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End of SAARC Summit?

Kuldip Nayar

India's foreign minister Sushma Swaraj may sound belligerent in her speech at the United Nation. But she indicates India's exasperation over Pakistan's interference in Kashmir or elsewhere. After the killing of 14 jawans at Uri, one widely supported demand is: retaliation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has promised counter action at the time and the place that the armed forces chose. What would be India's next step not yet known but the retaliation part is very much true. It is a sad option and to exercise it without action requires patience which is getting exhausted. War is not considered an option. Yet what is the way out?

Pakistan had admitted that some non-state actors could have indulged in straightening things at Uri. But now after the whole world has expressed horror over the Uri incident. Islamabad says that India had stage managed Uri and Islamabad had no hand in it. But how does it explain that its soil was used by the forces who attacked Uri. Pakistan has raised the Kashmir issue to divert attention from everything else. It expects New Delhi to participate in the talks which it would initiate.

Probably its eyes were on the SAARC summit at Islamabad. India's formal 'no' to participate has ended the meeting because both Nepal and Bangladesh have expressed their inability to attend the Summit at Islamabad. Obviously it had to be cancelled when India said no.

The question is where we go from here. War is no option but talks also have not fructified. Sushma's speech is another warning to Pakistan that India was tired of Pakistan's doings and may be driven to take some action. All eyes are on New Delhi because it has to decide what steps should be taken because it is becoming increasingly clear that talks are no solution.

India has considered the revision of Indus Water Treaty which was signed in 1960 by Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistan military chief Mohammad Ayub Khan. Sartaj Aziz who represents Pakistan's foreign affairs has said

that anything done to revise the treaty without Pakistan's participation would be 'an act of war'. This has complicated the matters still further.

In view of this deadlock, no progress has been made. This should be told to the people on both sides. They have been urging their respective governments to sort out the matter through dialogue. Pakistan says again and again that some settlement over Kashmir is necessary for any peace in the subcontinent.

We come back to square one. By all means the parties concerned should sit across the table to find a solution. But India and Pakistan cannot do by themselves. The Kashmiris want to have their say. Recently, when I went to Srinagar at the invitation of students, I found that the youth wanted a country of their own sovereign and independent. They do not realize that India did not favour another Islamic state on its border when it is exasperated by the one, Pakistan, it has.

But the mood of the youth is that of anger and they would not compromise their demand for *azaadi*. They do not realize that *azaadi* is an ideal, not a feasible proposition. When the British left India in August 1947, they gave the princely states an option to stay independent if they did not want to join either India or Pakistan. Maharaja Hari Singh, the then Jammu and Kashmir ruler, declared that he would stay independent. The land-locked state had to have the support of both India and Pakistan for access to the outside world. He did not want to depend on one. With the Muslims in a majority in J and K, Pakistan expected its accession. When it did not take place, Pakistan sent its irregulars, backed by the regular troops. The Maharaja sought the help of India which insisted on the accession before sending its troops. He had to sign the Instrument of Accession Act.

The two parts of the states are against *azaadi*. Jammu, the Hindu majority part, would like to join India. The Buddhist majority Ladakh, the other part, want to be a union territory of India. Therefore the demand for *azaadi* is essentially that of the valley which has nearly 98 percent of Muslims.

When India is in the midst of endeavour for polarization and when the ruling political party is playing a Hindu card, it is difficult to imagine that the Congress or any other political party, including the Communists, would support the *azaadi* demand. Even otherwise, all political parties are opposed to the demand for independence, although some may go to the farthest in giving powers to the state.

After 70 years of partition, the wounds inflicted because of the division have not healed yet. How does anyone expect the people in India to reconcile to another partition, however genuine and strong are the sentiments of the Kashmiris? If partition is again on the basis of religion, the secular state may not survive as it is. True, the 25 crore Muslims in India are equal citizens and they cannot be treated as hostages. But the valley's secession may have such repercussions which are dreadful to imagine. The constitution, guaranteeing equality to all Indian citizens, may be of no avail.

India and Pakistan have fought two regular wars on Kashmir, apart from a mini misadventure in Kargil. The valley continues to remain part of the Jammu and Kashmir state. Several thousand Kashmiris have died for the cause of *azaadi*. For India, they were insurgents. They were crushed by the security forces which too lost thousands. Even now some militants from across the border attack some places but are rebuffed. For example, on the day of Zubin Mehta's concert, a post of Central Reserve Police Force in the southern Kashmir was targeted with rockets. There was a hartal at Srinagar. But this exercise has been gone over by many a time before. Sushma's warning may also go unanswered. But hers is yet only a warning because the next step can lead to war between the two countries. There seems to be some rethinking at Islamabad because they have said through their envoy Abdul Basit that the Uri was "stage managed" and Pakistan had no hand in it.

Linking Economics With Ethics

The dominant trends in economics have generally de-linked economic development from ethical considerations. However some leading thinkers have been emphasising the need to move away from such an approach to economic development.

E. F. Schumacher has written, "To think that the only way to promote economic growth in the so-called underdeveloped countries is to imitate as closely as possible the current practices of the advanced countries and to force every time-honoured institution into the service of material aims of purely Western inspiration, betrays not only an astonishing lack of imagination but also a truly ominous lack of awareness of the dehumanizing deformities of the modern west."

For Mahatma Gandhi emphasising ethical values was integral to his understanding of economics. He wrote, "That economics is untrue which ignores or disregards moral values. The extension of the law of non-violence in the domain of economics means nothing less than the introduction of moral values as a factor to be considered in regulating international commerce."

One important aspect which Mahatma Gandhi emphasised was the need to give the highest priority to the poor. Gandhi said,

"Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test:

Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and self melt away."

Secondly Gandhi emphasised the cooperation of people in meeting human needs, "What we seek to do is substitute false and non-human economics by true and human. Not killing competition but life giving cooperation is the law of the human being."

–Bharat Dogra

We Want Not War, But Solution to Kashmir Problem

Sandeep Pandey

After the Uri attack an atmosphere of jingoism is being built which can lead the country to war. While war may be necessary for the rulers, no war is in the interest of common citizens. A India-Pakistan war has the added danger of converting into a nuclear war. People who are talking about war should be asked if they are prepared for a number of cities on both sides turning into Hiroshimas and Nagasakis? India and Pakistan have already fought four wars. There was no solution, neither was any of them so conclusive that a next one was not needed. Hence possibility of a solution emerging from war is slim. So, why should we even consider the option of war? Talk about war is sheer madness.

The reason behind war, the Kashmir problem needs to be solved so that in future no soldier or common citizen has to die. It is government's responsibility to normalize the situation in Kashmir and talk to Pakistan so that a solution which is agreeable to all Kashmiris can be arrived at. While it is admirable that our soldiers are brave and are prepared to lay down their lives performing their duty, their lives are precious, especially for their family members. Why should we let them die unnecessarily? The government policy will determine how safe are our soldiers? The governments of India and Pakistan can instantly create friendship and in the next moment become treacherous enemies. The common citizens of the two countries meet with warm cordiality whenever they get a chance. Why should the soldiers have to pay with their lives for the whims and fancies of leaders?

