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Editorial

MOB LYNCHING HAS BECOME quite a common practice in India, which suggests that the social fabric of the country is increasingly showing signs of disarray. They come from allegations of cow killing, cattle peddling, child abduction, racially motivated grousers against Africans and so on, many of which are the handiwork of rumour mongers. Fake news spread through social media also has its share of lynching. Bovine related mob lynching deaths have increased considerably in recent years with mainly Muslims and Dalits being the main targets. There is a certain degree of feeling of impunity being felt by the perpetrators of such violence, who are often valorised by sections who approve such acts. While it is indeed a law and order issue, it is more than that; it cannot occur in a political vacuum. It shows that hate crimes have gained a certain form of respectability in our society and they have their political and electoral spin offs. The legal system has its limits, given the plethora of issues on which lynching takes place. India has often invoked the 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' idea as its cultural mascot. But mob lynching is a social pathology, pure and simple, belying this noble vision. The perpetrator no longer sees the victim as a human being and this dehumanisation, which is facilitated by the amorphous character of the mob, only aids in lynching. If we are not able to promote a democracy of compassion but a mobocracy built on hatred, all the constitutional values that we have tried to uphold in this country will soon be lost. We would be creating an altogether different India than the one the Father of the Nation had envisaged.

This issue of the journal is a combined one, incorporating the first two issues of volume forty. A number of articles on J. C. Kumarappa that could not be accommodated in the last issue of the journal have found their place in this issue. This issue has four main articles and four shorter pieces in the section on notes and comments. The first article by Edward T. Ulrich, looks at the philosophy of Aurobindo who argued that Hinduism endorses violence in certain circumstances.

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The second article by N. Benjamin and Savita Andelwar attempts to place Gandhi in the context of the Bhakti movement in medieval India. Pooja Sharma's article explores a decentralised pathway to energy security and energy transition in developing countries. P. P. Pillai examines the relevance of the economic ideas of Gandhi and Kumarappa in the context of decentralisation and development. There are also articles by Peter Gonsalves, Shimon Lev, Shivanand Shettar and M. Thangaraj. The issue ends with a book review by Anthony Savari Raj.

JOHN S MOOLAKKATTU
Editor

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Revolutionary Violence and Hinduism: Aurobindo Ghose's “Active Resistance”

Edward T. Ulrich

ABSTRACT

In the nineteenth century, significant Indian leaders, like Surendranath Banerjea and Swami Vivekananda, emphasized that India is essentially a peaceful land. However, influenced by accounts of European history, Aurobindo Ghose was convinced that India needed to gain independence and that violence is the normal route for countries to gain freedom. Thus, in addition to revolutionary involvement in the first decade of the twentieth century, Aurobindo challenged the ideas of men like Banerjea and Vivekananda. He argued that Hinduism endorses violence in certain circumstances. He relied on notions of caste duties, the idea that the atman is beyond good and evil, and the teaching that destruction can open new possibilities. In the freedom struggle, Aurobindo's arguments did not predominate, but he nevertheless made important contributions.

Key words: Aurobindo Ghose, violence, *swadeshi*, *Mahabharata*, Saktism

Introduction

MANY RELIGIONS TEACH peaceful and harmonious ideals. Yet, violence is a part of life, and sometimes religious believers find themselves in a position of having to fight. Thereby arises the question of reconciling the ideals of the religion with the realities of violence. For instance, Western Christendom had relied on the “just war theory,” which aims to weigh the evil that would be caused by a planned war against the evil which it is expected to remove. This study will examine the issue of violence and spiritual ideals in the thought of Aurobindo

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Ghose. Aurobindo emerged as the key leader in India's independence movement in 1907 and 1908, a decade prior to the start of Gandhi's involvement. Unlike Gandhi, he espoused the use of violence, aiming for an armed insurrection.

In the Asian context, the issue of justifying violence is especially interesting, since *ahimsa*, "non-injury," is a central value in the Buddhist, Jain, and Hindu religions. Consistent with that heritage, Mahatma Gandhi led a non-violent movement against the British Empire. However, his approach did not represent the entirety of the nationalist movement. Could the movement, as a whole, have gone in a violent direction? Further, how did Aurobindo, who later became known as a great spiritual thinker, reconcile India's emphasis on *ahimsa* with his plans for violent revolution?

Perhaps surprisingly, objection to British rule and presence was not universal in India. For instance, in Kolkata, the original British capital, there were new opportunities available to many Indians, such as government jobs and a Western education. A prominent Bengali, Raja Rammohun Roy (ca. 1772-1833), believed that the British were doing much good in India, and some of the literature reports that he played a role in inviting the Baptist missionary, Alexander Duff, to India because of the education and moral values that he could offer. Later, in the 1870s and 1880s, a nationalist movement emerged. However, it did not necessarily seek to struggle against the British, but often aimed to cooperate with them.

Aurobindo's political involvement peaked in the years 1906-1908. His main contribution was to help turn the tide of public opinion against the British rule. He did this through the revolutionary newspaper, *Bande Mataram*, in editorials that were both highly intellectual and scathingly cynical. His main target was not the British, but politically aware Indians who would settle for anything less than complete independence from Britain. Aurobindo's aim, during those years, was to turn a regional protest in Bengal, over its partition into different administrative regions, into a countrywide movement for independence. He wished to rouse Indians to leave complacency and comfort behind in resisting the British, even to become violent.

During the period of his revolutionary involvement, Aurobindo addressed the issue of violence mainly in three writings: "Notes on the *Mahabharata*," *Bhawani Mandir*, and the editorials in *Bande Mataram*. The first was an unpublished essay, composed around 1902, in which he formulated some of his basic ideas on violence. He would reiterate these in later works in the following years and decades. In 1905, around the time of the partition of Bengal, he composed *Bhawani Mandir*. This was a pamphlet which gave a plan to organize an order

of monks who would be dedicated to national uplift.

Finally, Aurobindo began his most public contributions in 1906, when he became an editor of *Bande Mataram*. That period ended, however, in 1908. In conjunction with the Muzzafarpur bombing, Aurobindo's brother, Barin, had organized a revolutionary group which attempted the assassination of a British magistrate. The British arrested Barin, Aurobindo, and many others. This paper will outline Aurobindo's views of violence during his revolutionary days, situating his perspective within the context of classic Hindu traditions and various influential Indians who belonged to his era.

Some Nineteenth Century Indians on Hinduism and Non-violence

Keshub Chandra Sen and Brahmoism

The period of Aurobindo's revolutionary involvement was a distinct phase in modern Bengali history. However, his life stands in an overall narrative, both in terms of continuity and discontinuity, with preceding phases. Two important preceding movements were the Brahmoism of Keshub Chandra Sen and the Neo-Vedanta of Swami Vivekananda. Raja Rammohun Roy initially established Brahmoism in 1828. It was a reforming movement that Roy based on the *upanisadic* teaching of a unitary reality behind all things. He believed that this teaching was contrary to contemporary, corrupt and superstitious practices in Hinduism. To propagate his values, Roy relied on a Christian pattern of worship, since he believed that that pattern was effective for educating people and imparting moral values. The worship, however, relied on the Vedas, not the Bible.¹

Not long after he had established the Samaj, in 1833, Roy passed away. Approximately twenty years later in 1843, Devendranath Tagore, the grandfather of the famous Rabindranath Tagore, took charge of the Samaj. He organized it into a formal religious movement, giving it an initiation ceremony, a creed, a prayer book, and uniformity in belief and practices. Disillusioned with the Hinduism of his time, he believed that India had an ancient monotheistic past, and that propagating the *upanisads* would help restore India's glory: "If I could preach the Brâhma religion as based upon the Vedanta, then all India would have one religion, all dissensions would come to an end, . . . , her former valour and power would be revived and finally she would regain her freedom."²

Fourteen years after Tagore took charge of the Samaj, a young man, Keshub Chandra Sen, joined. He soon became Tagore's right hand man. Like Roy and Tagore, he was disillusioned with the

Hinduism of his time. However, rather than turning to Vedantic sources he steeped himself in nineteenth century Christian thought, ranging from Calvinism to Unitarianism. He created a mixture of evangelical piety and New England Transcendentalism, which was effective in drawing many of the youth of Kolkata to the Samaj. These youths were Western educated elites who had dropped belief in the Hinduism of the time. Some of them had dropped belief in the divine altogether. Sen attempted to appeal to them by arguing that the great Western philosophers had argued that intuition can give a direct knowledge of God.³

Sen felt that Indians had fallen into a state of lethargy, and needed to be roused from it. Among Kolkata's Western educated youths, he observed ambitious plans to change society: "Witness the numerous Improvement Societies, Friendly Meetings, Debating Clubs, Literary Associations, etc., whose number is hourly increasing." However, Sen felt that all of that led to nothing more than talk: "But what is the upshot of all this? 'Mere prattle without practice.'" He felt these youths, many of whom had dropped belief in the divine, needed prayer. Prayer "makes the weak powerful, the timid heroic, "it inspires the soul with "heavenly fire and enthusiasm."⁵ Later, in a public talk that won both praise and criticism, he stated that Indians needed to turn to Jesus Christ: "Nothing short of self-sacrifice, of which Christ has furnished so bright an example, will regenerate India."⁶

Like Roy, Tagore, and later Aurobindo, Sen believed that India had a glorious past. Also like Roy, but probably much more than him, Sen believed that the British were helping to steer India towards a revival of that past: "The great work which is going on in India, under the auspices of the British Government, is a work of revolutionary reform. This is not man's work, but a work which God is doing with His own hand, using the British nation as His instruments."⁷ Accordingly, he encouraged loyalty to Queen Victoria, comparing it to the loyalty that Hindus traditionally gave to their *râjâs*.⁸ In addition, he was involved with social reform, such as women's education.

Significantly, although not central to his views, Sen argued that Hindus are essentially peaceful. In his talk, "Jesus Christ," he stated, "The Hindoo is mild and meek. . . . He is conciliating and forgiving, and would do all he can to enjoy the enviable felicity of having no enemy on earth."⁹ A few years later, he attributed this peacefulness to the Hindu emphasis on the indwelling of God in all things: "God is represented as the Infinite Spirit dwelling in His own glory, and pervading all space, full of peace and joy. . . . Hence the principal feature of the religion of the Hindus is quiet contemplation."¹⁰

Swami Vivekananda and the Ramakrishna Mission

As a young man, Swami Vivekananda was known as “Narendranath Datta,” and was involved with the Brahmo Samaj.¹¹ His involvement might have been due, originally and mainly to practical circumstances, rather than spiritual interests. His family was poor and he could obtain some money from the Samaj through his skills as a musician. However, whereas the Samaj rejected much contemporary Hinduism, Vivekananda eventually left the Samaj and became involved with the contemporary Hindu holy man, Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Three years after the latter’s death, in 1893, he began to travel widely. He travelled across India, through Europe, and in America, addressing the 1893 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago. Returning to India in 1897, he drew enormous crowds as a speaker.

Although Vivekananda broke with the Samaj by accepting Ramakrishna as his guru, Vivekananda expressed, in his speeches, many of the same themes emphasized by the Samaj. These included social reform, the equality of all people, direct access to the divine, and downplaying of religious paraphernalia, such as images and rituals. However, Vivekananda gave these themes a very different foundation than in the Samaj. Tagore and Sen, and Roy, at least in his early years, had rooted these themes in theism. In contrast, Vivekananda rooted them in the non-duality of the *upanisads*. For instance, whereas had Sen discussed the brotherhood of all peoples on the basis on the fatherhood of God, Vivekananda discussed human unity through the idea of the unity of all reality.¹² Thereby, Vivekananda established a school of philosophy which many refer to as “Neo-Vedanta.”

Like Sen, Vivekananda believed that Indians had become lethargic: “You have talked of reforms, of ideals, and all these things for the past hundred years; but when it comes to practice, you are not to be found anywhere.”¹³ To address this, Sen had recommended prayer and the example of Jesus, but Vivekananda drew the attention of Indians to the notion of the divine within: “The first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads, and believe—‘I am the Soul,’ . . . Everything can be done by us; we all have the same glorious soul, let us believe in it.”¹⁴

Like Sen, Vivekananda had no interest in political revolution. However, that did not mean that he endorsed British rule. Like Sen, he believed that India had a glorious past, but unlike Sen, he believed that Indians needed to look to themselves, not to Britain. In fact, it is the West that needs India, far from India “have started the founders of religions from the most ancient times, deluging the earth again and again with the pure and perennial waters of spiritual truth. . . .

