnapped and sold in international markets. [Ahmed Shah] Abdali, [Mohammed] Ghori and [Mahmood of] Ghazni took women from here

and sold them. It was an era of great humiliation. So, to protect our women, our society put multiple restrictions on them.”

Gopal would have his listeners not just believe his justification to repress women but also that the plunder of wealth of rival kingdoms and enslavement of the conquered were restricted to Muslim invaders. Both, however, run through kingdoms and history. The Chola kings brought innumerable slaves from Sri Lanka. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj’s army plundered Kalyan, and Kalyan’s governor’s Muslim daughter-in-law was taken captive.

The restrictions on Hindu women that Gopal refers to prevailed long before any Muslim kings set foot in South Asia—including Sati, the immolation of a widow on her husband’s funeral pyre.

Women were deprived of property and education due to the social norms prevailing in early India. In the Mahabharata, there are accounts of Pandu’s wife Madri and Lord Krishna’s father Vasudev’s four wives burning themselves to death after their husbands died.

The subordination of women was due to patriarchy, influenced by sentiments such as clan superiority, and both factors had a crucial role in Sati. As per the historian Romila Thapar, the significant factors in the rise of Sati were the subordination of women in patriarchal society, the changing “systems of kinship”, and the desire to exert “control over female sexuality”. According to most historians of repute, Sati originated within the Kshatriya aristocracy and remained limited mainly to the so-called warrior classes among Hindus.

The decline of trade and commerce in the post-Gupta period in Indian history is among

the critical reasons for the decline in the status of women. They were prohibited from education; child marriage increasingly became the norm; widow remarriage was prohibited; occurrences of the dreadful practice of Sati grew, too. Before this period, Sati was an occasional phenomenon.

How does RSS deal with the issue? An exclusively male organisation, it promoted the Rashtra Sevika Samiti as a subordinate outfit. Its very name reflects the Hindu nationalist outlook on gender, for the word *swayam* (being, self) is missing from its name, and the word *sevika*—service—is included instead.

The Rashtra Sevika Samiti has been preaching to its women followers total support of the subordinate position of women. Vijaya Raje Scindia, vice-president of the Bharatiya Janata Party, the political offshoot of the RSS, took out a morcha to Parliament to support Sati in the aftermath of the Roopkawar sati case. That was when Parliament was discussing a new law to curb this practice. Scindia believed committing Sati was a “glorious” tradition and the right of Hindu women. In April 1994, Mridula Sinha, a top leader of the Samiti, who later became the Governor of Goa, advised Hindu women in an interview with *Savvy* magazine to “adjust” if her husband beats her—for she could have “provoked” the assault. She also defended dowry—“my father bought me a husband in just Rs 5,000”—and said women must not work outside the home unless it is a dire necessity.

We also recall former RSS prachark Pramod Muthalik, members of whose outfit, the Sri Ram Sene, were recorded on camera beating girls leaving a pub in Mangalore, Karnataka, in 2009. The outfit was later acquitted, and the police investigation came under the scanner. Thrashing young couples on St Valentine’s Day is a regular feature of the Bajrang Dal, another RSS-related outfit. On 10 November 2020, Goa Police registered

an FIR against Shilpa Singh, an assistant professor at a law college, for allegedly “outraging religious sentiments” by comparing the mangalsutra worn by married women to a dog’s chain. The RSS’s student outfit, Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, complained to the college authorities.

The BJP government recently honoured the Gita Press with the Gandhi Peace Prize, but it, too, peddled values parallel to the RSS’s beliefs. The Gita Press has been rehashing the Manusmriti’s values on caste and gender issues for decades. Many books from this press advise Hindu women to remain subordinated to men, and give women a litany of advice. Some of these books are *Nari Shiksha* [Education of Women] by Hanuman Prasad Poddar, *Grahst Mein Kaise Rahan* [How to Lead a Household Life] by Swami Ramsukhdas, *Striyon ke Liye Kartawya Shiksha* [Education on the Duties of Women] and *Nari Dharm* [Duties of Women] by Jai Dayal Goyandka are few of them.