It has been hardly two years for the Narendra Modi government and he has already faced two terrorist attacks. In addition to ruling the centre, Bhartiya Janata Party is also an alliance partner in Jammu & Kashmir. Situation has never been so bad in Kashmir. Why is it that with BJP coming to power situation inside the country and threat from outside becomes worse? Has it got something to do with the ideology and manner of functioning of BJP? The Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh, it's ideological parent organisation, must introspect about this.

So far it was the Indian government which was trying to prevent the internationalization of Kashmir issue. But

by raising the issue of Balochistan the Indian government is now responsible for internationalizing the issue. The Indian government has every right to raise the issue of Balochistan but its priority should be Kashmir. If over 80 people are killed in J&K over two months and we've to use pellet guns against people in which children lose their lives and some people lose their eyesight then it doesn't send a very good message to the world. It is a proof that people of Kashmir are not with Indian government. India blames Pakistan for happenings in J&K. While it is true that some Kashmiri youth have received training in terrorism in Pakistan, when the children and women pick up stones against the security forces then it is a failure of our policies there. Without putting its house in order, blaming outsiders for every wrong in Kashmir doesn't build any credibility for India internationally.

India wants the international community to label Pakistan a terrorist country. Why are no questions raised on the role of United States? There was a US citizen involved in the planning for attack on Mumbai, David Coleman Headley, about whom we don't mention when we blame Pakistan for the attack. Why does the US continue to supply weapons to Pakistan in spite of the fact the Osama bin Laden, perpetrator of the 9/11 attack on twin towers and its biggest enemy in recent times, got refuge there? If our response is going to be dictated by our bias against Pakistan alone, we'll never be able to stop these attacks on India.

We also need to secure our border against repeated infringements. It will be better that instead of investing in offensive armament we gave priority to modern equipment to make our borders secure. Leaders who play with the emotion of nationalism on such occasions must be asked how is it that terrorists enter our territory so easily without our intelligence agencies getting a whiff of it? People responsible for these lapses must be held accountable.

If the BJP government is hiding its failure in economic policies behind this jingoism then it is utterly shameful. It is a fact that not much investment has come in, in spite

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The Forgotten Mahatma

Brij Khandelwal

We remember Mahatma Gandhi only on October 2 and January 30. The symbolic spinning of charkha, recital of bhajans and selling khadi at a discount are the only activities that remind us of him. For the rest of the year, Gandhi remains a forgotten Mahatma deified like one of our numerous gods and his teachings reduced to mundane rituals.

Long back Albert Einstein had said that the coming generation would scarcely believe that a man like him had ever walked the planet earth. Einstein was probably thinking of the very distant future when people might raise their eyebrows in sheer disbelief and ask ‘was there a man like Gandhi in flesh and blood?’

Seven decades after his death Gandhi who preached the gospel of truth and non-violence all his life and strove to liberate India, has become in his own country, among his own people a legend and a myth. What Gandhi said or did is mostly forgotten and we are stuck up with symbols like the charkha and khadi.

Abdul Ghaffar Khan, known as the “Frontier Gandhi” caustically remarked when he visited India in 1969 on the occasion of Gandhi’s birth centenary celebrations “I have come to remind the people of India that they have forgotten the Mahatma.”

If the people have forgotten Gandhi, it is not because there are inherent contradictions or flaws in the Gandhian philosophy. In fact, what he wrote in the Harijan, Young India or elsewhere or said at his prayer meetings has relevance not only today but until man either degenerates into a beast or is reduced to a robot.

When several varieties of Marxism and liberal socialism are current, it has become fashionable in elite circles to criticize Gandhi and blame him for all the problems confronting us. But in the midst of jibes and questionings it would be worthwhile to do a bit of soul-searching to find out if we have understood and followed Gandhi in letter and spirit.

Horace Alexander rightly asked us to bring Gandhi “down to earth again as a living man among his men, which is what he wanted to be” to strip him of

his mahatmaship and look at him, if we can, as plain Mr. Gandhi.”

Many in this country would create an orgy of violence and a carnival of bloodshed just for the thrill of it. Many would be interested in sitting at the head of political dinners and getting photographed. But few would be prepared to die for their country in obscurity, unwept and unsung.

Unlike most leaders anywhere in the world Gandhi knew how to risk his popularity. Dr Ram Manohar Lohia wrote about Gandhi “he had a calf, the child of a sacred cow injected to death in a certain situation, he had a monkey shot, he took Harijans into temples, he refused to attend weddings unless they were inter-caste, he sanctioned divorce, he had a large sum of Rs 55 crore and more given to Pakistan at a time when Hindus held that treasonable, he acted and not alone spoke against property, in brief, he hardly ever missed doing anything that brought danger and calumny to him.”

The reason why, we, as a nation are still struggling hopelessly is that we have shown more interest in aping the West and adopting western growth models. The result inevitably is that while we have created “islands of prosperity” the masses continue to exist in vast areas of darkness.

Hypocrisy has become our new religion and falsehood our way of life. We have fatal doses of these in all spheres of our life. Fat pundits stooge on gullible masses; pseudo-leftists and chauvinistic scoundrels run the circus that is our politics. Public and private monopolies sustain the “functioning anarchy” that is our economy. Gandhi had warned us of an anomie that will have overtaken us but we never bothered to create conditions in which life will have some mission and purpose. Little wonder we are overwhelmed by rank passivity and continue to wait for a messiah for our deliverance.

The relevance of Gandhi is now being realized the world over as mankind grapples with one vast problem after another. The schizophrenic despair resulting from

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Gandhism and Socialism

Rammanohar Lohia

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

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

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

Gandhiji is more specific than Buddha or Christ, whose sayings have been liable to various interpretations according to persons and climes. At the same time, he is more general than, let us say, Karl Marx, whose writings in themselves have given us an elaborate system; more specific than the prophet, more general than the philosopher. Furthermore, the only treatise which Mahatma Gandhi wrote in order to elaborate what he thought was a system, is rarely read at any time by any considerable number of people: the *Hind Swaraj*. Mahatma Gandhi has influenced his generation in India and in the world not so much by his writings, certainly not by any systematic writing, as by his living and his action and what he said in illustration of them. There are persons with whom the written or the spoken word is what matters and their

life is but a secondary annotation to what they have said. Mahatma Gandhi also wrote and spoke voluminously, but whatever he wrote and spoke was a commentary on how he lived and how he acted.