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Here is the life-giving water with which must be quenched the burning fire of materialism which is burning the core of the hearts of millions in other lands."¹⁵

Finally, like Sen, Vivekananda believed that Hinduism is essentially a peaceful religion.

India is "the land where humanity has attained its highest towards gentleness, towards generosity, towards purity, towards calmness."¹⁶ Unlike Europe, where people take pride in claiming descent from a ruler with a reputation for cruelty and greediness, "In India, . . . , the greatest princes seek to trace their descent to some ancient sage who dressed in a bit of loin-cloth, lived in a forest, eating roots and studying the Vedas."¹⁷ The heart of this spirituality, which leads people to be so peaceful, is a profound awareness of the nothingness of the world: "This little earthly horizon of a few feet is not that which bounds the view of our religion. Ours is way beyond, and still beyond; beyond the senses, beyond space, and beyond time, away, away beyond, till nothing of this world is left and the universe itself becomes like a drop in the transcendent ocean of the glory of the soul."¹⁸

In 1828, to spread his ideals, Roy had founded the Brahmo Samaj. Later, in 1843, to spread the message of the *upanisads*, Tagore had formalized the Samaj. Even later, in 1866, emphasizing social reform and giving it a Western basis, Sen had broken away from the original Samaj and founded the Brahmo Samaj of India. Likewise, Vivekananda broke away from his Brahmo friends and, much later, in 1897, founded the Ramakrishna Mission. That year, he expressed his vision for the Mission in a speech: "There should be an institution to train teachers who must go about preaching religion and giving secular education to our people; they must carry both," covering "the whole of India."¹⁹ The school would promote "life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas."²⁰ The spiritual heart of the institution would be a temple dedicated to the sacred syllable *om*, something upon which all Hindus can agree.

Surendranath Banerjea and the Indian National Congress

Sen and Vivekananda argued that Hinduism was essentially peaceful, and neither was interested in political revolution. However, the main target of Aurobindo's revolutionary writings was not Sen, whose days of popularity were long gone by the time of Aurobindo's first political writings in 1893. Neither was Vivekananda his target, whom Aurobindo came to admire. Aurobindo's target was neither Sen nor Vivekananda, but the leadership of the Indian National Congress. The Congress was established in 1885 as India's first, modern, political body. Aurobindo despised its aims and methods, but also realized its

potential as a revolutionary body, a potential that Mahatma Gandhi later brought out.

One of the most prominent of the early leaders of the Congress was Surendranath Banerjea. His father had received Western education and Surendranath went to school in England. Afterwards, he became a magistrate in the Indian Civil Service. However, Banerjea had some difficulties with his supervisor, and was dismissed.²¹ He subsequently applied for the English bar, but was denied it. Thus, Banerjea wrote that he “felt with all the passionate warmth of youth that we were helots, hewers of wood and drawers of water in the land of our birth. The personal wrong done to me was an illustration of the helpless impotency of our people.”²²

Whereas Vivekananda was a spiritual figure, Banerjea responded to his disillusionment in the political domain. Having been expelled from the Indian Civil Service and having been denied the English bar, he became a professor of English in Kolkata. He used his position to rally the youth of Kolkata, and in 1876, he formed the India Association to inspire a sense of Indian unity and patriotism. In his autobiography, he claimed to have preached the example of the Italian revolutionary, Giuseppe Mazzini: “I inculcated, with all the emphasis that I could command, the enduring lessons of his noble life, lived for the sake of others, his lofty patriotism, his self-abnegation, and his heroic devotion to the interests of humanity. It was Mazzini, . . . , that I presented to the youth of Bengal. Mazzini had taught Italian unity. We wanted Indian unity.”²³

Although Banerjea became politically active, he was no revolutionary. To begin, in spite of his misfortune, he expressed loyalty to the British Empire: “We are not rebels; we are not treasonably affected towards the Government. We are loyal subjects of Her Majesty the Queen.”²⁴ In addition, like Sen and Vivekananda, he felt that India was essentially a peaceful land. He wanted reform in the administration of India, but he believed that to move in a revolutionary direction would be contrary to India’s history, and would thus be counterproductive. Accordingly, regarding Mazzini’s teachings, he stated that “I discarded his revolutionary teachings as unsuited to the circumstances of India and as fatal to its normal development, along the lines of peaceful and orderly progress.”²⁵

Institutions similar to Banerjea’s India Association were forming across the country. In 1885, the Englishman, A. O. Hume, channeled this growing effort and awareness by establishing the Indian National Congress. Congress delegates met once a year in December in order to draft resolutions which the Congress would forward to the British. Kolkata was a centre of activity for the Congress, but it drew delegates

from across the country with the aim of developing a national consensus. Early leadership praised the Congress as India's first, truly national body: "Diverse we are in origin, in religion, in language, and in our manners and customs, but we are not the less members of the same nation. We live in the same country, we are subjects of the same sovereign, and our good and evil depend, entirely on the state of the Government and the laws passed in this country. . . . We are all bound by the same political bond, and therefore we constitute one nation. I behold in this Congress the dawn of a better and a happier day for India."²⁶

Also, like Banerjea, the Congress professed loyalty to the Empire and had no revolutionary agenda. Its aim was to petition the British for various changes. As one of the key, early leaders, Dadabhai Naoroji stated, "If we really desire to be respected, if we wish our requests to be attended to, if we honestly expect that the English nation will do its duty towards us, we must prove ourselves worthy by showing that we are never unreasonable, never violent, never uncharitable; we must show that we are . . . gentlemen, in the highest sense of the word."²⁷

Later, in 1905, the gentlemanly world of the Congress would be shaken. In order to make the administration of Bengal more manageable, and in order to weaken the power of Bengal's growing, Hindu middle class, the British divided Bengal into several different administrative regions. This outraged many Bengalis, leading to the boycott of British goods and the growth of the *swadeshi* movement, of the promotion of indigenous goods. The majority of the Congress leadership endorsed the boycott and *swadeshi* movements, some, like Banerjea, even became leaders in these movements.

Although Congress, as a whole, endorsed boycott and *swadeshi*, they were divided over aims and approach. The majority of Congress members, the "Moderates," continued to endorse the earlier method of petitioning the British, and they wanted self-rule within the overall context of British rule. However, a newer, younger minority, the Extremists, did not have faith in petition, wanted complete severance from Britain, and aimed to transform a regional protest over partition into a nationwide movement for independence. The Extremists themselves were divided. For instance, Bipin Chandra Pal, who was an early, central spokesperson, envisaged a peaceful and gentlemanly separation between Britain and India.²⁸ Others, like Aurobindo, were deeply cynical towards the British, scoffed at the possibility of a peaceful severance, and felt that violence would be necessary.

The Emergence of a Different Voice

Aurobindo, perhaps ironically, had Brahmo roots. His father, Krishna Dhun Ghose, was an admirer of Devendranath Tagore's close colleague in the Samaj, Rajnarain Bose. Also, Krishna Dhun married Bose's daughter, Swarnalotta, to draw closer to the family. Later, in 1870, Krishna Dhun sailed to England for medical school, and he was on the boat with some Brahmos, including Keshub Chandra Sen. Sen went on a six month, well known speaking tour of England, whereas Ghose went to King's College, Aberdeen University. After completing his studies and returning to India, he would give his third son the name "Aravinda Acroyd Ghose." He took the middle name from the name of his good friend, Annette Ackroyd, who was a onetime collaborator with Sen on women's education. That third son later changed this name to "Aurobindo."²⁹

Krishna Dhun had great interest in the Samaj, but that changed while he was in medical school in Aberdeen. At that time, the debate over Darwin was in full swing. Krishna Dhun took a stance and rejected belief in God. However, he had a new faith: the evolutionary improvement of humankind.³⁰ However, unlike the Western educated, atheistic youth whom Sen had earlier criticized as lethargic, Krishna Dhun was an active man. He was generous with his money and was successful in raising the level of health and sanitation in his district.³¹ In addition, during his time in medical school, Krishna Dhun became convinced of the superiority of English ways. Hence, he adopted "English habits of dress, speech, behaviour, and thought."³² Further, he insisted on English ways and language in his home.³³

Krishna Dhun wanted his boys to obtain the best possible employment, which meant jobs in the Indian Civil Service. In 1879, when Aurobindo was of age seven, Krishna Dhun brought the three boys to England. At that time, English education was essential for having the background to pass the qualifying examinations for the Indian Civil Service. The boys stayed with the Drewett family in Manchester, and the Drewetts agreed to give the boys any religious education, and not to allow exposure to other Indians.³⁴

After being tutored at home, Aurobindo studied at St. Paul's College in London, and he entered King's College, in 1890 to study for the Indian Civil Service. However, in 1892 he repeatedly failed to show up for the horseback riding examinations, and thus disqualified himself. However, a family friend arranged an interview for Aurobindo with the ruler of Baroda, Sayajirao Gaekwar, who was visiting London. The Gaekwar was impressed with Aurobindo and offered him a position. On January 12, 1893, two months after his

father's death, Aurobindo left England, boarding a steamer to Mumbai.³⁵

One of the outstanding features of Aurobindo's life was his dedication to literature. As a boy, and later as an adult, Aurobindo was a voracious reader and excelled in school. At a very early age, he was reading the King James Bible, English poetry, and writing his own poetry. At St. Paul's School and King's College, he buried himself in reading the classics of the English, Italian, German, Spanish, Greek, and Latin languages, reading them in the original languages.³⁶ Later, at King's College, he began learning Sanskrit. For the most part, he studied it independently, by reading the *Mahabharata*.³⁷ He also continued writing poetry, and in 1898, after his return to India, he published his first collection, *Songs to Myrtilla*. The opening lines of the first poem, "Songs to Myrtilla," show his romantic style: "Sweet is the night, sweet and cool / As to parched lips a running pool; / Sweet when the flowers have fallen asleep / And only moonlit rivulets creep."³⁸

Aurobindo's interest in revolution began at an early age, and was initially sparked by his interest in romantic poetry. Around age eleven, when reading Shelley's fictional account of a revolt against a tyrannical ruler, *The Revolt of Islam*, he felt a vague desire to work for "World-change."³⁹ Not long after that, a jealous magistrate transferred Aurobindo's father to a region where he was isolated from his friends and contacts. He became bitter and regularly sent to Aurobindo newspaper clippings about British abuses of power.⁴⁰ Thereby, according to Aurobindo, his vague desire to participate in "World-change" "canalised into the idea of the liberation of his own country."⁴¹ Around the same time, as a student at St. Paul's College in London, he learned about European revolutionary history and read Giuseppe Mazzini.⁴²

Not only did he have a desire for revolution, he developed an outright dislike for aspects of English culture and society. For instance, he did not like Christianity's history of persecution, the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, and the intolerance that he and his brothers experienced from one of their guardians.⁴³ Later, in 1892, Dadabhai Naoroji, one of the key Congress leaders, was elected to the British Parliament. Aurobindo did not share the joy of other Indian students at Cambridge. He was skeptical that cooperation with the British would lead to anything significantly beneficial to India.⁴⁴ In a summary statement about his years in England, he said, "Few friendships were made . . . and none very intimate; the mental atmosphere was not found congenial. . . . There was an attachment to English and European thought and literature, but not to England as a country; he had no

ties there and did not make England his adopted country."⁴⁵ Elsewhere, in much stronger words, he said that he developed "a strong dislike for the British."⁴⁶

Although fed up, overall, with English people, religion, and politics, Aurobindo had little, if any, exposure in his early years to Indian people and culture. That changed at Cambridge, where he made friends with other Indian students and joined the cultural group, the Indian Majlis. In addition, his coursework for the Indian Civil Service exposed him to India's classic schools of philosophy. Intrigued, he read the *Isa Upanisad* on his own in 1892.⁴⁷ Sankara, a classic interpreter of the *upanisads*, is generally understood to have taught that the world is illusory next to the supreme reality of Brahman. Inspired by the *Isa Upanisad*, Aurobindo tried to have an experience of Brahman as the sole reality: "I felt the One only as true; it was an experience absolutely Shankarite in its sense. It lasted only for a short time."⁴⁸ This exposure to Indian philosophy seemed to have moved him past the agnosticism he had professed earlier in his life. However, at that time he was not a spiritual aspirant—his spiritual interests would gradually develop in the following decade.⁴⁹

After having been away from India since age seven, Aurobindo landed in Mumbai in 1893. Shortly after that, he arrived in Baroda. The environment was very different from the English environment in which he had grown up. Yet, instead of feeling the culture shock, Aurobindo felt a "natural attraction to Indian culture and ways of life and a temperamental feeling and preference for all that was Indian."⁵⁰ His easy adjustment was probably due in large part to his dislike of England, and to the fact that he was not a stranger to material poverty, having lived for a while in poverty in London.