To top it, the RSS and its affiliate outfits aggressively campaign against their own make-believe’ love Jihad’. It is nothing but an effort to control Hindu women by targeting Muslims. On the pretext of love Jihad, these organisations go house to house advising the Hindu parents and male relatives to “keep an eye on girls”. The historian Charu Gupta wrote in 2009, “Whether it is 1920 or 2009, Hindu patriarchal notions appear deeply entrenched. In both campaigns, images of passive victimised Hindu women at the hands of inscrutable Muslims abound, and any possibility of women exercising their legitimate right to love and their right to choice is ignored.”

The latest from the RSS leadership is yet another reiteration of their unshakable faith in patriarchy. That is why they blame all ills of Hindu society on external factors and hide behind the social structures and the scriptures that promote these problems. 

Scrap it

***SC did well to place sedition before a constitution bench.
This law, in any form, has no place***

TOI Editorial

The Supreme Court on Tuesday referred the validity of the sedition law, Section 124A of IPC, to a five-judge constitution bench. The backstory is that in May 2022, SC suspended the operation of the sedition law while it was under consideration in a case. Subsequently, GOI introduced a bill, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 to replace IPC. SC ignored this development, and rightly so, as any law to replace IPC will have prospective effect. Sedition has often been misused – prominent examples include its application in agitations on reservations or even the one against the Kudankulam nuclear plant. Many thousands remain affected by open sedition cases.

There are also other reasons to justify SC's move. The wording of Section 150 of BNS has significant overlap with IPC's sedition law. A constitution bench's verdict on sedition will be useful to the parliamentary committee that's studying BNS. The primary problem with the sedition law was summed up by former CJI NV Ramana. He said that if the police want to fix somebody, sedition is invoked. The law has lent itself to misuse because of loose wording. It's also led to jurisprudence that's not quite in sync.

The constitutionality of sedition was upheld

by a five-member SC bench in 1962. Interpretations of when it could be invoked have evolved in line with the ways the judiciary has dealt with fundamental rights. Consequently, we have moved from justifying sedition when there's a "tendency" to public disorder towards proximity, such as a "spark in a powder keg". Eventually, there was a line of demarcation drawn between advocacy that is not punishable and incitement which can call for police action. Regardless of what SC has said over time, the only constant factor is that sedition has been consistently misused by police forces in India to clamp down on expression or protests that inconvenience governments.

Sedition in its current form or even in a revised manner has no place in India. In power, all political parties have shown the same inclination to misuse the sedition law. The most important lessons from India's experience with it is that there needs to be clear demarcation between the state and the government. The latter is in place for a fixed duration and there are limitations on its exercise of power. Loosely worded laws always lead to abuse of power.

Courtesy **The Times of India**, September 14, 2023. 

I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made mis-steps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can only rest for a moment, for with freedom come responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk has not ended.

- : Nelson Mandela



Khalistan, an idea or a misplaced hollow political rhetoric

Immrinder Singh Ahluwalia

Before taking up this issue of “Khalistan”, I will make it clear that your truly is a citizen of India by birth, a Sikh by religion and by patriarchal lineage and a domicile of the state of Punjab in India by residence and I am proud of all these three. Hence my voice is a voice in this issue. I may be an incomplete SIKH by its tenets but am still a complete SIKH by faith.

And Khalistan and the idea of it is being taken up by me in this article is with reference to the rhetorical misplaced impossible idea (floated by a few irrelevant) of the State of Punjab in India severing from India and being established as a separate nation and being renamed “Khalistan”.

What is intriguing is that a referendum was recently held in Canada by some people who though being Indians by lineage were however in all probability citizens, permanent residents and work permit holders of Canada. And it is a foregone conclusion as to in which direction the results of this referendum went.

And as per reports, this referendum was held in the premises of a Gurudwara (Sikh religious institution).

How our “Gurdwaras” and its premises are being politicised for arousing religious sentiments for Separatism. And it further begs the question. Should our Gurudwaras be allowed for this purpose?. And are people for selfish gains making our Gurudwaras political?

Another pertinent question to ask is that how can people who have given up Indian citizenship and taken up Canadian citizenship or people who have taken up residence in Canada by choice or people who have chosen to work and live in Canada decide the future

of a state in India.?