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

The world today is in the grip of two systems and the third one is in the making. Capitalism and communism are almost fully elaborated systems, and the whole world is in their grip, and the result is poverty and war and fear. The third idea is also making itself felt on the world stage. It is still inadequate, and it has not been fully elaborated, but it is open. In an open system there is still some chance of truth and progress, while a closed system does violence to facts and wishes them away in order to prove their meaninglessness. Open systems live in accordance with the facts, and in any case expect such systems to revitalize themselves with obstinate or changing situation. This idea is the Socialist idea. Instead of seeking to elaborate a new doctrine of Gandhism, it would be far more desirable if the contents of Gandhiji's life and action were to operate on systems that already exist on the stage of the world. As to capitalism and communism, one may doubt if these can be influenced, considering that they are closed. But for socialism Gandhiji's action may well act as a filter through which socialist ideas flow and get rid of their dross or as the strain which may colour them generally. Nobody would be happier than I if Gandhiji's ideas were also to influence the other two systems, capitalism and communism, but one may reasonably doubt that this can be done. In what lies the specific value of Gandhiji's action?

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

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

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

Gandhiji also had other qualities, which I will not

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

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

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

The world today is inclined to think so much of the future and whatever aims are laid in the future that the present is sacrificed. One does not pay enough attention to the immediate steps that one undertakes, with the result

that a certain mysticism has begun to operate in collective life. When asked as to how an immediate and a particular act is related to the end in view, one is told “wait for the next act,” and when one has waited for the next act and is still waiting to get an answer, one is again told, “wait yet for the next act”. The chain of acts goes on lengthening and no single act is a justification in itself. Its justification is continually sought in the succeeding act that never occurs, and the chain goes on lengthening, and in the name of truth and world peace, wickedness abounds. The extent to which the world of today has forgotten this lesson “one step enough for me”—to that extent has it surrendered itself to the dark forces of—I do not like to use the word “mysticism,” “mystic” is a good word—to the dark underground forces of illogic or whatever you call them. Such systems, incidentally, pride themselves on their science and their logic. That is not, however, to say, that those who subscribe to the doctrine of immediacy should be unaware of the end that they have in view. The immediate step is, of course, related to the distant aim in view, but it should not be considered to be a passing and transitory stage to which one need not pay attention.

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

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

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

This doctrine of ends and means, together with the doctrine of immediacy, has given to modern man a weapon of unexampled strength. This weapon is being used in increasing fashion by the world. The freedom forces of Tunisia are using it, the dark races of South Africa are using it, and, if for the time being a momentary eclipse seems to have come over it in our own country, do not forget that a great man’s ideas and teachings are not to be judged by what has happened three or four years immediately after his death but what may happen in the rest of the century and after. Before this weapon came into frequent use in our political or collective life, the world had known alone of two other modes of operation, the parliamentary and the insurrectionary. There was either the parliament to remove wrongs or if the parliament proved faulty the masses could mount the barricades and try to defeat authority. Friedrich Engels of the earlier period said that history was made by the people and that parliaments could not achieve anything worth much. Ultimately the mass of the people so thought Engels, would have to rush to the barricades in order to defeat authority. After the experience of the German parliament and the victories achieved by Lassalle’s social democratic party, Engels revised his opinion and thought that parliamentary means could be sufficient and that revolutionaries would do well to look upon parliament as an agency of change. In this statement of Engels, the contrast is between parliament and insurrection, between democratic constitutional life on the one hand and barricades on the other. The European mind was unable to go beyond these two alternatives until Gandhiji came on the scene and showed that there was a third course of action.

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

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

that are inflicted upon them.

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

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

It is true that civil disobedience or satyagraha must register many more victories before they are recognized as effective and universal weapons like the bullet. When I cite to you the example of South Africa and Tunisia or the Negroes of the U.S.A., where whites and Negroes are trying to violate unjust laws, I do not deny that much of that may be due to expediency. Let no one imagine that the Tunisian or the South African has grasped the effectiveness of civil disobedience also with regard to

building up a good and worthwhile civilization. They are probably using it because they have no other weapon in their hands.

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

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

subject of representative government.

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

Tools have multiplied, but to dispense with them altogether is bound to lead to a situation in which the spinning wheel, however much it may come in for ceremonial attention on a specific day, let us say Independence Day, when the President of the Republic spins in a public park and hundreds or thousands spin along with him, is dead or dying out. It would, therefore, be neither logical nor worthwhile to go on singing praises of the self-sufficient village and the spinning wheel and simultaneously enabling the erection of huge factories for the production of cloth or cement or something, and that is precisely the situation which the people of India have to face today. The village republic may also be heading towards a similar disaster, for when the Constituent Assembly of Gandhi-India met to frame the Constitution for India, it had over three hundred articles

for division of power between Delhi and Hyderabad, between the President of the Republic and the Governor, between parliament and the state assemblies and similar matters, but it had no time to consider the concept of village government and village republic, until someone at the very end thought that the foundation of Gandhism had been missed and suggested the inclusion of an article about village government. Any student can go through the Constitution of India, and will find that out of 392 articles just one article enunciates how extremely desirable village government is. What is it? How is it to be worked out? What powers are to be distributed? All that is awarded to village government is ceremonial attention and that too as an afterthought. Here then is a situation where the mind must exercise itself and cannot be content with any specific solutions which Gandhiji himself may have offered. It is the direction alone that matters, and the direction is one of decentralization, a decentralized economy and decentralized political system.

What would be a socialist's application of this principle? Such an application will have to make use of tools, not necessarily those already in use but tools that may have yet to be invented and manufactured. As to the decentralization of political power, the principle may be laid down straightaway as one of the maximum divisible powers to the village or the city consistent with the integrity and unity of the country. The principle may not be worked out in elaborate detail at a shot. It may in fact take the rest of the century to work it out. If it is acknowledged that the individual residing in his village where he can practice democracy of the first grade will be given abundant powers so as to decide his own destiny, that principle is accomplished.

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

I do not have to tell you that the modern tool has

become so complicated that it violates the principles of democracy, that the kind of civilization it has built up is dependent on certain driving forces, for instance, on the concept of an increasing standard of living, or ever-increasing output. Modern civilization of the late 300 years can be distinguished from all those that went before it with regard to certain points. One is that every modern individual wants a house, clothes, and furniture that are increasingly expensive. Such a demand exist that the total output keeps on increasing, and so the ever increasing produce of a nation is invested in other tools which further increase output. All this is dependent on a sound application of science and technology and inventions of all kinds. It is a patent fact that these driving forces are no longer applicable to the world as a whole. Two-thirds of the world has no use for them, and where these have been forced upon the people, the result has been a stunting in the material and moral growth of a nation.

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

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

I will now go on to certain other aspects of Gandhiji, but only briefly. So soon after his death there has been an eclipse; I believe that it is a temporary eclipse. There is a great deal of ceremonial mention of his name and erection of monuments, but so far as the great effect of his teaching is concerned, it has been absent or comparatively absent after his death. What is

that due to? Is something lacking in what Gandhiji did and said and wrote? Perhaps so, and if this is true, there is no use blaming alone the men of today for their doings.