In his first years in India, Aurobindo worked in a variety of jobs for the government of Baroda. These involved much paperwork and were uninteresting to him. His real passion was literature, and in his first year in India, he translated two chapters of the *Mahabharata* and began a third.⁵¹ In addition, after a reunion with his family in early 1894, which Rajnarain Bose attended, he began studying the language of his family, Bengali. He did this by reading the contemporary, popular authors, Madhusdan Dutt and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.⁵²

In 1893 and 1894, Aurobindo contributed two series of articles to the Mumbai newspaper, *Indu Prakash*: "New Lamps for Old" and "Bankim Chandra Chatterji." Extremism had not yet emerged as a movement in the Congress, but in these articles, Aurobindo expressed an early form of Indian political extremism. This included a disenchantment with the West and a conviction that Indians needed to rely on their own, internal resources. In "Chatterji," which was a

memorial to the recently deceased novelist, Aurobindo took social reformers, like Sen, to task for imitating the West. Sen gave attention to the education of women. Although not expressing the position that women should not be educated, Aurobindo mocked the results of such efforts. All that the reformers had done was to create a “superficial being fit only for flirtation, match-making and playing on the piano.” Thereby they destroyed all that was admirable in these Indian women, spoiling “the rich stuffs given over to their shaping.”⁵³

Although discouraged by Western imitators like Sen, Aurobindo saw a route forward for India, a route opened by Chatterjee. The latter had written many stories about life in Bengal, and thereby, in Aurobindo’s estimation had transformed the Bengali language into “a rich, musical and flexible organ vibrating to every human emotion and expressive of every beautiful or noble thought.”⁵⁴ In this way, Chatterjee’s novels were giving Bengalis a sense of pride and common identity, and were thereby transforming Bengal into a “nation.”⁵⁵ This nationalism was rooted not in adulation of the West, but in a love for Bengali heritage: “We see the embryo of a new generation soon to be with us . . . , a generation national to a fault, loving Bengal and her new glories. . . . The desire for a nobler and more inspiring patriotism is growing more intense.”⁵⁶

Aurobindo took social reformism to task in “Bankim Chandra Chatterji” and in “New Lamps” he took the Congress to task. The latter was his first, formal political statement. Given the knowledge he had gained through his Western education about the history of European revolutions, and given his awareness of contemporary issues in Ireland, he was very cynical about the efforts of Congress to petition the British: “Why, these gentlemen can never have studied any history at all except that of England. . . . we know that the first step of that fortunate country [France] towards progress was not through any decent and orderly expansion, but through a purification by blood and fire. It was not a convocation of respectable citizens, but the vast and ignorant proletariat, that emerged from a prolonged and almost coeval apathy and blotted out in five terrible years the accumulated oppression of thirteen centuries.”⁵⁷ This series was discontinued after the owner of *Indu Prakash* was warned about the possibility of going to jail.⁵⁸

Aurobindo Ghose and Surendranath Banerjea had similar backgrounds. Both had anglicized fathers, and both were educated in the West. Further, in conjunction with personal experiences, both became embittered towards the British. However, whereas Banerjea claimed he did not endorse the revolutionary aspects of Mazzini’s message, Aurobindo advocated revolutionary violence in “New

Lamps" in 1893 and 1894. Later, in 1902 and 1903, Aurobindo and his younger brother, Barin, worked with others to organize revolutionary groups in Bengal. These groups, under the cover of moral and cultural aims, taught their members skills needed for an armed uprising.⁵⁹ However, there was little interest in this at the time, and the groups did not last. Aurobindo reported that "the people were steeped in pessimism, a black weight of darkness weighing over the whole country."⁶⁰

Legitimizing Revolutionary Violence

The Battlefield of Kurukcetra

Aurobindo first began reading the *Mahabharata* in college.⁶¹ This monumental epic relates a tale of a war between estranged cousins in India's ancient, legendary, royal Bhârata family. In a dice game, the Kauravas cheated their cousins, the Pandavas, out of their kingdom, and exiled them for thirteen years. After the thirteen years, the Pandavas returned and assembled their allies to wage war to reclaim the kingdom. Aurobindo began reading the *Mahabharata* in college, in India he continued to study it, and began reading other Sanskrit classics (Heehs 2008: 37, 49). From 1898 to 1902, he wrote a series of essays on the *Mahâbhârata* and on Kalidasa's poetry.⁶²

Around 1902, Aurobindo wrote "Notes on the *Mahabharata*."⁶³ The essay is mainly a literary analysis of the great epic, and a response to current criticism of it. However, Aurobindo addressed other issues in the essay. To begin, like Sen and Vivekananda, Aurobindo was disappointed in his countrymen, feeling that many of them were in a state of impotence and lethargy. However, the *Mahabharata* does not portray India as an impotent society. Rather, in Aurobindo's words, it shows "a great Aryan civilization with the types, ideas, aims and passions of a heroic and pregnant period."⁶⁴ He wrote that the excessive otherworldliness of Buddhism was a cause of the decline of that earlier, grand civilization.⁶⁵ He believed that the *Mahabharata* is a message which can help India rise again, for it has "a formative ethical and religious spirit which is absolutely corrective to the faults that . . . mar to the present day the Hindu character."⁶⁶ Sen's Brahmo Samaj of India tried to motivate Indians and reform India, but Aurobindo wrote, "No Indianised Christianity, no fair rehash of that pale & consumptive shadow English Theism, will suffice to save us."⁶⁷ In contrast to an "Indianised Christianity," the *Mahabharata* offers a solution through one "who speaks our own language, thinks our own thoughts."⁶⁸

The "ethical . . . spirit" which Aurobindo had in mind is probably the *Mahabharata's* message of action.⁶⁹ Given that he had to fight his

cousins, Arjuna, one of the Pandavas, expressed his unwillingness to fight. However, the Pandavas' close friend and incarnation of God, Krsna, was not sympathetic. He taught Arjuna a message of unflinching dedication to duty. He framed that message in a wider discussion of the critical importance of action. As God, Krsna has "no task at all to accomplish in these three worlds. . . . I have nothing to obtain that I do not have already. Yet I move in action. If I were not to move in action, untiringly, at all times, . . . , people all around would follow my lead. These people would collapse if I did not act."⁷⁰ (*Bhagavad Gita* 3.22-24; trans. Buitenen).

Aurobindo recommended the *Mahabharata* for its message of action, and addressed the specific act of waging war. Before the great war, Samjaya, who was an advisor to the Kaurava monarch Dhrtarastra, raised a moral scruple. Approaching the Pandavas, he praised their qualities: "You are gifted with every virtue, ye Parthas, /With steadiness, mildness and honesty /You are high-born, gentle and generous"⁷¹ He tried to persuade them that, given these qualities, war was not befitting of them.⁷²

Krsna responded by pointing out that the different castes have different duties, and that it is the task of the warrior caste to "offer the subjects protection." Further, when land is "cruelly" coveted by another and power is taken, "this shall be a cause of war."⁷³ Samjaya praised the Pandavas for being "gentle and generous," but it is not right, according to Krsna, to be gentle and generous in the face of harm done.⁷⁴ In fact, in the face of harm done, such qualities can be covers for cowardice: "The Christian & Buddhistic doctrine of turning the other cheek to the smiter. . . . is a gospel for cowards & weaklings. Babes & sucklings may practise it because they must, but with others it is a hypocrisy."⁷⁵

The above argument is the core of Aurobindo's position on war in "Notes on the *Mahabharata*." In addition, he addressed the notion that Indians are essentially a peaceful people and Hinduism a peaceful religion. He noted that India's great epic, one which Banerjea himself recommended to Indians for its moral lessons, is a tale of war.⁷⁶ It "frankly accepts war & empire as the result of man's natural lust for dominion."⁷⁷ In addition, whereas Banerjea believed that a revolutionary approach would be "fatal" to India's "normal development," the Pandavas, whether real or fictional characters, used force to reclaim India.⁷⁸

Whereas Banerjea had mentioned India's "peaceful and orderly progress," Vivekananda stated that in India humanity has reached the highest levels of "gentleness, . . . generosity, . . . calmness."⁷⁹ It is possible that Aurobindo agreed with Vivekananda on that point.

However, if so, he clearly did not accept that as the entire picture. To begin, although, the Pandavas were gentle and generous, Kṛṣṇa taught them that peacefulness was not the right response to the Kauravas. Further, whereas in India “the greatest princes” may trace their lineage to a gentle sage, Aurobindo would point out that although a prince might admire a peaceful *brahmin*, a *ksatriya* is all the same a *ksatriya*. As a prince he has a different code of conduct, especially in times of war.⁸⁰

Aurobindo also had a response, in “Notes on the *Mahabharata*,” to Sen’s idea that the notion of a divine immanent in all things leads to peacefulness. It is true that the *Upanisads* portray the *atman* as beyond the trammels of worldly existence. As the *Bṛhadaranyaka Upanisad* states: “He cannot be grasped. He is undecaying. . . . He has nothing sticking to him. . . . He is not bound; . . . he neither trembles in fear nor suffers injury.”⁸¹ However, the *atman* is so far removed from the trammels of the world that it is unaffected by good and bad actions. In fact, the wise one who has realized the *atman* is “no longer stained by bad deeds.”⁸² Or, in Aurobindo’s words, when “the soul becomes conscious of its identity with God” it “is untouched by either sin or virtue.” This fact, “in the hands of a hero it can save the world.”⁸³ It prepares him or her for seemingly horrific actions, such as the slaughter between the Kauravas and Pandavas on the battlefield of Kuruksetra. In other words, although it is true that the *atman* is pacific, the actions of the realized sage are not necessarily pacific. Rather, it is his or her mind that is pacific in the midst of both action and inaction.

Aurobindo illustrated these ideas by discussing the *Ramayana*. The central character, Rama, was exiled from the kingdom by his father, Dasaratha. The father was compelled to do this by one of his three wives, a wife who wanted to see her own son, Bharata, have the throne. Later, while in exile, Rama’s wife, Sita, was abducted, and Rāma raised an army to regain her. Aurobindo points out that going into exile was to Rama’s detriment, and rescuing his wife was to his benefit. However, he did both detrimental and beneficial actions with the “same unflinching energy.”⁸⁴ He did so because both were his duties, the former his duty as a son and the latter as a husband. “With the perfect Hindu, the feeling of self has been merged in the sense of the universe; he does his duty equally whether it happens to promote the interests of others or his own.”⁸⁵

The Temple of the Mother

In his first instance of addressing the morality of war, Aurobindo delved into the *Mahabharata* and somewhat into the *Upanisads*. In the second instance, *Bhawani Mandir*, translated as “The Temple of the

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Mother," Aurobindo drew upon a very different stream of Hinduism: Saktism. In the *Upanisads* and in the *Mahabharata*, the ultimate reality, *brahman*, is often portrayed as a quiescent ground. *Brahman* may be quiescent, the later, medieval texts, the *purânas* assign to *brahman* an active power, Sakti. For instance, the *Siva Purana* identifies Siva with *brahman*, and his spouse, Parvati, with Sakti. Sakti is the dynamic power through whom Siva acts.

The *Siva Purana* expresses these ideas in stating, "Just as the moon does not shine without the moonlight so also though existing Siva does not shine without Sakti. Just as the sun does not exist without its light nor does the light thereof exist without the sun, so also there is mutual dependence between Sakti and Saktiman."⁸⁶ In that way, as David Kinsley explains, Sakti is "the creative force of the cosmos and the underlying potency of things."⁸⁷ Together, Siva and Sakti bring the world into being: "Just as no boy is born without parents, so also the universe of mobile and immobile beings does not originate without Siva and Siva."⁸⁸ Further, whereas the *Upanisads* often stress the distinction between *brahman* and the world, Sakti is understood to be one with the world. This is because she is the mother of all.

In addition to a creative aspect, in the *puranas*, Sakti also has a destructive aspect. For instance, in the *Linga Purana*, Parvati, the lovely and gentle spouse of Siva, fashions the horrific, bloodthirsty goddess, Kâlî, to destroy the demon, Daruka.⁸⁹ In terms of legend and story, Kali destroys malevolent forces. However, in more abstract and philosophical portions of the *puranas*, Kali is the power through whom Siva destroys the world.⁹⁰ A different set of literature, the *tantras*, regard Kali, rather than Siva, as the supreme reality.