And it further begs the question. Whether all these people who had voted in the referendum would gladly and happily give up their Canadian citizenship or Canadian permanent residence or Canada work permit and take up “Khalistan” citizenship in the hypothetical likelihood of “Khalistan” taking shape and form. We all know what the answer will be. It will be an emphatic NO.

And what did this referendum accomplish. The only thing it accomplished was the further alienation from India’s side of the Honourable Prime Minister of Canada at the G20 Summit in New Delhi as was reported in the press. And add to that further political tensions and worsening ties between the Governments of India and Canada.

And what it is going to further do is alienate Sikhs who are proud Indians who live in India and in other parts of the world and who owe their allegiance to India and its constitution from the other Indians living in India and in foreign lands as the events in recent times have amply exhibited.

Canada is projected as a melting pot of immigrants from different countries. And those are in huge numbers now especially from Punjab in India. When that happens, these huge populace of immigrants become a significant “VOTE BANK”. And this tends to throw up leaders from amongst themselves to represent them. But in order to remain politically relevant, these leaders protect their vote bank with issues which is the easiest to exploit, “RELIGION”.

I have heard an interview of the honourable Prime Minister of Canada where he says that Canada will always “Defend

freedom of expression, freedom of conscience and freedom of peaceful protest.”

“RIGHT TO DISSENT AND PROTEST AND EXPRESS YOURSELF” should be a democratic right but separatism activism on your soil against another country cannot be a democratic right. Separatism activities against another country should never be allowed in a rightful democracy. Canada’s democracy should never impinge India’s sovereignty.

Is Canada going the Pakistan way? Allowing separatism against another country to flourish on its lands just for votes?

And what do the people who organised this referendum want to achieve. Citizens of a foreign land, residing in a foreign land and organising a referendum in a foreign land against the country of their lineage. What relevance did this referendum have. It is just a misplaced jingoism on the part of few to stay relevant, politically and socially goaded on by countries hostile to India.

Our Gurus never abandoned our lands for fear of persecution. They stood proudly on their lands and fought on their lands for what was right without any fear. Even when they lost their everything, they still fought.

Our heroes Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Shaheed Udham Singh, Shaheed Sukhdev and Shaheed Rajguru never went to USA or Canada and take up citizenship, Permanent residence etc there to fight from those Lands for the independence of India for fear of persecution in India.

So who are these people fooling. If they are so convinced with the idea of Liberation of Punjab and formation of Khalistan in its place, they should come to India and fight for it here without fear of persecution.

The powers that be who conducted this referendum must be asked a very pertinent question. How is the notion of separate nation of “Khalistan” viable and possible, either

politically or geographically or economically or demographically. And what do they project to the gullible people in this regard.

Punjab is a state which is landlocked by the lands of four states, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan and Jammu and Kashmir. It doesn’t have any maritime access. Punjab doesn’t have any natural resources to stand on its own now. Punjab doesn’t have sufficient water, electricity and infrastructure and is crumbling in huge debt. It is a primarily agrarian economy and hugely dependent on the waters of Himachal Pradesh for irrigation and generating electricity.

And you zip up the borders of Punjab with Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir and you have nowhere to go other than towards Pakistan which is a crumbling nation which will always use us like they have always used the people of Kashmir, to ferment trouble in India. And you dry up the water from Himachal Pradesh and “Khalistan” will have no water.

What “Khalistan” will certainly become will be a punching bag buffer nation between two very hostile nations. It will end up like Ukraine.

And now about the demographics of Punjab. The demography of Punjab is in shambles. The youth are leaving Punjab for greener pastures in the west at the drop of a hat. It’s their shortcut to dollars which is appealing to them. You have parents in Punjab who are sending their 16-17 year old children alone to the west with the notion that they will settle there and then will settle them too for pensions and all. And it’s all bullshit being put forward that there are no opportunities in Punjab and India. And it is also sheer nonsense being propagated youth are leaving Punjab for fear of being persecuted. Those who are law abiding citizens of India will never be persecuted unnecessarily. However those who indulge

in anti-India activities will and should.