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

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

Nevertheless, it would be futile to deny the element

of ultimate philosophy in Gandhiji's austerity. He did not really come to terms with the devil of gold or music or loveliness or what one may call rising economic standards. Like his great predecessors, he denied or overwhelmingly reduced the material. It may be doubted whether the material and the spiritual, the lovely and the good, in fact, the beautiful and the true can ever come to terms except by a trick of definition in which the one is absorbed by the other. Furthermore, the possibility of a continuing equilibrium in view of the dynamism and the demonism of the material may also be denied. As an American undergraduate once asked me, once we have the materialist bull by the horns, how do we ever let him go? How could we ever live a relaxed existence if the material needed to be controlled permanently? The question stumped me then, as it stumps me now. I have no answer to it except the wills of life and experimentation.

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

The more extremist of his followers have gone on to embrace the ideas of Karl Marx. They too have abandoned the genuinely revolutionary in Gandhiji, that which made him take to the path of civil disobedience, village government, and controllable tools. They have tried barely to keep alive Gandhiji's passion for identification between the mass and the leaders, and while their ways of conflict are unhemmed, they have acquired

the communist's devotion to the current civilization, with its urges and its technology, which is incidentally also the capitalist's devotion.

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

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

Systems that have been so far elaborated, socialism being no exception, would make it necessary for the individual to be good. The transitional individual would just need time in which to make necessary adjustments. Our task now is to elaborate a system in which it would be possible for the individual to be good but also necessary for him to be so. Capitalism and communism have both tried to put before the world certain systems of thought and action where all will be automatically good. It will not be necessary for one to be good. That has been the specific quality of sages all over the world. To deal with systems and to elaborate them on paper and to change society in accordance with them has sufficed for these sages, but they have invariably failed. What should be done, however, is to take advantage of certain essential virtues of the individual and then to weave them into systems where it would be possible to be good but where the individual will always find it necessary to strive to be good. Socialism has hitherto generally been the system where such necessity did not arise, where the environment alone mattered, where changes in law and in government and administration were sufficient to make the individual good. This is a vice which socialism has hitherto shared with communism and capitalism. I deliberately call it a vice, the vice of environmentalism, where the environment alone is of importance and where

with improvement in it the individual is believed to change automatically.

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

Socialism has dealt too much with the sage studying environment with discovery of principles of good organization. The saint has emphasized qualities of living and denial of the flesh. Each one of us has latent in him the virtues of the sage and the saint. But the virtue of the sage has tended to degenerate into the vice of cruelty just as the virtue of the saint has tended to degenerate into the vice of narrowness. Sage and saint have both become narrow and cruel. The sage becomes cruel, because he begins to hate all those who are unable or do not wish to think like him. The saint becomes narrow, because there is no effort like the effort to be good or pure. The distance between cruelty and narrowness is very small. If there is any lesson to be learned from Mahatma Gandhi's life and action, every one of us should strive to bring out the latent qualities of satyagraha and sagehood as well as sainthood. Let us not be frightened of sainthood. Not to wish to deny the flesh is almost always to deny the saint altogether, and that is bad. Knowledge and good conduct, change of environment and change in the individual, revolution and religion, social reconstruction and moral uplift, education of the mind and training of habits have hitherto appeared as antipoles because of man's incurable inclination to monastic solace. Whether or not Mahatma Gandhi was able to combine well the sage and the saint in his own person without being predominantly the one or the other is a speculation of little interest. Among leaders of men, he was the first in world history to be a revolutionary of political and social structures together with being a revolutionary of the inner world and ways of conduct. Frequent mental gymnastics are conducted by persons so as to make some ropes of theory take a strand from Marx and a strand from Gandhi and weave them together. That is a pursuit which to my mind is utterly hopeless and produces no results. But if

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Anthropocene Age

Samar Bagchi

The geologic age in which we are living now is known as Holocene Age. This age started after the last ice age ended about 12000 years ago. The human civilization developed in different regions of the earth from about 10000 years. Industrial Revolution arrived between the middle of 18th and 19th centuries. Two great changes took place in human society after the Industrial Revolution. In 1830, when Industrial Revolution was ending the human population was only 1000 million. In 2000 it crossed 6000 million. Humans like us, Cro-Magnon man, arrived on Earth about 40 to 50 thousand years back. Through evolution it took so many years to bring the world population to 1000 million. But Industrial Revolution brought in so much productive forces in the hands of humans that earth added 5000 million more people in 170 years only. The demands from nature for timber, water, minerals, etc. went on increasing at a galloping speed, specially after 1950s.

That humans are the masters of the earth is a Judeo-Christian world view. In the Book of Genesis Bible says, "God said unto them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it and have command over the fish of the sea and fowl of the air, and over everything that moveth the earth." During the Scientific Revolution between 16th and 18th Centuries the philosophy of science was given by Francis Bacon and the mathematician-philosopher Rene Descartes. They talked about becoming masters of nature. Descartes in, "Discourse on Method" writes, "We can have useful knowledge by which, cognizant of the force and actions of fire, water, air, the stars, the heavens and all other bodies which surround us – knowing them as distinctly as we know the various crafts of the artisans – we may be able to apply them in the same fashion to every use to which they are suited and thus make ourselves masters and possessors of nature." Humans are not the masters of nature. It is just 'a link in the immense web of nature' as Blaise Pascal has said.

The second major change that took place was in the explosion of gluttonous consumerism among the rich and middle class of the world. The change can be understood from the example given below. In the middle of the Industrial Revolution when an American used to go to

the market one had a choice of a maximum of 300 items in a market space of about 150 sq. meter. But, in 2000 when an American, living in a city having a population of one million, goes to the market one has a choice of one million items in a market space of 1.5 million sq.mt. This is the reason Mark Twain writes, "Civilization is a limitless multiplication of unnecessary necessities." When we look at the burgeoning growth of glittering shopping malls in the big cities like Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata we can understand the situation. If you go to such shopping malls you will not find a Rama Kaibartya (low caste), a Hansda or Tudu (tribal). Because of such proliferating production for making profit by the corporate and satisfying the gluttonous consumerism of the rich few of the world the earth is very fast losing its forests, biodiversity, water, soil with melting of glaciers and ice in the arctics and advancing deserts. To produce such consumables you need energy and major part of it comes from fossil fuels. Every year the need for energy in the world is increasing at the rate of 2%. Millions of tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) is liberated that is causing global warming and climate change. If the average temperature of earth increases by only 2 degree Celsius then there will be a catastrophe in earth. Scientists predict that if humans do not make a drastic change in their lifestyle global temperature may rise up to 6 degree Celsius by the end of 21st. Century. Scientists from Stanford, Princeton and Berkley have recently informed that sixth mass extinction is coming when the first species that will go out of the earth is Homo sapiens. Fifth mass extinction came 65 million years back when with other species Dinosaurs became extinct.