In some of the *tantras*, those known as *vamamarga*, or "left-handed," Kali is worshipped through socially transgressive acts. For instance, there are blood sacrifices, worship in cremation grounds, and worship involving human corpses. One might wonder about the significance of regarding the supreme deity in terms of such horridness. A key issue is that Kali's horridness implies power. For instance, Heinrich Zimmer argues that socially transgressive acts release an enormous amount of psychological energy: "How much lies blocked up in every man by the social order! For the vital force (*shakti*) in each of us would overflow all measure were it to fulfill its nature."⁹¹ David Kinsley argues that Kali's transgressive character opens to worshippers the feeling of new possibilities: "To meditate on the dark goddess, or to devote oneself to her, is to step out of the everyday world of predictable dharmic order and enter a world of reversals, opposites, and contrasts and in doing so to wake up to new possibilities and new frames of reference."⁹² Likewise, cremation grounds are portals

to the unseen world of the spirits and their various powers. "It is where all human beings eventually and inevitably make contact with the spirit world as they pass from life to death. . . . It is a liminal place, betwixt and between worlds, where radical transformations take place and contact between worlds is relatively common."⁹³

In his 1905 pamphlet, *Bhawani Mandir*, Aurobindo drew upon Saktic themes.⁹⁴ Firstly, he considered Sakti in terms of an empowering energy that could inspire Indians. Secondly, although there is no evidence that he engaged in or endorsed the above, socially transgressive acts, he regarded revolutionary violence in terms of the possibilities it could open.⁹⁵ The pamphlet gives a plan for an order of monks who would be dedicated to the war goddess, Bhavânî. The monks would steep themselves in yogic practices, but would also fan out across the country, working in practical ways for social and educational uplift. Although the pamphlet does not explicitly mention revolution, Aurobindo later explained that the goals of social and educational uplift were a cover for the "revolutionary preparation of the country."⁹⁶

There were several influences behind *Bhawani Mandir*. To begin, as seen above, Aurobindo began reading the Bengali novelist, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, in 1894, and greatly admired his role in a revival of Bengali pride. In one of his later novels, *Anandamamh*, Chatterjee had portrayed a fictional order of monks that worship the land of Bengal as a goddess. The order fights for its freedom from both Muslim and British control. The monks sang a poem, "Bande Mâtaram," which praises the land of Bengal as a goddess, and later became a basis for India's national anthem. Like the monks of *Anandamamh*, the monks of Aurobindo's *Bhawani Mandir* would praise the goddess.

Swami Vivekananda and his former disciple, Sister Nivedita, were also important influences. In 1897, Vivekananda had gone on his famous speaking tour of India. That year, he had founded the Ramakrishna Mission, with its emphasis on combining contemplation and action, on social and educational uplift, and in spreading out across India. In 1900, Nivedita had published the classic book, *Kali: The Mother*, which was an explanation of this destructive goddess to a contemporary audience. By 1902, Aurobindo read Nivedita's book, and was "very much enamoured."⁹⁷ At some point in the following years, Aurobindo was reading Vivekananda and his master, Ramakrishna. The latter was, among other things, a well-known devotee of Kâlî.⁹⁸ In 1904, around the time that he composed *Bhawani Mandir*, Aurobindo claimed to have had an experience of Kâlî before a temple statue, feeling "a living Presence there."⁹⁹

In 1905, Aurobindo and his revolutionary friends in Baroda were

experimenting with spiritualistic phenomena, which was popular at the time. On at least one occasion, they tried to contact Ramakrishna. Once, they asked the spectre, who had appeared, what they should do to improve the country. The reply was to “build a temple.”¹⁰⁰ *Bhawani Mandir* was the result, and thereby Aurobindo was touched by the Brahmo enthusiasm, transmitted through Vivekananda, for establishing a new religious institution for the uplift of the country.

In *Bhawani Mandir*, Aurobindo drew upon the empowering aspect of Sakti. He complained, as Sen and Vivekananda had earlier said, that Indians had become lethargic: “Our race has” become like “an old man . . . paralysed by simple sluggishness, senile timidity, senile feebleness. If India is to survive, she must be made young again.” Recalling the earlier days of glory portrayed in the *Mahabharata*, he wrote that India’s “soul must become, as it was in the old times, . . . , an ocean of action or of force.”¹⁰¹

To revivify India, Sen had recommended prayer and the example of Jesus, and Vivekananda a message of strength through the *atman*. Like Sen, Aurobindo recommended religious devotion and like Vivekananda, he recommended strength through the *atman*.¹⁰² However, unlike Sen, Aurobindo did not advocate devotion to the god of English theism, but to Sakti. In language somewhat similar to Sen’s Christian language of regeneration and rebirth, Aurobindo wrote about a rebirth through Sakti: “We have to create strength where it did not exist before; we have to change our natures, and become new men with new hearts, to be born again. . . . Strength can only be created by drawing it from the internal and inexhaustible reservoirs of the Spirit, from that Adya-Shakti of the Eternal which is the fountain of all new existence.”¹⁰³

In terms of a rebirth, Aurobindo drew not only on the general idea of Sakti as dynamic power, but also on the specific notion of Kali’s transgressive power. He noted that many rapid changes were taking place in the world, such as the rise of Japan as a world power, and Japan’s defeat of Russia’s Baltic fleet. He described these movements in abstract terms: “Huge masses of strength rise before our vision, tremendous, swift and inexorable forces, . . . , terrible sweeping columns of force. . . . The Shakti of war.”¹⁰⁴ These destructive forces open up new possibilities; when Sakti is operating destructively she is “remoulding, creating. She is pouring Her spirit into the old; She is whirling into life the new.”¹⁰⁵ India needs to rouse itself; it can, it will catch the waves of changes sweeping across the world. New possibilities lie before it, if it does.

Bhawani Mandir addresses, although more implicitly than explicitly, the moral issues surrounding violence. Earlier, in “Notes on the *Volume 40 Number 1&2*

Mahabharata," Aurobindo challenged the idea that Indian people and history are essentially peaceful by bringing up India's *ksatriya* traditions. Later, in *Bhawani Mandir*, he brought up Kali worship, which also has a long history of association with the *ksatriya* caste. Further, just as he had pointed out in "Notes on the *Mahabharata*" that the *atman* is beyond both good and evil, in *Bhawani Mandir*, Aurobindo pointed out that the divine is behind not only creation but also destruction. Sakti is not only "Lakshmi" but "Kali," and from her springs forth both "Devas" and "Asuras."¹⁰⁶ In fact, "destruction itself is creation," since the former can open up new possibilities.¹⁰⁷ Presumably, a destructive act by a human being may be the act of the divine itself.

Lastly, Aurobindo addressed, whether intentionally or unintentionally, Vivekananda's idea that Hinduism is essentially non-violent. Vivekananda had believed that the heart of Indian spirituality is a profound awareness of the nothingness of the world. This is in accord with the *advaitic* traditions on which Vivekananda drew. However, whereas classic *advaitic* schools consider the world as nothing next to *brahman*, in some of the *puranas*, Sakti bridges *brahman* and the world. Sakti is the mother of the world, and is one with it. Many centuries later, consistent with this, but nevertheless innovative, Chatterjee identified the land of Bengal with the goddess. Thus, Bengal is not nothingness next to *brahman*, but is divine. It is thus worth fighting over, and Chatterjee's *Anandamamh* is a tale of warfare. Continuing in that vein, Aurobindo wrote in *Bhawani Mandir* about all of India as divine. A nation "is not a piece of earth, nor a figure of speech, nor a fiction of the mind. It is a mighty Shakti, composed of the Shaktis of all the millions of units that make up the nation. . . . The Shakti we call India, Bhawani Bharati, is the living unity of the Shaktis of three hundred millions of people."¹⁰⁸

Hail to the Mother

Aurobindo's "Notes on the *Mahabharata*" was not published in his lifetime. However, *Bhawani Mandir* had an influence. It circulated among the public, and Aurobindo's younger brother, Barin, attempted to organize a revolutionary order similar to the one described in the pamphlet. Barin's group committed a series of terroristic acts, including the famous 1908 Muzzafarpur Bombing. Yet, although the plan of forming a revolutionary group was carried out, Heehs states that the ideas in *Bhawani Mandir* were "too cerebral to excite potential revolutionaries."¹⁰⁹ Likewise, Samanta states that it was a minor influence among Bengali revolutionaries and that "the revolutionaries in the rest of India had hardly ever read the booklet."¹¹⁰ Aurobindo

himself distanced himself from the text, explaining decades later that “it was more Barin’s idea than his.”¹¹¹ However, in the period, 1906-1908, Aurobindo found his voice as a political activist and thinker. He did so as an editor of the revolutionary newspaper, *Bande Mataram*, or “Hail to the Mother.”

Much transpired in Bengal between the writing of *Bhawani Mandir* in 1905 and becoming an editor of *Bande Mataram* in 1906 and the chief editor in the following year. Earlier, in 1902-1904, when Aurobindo tried to organize revolutionary groups, there was little interest in resisting the British. However, in 1905, the British made the final announcement of their plans to partition the land of Bengal into smaller, administrative regions. This outraged many Bengalis, and the boycott and *swadeshi* movements swept through Bengal, the newly created East Bengal, and other parts of north India. Aurobindo and his companions in Baroda formed a local association to promote *swadeshi*.¹¹²

As an expression of *swadeshi*, some Bengalis established Indian schools, known as “national schools,” as alternatives to British education. The wealthy Kolkata entrepreneur, Subodh Chandra Mallik, selected Aurobindo to be the principal of a new college. This involvement brought Aurobindo closer to the workings of the Indian National Congress, which by this time had developed two distinct factions: Moderates and Extremists. As discussed earlier, the Moderates utilized petition, *swadeshi*, and boycott, and aimed for self-rule within an overall context of British rule. The Extremists, however, had no patience with petition, and wanted a complete severance from Britain. Bipin Chandra Pal was one of the key, early leaders of the Extremists, and had started *Bande Mataram*. Aurobindo met him and others and in Mallik’s home in 1905. In 1906, Aurobindo moved from Baroda to Kolkata to be more involved, and he joined the editorial staff of *Bande Mataram*.¹¹³

Whereas in “Notes on the *Mahabharata*” and *Bhawani Mandir*, Aurobindo relied on religious or spiritual sources, in *Bande Mataram*, Aurobindo relied mainly on political philosophy and biting cynicism. In his first, surviving, contribution, he criticized the Indian community in South Africa for their support of the British in the Zulu Rebellion. Many, including Mahatma Gandhi, hoped to gain better treatment from the British by this demonstration of loyalty. However, after the conflict, the government increased restrictions on Indians, and Britain did nothing to block that. Aurobindo criticized the Indians, stating that “by their act they associated themselves with the colonists in their oppression of the natives of the country.” The Indians “have only themselves to thank if they also are oppressed by the same narrow

and arrogant colonial spirit. . . . So long as the Indian nation at home does not build itself into a strong and self-governing people, they can expect nothing from Englishmen in their colonies except oppression and contumely."¹¹⁴

The English and some Indians often touted loyalty to England as a virtue. However, in his fourth surviving contribution to *Bande Mataram*, Aurobindo attacked this notion. On the Indian side, "Loyalty in the sense in which the term is usually used, . . . cannot naturally exist or grow in a country that is subject to the domination of another."¹¹⁵ On the English side, "that the British Government in India never set a two-pence value on the loyalty of their Indian subjects,—though they are always anxious to proclaim it from the housetops." To prove this point, Aurobindo turned to the "history of their past transactions with us," including the fact that any race in India could carry a gun without a license, except Indians themselves, and the exclusion of Indians from "all positions of exceptional trust and responsibility."¹¹⁶ In another contribution, he mocked the efforts of some Congress leaders to discourage protest for the sake of diplomacy: "The diplomacy of the ostrich hiding its head in the sand? . . . If the shades of Cavour and Bismarck have leisure to listen to such senilities, what a smile of immortal contempt must pass over their lips as they watch the 'diplomacy' of our leaders!"¹¹⁷

Previously, Aurobindo had aimed for an armed insurrection. Later, given the effectiveness of *swadeshi* and boycott in challenging the British and rousing Indians, Aurobindo strongly encouraged these, rather than violence. Yet, he continued to believe firmly that Indians had to be ready to use force. The British used force against the protests, and Aurobindo believed that Indians had to be ready to respond to force with force. He argued in 1907, in "The Doctrine of Passive Resistance," that passive resistance is meaningless unless it is backed up by the possibility of "active resistance": "Passive resistance cannot build up a strong and great nation unless it is masculine, bold and ardent in its spirit and ready at any moment and at the slightest notice to supplement itself with active resistance. We do not want to develop a nation of women who know only how to suffer and not how to strike."¹¹⁸