The truth the youth are leaving Punjab for greener pastures in the west and the parents in Punjab who are sending their 16-17 year old children alone to the west are doing so for their personal comfort and benefit.

And our youth in turn are becoming more western in time adopting the western attire, food habits and culture and shedding the tenets of Sikhism fast.

So tom-tomming that Khalistan will be a land where Sikhism will be practised in its pure form and Khalsa Raj will be the Raj of choice is just befooling everyone.

Sikhism in its purest form in all probability is not even being practiced by the family of those people who organised and participated in this referendum.

The time is fast approaching when Punjab is going to be left with very few youth populace. And those who are going to be left will either be a torn between different ideologies youth or confused nowhere to go kind youth. Is this going to be the foundation of “Khalistan”?

Sikhs had an identity in India. We were looked upon with respect and pride which was our heritage given to us by the acts of our Gurus and men of valour who laid down their lives and of their families for the protection of our honour and our lands. We were “THE PEOPLE” who stood up to be counted in times of peril.

How our Legacy has been eroded by the acts of some misguided people. We have become Khalistanis and drug addicts in the eyes of people who once respected us.

We are being mentioned as extremists on TV Channels and social media. Day is not far when we Sikhs will be viewed like the people of muslim faith were and being viewed as As Jihadis.

Actions of a few misguided people had

and have taken Islam to crossroads and the actions of a few misguided people are taking our religion down the same path.

We Sikhs are all over India. Every inch of India is our's to tread upon, to live and to flourish. Not just in Punjab.

Because these same lands were tread upon once by our Gurus and for which they gave up their everything for. And these lands were once tread upon by our forefathers who fought for it. And these lands are proudly tread upon and protected by our valiant sikhs in uniform.

There cannot be any arguing to the fact that we Sikhs have been let down by our government and fellow countrymen in the past and present. The genocide of 1984, Operation Bluestar etcetc are ugly truths and scars never to be forgotten or forgiven. But we must not forget that these events were perpetuated not by our motherland and its Lands but by some evil people who walked on it once but have either long gone away dead and buried or will be gone one day dead and buried. “INDIA” will remain our land and in that “India” our Punjab will remain our land to protect.

The fight for the Identity of our Sikhs can be a fight for justice and recognition. The fight for the prosperity of Punjab can be a fight for what should be rightfully ours. But it should never culminate in voices of separatism.

It is a duty to our heritage handed over to us by our valiant GURUS and our forefathers that we regain our proud heritage and not be branded as religion of suspect. Separatism activities will lead us in that direction.

Do we want to take our proud religion down that road where our Turban and our names are racially profiled at airports, at places, in congregations etc etc. By holding referendums like these in foreign lands, we are already going on that track. We are doing

huge damage to our great religion.

The utter neglect of the state of Punjab politically and economically is an ugly truth. Its just the ugly nature of federalism and multi party system. And our state of Punjab has been run aground more by our very own people in the state than by anyone else. But it again cannot form the basis of separatism.

This should be a fight for justice from the powers that be and seeking what's rightfully ours and not be a basis for separatism and referendums.

Separatism and referendums are never going to be the way forward for us Sikhs. Its going to bring more disrepute to our great religion like it brought for "Islam".

The only way forward for us Sikhs is the way preached to us by our Gurus and our forefathers. Fight and struggle for justice, Stand against Evil, Fight and struggle to protect our lands and our people, fight and struggle to protect our rights, fight to protect our religion and other religions, stand with the oppressed always. And choose the righteous path for redemption. And not to indulge and experiment with silly jingoistic divisionary tactics of separatism and referendums.

And we should strive to accomplish all that under our "Tricolour" and our "Nishan Sahib" always.

wwdis@rediffmail.com

Dated. 15th September, 2023. 

Apex court asks ED Director to quit before the expiry of third extension

A bench headed by Justice B.R. Gavai on Tuesday asked Enforcement Directorate (ED) Director Sanjay Kumar Mishra to quit four months before his third extension ends in November. The apex court upheld statutory amendments that facilitate the tenures of Directors of Central Bureau of Investigation and the ED were stretched "piecemeal". It concluded that the extensions given to Mr Mishra in 2021 and 2022 were both invalid and illegal.