Because of this great change that has taken place on earth some scientists are proposing that we have entered the Anthropocene Age crossing Holocene. The word Anthropocene has not yet come in the dictionaries. In 2009, a Working Group on the Anthropocene was formed at the Leicester University under the leadership of Professor of Geology, Jan zalasiewicz. Zala Siewicz informs. "The significance of Anthropocene is that it sets a different trajectory of the earth system, of which we of course are part. " He goes on, "We have lived most of our lives in something called the Anthropocene and just realizing the scale and permanence of the change. "

When with chemical agriculture, use of nitrogen and phosphorus were started being used more and more and from then on the footsteps of Anthropocene Age started. The climate scientist of University of London Prof. Chris Repley, who was also the Director of London Science Museum, informs, "Anthropocene makes a new period in which our collective activities dominate the planetary machinery." He further says, "We are playing with fire, a potentially reckless mode of behavior which we are likely to come to regret unless we get a grip on the situation."

In 1970 started the observation of Earth Day in USA. It is observed every year. In 1962 Rachel Carson wrote 'Silent Spring' and made the world aware of the great environmental crisis. In 1972 we had Stockholm Conference in which late Indira Gandhi said, "Poverty is the greatest polluter". In 1992 we had the Earth Assembly at Rio. President of USA senior George Bush was not coming. When Reilly, the head of American delegation, informed Bush that if he does not come America will be isolated. Then Bush came. But, before coming he gave a statement that, 'I shall not change the lifestyle of Americans'. What is that lifestyle? America has only 5.6% of world population. But it consumes 40% of the natural resources of the world. Information about the consumerism has been given earlier. In 2002, Sustainable Development Conference was held in Johannesburg. As per the decision of Rio Meet 21st. Conference of Parties (COP21) was held in Paris in last November-December. But after all these conferences and meets the need for power is increasing at the rate of about 2% every year. The power comes mostly from fossil fuels. So, CO₂ in air is increasing by millions of tons every year. The devastation of nature goes on unabated. It is projected that all ice of Arctic will melt within the next few decades. If all ice melts then calthrage (methane), that is lying under ground for millions of years, will be released which is many times more Green House Gas ((GHG)) than CO₂. Thereby, the global warming and climate change will be faster.

Humans are the most intelligent of all animals. But, it is digging its own grave. Philosophers and poets gave warnings long back. 17th Century philosopher and mathematician Blaise Pascal (born 1621), whose law on hydrostatics have to be studied by every student, wrote, "Humankind is a very small link in the immense web of nature, but it is the only one that through thought understands nature; it is the only species on earth to be responsible for the earth and will be able to transform it

for the better or for worse." Are the humans taking the earth towards a better or towards a dark future taking away the right of life of the future generation?

The year Tagore died in 1941, in his famous essay "Crisis in civilization, he wrote, "At an early age I had believed with all feeling the gift of European civilization. But today, at the time of my departure that belief has become completely bereft." In 1940, in a letter to poet Amiya Chakrabarty, then teaching in USA, wrote, "Using Brahmin's brain, Kshatriya's services and shudra's services today's commercially-minded Europe has become irresistible. But, I can see their feet on a downward slope towards extinction." English poet W.B. Yeats (1865-1919) wrote, "Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world, / The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere/ The ceremony of innocence is drowned;/ The best lack all conviction, while the worst/ Are full of passionate intensity." When we take a look at the media we feel how true is the vision of the poets. What violence has gripped over nature and society?

Tagore and Gandhiji understood that city-based industrial civilization will collapse. Rabindranath establishes Santiniketan and Sriniketan to start a new kind of education and rejuvenation of villages. Sriniketan was working in 50 villages and more than 10 tribal villages. In 1904 Tagore wrote, "Swadeshi Samaj", in 1905, "Bilasher phans" (noose of luxury), in 1922, breaks away dam in the drama, "Muktadhara" (Freed stream). The words that the farmers of Sibtarai village downstream the dam speaks is as if Medha Patkar of Narmada Banchao Andolan is speaking. In 1924 Tagore writes, "Raktakarabi", a severe critic of the dehumanized modern civilization. In the same year in 1924, in a lecture in China, Tagore says, "We have for over a century been dragged by the prosperous West behind its chariot, choked by the dust, deafened by the noise, humbled by our own helplessness and overwhelmed by the speed. We agreed to acknowledge that this chariot drive is progress and that progress was civilization. If we ever ventured to ask "progress towards what, and progress for whom"- it was considered to be peculiarly and ridiculously oriental to entertain such doubts about the absoluteness of progress. Of late, a voice has come bidding us to take count of not only the scientific perfection of the chariot but of the depth of ditches lying on its path."

Tagore is raising question about civilization and

progress. What will we call civilization, progress and development? If we take a look at the old civilizations we value Greek civilization, which we now call Mediterranean civilization, we value Gupta period of India when we had a flourishing of arts and sciences. We value the Islamic renaissance of Bagdad Caliphate when there were great outpourings in science, mathematics, astronomy, medicine etc. We value European renaissance from 15th to 17th Centuries and of the Bengal renaissance of 19th and early 20th Century. There was no internet, computer or mobile then. Did it deter the creativity of mind? The aspect in which humans are unique is in its immense creativity of producing literature, arts, architecture and sciences. No other species can do that though they have the need to procreate, they need shelter and need food for survival. A society that fosters the creativity of human is more civilized, more developed.

Gandhiji writes, “God forbid India should ever take to industrialization in the manner of the West. A tiny island kingdom is today keeping the whole world in chains. If an entire nation of 300 million took to similar kind of economic exploitation the whole world will be bare like locust.” We can now understand the meaning of these words of Gandhiji and the words of Tagore like ‘ditches’ through the ecological sciences. Ecological Footprint (EFP) is a new concept that has come in ecological science. When we stay in a house, eat vegetables, eat fish, eat meat we need some land or water space. When we breathe out CO₂ we need space for trees to absorb it. The carrying capacity of earth is 1.9 hectares(ha) per person. But in the 1980s already average EFP per person was 2.3ha which is 20% more than the carrying capacity of the earth. If we look at the burgeoning glittering shopping malls of the big cities of India during the last three decades or so it is sure that EFP has increased greatly. But in 1980s the EFP of USA was 10ha per person, Australia 8ha, Europe 5ha while Asia and Africa 1.4 to 1.5 ha per person. Hence, it is not the poor people of the third world that is responsible for the catastrophe that the earth faces. It is the rich few of the world including that of India that is responsible for the environmental degradation

Rabindranath and Gandhiji did not want urbanization. In 1928 in the article, ‘Samabay Niti’ (Rules of cooperative) Tagore writes, “ Socialization is the heart of the village. This socialization can never be achieved in a town. One reason for this is that, as town is large social relations become loose. Another reason is that because of business and other special needs and

opportunities population becomes large. There humans primarily want to satisfy its own essential needs, not each other. Due to this even when people living in the same locality they don’t feel ashamed if they don’t know each other. With the complication of our life this alienation is gradually growing.” Tagore more specifically speaks about alienation in a talk before the villagers during the yearly festival in 1930 thus, “You don’t have to go far-Kolkata, where we live, know there is no relationship between neighbors in their joy, sorrows and during some troubles. English poet T. S. Eliot (b.1888) writes about alienation in the Western society thus, “The desert is not only in the southern tropics/ The desert is around the corner/ The desert is squeezed in the tube train/ And the desert is in the heart of your neighbor.”