Aurobindo addressed the morality of striking back. His main consideration was not religious or philosophical. Rather, it was the basic human conviction that one has a right to defend oneself. He was convinced that England was draining the life from India, and compared the survival of the nation to the survival of an individual: "Any and every means of self-preservation becomes right and justifiable,—just as it is lawful for a man who is being strangled to rid

himself of the pressure on his throat by any means in his power."¹¹⁹

Aurobindo supported his main argument in "Doctrine of Passive Resistance" with considerations from "Notes on the *Mahabharata*" and *Bhawani Mandir*. To begin, what is right in one situation may be wrong in another: "The morality of war is different from the morality of peace." Virtue in one context may be cowardice in another: "To shrink from bloodshed and violence under such circumstances is a weakness deserving as severe a rebuke as Srikrishna addressed to Arjuna when he shrank from the colossal civil slaughter on the field of Kurukshetra."¹²⁰ Aurobindo further stressed this by drawing upon a theme from *Bhawani Mandir*. When Indians suffer repression, it is not just human beings that are offended, but the divine itself: "To submit to illegal or violent methods of coercion, . . . is . . . to sin against the divinity within ourselves and the divinity in our motherland."¹²¹

Also drawing upon "Notes on the *Mahabharata*," Aurobindo argued that morality depends not only upon situation, but social group. In the editorial, "Many Delusions," he agreed that there is a high standard of non-violence in Hinduism. This is the forgiveness of "injuries" and the acceptance of "honour or insult, wrong and injustice, with a calm and untroubled mind." However, that moral standard applies to the *brahmins*, whereas "the first virtue of the Kshatriya is not to bow his neck to an unjust yoke but to protect his weak and suffering countrymen against the oppressor and welcome death in a just and righteous battle." Furthermore, *brahminical* values are relevant to the spiritual goal of liberation from the world, whereas the governance of the country, historically, belonged to the *ksatriyas*.¹²²

Aurobindo not only wrote that morality depends upon situation and social group, but that strife itself can belong to the divine. Aurobindo pointed out that "certain class of minds shrink from aggressiveness as if it were a sin."¹²³ He addressed this sentiment in "The Writing on the Wall" by drawing upon a further theme from *Bhawani Mandir*, although in general and attenuated way. Struggle is inscribed in the nature of reality itself, and without struggle there is no progress:

When things violent or fearful take place let no one be alarmed or discouraged—they also are "His goings forth". . . . If you want to get anything grand and beautiful out of her [nature] you must go through the process through which a piece of stone passes before it is endowed with shape, beauty and meaning. The fertilising river rolls down stones, breaks through the impediments, rends as under the surface of the earth before it bears on its bosom the argosies and crowns the bordering lands with plenty. Those who cannot look this sternness of nature in the face are not destined for things good, noble and high.¹²⁴

Conclusion

In the nineteenth century, Vivekananda argued the spiritual superiority of India to the West by portraying Hinduism as essentially non-violent and the West as a hotbed of violence. Aurobindo, who was raised without religious instruction and was originally an agnostic, had no interest, originally, with the spiritual arena. Rather, he wanted freedom in the political domain. Politically involved in the first decade of the twentieth century, Aurobindo tried to inspire Indians with the goal of independence, to encourage them to resist the British, and to prepare them to use violence. As a part of this undertaking, he had to address moral and religious scruples about violence.

Aurobindo's core argument was that a country has a right to expel foreign domination with violence, just as a victim has a right to use violence against the person strangling him or her. He bolstered this with other considerations. For instance, the *Mahabharata* is a tale of war and espouses violence depending upon the situation and the social group to which one belongs. Further, although men like Vivekananda argued that the *advaitic* doctrine of unity is the foundation of love and brotherhood, Aurobindo gave a different perspective on this doctrine. Finally, inspired in part by Saktism, Aurobindo argued that what is now violence and discord can be a part of a larger process from which harmony will emerge. Reality is in a process of change and becoming, and the possibility of something greater and better exists in that change and becoming.

Regarding violence, there is the moral question of its justification. There is also the historical question of whether it is wise in the situation. Amal Tripathi aptly states that the agitation of 1906-1908 began "with a bang" and ended "with a whimper" when the British arrested its leaders.¹²⁵ Later in that century, Gandhi and other leaders were repeatedly arrested, but the movement did not die out but grew stronger. Sumit Sarkar argues that the fundamental flaw of 1906-1908 was a failure to reach out to the entire society, especially to the peasant class and to the Muslims. The peasants and Muslims were not convinced, as a whole, that the *swadeshi* and boycott movements were in their best interests.¹²⁶

It is highly significant that Aurobindo wrote: "The Doctrine of Passive Resistance" in the wake of riots at Comilla, Mogra, and Ghatiara.¹²⁷ These riots involved Hindus who supported *swadeshi* and Muslims who did not. Rather than writing in support of violence, it would have been wiser, at that time, to reach out to Muslims and determine the reasons why they did not support *swadeshi*. Aurobindo mentioned "hooliganism" and an attempt by opponents of *swadeshi* to

coopt Muslim antipathies against the Hindus.¹²⁸ However, Sarkar casts the issue in terms of tensions between wealthy Hindu landlords and Muslim tenants, and Heehs mentions the hardship of Muslims, who tended to be poorer, in paying the higher prices for *swadeshi* goods.¹²⁹

In spite of the limitations of 1906-1908, Aurobindo made important contributions to the nationalist movement. He helped to rouse Indians from complacency and to steel them for the bloody struggles that lay ahead. Regarding violence, Aurobindo's point was that unless backed up by force, passive resistance would be meaningless. Mahatma Gandhi recognized that point, and thus he developed the idea of "active non-violence," of using non-violence as a method of confrontation rather than retreat. As he wrote in *Hind Swaraj*, about three years after Aurobindo's "Passive Resistance," "Passive resistance, that is, soul-force, is matchless. It is superior to the force of arms. . . . Wherein is courage required – in blowing others to pieces from behind a cannon or with a smiling face to approach a cannon and to be blown to pieces?"¹³⁰ Such non-violence went beyond the non-violence criticized by Aurobindo, for it was not a cover for cowardice or bourgeois complacency.

Aurobindo withdrew from the nationalist movement in 1910, beginning his well-known period of residence in Pondicherry. He explained that he wanted to focus on his new, spiritual experiences, that India's independence was inevitable, and that "there would be no need of armed insurrection and that the secret preparation for it could be dropped without injury to the nationalist cause."¹³¹ Although no longer campaigning for either independence or violence, he continued to work to disabuse people of the notion that spirituality and the horrible aspects of life are necessarily opposed. As he wrote, probably in his first decade in Pondicherry: "It is only a few religions which have had the courage to say without any reserve, like the Indian, that this enigmatic World-Power is one Deity, one Trinity, to lift up the image of the Force that acts in the world in the figure not only of the beneficent Durga, but of the terrible Kâlî in her blood-stained dance of destruction and to say, 'This too is the Mother; this also know to be God; this too, if thou hast the strength, adore.'¹³²

Later, in his great work, *The Life Divine*, such themes appeared again. Speaking in broad and abstract terms, Aurobindo wrote of strife and struggle as potentially part of an overall process of development. Probably writing during the second half of the second decade of the twentieth century, he stated: "the universe begins from the concealment of Sachchidananda in that which seems to be its own opposite and its self-finding even amid the terms of that opposite... infinite unity loses itself in the appearance of a chaos of multiplicity

and emerges in a discord of forces and beings which seek to recover unity by possessing, dissolving and devouring each other. In this creation the real Sachchidananda has to emerge."¹³³

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Gandhi and Bhakti Movement in Medieval India

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ABSTRACT

Medieval India witnessed Bhakti Movement. There were saints and poets in it. They were devoted to their God and wrote about Him. Some of them preached brotherhood of man and the oneness of God irrespective of religion. This led them to be critical of the caste system. They composed hymns which became popular. Their devotees were from different castes and creeds. They made an impact on Gandhi. He referred to their teachings in his prayer meetings and speeches. He quoted these saint-poets when he launched his political and social movement. Hence, their influence on Gandhi needs to be studied.

Key words: Bhakti movement, Non-cooperation movement, Tulsidas, Nanak, Kabir, Chaitanya and Mira.

Introduction

GANDHI HAD SPIRITUAL interests and was fascinated by the saints and poets of the Bhakti Movement in Medieval India. He entertained a high opinion of them. He appreciated their contrite heart and spiritualism. He believed that their writings came from their heart and that they did not seek laurels for themselves. Nor did they think of enriching the languages in which they wrote. He read their writings whenever he could and quoted them in support of his philosophy of life and activities. This has been discussed in the pages to come. Although the number of these saints and poets is large, Gandhi talked about only some of them. His comments on each of them have been studied here. They have been mentioned in

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a chronological sequence.

I. Kabir (1455-1518)

He was the son of a Brahmin widow left by the bank of a lake and picked up by a julahai (weaver) couple. He was engaged in weaving from childhood but took interest in bhakti. He was married and had a son and daughter. He spent most of his time in Kashi and its vicinity.¹

Gandhi often quoted from the works of Kabir. One of his favourite hymns which he included in his daily prayer book was by Kabir. Its opening words were:²

“Says Kabir, when I was born
I cried and the world laughed.
I will do such deeds that when I die
I will laugh and the world will cry.”

In *Ashram Bhajanavali*, a collection of devotional songs which formed a part of the morning and evening prayers at his Ashrams, he quoted from the works of saint-poets. Three illustrations of his quotes from Kabir are mentioned below:³

- (i) “Listen all ye good people, the only safety lies in seeking the protection of God.” (August 26, 1930.)
- (ii) “Listen O good men, there is no wailing after complete-surrender.” (August 27, 1930).
- (iii) “He on whose lips is not the name of God has lived in vain.” (September 2, 1930).

When Gandhi was imprisoned in Yeravda Central Jail, Pune he read numerous books. In his jail diary he noted under September 20, 1922, “Finished reading Kabir’s poems.” He said: “Kabir, in his homely telling way, has described the treasures of the humble. It is not he that exalteth himself, but he that humbleth himself that shall see God, says Kabir. We have to be humble like the ant and not proud like the elephant.”⁴ On October 8, 1924 Gandhi undertook a 21-day fast in Delhi. At the time of breaking it, the Gita was read to him and one of Kabir’s hymns was also sung to him in which Kabir calls himself the chief among the sinners and that God alone is his refuge.⁵ On July 1, 1930, Gandhi was sent to Yeravda Prison in Poona. He translated lines of Kabir in his cell some of which are given below:⁶

“He who is valiant of heart fleeth not from the face of peril,
And he who fleeth from peril is craven and base:
Behold, the battle is joined,
Fierce is the onslaught.”

In his fight for the abolition of untouchability, Gandhi invoked the

name of Kabir. He said: "Every single breadth of mine all the twenty-four hours seems to say "Remove untouchability" ... We have to become not the masters of Harijans, but their servants.... Kabir as well as other saints also have said that God lives with him who is forsaken by the world. Whom the world shuns God accepts."⁷

Gandhi staunchly advocated the usage of charkha and condemned the consumption of foreign cloth. He remembered Kabir in this context also. He wrote: "By patronizing foreign cloth we have committed a deep sin. We have condoned an occupation which in point of importance is second only to agriculture, and we are face to face with a total disruption of a calling to which Kabir was born and which he adorned."⁸ He quoted from the statement of Madan Mohan Malaviya that he would not be satisfied until the raris and maharanas spin yarn and weave cloth for the nation. Gandhi added: "They have the example of Aurangzeb who made his own caps. A greater emperor - Kabir - was himself a weaver and has immortalized the art in his poems."⁹ He wrote to Maithilisharan Gupta, a noted writer: "I have lost quite a lot for the sake of the charkha, but I do not feel the loss. I have gained more." Elaborating his thoughts, he continued: "Well, morning is when we wake up. Kabir was a weaver, yet he left behind immortal poetry. If all of you turn weavers your poetry will have much greater power."¹⁰

II. Nanak (1469-1539)

He took interest in divine subjects from childhood and was infatuated by sadhus and faqirs. In order to distract his attention, his father married him. But his interests in religious matters remained. He undertook extensive pilgrimages in India, and went to Mecca and Medina too. His disciples were both Hindus and Muslims. One of them was Mardana, a low caste Muslim. He concretised the idea of *sangat* in which all individuals could sit together and pray irrespective of caste, creed, sex, etc. In *langer* he served food to all participants without any distinction. The number of hymns recorded in *Guru Granth Sahib* (Sikh holy book which is considered to be the last Guru) are 974.¹¹ W.H. Mcleod comments: "The Muslim contribution to the thought of Guru Nanak is not of fundamental importance, but neither is it to be dismissed as wholly insignificant."¹² Gandhi believed that Nanak was a great religious leader. He also claimed himself to be a true Sikh.