The directors of the two law enforcement agencies have fixed tenures of two years. However, it were the amendments introduced in 2021 to the Central Vigilance Commission Act, the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act and the Fundamental Rules that allowed them three annual extensions. They were introduced after the apex court had asked the government to stop giving extensions to Mr Mishra.

Justice Gavai, who upheld the 2021 judgement said that the extensions were not

given at the "sweet will" of the government. Instead, the 2021 amendments require high-level committees to recommend the officers for service extensions. As per the judgement, if the same committees could be trusted with the initial appointment of the Directors, there was no reason to distrust them about the prospect of an extension.

The development also paved the way for some political exchange. Mahua Moitra, Trinamool Congress MP from Krishnanagar (West Bengal) tweeted to thank the apex court for ruling the extension invalid. "BJP - we shall fight you in the polls, we shall fight you in the courts, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall never surrender," Ms Moitra tweeted. Meanwhile, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said the ED is beyond an individual, pointing to the apex court upholding the Central Vigilance Act. He stated those rejoicing over the court verdict are "delusional" for various reasons. 

Humanism: M.N. Roy's Radical Humanism in India

Mohd Aqib Aslam

Humanism is a philosophical stance that emphasizes the value and agency of human beings, individually and collectively. The concept of humanism refers primarily to a system of thought, which focuses on the autonomy of the individual. Humanism is a doctrine according to which man is point of departure and point of reference of human action. Humanism was a product of Renaissance and reformation in Europe and found its fullest expression in the American and French Revolutions.



needs and seeking solely rational ways of solving human problems and concerned with mankind as responsible and progressive intellectual beings.

Humanism expresses that human being has great potentiality and if developed fully, one can reach to the greatest height, provided one gets proper opportunities to develop. Gandhi ji, Russel and Tolstoy were great humanists of the twentieth century.

In humanist thought, man becomes free in his private life.

He was not only unique but also different and could not be reduced to the other. Man acquired inherent natural right to decide the rules of moral living. Man claimed freedom in the public domain and asserted the right to choose his political regime.

Human beings are in complete charge of themselves, they will decide their own values and they are materialists. Everyone wants to be a freeman. Everyone occupies a unique position, in communion with oneself, everyone is alone, and responsible for his actions. The final decision in all matters now rests with the individual. Since man has the capacity to decide true and false as he is endowed with reason, he has a right to choose his political regime. Democracy is the only legitimate form of government as it is based on the idea of willing subjects. Thus, humanism has links with the materialism, individualism and democratism.

M.N. Roy's Radical Humanism In India
M.N. Roy gave a clear expression to the

Ancient India and Humanism

Human-centered philosophy that rejected the supernatural may also be found circa 1500 BCE in the Lokayata system of Indian philosophy. Nasadiya Sukta, a passage in the Rig Veda, contains one of the first recorded assertions of agnosticism. In the 6th century BCE, Gautama Buddha expressed, in Pali literature a skeptical attitude toward the supernatural.

Since neither soul, nor aught belonging to soul, can really and truly exist, the view which holds that this I who am **world**, who am **soul**, shall hereafter live permanent, persisting, unchanging, yea abide eternally: is not this utterly and entirely a foolish doctrine.

Humanism is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as:

an outlook or system of thought concerned with human rather than divine or supernatural matters. A belief or outlook emphasizing common human

idea of humanism. Manavendranath Roy whose original name was Narendranath Bhattacharya was born on 21st March, 1887 at Arbalia in Bengal. He was a revolutionary and a member of Juganther Party and went to other countries to secure arms. He came in touch with Marxism in the USA. He joined the Socialist Party of Mexico and he made it the Communist Party of Mexico and he became the founder of the first Communist Party outside Soviet Union. He became a prominent member of Communist International.

In his later life, he was well-known as a radical humanist. Radical Humanism was also known as scientific humanism. It undertook a scientific approach for understanding man and his place in the world. So it was called scientific humanism. It is known as materialism or monistic naturalism whose characteristics are naturalism, determinism and monism.