In this human-centric Anthropocene Age both nature and society are crumbling. The difference between rich and poor, violence and untruth are gallopingly increasing. What kind of India Gandhiji dreamt? On 5th of October, Gandhiji wrote a letter to Pt. Nehru, “The first thing that I want to write about is the difference in outlook between us. If the difference is fundamental then I feel the public should also be made aware of it”. Then Gandhiji expressed his dream of future India and the world in the letter thus, “I am convinced if India is to attain true freedom and through India the world also then sooner or later the fact must be recognized that people have to live in villages, not in towns, in huts, not in palaces. Crores of people will never be able to live at peace with each other in towns and palaces. They will then have no recourse but to resort to violence and untruth ...while I admire modern science (he did not say this in Hind Swaraj) ...which should be re clothed and refashioned aright... the village of my dream is still in my mind... My ideal village will contain intelligent human beings. They will not live in dirt and darkness as animals. Men and women will be free and able to hold their own against anyone in the world.”

Pt. Nehru replied thus on 9th October. “It is 38 years since Hind Swaraj was written. The world has completely changed since then, probably in a wrong direction... You are right in saying that the world or a large part of it appeared to be bent on committing suicide. That may be an inevitable development of an evil seed planted in civilization that has grown.” Knowing that the Western paradigm of development is in a ‘wrong direction’, ‘committing suicide’ and an ‘evil seed’ we drank that poison of Western paradigm of development and we have an India now where the hungriest people live, every 3

seconds a child dies out of malnutrition, about 1 million farmers commit suicide in 10 years' time. The West could develop the way it did because the world was divided between the 'core' and 'periphery' after colonization in the 18th and 19th centuries. By plunder, extermination, deindustrialising and deeducating the peripheries the West could develop the way it had. Dadabhai Nauroji, Ramesh Chandra Datta, Ganesh Deuskar have described this in their books. Charles Darwin writes, "Wherever the Europeans have trod death seems to follow". Daniel Defoe of Robinson Crusoe chastises the Spaniards for their barbarities in America thus, "Where they destroyed millions of these people... a mere butchery, a bloody and unnatural piece of cruelty, unjustifiable either to God or men; as for which the very name of Spaniard is reckoned to be frightful and terrible to all people of humanity or of Christian compassion". Where is our 'periphery'? So, we are attacking Singur, Nandigram, Niamgiri, Jagatsingpur etc and ousting millions of adivasis, dalits, farmers from their hearth and home and destroying the ecology of our beautiful and rich country with its natural resources. The looting and exploitation of our natural resources is still going on with globalization.

Rabindranath and Gandhiji had given a new vision of India which will have equity and village-centered development shunning urbanization. In 1922, Tagore in "Cooperative" gives plan for development of villages thus, "We have to reconstruct all our villages to satisfy all our needs. It is necessary to form a zone. If the heads of zones can organize all works and redress the deficiencies by themselves only then the cultivation of self-rule will become true all over the country. It is necessary to help and inspire the villagers to start their own school, cooperative and bank. By this way if the villages become self-reliant and united then only we will be saved. Our greatest problem is how to reconstruct our village society."

We all hoped that socialism will show a new way. But, after 70 years of existence Soviet Union collapsed. China has adopted large scale industrialization with freedom of capital. Marx and Engels said when communism will be established the productive forces will increase to an "infinite extent". In 'Communist Manifesto' Marx-Engels write that communist society will, "increase

the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible".

Engels more clearly in "Principles of Communism", which is published as an appendix of Communist Manifesto, writes, "It is obvious that hitherto the productive forces had not yet been so far developed that enough could be produced for all... Now, however, when the development of large scale industry has created, firstly, capital and productive forces on a scale hitherto unheard of and the means are available to increase these productive forces in a short time to an infinite extent". USSR tried to beat America in per capita production and collapsed. In 2005, late Harry Magdoff, editor of the famous Marxist journal of USA "Monthly Review", in a letter to Michael Lobowitz writes, "When I worked at the War Production Board I met with members of the Russian purchasing Mission and was astonished among other things, by their worship of the big and the focus on catching up and overtaking the United States."

Lot of research is going on today by the Marxist scholars about the ecological vision of Marx. Marx dreamt that, "Communist society... makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner" (German Ideology). Rabindranath and Gandhiji dreamt and worked for such a society with equity, without violence, simple living but rich in culture. Gandhiji says, "Exploitation is the greatest of violence". Tagore writes, "No, no you will not achieve heaven as much as you crave for pleasure". As long as humans do not come out from the "Noose of Luxury" it will be impossible to stop the collapse that the world is facing today.

We listen to the footsteps of change when we hear about – Give us Right over Water, Forest and Land, Occupy Wall Street, Another World is Possible or Arab Spring. To change this decaying consumerist industrial society for a new kind of society envisaged by Rabindranath and Gandhiji we have to take part in an united "struggle and

Construction', a slogan that was coined by Sankar Guha Neogi. Tagore said, "To lose faith in man is a sin."

Sometime in the middle decades of the twenty-first century, Galbraith's great unanswered question "How Much Should a Country Consume?" - with its Gandhian corollary, "How Much Should a Person Consume?" – will come finally to dominate the intellectual and political debates of the time.

–Ramachandra Guha

Gandhian Economics in the 21st Century

Smitha Khadri V.

“India’s way is not Europe’s: India is not Calcutta and Bombay. India lives in seven hundred thousand villages.” – M. K. Gandhi

65 years since adopting the constitution of India with a force of diversified, eager 1.311 billion Indians (second only to Cina by a margin of 0.07 billion numbers!) want to cross the threshold of economic thirst to join the economically developed side of the globe. It is easily said than happening with the 0.27 billion Indians not having the economic and so the nutritive stamina to even reach the finishing line. This is going to be pipedream with the prediction of the population to cross 1.6 billion by 2050, which could mean more disparity, inequality economically and further away from the dreams weaved by Gandhi for his India.

The successive governments have been doing their entire bit, opening the markets to foreign investments in critical areas of Defence, Railways, Insurance to Unified National tax to ‘Make in India’ initiative with the growth staggering at 7.1 % and inflation glaring at 5.9%. With these daily inflation and counter inflation headlines tango, a series of lecture announcement by the American Economics Professor, Mark Lindely specializing in Gandhian Economics in Bengaluru was intriguing. I chose the Sunday retreat in Gandhi Bhavan with a curiosity: if Gandhi did hold any solution to the current conundrum.