Anand T. Hingorani requested Gandhi to daily write a thought which he did from July 17 to October 31, 1945. In these thoughts, he quoted Nanak:¹³

1. "Life is unreal, death is real and certain." (July 20, 1945).

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2. "God dwells in every human heart, and so every heart is a temple of God." (July 21, 1945).

3. "If we obey the law of God, we then need no man-made laws." (July 24, 1945).

4. "God has ordained that all of us in this world are one family and each of us has to live for others." (July 25, 1945).

5. " 'Man is born of woman and woman is born of man.' Then, why is it that we find sexual immorality in the world?" (August 7, 1945).

6. Nanak lay in the open under the sky. A kind-hearted householder suggested to him: "There is a beautiful dharamsala nearby. Why not go there?" Nanak replied: "The whole earth is my dharamsala and the sky is its roof." (August 9, 1945).

7. "The craving for happiness is a veritable disease. Sorrow or suffering is its remedy." (August 10, 1945).

8. "Whatever you give away is yours; whatever you keep is not yours." (August 11, 1945).

9. "He who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow and shares with others what he earns, can be called truly honest." (August 13, 1945).

10. "The more one indulges oneself, the more unhappy one becomes." (August 14, 1945).

11. "Dreams are evidence of the fact that the *atma* (soul) uses the senses as its instruments. But it is only when the *atma* keeps the senses under control that they become its instruments, and the *atma* then becomes ripe for union with the *Paramatma*." (August 17, 1945).

However, in a prayer meeting in Madras on January 29, 1946, after a hymn of Nanak was sung, Gandhi commenced speaking to this effect: "He (Nanak) says, some people go to the forest to realize God.... In the forest live tigers, lions and bears. Therefore, ordinary people cannot be expected to go to the forest. God is everywhere. He is in the scorpion. He is in the dog. The dog may bite us, but God is good. God is not far away in the forest, but He is within us." What Gandhi was saying amounted to a contradiction of Nanak. The audience became restless and the noise became so loud that Gandhi had to stop.¹⁴

Nanak preached Sikhs that they should be friendly with both Hindus and Muslims. Many of his disciples were Muslims. Gandhi endorsed Nanak's efforts to unite the two communities. He observed, "Guru Nanak made no distinction between Hindus and Muslims. For him the whole world was one. Such is also my sanatana dharma. Being a true Hindu I also claim to be a true Muslim. I always recite the great Muslim prayer in which it is proclaimed that God is one

and He protects the whole world by day and night.”¹⁵

Gandhi made a plea to the students of Amritsar to join the Non-cooperation Movement in the name of Nanak. He urged them: “I have come here to ask the Sikh students whether they wish to be loyal to the (British) empire or to Guru Nanak. Friends of your community are being sent to put down the great, freedom-loving Arab people who have done us no harm. The government steals an anvil from you and compensates you with the gift of a needle. How can we maintain cordial relations with it after the cruelty perpetrated by Bosworth Smith in Jallianwala?” He continued: “If you feel for the Punjab as much as I do, you can see that the Khalsa College gives up receiving grants, that it breaks off its connection with the Municipality, and so you can make it truly *khalsa* (pure). If you do not succeed, you can leave it and be *khalsa* yourselves.”¹⁶

III. Chaitanya (1485-1533)

He spent his life in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. His childhood name was Vishambhar. In 1505 he was initiated in the bhakti cult. At the age of 24 he became a sanyasi and assumed the name of Krishna Chaitanya. He was so much filled with religious ecstasy that sometimes he behaved like an insane. He laughed and wept, shouting the name of Krishna. Whenever he lectured his theme was Krishna.¹⁷ He composed *Siksastakam* (devotional prayers in Sanskrit). He was the founder of Gaudiya Vaishnavism sect. He revered Krishna by chanting *Hare Krishna*. His devotees considered him an avatar of Krishna.

Gandhi called him a prince of devotees and appreciated his lyrics in praise of Krishna. But he regretted: “It is a shame that Chaitanya’s lyrics are a sealed book to people outside Bengal and Orissa.”¹⁸ Untouchability was an anathema to Gandhi and he found that Chaitanya too went against it. Many sayings attributed to him transcend the caste system although their authorship is disputed. His two disciples were outcastes from Hindu society as renegade converts to Islam. To this day many people of Bengal sing songs as were heard among the sweepers, their burden being, “Come, and see the god-man who does not believe in caste.”¹⁹ Bengal was ahead of the rest of India with respect to ignoring untouchability and Gandhi credited Chaitanya for it. Gandhi wrote: “In Bengal Chaitanya lifted up thousands of people who were regarded as untouchables. He weakened the hold of the idea over people’s minds and today untouchability is practised in Bengal in a very mild form. The idea of being defiled by touch is altogether unknown there.”²⁰ Recent research has corroborated the views of Gandhi. Says Prabodh Kumar Rath,

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“Chaitanya proved to be a great reformist as he struck at the root of untouchability. He was of the view that even a Chandala is not to be despised as a Chandala, if he is attached with the name of Krishna and that a Brahmin is not to be respected as a Brahmin if he is dishonest. Kindness to all living beings was the fountain source of inspiration to Chaitanya.”²¹

For the sake of completeness, here a reference may be made to Gandhi-Ambedkar controversy about the caste system in which Gandhi made a reference to Chaitanya. In the annual conference of the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal (a liberal wing of the Arya Samaj) in Lahore on May 15, 1936, Ambedkar was invited to deliver the presidential address. The Reception Committee desired to publish and distribute it in advance. But it contained an intellectual attack on the Vedas, Shastras and Hinduism itself. Ambedkar said in it: “I have no hesitation in saying that if the Mohammedan has been cruel, the Hindu has been mean and meanness is worse than cruelty.” He also added: “You must not only discard the *shastras*, you must deny their authority, as did Buddha and Nanak. You must have courage to tell the Hindus that what is wrong with them is their religion – the religion which has produced in them this notion of the sacredness of Caste.”²² The Reception Committee requested Ambedkar to modify it suitably but in vain. Therefore, it cancelled the conference. Ambedkar published the address on his own with the title *Annihilation of caste*. Gandhi was grieved by what seemed to him an unfair criticism of Hinduism. He asked whether a religion professed by Chaitanya, Tukaram and others is “... so utterly devoid of merit as it is made out in Dr. Ambedkar’s address? A religion has to be judged not by its worst specimens but by the best it might have produced. For that and that alone can be used as the standard to aspire to, if not to improve upon.”²³ However, Ambedkar was unmoved and retorted: “That religion should be judged not by its worst specimens, but by its best is true enough, but does it dispose of the matter? I say it does not.”²⁴

IV. Mira (1498-1557)

She was the queen of Mewar by marriage. Her husband Bhojraj was the son of better known Rana Sangha. She was devoted to Girdhar Gopal from childhood and refused to worship the Kuldevi of Mewar. Her association with sadhus further enraged her in-laws. After the death of her husband, she was subjected to torture and abuse. According to legends, she was administered poison which did not kill her. An asp was sent to bite her but to no avail. She left Mewar and finally reached Dwarka. According to a legend, she met her end when an idol of her god absorbed her.²⁵

Gandhi called himself a disciple of Mira,²⁶ as the love for God was her guiding spirit. He pointed out: "The great lesson that we learn from the life of Mirabai is that she renounced her all – even her husband – for the sake of God."²⁷ After three years, he remarked: "God can be found only through love and that love should be not worldly but divine. Mirabai who saw God in everything lived in such love. For her God was all in all."²⁸ Gandhi was impressed by her devotion to Krishna. He considered her a great devotee whose name is found at the end of countless bhajans. She herself did not use her name but her disciples found great satisfaction in attributing their compositions to her.²⁹ When a correspondent asked him about her songs, he commented: "They are so beautiful. Its because they come from the heart and not from any desire to compose or to please a public."³⁰ He stressed: "Some pundits say that women cannot attain salvation. But as I see it, that is not so. The Vaishnavas believe that there has not been a greater devotee than Mirabai. My view is that if Mirabai cannot get salvation, no man can ever get it."³¹

During his struggle in South Africa, Gandhi's friends in India pressed him to return for service to the motherland. He was tempted to agree but the people there accepted his request with reluctance and that too on the condition that he would go back if needed there. Gandhi wrote: "I thought it was a difficult condition but the love that bound me to the community made me accept it." He recollected Mira's song:

"The Lord has bound me
With the cotton-thread of love,
I am His bondslave."

Gandhi wrote: "And for me, too, the cotton-thread of love that bound me to the community was too strong to break. The voice of the people is the voice of God, and here the voice of friends was too real to be rejected."³² In other words, Mira indirectly played a role in inducing him to return from South Africa to India.

When he evolved the idea of non-cooperation with the British Government, she was again at the back of his mind. He wrote: "Non-cooperation without love is Satanic non-cooperation with love is godly.... She (Mira) lovingly submitted to the punishment which the Rana inflicted on her. Our non-cooperation also springs from love."³³ On another occasion he wrote that she took the cup of poison to her lips "with cheerful equanimity."³⁴ He also gave her example if there was discord in the family. A husband may not consider himself under any obligation to consult his wife, regarding her as his property. A wife who may accept his claim suppresses herself. Gandhi suggested: "I think there is a way out. Mirabai has shown the way. The wife has

a perfect right to take her own course and meekly brave the consequences when she knows herself to be in the right and her resistance is for a nobler purpose."³⁵ An ideal marriage aims at spiritual union through physical union. The human love that it incarnates is intended to serve as a stepping stone to the divine or universal love. Hence, Mira sang: "God alone is my husband – none else."³⁶ Some years later Gandhi added: "The great lesson that we learn from the life of Mirabai is that she renounced her all – even her husband – for the sake of God."³⁷

In *Ashram Bhajanavali* referred to above, Gandhi quotes Mira the three examples of which are given below:³⁸

- (i) "I have sung the praise of the Lord in great glee." (September 14, 1930.)
- (ii) "Rana sent me a poison cup, I drank it as if it was nectar; he sent me a black snake in a box, I took it for God Saligram.... I want Krishna as my Lord and Master come what may, I am intent upon God and God alone." (September 17, 1930).
- (iii) "Where there is grief there is the cry of distress (sent to heaven)." (September 17, 1930).

Gandhi argued that the situation which Mira faced and her response to it made her a satyagrahi. He mentioned this more than once and on one occasion he argued: "Mirabai is said to have offended her husband by following her own conscience, was content to live in separation from him and bore with quiet dignity and resignation all the injuries that are said to have been done to her in order to bend her to her husband's will. " Still she did not have "any ill will" towards her persecutor. In doing so, she practised satyagraha.³⁹

In a letter probably addressed to Maganlal Gandhi in South Africa around February 5, 1910, Gandhi wrote: "Thus, India is, for the present, like a cremation ground for us. We ought to - we have to - prepare ourselves here, so that we spread our bed there and sing Mirabai's *bhajan*, "Bola ma, Bola ma" and the like... I always feel that I shall be strong enough to welcome death in any form and at any time. I wish all may get this strength."⁴⁰ He believed that life is transitory and we do not know what will happen even after a minute or a second. One may pass away even in the act of yawning. In this context he quoted Mira: "Make the best of today, for who has seen tomorrow."⁴¹ Gandhi was convinced that these words truly depicted his relationship with God. While giving discourses on the Gita in Satyagraha Ashram in Ahmedabad on March 24, 1926, he observed: "The relationship between us and God is of the kind described here. The thread is slender, and a single one besides."⁴² He had respect for

womanhood which made him think that a wife should have her own individuality and Mira had it. Recent studies have corroborated his views. Pratibha Jain and Sangeeta Sharma write: "In fact, a perusal of Meera's life shows that there is a continuous conflict and confrontation between Meera's fiercely independent and single-minded devotion to Krishna and the code of honour cherished by the society and polity in the erstwhile Rajput state."⁴³

In his prayer meeting in New Delhi on June 30, 1946, a song of Mira was sung. Commenting on it, he said that in it the devotee asks the soul to drink deep of the nectar of God's name. Physical food and drink result in satiety and if over-indulged in illness. But the ambrosia of God's name knows no such limit. The deeper one drinks of it the more the thirst for it grows.⁴⁴

Gandhi did not believe it as literally true that she never felt the pains inflicted upon her at the instance of her husband. But her love of God and conscious repetition of His name always kept her cheerful.⁴⁵ After some years he again wrote: "We should not pay attention to the stories of miracles in the life of Mirabai. I also don't believe that they occurred in that very manner. What we have to remember is the holiness of her character..."⁴⁶

Gandhi's political strategy differed from that of the earlier politicians. He believed in struggle and not in mendicancy to achieve political objectives. He wrote: "The more I observe things, the more I realize that deputations, petitions, etc., are all in vain, if there are no real sanctions behind them. I see from experience that it is better to be in goal than to have to seek interviews." To support his contention, he quoted from a song of Mira:⁴⁷

"Prepare not your draught from the twice-bitter *neem*,
Shunning the sweetness of the sugar and the sugarcane;
Give not your love to the glow-worm,
Turning away from the light of sun and moon."