Naturalism asserts the existence of nature and holds that everything that exists including man is a part of nature. Determinism implies that the universe is governed by certain objective laws, that the process is orderly and that events do not take place without a cause. Nothing is left to chance. So it leads to the following conclusion. The universe works on a deterministic manner. This is called monism. Man is made of superior matter. He has a rational mind. He is gifted with reason.

Man is a part of nature. He lives in society. But, society does not possess consciousness. It does not know what is good and bad. It is not a biological being. Man has all these characteristics. So between man and society, man is important. He is the measure of everything. Social development means development of all people living in the society. In other words, society, State, government, etc. exist for the welfare of man. He is the end and the society is the means. It exists to guarantee his freedom and to protect his liberty. In short, he asserts the sovereignty of man.

Roy regarded man as central. He wrote: **freedom is the supreme value because the urge for freedom is the essence of human existence.**

Roy accepted humanism because humanists had always approached life from the assumption of the sovereignty of man. It is man's unique capacity of knowing, as distinct from the common biological activity of being aware, which endows him with powers, not to rule over others, but to create freedom for the benefit of humanity. All citizens are equal members of the society.

Humanism believes that society consists of individuals, good and bad; those who can co-operate and those who cannot, and those who can inflict injury and those who cannot. All of them can coexist in a framework of plurality. The State should protect them all and should be so organized that the individual becomes an end in itself. The State, science, technology, etc. are all means of an end, namely, to enable individuals to flourish; they are not ends in themselves; they cannot be allowed to dominate human life.

Conclusion

Submersed Humanism is a system of views based on respect for the dignity of man, concern for his welfare, his all round development and creation of favorable conditions for social life. The humanism that we have seen in thoughts of contemporary Indian philosophers is different from the western humanism.

Western humanism is mostly intellectual, economic and political in nature. But the Indian humanism is primarily spiritual. The Indian humanism does not take man to be material being but as one with spirit, mind, life and body. It aims at the fulfillment of the aspirations which are physical, vital, mental and spiritual in nature.

Courtesy **Legal Service India**,
E-Journal. 

Humour

I hereby swear

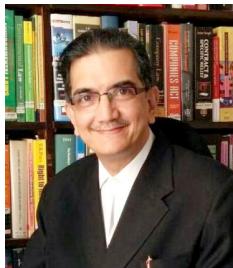
Raju Z Moray

I need to be heard
Allow me to say it
And if milords insist
I'll say it on affidavit
I say I am an Indian
 Stuck in a rut
 Hoping for freedom
 In a new Bharat
I know not my name
Figures in which list
Since I am still alive
 I am not a terrorist
I cherish my country
Whether land or liquor
 Never touched Scotch
Or hash... though quicker



I love everything prime
From time to minister
 I hate all the haters
 Find them all sinister
I shall attend classes
For patriotism tuition
So that I can admire
Amended Constitution
I love all the villages
Though I live in a city
 I do swear to uphold
 Full territorial integrity
Whatever I have sworn
Is true to my knowledge
Though I hardly attended
Classes in law college.

(Courtesy **The Leaflet**, September 6, 2023.)



Raju Z Moray practices law in Mumbai. For more than 20 years he has been a contributor of articles and poems to publications of the Lawyers Collective. An anthology of his humorous writing for 'The Lawyers' magazine was published in 2017 as 'Court Jester' and the series of 60 poems he penned during the 2020 Lockdown for 'The Leaflet' has been published in December 2020 as 'The Locked Down Lawyer'. His poems have been appearing in The Radical Humanist.

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THE DEADLY RISE OF ANTI- SCIENCE

A Scientist's Warning

PETER J. HOTEZ, MD, PhD



"By means of ever more effective methods of mind-manipulation, the democracies will change their nature; the quaint old forms -- elections, parliaments, Supreme Courts and all the rest -- will remain.

The underlying substance will be a new kind of totalitarianism. All the traditional names, all the hallowed slogans will remain exactly what they were in the good old days. Democracy and freedom will be the theme of every broadcast and editorial. Meanwhile the ruling oligarchy and its highly trained elite of soldiers, policemen, thought-manufacturers and mind-manipulators will quietly run the show as they see fit."

Aldous Huxley