Prof. Mark Lindely, was as agile as Gandhi would have been at that age of 79 years enthraling the majority student audience and a few Gandhians at heart like me with the relevance of Gandhian economics today. Gandhi was not an economist, but for him everything was measured in truth and non-violence. An economist whose convictions matched his economical theories was J.C. Kumarappa, known as Gandhi’s Economist. Gandhi once replied to a compliment for having groomed Kumarappa to his convictions that Kumarappa came readymade. Educated in London and Columbia University on Public Finance, Kumarappa started his career with a strong conviction that man is not merely a wealth producing agent but essentially a member of the society with political, social and spiritual responsibility. This resulted in Kumarappa losing interest in money making and wrote

articles catching the attention of Gandhi. Together they forged the way to Gandhian Economics of Truth and Non-violence, Moral Economics.

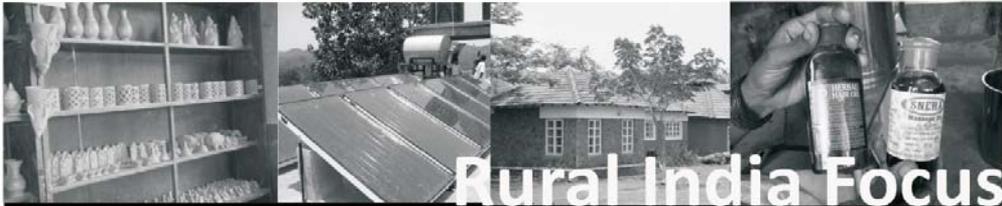
Gandhi, a man known for perfection and ground reality, requested Kumarappa to take up the house to house economic survey of 50 villages in Gujarat assisted by Gujarat Vidyapeeth students. The data collected was first of its kind highlighting the ground economic status of Indian villages. Gandhi published the data in five languages. This was followed by 600 village survey in Central and North-West Province. These data were very useful in the negotiations in the round-table conferences and help Gandhi strengthen his concept of making every village independent democratic unit. In 1934, under the stewardship of Gandhi and Kumarappa as secretary, the All India Village Industries Association was founded paving way for welfare economics.

The partnership of Gandhi and Kumarappa gave two gifts to build a just and happy nation – Fair trade and Sustainability, the very mantra the United Nations Development Programmes are based on. Prof. Lindely used a tagline for every transaction we carry out for everyone of us, “Sweeten your Life” by buying fair trade goods, where a good part of the money is going directly to the poorest people in the process of producing the goods. Transferring the purchase power is the essence of economics. This transferring power should also include moral and humane transaction with an element of ‘free will’ as advocated by Gandhi. That is, bringing in moral exchange between buyers and sellers, in simple words ‘bargaining’. With a little exchange, you are bringing the moral option in the transaction.

During the Second World War, J.C. Kumarappa was jailed as were most of the Congress leaders. This period brought out a beautiful book, “The Economy of Permanence” which was way beyond the days’ need. Kumarappa was the first economist to talk on sustainability, the future economics, 60 years ago. By taking up material reckoning as way of valuation,

Kumarappa was a pioneer as an Ecological Economist. He valued a tree in terms of fruits, shade, amount of oxygen supplied, so on and so forth. The Economics of Permanence theory raised a question on the concept of 'free-will'. Free will is a choice which is bestowed on us humans only. Along with Gandhi's love, Kumarappa added fear, fear of nature. How nature would punish if we did not tread the path of co-ordination and co-operation with it while exercising our gift of freewill. The current climate change and global warming is the result of the unchecked, unethical freewill exercising.

A beautiful word, 'Satisficing' was coined by American economist, Herbert Simon 50 years ago with the combination of two words, 'Satisfy' and 'Suffice'. This is the single mantra for sustainability. This brings to mind the RBI Governor, Raghuram Rajan's opinion, 'Make for India' better approach than 'Make in India'. Gandhi and also Kumarappa were not against technology or machines, but instead believed in managing work in coordination with nature. As Gandhi believed, "that economics is untrue which ignores or disregards moral values".



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Seven Questions about education and Shiksha Swaraj

Anand Kumar

A. Any education system is expected to contribute towards a) making of a proper personality and capability building of students through imparting values and knowledge, b) nation-building, and c) humane world order. Indian educational setting is going through rapid expansion without expected contribution in these three contexts. At the same time, any evaluation of the education system of India today will lead us to three conclusions: 1. Growing hunger for good education in all Indian households irrespective of caste, tribe, class, gender, region, religion. It is a positive factor for creating a healthy and democratic educational setting. 2. A disturbing trend of unchecked commercialization of education from nursery to university levels without any accountability. It is being promoted by a nexus of profit seeking businessmen, powerful politicians and bureaucrats. 3. Increasingly declining commitment of central and state governments in promoting universal availability of good education to children and youth. It is combined with increasing interference of bureaucracy and politicians in the matters of education leading to corruption and devaluation of standards in government run educational institutions.

B. There is a global education market where anyone can get education for a price. Indian elite is making use of it for several decades. But any education market is based upon commodification of education and knowledge. Like all markets, it will have the limit of money power where only wealthy people will be able to provide education for their children as is the case with the Indian elite who are paying a large amount for schooling and college degrees for their children all over the country. Let us not ignore that it is proving to be counter-productive and anti-social in advanced capitalist countries like the US and UK. Certainly, we cannot afford it at present as we need a system of education which is not only available but also affordable. Our social formation needs education to function as a bridge to overcome the present divides of i. men-women, ii. rural-urban, iii. the dominant castes and the depressed sections, iv. the affluent and the impoverished, and v. the forward and backward regions and states.

In a country like India, there are five problems with

the idea of 'education market'. We are a country where a) 77% working people have purchasing power of Rs. 20 per day (Sengupta Committee Report), b) most of the rural girls drop out between standard 6th and 10th, and rural boys fail to enter graduate studies due to poverty (Survey report by Pratham), c) Muslim children have very insignificant presence beyond standard 10th, (Sachar Committee Report), d) children of MBCs, SCs, STs and De-notified Tribes have problem of access to quality education even at the basic level, and e) there are minimum facilities for children with disabilities, So making a system of market of education will be a guarantee of perpetuation of elite power and deepening of disparities.

C) Shiksha Swaraj is an initiative of patriotic Indians to underline the need of rapid reforms in education to make it an instrument of nation building through economic advancement, social harmony and deepening of democratic values. Shiksha Swaraj believes that India needs education to promote economic empowerment, social justice and political power for all, including the deprived sections of our society. It includes the rural poor, urban marginals and all citizens belonging to the weaker sections including the women, SCs, STs, the OBCs and MBCs. Education and nation-building have grown together in the modern world system. There is no evidence to support the claim that conversion of education from public good and an essential ingredient of the duties of welfare state into a private good and market mediated resource has been helpful in creating excellence in the field of knowledge or better rewards for the best students, best teaches, and best institutions. In the Euro-American countries, education process has gone through secularization and democratization, and not unethical commercialisation. Right to education from primary to post-graduate levels is the agenda of Shiksha Swaraj with emphasis upon Saman (equal) – Sulabh (accessible)-Sarhthak (useful) Shiksha.