As a part of the Non-cooperation Movement, he asked the students to leave the government educational institutions. The students were diffident about its benefit to them. He conceded that it meant suffering for them in the short-run. In order to console them, he gave the illustration of Mira. He informed them: "Mirabai danced with joy when she renounced the pleasures of the palace. These had made her weep. To other eyes, this was a great sacrifice. For her the renunciation was bliss."⁴⁸

Gandhi talked about her with respect to other women. He compared Sarojini Naidu with her. Saraladevi from the Tagore family was close to him, the link being khaddar. She stopped wearing saris of Decca muslin and wore rough khaddar saris even in the hot season.

He interacted with her on an intellectual plane and sent her translation of Mira's bhajans. When he fell sick and stayed in salubrious environment of Sinhgadh in hilly Maharashtra, he missed her and expressed his intense feelings of separation. He quoted her Mira's lovelorn hymn for Krishna,⁴⁹

"Mira says, O Lord Girdar Nagar,
My eyes see all things in a new light."

When he visited Calcutta in early November 1924, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das's niece visited him. He asked her to sing a few hymns of Mira. She readily agreed and sang,⁵⁰

"O come, my Lord, come quickly please!
This Mira's heart is ill at ease."

A reference may be made here to Madeleine Slade, a British national. She met Gandhi on November 7, 1925 in Ahmedabad. Afterwards she wrote: 'I fell on my knees. Hands gently raised me up, and a voice said: "You shall be my daughter." My consciousness of the physical world began to return, and I saw a face smiling at me with eyes full of love, blended with a gentle twinkle of amusement.' She became his ardent disciple, and he gave her the name of Mira Behn.⁵¹ Sudheendra Kulkarni accounts for it by saying that Mira's association with mystical poetry and music probably played a role in his choosing this name for her.⁵² However, she outlived him and in 1958 left India for Austria, confessing that India and Gandhi no longer interested her.

V. Surdas (c. 1540- c. 1620)

He is believed to be a Saraswat Brahmin and was born blind. He mostly lived in and around Mathura. He was an adept in both literature and music. One of his major works is *Sursagar* whose theme is Krishna. He surrendered himself before his God whom he considered to be the avatar of Vishnu. By his knowledge and imagination, he filled the Hindi literature with bhakti.⁵³

He had a contrite heart and considered himself to be wretched and wicked. Gandhi commented: "It is the passionate cry of a soul hungering for union with the divine. According to our standards he was a saint, but according to his own he was a proclaimed sinner. Spiritually he was miles ahead of us, but he felt the separation from the divine so keenly that he has uttered that anguished cry in loathing and despair."⁵⁴ Besides, Surdas learnt that he should depend on the goodness of God and not on his own strength. Gandhi quoted him to this effect: "I have tried my strength in one way and another, till I am weary and can do no more; you must save me now...."⁵⁵ Under the circumstances, the best alternative was to rely on the mercies of God.

In a prayer meeting in Bombay on May 22, 1935, Gandhi stated: "As the poet Surdas has sung, Rama is the strength of the weak. This strength is not to be obtained by taking up arms or by similar means. It is to be obtained by throwing oneself on His name.... the moment you trust naught but Him, you are strong, all disappointment disappears. The hymn alludes to the story of the Lord of elephants who was in the jaws of CROCODILE.... There was only the tip of his trunk left above water when he invoked God's name and he was saved."⁵⁶

In *Ashram Bhajanavali* mentioned above, Gandhi referred to Surdas of which three examples are quoted below:⁵⁷

(i) "Surdas the blind beggar knocks at the door, O Lord." (August 10, 1930).

(ii) "Surdas says that when a man has exhausted all his resources and invokes the name of God, his grace descends upon him." (August 11, 1930.)

(iii) "God destroys with His sudarshana those who come in the way of devotees." (August 12, 1930.)

VI. Tulsidas (1554-1680)

Hailing from a Brahmin family, he spent many years in Kashi and Ayodhya which moulded his life. He became a devotee of Rama. He composed works whose number has been put at 21. His best known work is *Ramcharitramanas*.⁵⁸

Tulsidas made an impact on Gandhi when he was still a lad of thirteen years. During his father's illness in Porbandar, Tulsidas's *Ramayana* was read to the father which enraptured the son too. Afterwards Gandhi wrote: "That laid the foundation of my deep devotion to *Ramayana*. Today I regard the *Ramayana* of Tulsidas as the greatest book in all devotional literature."⁵⁹ Subsequently, Gandhi called him "The prince of devotees." Gandhi admitted that he was fascinated by Rama through Tulsidas.⁶⁰ After a month he again wrote: "There are some books on this subject (reincarnation) in English, but even they do not satisfy the mind. Possibly there are works on this subject in Sanskrit but I do not know about them. I owe my faith in incarnation to Tulsidas."⁶¹

In his letter to Kamalnayan Bajaj dated June 3, 1935, Gandhi asked him to cultivate the strength of heart for which it was necessary to read *Gita* and Tulsidas.⁶² He wrote: "The faith of Tulsidas was unsurpassed. It was his faith that presented to the Hindu world a treasure like the *Ramayana*. The *Ramayana* is a work filled with learning, but the effect of its learning is nothing compared to the effect of its bhakti."⁶³ He was also enamoured by the hymns of Tulsidas. One of

the hymns which was often sung in Satyagraha Ashram, Ahmedabad was:⁶⁴

“My honour, O! God, is in Thy keeping;
Thou art ever my Refuge,
For Thou are Protector of the weak.
It is Thy promise to listen to the wail of sinners;
I am a sinner of old, help me Thou
To cross this ocean of darkness.
It is Thine to remove the sin
And the misery of mankind.
Be gracious to Tulsidas
And make him Thy devotee.”

In *Ashram Bhajanavali* referred to above, Gandhi quoted Tulsidas thrice:⁶⁵

(i) “O Thou, son of Lord Dasharatha, Thou hast turned beggars into kings, Thou are the refuge of the distressed. I am Thy slave. O merciful God, say if only once: Tulsidas is Mine.” (July 20, 1930.)

(ii) “There is none so afflicted like me, there is no deliverer like unto Thee; Thou art the creator, I am a little creature; thou art the Lord, I am a slave; Thou art father, brother, teacher, friend, all in all to me;... may Tuli somehow feel the protecting power of Thy holy feet.” (July 21, 1930.)

(iii) “Be merciful, O Lord, to Tulsidas, and give him the boon of Thy Worship.” (July 30, 1930.)

Rajendra Prasad writes that Gandhi always carried in his mind a couplet of Tulsidas and unfailingly acted on it: “It has always been the tradition in the house of Raghu to sacrifice one’s life itself rather than prove false to one’s word.”⁶⁶ From 1919 Gandhi embarked on the defiance of the government and toured the country. B.R. Nanda writes in this connection: “The awakening of the people, to which his movement was contributing, pleased Gandhi. In the course of tours he noted that ‘the spirit of kindness of which the poet Tulsidas sings so eloquently is gaining ground.’ ... India could acquire a new strength by purging her corporate life of untouchability, communal strife, drink and drug and dependence upon foreign cloth and institutions run or aided by the British Government.”⁶⁷

Gandhi thought that the British rule was satanic and hence Indians had the duty of keeping away from it. He quoted Tulsidas who counselled the people to be away from the wicked.⁶⁸ He added: “I consider this the regime of Ravana. Tulsidas called it a sin to live under such a regime. I can positively say that all the twenty-four hours I am taken up with the idea of destroying it or mending it.”⁶⁹ After a few days, Gandhi commented: “We can remove the satanic

Government by two means: one, by means of the sword, and the other, by means of non-cooperation.... But if we adopt non-violent non-cooperation, we are bound to succeed. If you admit that we should bid adieu to Satan, then we should seek the help and favour of God, as has been enjoined on us by the Koran, the *Gita* and Tulsidas."⁷⁰ In his letter to Narasinhrao, Gandhi continued, "All the characteristics of *Ravanarajya* described by Tulsidas are to be found in British rule and that is why I describe it by that name. There is no anger in this, nor "righteous indignation." It is a conclusion which I have reached in all calmness of mind."⁷¹ He clarified: "Non-cooperation means refusing to associate ourselves with or be a party to the tyranny of the government and to render any support, direct or indirect, to such tyranny.... Tulsidas has said that it is sinful to associate with wicked persons."⁷² Tulsidas even spoke of leaving a kingdom that is wicked, calling it *desatyag*.⁷³ Gandhi said that in freedom alone can any creature grow, and never in slavery. He found this idea expressed by Tulsidas in his inimitable manner: "For the slave there is no happiness even in his dreams."⁷⁴ Subsequently, he said that Tulsidas had taught him that there could be no friendship, love or union between religion and irreligion. Hence, so long as he believed that the Government was satanic and based on arrogant exploitation of weak races, it was his duty to non-cooperate with it. He would stick to that course even if he stood alone.⁷⁵

No machine was as dear to Gandhi as charkha. In his convocation address in Bihar Vidyapith, Patna on January 30, 1927, he referred to Tulsidas to popularise the usage of charkha: "Just as Prahlada saw Rama everywhere and Tulsidas could see nothing but Rama even in the image of Krishna, let all your learning be directed to realizing the implications of the charkha." Besides, he gave prime importance to khadi and told the trainees at Khadi Vidyalaya, Ahmedabad: "If someone asked me what the place of khadi in relation to service of the cow or tanning was, I should surely say that it had the first place." He quoted a simile given by Tulsidas to show that it was the most benevolent activity.⁷⁶

Gandhi pointed out that Tulsidas said that everything, both animate and inanimate, is a mixture of good and bad qualities. But our duty is to distinguish the good from the bad, imbibing the former and ignoring the latter as the swan takes in only milk but leaves the water of evil behind.⁷⁷ Gandhi gave this analogy in the context of the liberals who had parted company with the Congress. He said that it was wrong to consider them as traitors or flatterers even though he did not approve of many of their views.

Gandhi denounced untouchability and alluded to Tulsidas who

held that Hindus should be kind to all. Hatred and contempt had no place in Hinduism.⁷⁸ After some years Gandhi once more quoted him: "Tulsidas has said that compassion is the very source of religion. If you forsake love, you shall lose the battle. They who regard untouchability as sin, must not sin themselves by hating their opponents." In disapproving untouchability, on another occasion he invoked the writings of Tulsidas. In his speech at a meeting of women in Ajmer on July 5, 1934, he quoted the latter that mercy is the root of religion. Untouchability must be abolished because it was opposed to the law of love and spirit of mercy. He asked how could Hindus swear by love but consign fellow Hindus to insanitary surroundings, prevent them from drawing water at wells, compel them to drink water spoilt by cattle and assault them if they tried to assert their common right over public wells? If dirty suvarna children could attend public schools, was it right to exclude Harijan children even when they were clean? He summed up, "To consider others as lower than ourselves was a species of pride, which Tulsidas called the root of sin, and pride goes before destruction."⁷⁹

Gandhi thought highly of Hindi as a language and of the contribution of Tulsidas to it by way of *Ramayana*. He remarked: "You talk of the poverty of Hindi literature – you talk of the poverty of today's Hindi, but if you dive deep into the pages of Tulsidas, probably you will share my opinion that there is no other book that stands equal to it in the literature of the world in modern languages. That one book has given me faith and hope which no other book has given. I think that it is a book which can stand any criticism and any scrutiny in literary grace, in metaphor and in religious fervour."⁸⁰

At the end, a reference may also be made to Gandhi's views regarding Tulsidas's thinking regarding women. Many persons criticized Gandhi for applauding *Ramayana* which contains disparaging remarks about women. He admitted that Tulsidas has unintentionally done injustice to womanfolk. He remarked: "The faults of the *Ramayana* are less a reflection on Tulsidas than a reflection on the age in which he lived." He gave the illustrations of Kausalya, Sumitra, etc., and continued: "In my opinion these instances go to prove that Tulsidasji was no reviler of women by conviction. On the contrary, so far as his convictions went, he had only reverence for them."⁸¹ Recent studies have corroborated the views of Gandhi. Krishna Rani says that women are given an honourable place in Tulsidas' writings, but admits that there are passages where women are shown under severe constraints, tortured by husbands and neglected by the society.⁸² Sapna Shukla thinks that he divided his female characters into good and evil in the light of social and cultural background.