D) Politics is life line of all democratic societies as it is the essential process of democratic nation-building and citizenship. It is Nagarik Dharma. All citizens above

18 years of age must engage in politics as a calling and duty. It includes students also. But there is need to be cautious that it does not get distorted into selfishness, moneymaking and corruption. Politics of principles promote peoples' well being and all round happiness. But un-principled politics with arrogance of power is self-destructive as politicians get perverted from servants of society to megalomaniac power seekers. Students, and all others, must not get infected with the virus of power for its own sake or *Paise se Satta aur Satta se Paisa*. This is the essence of 'good politics' which is the basis of alternative initiatives of Swaraj Abhiyan and several other citizen platforms in our country.

E) NDA Government has been without an educational strategy between 2014 and 2015 except trying to capture the institutions of higher studies and research. There is an open drive to 'clean' the educational system from the Nehruvian and Marxian influences. It has become well known that the first Human Resource Development Minister Smriti Irani was subjected to pressure from the ideologues of Hindutva organizations to change the form and content of higher education of India to converge with their ideological orientation without any delay. It got reflected in the appointment of new directors, vice chancellors, and post holders and members of the national bodies of research. The aggressiveness and undue interference of BJP central ministers, MPs, and party functionaries in the functioning of institutions of higher education stands well exposed from Hyderabad Central University, Jawaharlal Nehru University to Allahabad Central University, Aligarh Muslim University, and Banaras Hindu University. The tragic death of research scholar Rohit Vemulla, imprisonment and harassment of JNUSU president Kanhaiya Kumar, inquiries against Allahabad University president Richa Singh, resignation of the director of IIT-Delhi and refusal to reinstate Dr. Saibaba even after his bail by the Supreme Court are some of the most outstanding examples of the drive to deal with ideological and political adversaries through misuse of state power by the proponents of Saffronisation.

It is a sad chapter of violating autonomy of institutions of higher education for petite politics. The battle of ideas and power of perspectives cannot be settled by lumpenising campus spaces and classroom culture. It is going to hurt the process of democratic nation-building in the long run. Furthermore it is a failed approach. Because such anti-intellectual approach of

'capturing campuses' creates resistance and allergy. Earlier it was tried unsuccessfully during the 1970s by the Emergency Raj to crush the waves of youth unrest against corruption at high places and directionless education system. In recent times, it did not work with the Left Front Governments in West Bengal where there was patronizing of party-intellectuals and pro-party student activists in the educational institutions. It created flight of talent and alienation of students. At the same time, it is significant that the NDA has presented their own blueprint of educational reforms through T.S.R. Subramanyam Committee Report. But we cannot predict about what next as there is a strong lobby which wants to create a process of sanitization of education in the name of cultural values and Hindutva. In fact, there is need of de-colonization and democratization of education to meet the challenges of the age of knowledge power in the era of globalisation, not Saffronisation.

F) Quest for knowledge and respect for scientific orientation are essential ingredients of a healthy educational system. Furthermore, there is need to pay attention to five dimensions of our education system – i. philosophy, ii. economics, iii. sociology, iv. politics, and v. science of education to overcome the consequences of inefficiencies and missed opportunities of the last 70 years in our country. We have to make education as a process and a space of freedom of mind and adventure of ideas, not playground of party politics. Similarly, there is need to pay attention to putting an end to resource-crunch which has been a bad legacy of the colonial system and Congress Raj. More bureaucratisation and commercialization in the name of 'educational reforms' is going to create strong resistance as the world has entered age of knowledge and India will not permit its politicians to keep our children behind.

G) Finally, there is a big difference between 'promising reforms' and 'reform promises'. Today, the promising reforms have to include 1. Universalisation of education for all children upto 12th Standard, 2. Expansion and autonomy of avenues of quality higher education and relevant research, 3. Investment in training good teachers and preventing wastage and corruption, 4. Bridging the divides of language, gender, class, region and nations through special programmes of capacity building and talent harnessing., and 5. Making educational institutions as training ground for citizenship and cultivation of goodness.

(Continued from Page 5)

of Narendra Modi's appeal in almost every country that he has visited to 'make in India,' process of privatization has accelerated with Modi's friends like Ambani and Adani benefiting the most, there is no check on unemployment or price rise. In the middle of war mongering, decision about not to present a separate rail budget from next year and disinvestment in 17 loss making public enterprises raise an alarm. Is the government trying to thrust important financial decisions on the country amidst war hysteria?

We expect the government to stop talking about war and instead focus on finding solution to Kashmir problem. As a matter of state policy it should be declared that India will have a peaceful and friendly relation with Pakistan. This can happen by an instant decision like the one taken by Narendra Modi when he decided to stopover in Pakistan on his way from Afghanistan. India and Pakistan have a shared culture which provides a readymade basis for friendship. In any case, since Pakistan denies involvement in terrorist attacks over India, it should be convinced to join the peace effort. One thing which can help the process of normalization is increased interaction among citizens. A closer relationship among citizens of the two countries will also help resolve the Kashmir problem easily.

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obesity in affluent societies and the pangs of chill penury in the underdeveloped countries calls for fresh thinking on Gandhian lines.

The poor countries of the world particularly cannot do without Gandhi who lit the torch of freedom in the hearts of millions of people all over the world. His understanding of socioeconomic problems and his deep insight into human psychology were aimed at liberating the downtrodden from their difficulties.

He made valuable contribution to politics by his practical application of the nonviolent weapons of satyagraha, fast and strike, demonstrating how vulnerable modern states which depend on the 'Big Lie' are.

It is a pity that the scope of non-violent movements or peaceful resistance against totalitarian or fascist regimes has not been enlarged. In fact, no fresh thinking

has been done on these subjects although there has been a large scale proliferation of Gandhian institutes.

Similarly, most people seem to be confused about Gandhi's concept of decentralization of power. In a country of India's size and diversities small political and administrative units with well defined powers alone can guarantee the active involvement of the people. Likewise in the economic sphere accent must necessarily be on self-sufficient village units. A decentralized political system remains our best bet against emergence of fascistic and militaristic tendencies.

Unfortunately an impression has gained ground that the real prestige of a nation is measured not in terms of the well being and prosperity of the people but in relation to the armed might of the state. This is a fallacious argument which needs to be countered. Unless the people of a nation are healthy in mind and body any amount of stockpiling of arms will not boost its image.

If Gandhi's dream of Ram Rajya has remained unfulfilled it is largely because we have failed to strengthen democracy at the grassroots. The levers of power are controlled by a handful of people at whose whims and mercy democracy works.

(Continued from Page 14)

an effort were made to weave a consistent cloth, whole threads were picked from anywhere, no matter where, but the weaver's sole object were to devise an environment in which the individual could be good if he wished to be good, then, I believe, together with that unique weapon of civil disobedience this doctrine could be incorporated into socialism with great profit to mankind. A separate creed of Gandhism would perhaps not be of a much use to the world. Socialism is already on the world stage.

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

[Speech; Hyderabad, August 1952]

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