Women connected with Rama are depicted as having praiseworthy character as against their counterparts opposed to him.⁸³

Gandhi's last days were filled with sadness as he looked at the Congress party. The Congressmen thought that it was their government. Crores of rupees were coming into the coffers of the Congress and thousands of people were with it. Gandhi regretted, "It would be a misfortune if the spirit of service disappears and everyone thinks only of grabbing a share out of the crores of rupees. It would be no service to the nation if devoid of the spirit of service we concern ourselves only with serving our own ends or those of our relatives and friends.... Everywhere Congressmen are thus scrambling for power and favours." In other words, the name of the Congress had become greater than the Congress itself. In this context he drew an analogy with the name of Rama and recollected what Tulsidashad said: "The name of Rama has become greater than Rama Himself."⁸⁴

7. Miscellaneous saints

Besides, Gandhi spoke/wrote about some other characters of the Bhakti Movement. He pointed out that Vallabhacharya (1479-1531), a saint of Gujarat, never taught his disciples to follow a religion of hate and intolerance. In fact, he asked them to lift up the depressed classes, and the people steeped in ignorance and poverty.⁸⁵ Gandhi regretted that he together with Swaminarayana (1781-1833) made the people incapable of self-defence. Both of them did not reflect over the true nature of non-violence. He wrote: "Non-violence consists in holding in check all impulses in the *chitta* (mind). It comes into play especially in men's relations with one another. There is not even a suggestion of this idea in their writings."⁸⁶

Gandhi was impressed by the thoughts of Tukaram(1568-1649) and Ramdev (1608-1681). In his *Ashram Bhajanavali*, he referred to them. He quoted Tukaram three examples of which are mentioned below:⁸⁷

(1) "I am tired of everything worldly, Thee alone I like, O Gopal." (October 16, 1930).

(2) "O Panduranga, do Thou protect by Thy power sinners like me." (October 23, 1930).

(3) "All the above thinks fleeting; my welfare consists in always remembering Gopal." (October 26, 1930).

Gandhi thought that when saintly men appear, we see God. He quoted Ramdas to this effect: "Through that happy event we began to see God within ourselves." (October 15, 1930).⁸⁸ He quoted Eknath(1533-99) like this: "By the grace of Guru Janardana my mind

is intent upon the feet of God." (October 15, 1930).⁸⁹ He referred to Dadu (1544-1603) too, "Pangs of separation from one's beloved are like the pangs of the fabled *chakor* bird separated from the moon." (September 19, 1930).⁹⁰ Dadu established a sect named *Brahma Sampradaya* which later became known as *Dadupanth*. He tried to unite people of different faiths into bond of love.

Gandhi quoted both Tukaram and Ramdas that there could not be cooperation between a god and a monster/Rama and Ravana (i.e., between British Government and Indians).⁹¹ He pointed out that Ramdas exhorted the people never to depart from the path of virtue which was also the path of the highest virtue.⁹² Here S.G. Kashikar sees a similarity between the thoughts of Ramdas and Gandhi. He writes: "In *Mana-panchak*, Ramdas describes his conception of *Ram-rajya* – the ideal state. In its essence this hardly differs from the *Ram – rajya* of Gandhiji. He wants all to be happy, healthy, intelligent, benevolent, cooperative, prosperous, truthful, religious, care-free, peace-loving and contented."⁹³

Conclusion

Gandhi's aptitude to life was close to that of the saints of the bhakti Movement of Medieval India. Therefore, he had interest in their life and preaching which made a lasting impact on him. Buddhadeva Bhattacharya quotes Krishnalal Sridharani to say that their legends and mystic songs created a general belief in the efficacy of non-violence in India. Not surprisingly, "To Gandhi himself these songs were a source of general inspiration and he and his followers never failed to realize the propaganda value of such lyrics in dissemination of their ideology."⁹⁴

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A Decentralized Pathway for Energy Security and Energy Transition in Developing Nations

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ABSTRACT

With the onset of climate change as the biggest challenge in today's era, energy security and the consequent energy transition has been addressed as issue of concern by all the countries across globe. In the context of conceptualization of energy security in a '4 A framework' defined in terms of accessibility, affordability, availability and acceptability, the paper finds all its remedies and solutions in prescribing a decentralized pathway. Kumarappa's notion of 'economy of permanence' which recommends decentralization as a key alternative for improving the situation of people is reinforced by the paper in the context of ensuring energy security in the current scenario of energy transition. The paper concludes that by empowering local communities, strengthening their indigenous clean energy technologies would solve the impediments of political economy involved in the process of achieving energy accessibility.

Key words: Energy security, energy transition, decentralized system, clean energy technologies, corporate social responsibility.

Introduction

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS the process through which a nation improves economic, social and political well-being of the people living in the nation. It is also defined as policy intervention with the aim of bringing about economic and social well-being of people. It can be distinguished from economic growth which is essentially a rise in

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GDP, a phenomenon of market productivity. It has been observed that, over the years, economic growth and economic development had a detrimental impact on environment on account of excessive consumption of resources.

Energy is a prerequisite for growth and development, therefore each country essentially desires to be energy secure. In the present context when climate change has become the greatest challenge, energy transition pathways have to be determined by each nation. As a consequence, all the nations in the world have moved towards a sustainable development path and in terms of energy it means shifting to environmentally sustainable energy source. In the present global scenario the notion of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has been framed to achieve poverty alleviation, at the same time protecting the planet ensuring the people to enjoy peace and prosperity.

Consequently, all the developing nations have been facing the biggest challenge of attaining the sustainable development goals to ensure prosperity in every sense. However, to visualize and finally accomplish goals, the nations should lay down the system or mechanism strong enough to address the basic questions like for whom, how much, and for what? This indicates that the larger perspective is to cater to the localised needs of people living in remote areas and effectively opt for an inclusive growth. Therefore, to achieve these goals, a framework effective enough to evolve a comprehensive platform is essential to bring prosperity that is sustainable to each person living in the society.

Centralized system or its decentralized version are the two instruments prescribed for leading socio-economic benefits to the economy. Like any other system their objectives are well defined in not only creating wealth as efficiently as possible but also distributing it widely and evenly. A centralized setting is highly vulnerable of being trapped in the clutches of political economy depriving a large population living in remote areas from achieving the basic facilities. A system should be conducive to peace and harmony of the society. In this context, the paper would critically analyse energy security in a centralised setting emphasizing the drawbacks and highlighting the demand gaps left unfulfilled in the energy sphere, in the favour of larger section of society. The paper in turn makes an attempt to signify energy transition under a decentralized setting, which would cater to demands of each individual.

Centralized system usually leads to a violent economy, full of elements of greed, competition and concentration of power in the hands of few elite groups in the society. The paper in this aspect

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suggests that the decentralized system for developing economies would not only empower the local communities but also enhance one's own capabilities, developing the basic infrastructure catering to the basic needs.

The paper is structured in a manner to meet its main objective of laying down the pathways for energy transition for developing nations. In order to achieve the objective, the paper first emphasizes the role of energy in the process of economic development. Apart from critically analysing the two systems for energy transition, the paper evaluates the status of energy security under each system on the basis of crucial parameters such as energy accessibility, transmission and distribution losses, energy conservation and energy efficiency and finally meeting the corporate social responsibility. The paper is organized section wise to meet its objectives in a systematic manner concluding towards the end the significance of decentralized setting for ensuring the energy security.

Role of Energy in Economic Development

Economic development can be defined as all the efforts that mainly seek to improve economic well-being of the individuals as well as quality of life for the community by creating employment. Economic development in India started with socialist motivated politicians who laid down the foundation of free India comprising of state – ownership of many sectors. In 1980s, India gradually opened market for economic liberalization and in 1991 India progressed majorly towards free market economy.¹

Economic growth in India has been largely driven by services; intermediate industrialization phase of development has been skipped in the process of transformation of its economic structure. This structural change has resulted in what is referred to as 'jobless economic growth.'²

As a consequence, though the economic growth reached 7.5 per cent in 2000, the economy did not observe any significant poverty reduction; moreover the economy experienced rather an exceptionally high level of child malnutrition. Most of the economic reforms were streamlined towards public sector reforms, infrastructure, agriculture and rural development, removal of labour regulations, reforms in lagging states

The labour force in India is growing at 2.5 per cent every year.³ Emergence of formal businesses and jobs has been curtailed as official unemployment exceeds 9 per cent. Thirty per cent of the workers are casual workers who work when they can find jobs. Only 10 per cent of workforce is in regular employment, children under 14 constitute

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3.60 per cent of the total labour force in the country, 9 out of every 10 work in rural family settings, 85 per cent are engaged in agricultural activities and less than 9 per cent work in manufacturing, services and repairs. There has been a peculiar rise in informal employment within the organized sector owing to increased use of contract labour by employers benefitting from flexible labour practices.

This provides substantial evidence that the development process adopted by India has not resulted in an inclusive growth, reaching out to the marginalised group in the society or even in the aspect of reducing poverty and inequality for that matter. Energy is an essential ingredient for growth and development. Since all developing countries are confronting the need to develop and grow, not only clenching by rapid rise of middle income population but also at the same time provide a sustainable and inclusive growth, it is highly relevant to evaluate the energy need and requirement for a developing nation.

In present times, India's energy consumption has doubled since the year 2000 and is expected to be more than double by 2040, accounting for one-fourth of global increase in that same period. The greatest controversy is that even though India is the third largest market in gross electricity generation, it has almost 250 million people without access to power.⁴ All presently planned development policies such as 'make in India,' 'skilling India' and 'digital India' could be perceived as success only with energy and electricity playing a critical role in the process of growth and development. It is only through a comprehensive and inclusive energy regime, a developing country like India can think of achieving inclusive growth.

Having understood the role of energy in economic growth and development, it is crucial to comprehend the reserve endowment of energy to meet the consumption requirement supply energy as well as to understand the need for the current energy mix.

India's Resource Consumption

India is the second largest consumer of oil in Asia-Pacific region, next to China. Rapidly rising population and consequent rise in oil consumption coupled with economic growth generated import dependency to meet the consumption needs. India imports only a small quantity of natural gas.

Energy constitutes a critical ingredient in the process of economic development. A substantial amount of natural gas is imported from Qatar. India ranked 130th in Ease of Doing Business Index in 2014, but corruption has been prevalent in India at a very large-scale. Economic reforms of 1991 have resolved lot of corruption-related impediments in the process of economic growth. There are several

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environmental and ecological consequences such as changes in ecosystem, biological diversity, evolution of parasites and invasion by exotic species.

With climate change emerging as the greatest challenge of this era, energy transition becomes the core area of concern for all developed and developing nations. 'India has set a target of 100 gigawatts (GW) of installed solar energy capacity by 2022. India has also announced plans to cancel 14 GW coal plants. India is now committed to sell only electric cars by 2030. India is heading towards a leadership role in global climate change governance at G20 and COP23 forums (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNFCCC, Paris Agreement COP22).'

The above commitment can be accomplished only by shifting the energy regime towards renewable energy sources. The biggest challenge for a developing country like India is to implement renewable energy sources under a suitable policy framework. Renewable energy sources are technology dependent and their success is linked to the pathways of energy transition. Owing to lack of capital, research and development (R&D), developing countries fall short of their indigenous renewable energy technologies, due to which they need to depend on western countries. As a result, developing countries become more technologically dependent and import dependent on the west. Given this situation, energy security becomes a serious concern giving essential impetus to develop indigenous technologies for clean energy. Therefore, a decentralized system fostering growth and development of local areas, promoting indigenous technologies, empowering communities to undergo appropriate research for clean energy is expected to produce a cost effective, optimal outcome.

In this context, energy transition to renewable energy could be viewed as a process which progresses the economy towards non-violence and sustainability. The next section elaborates the concepts of non-violent economy and sustainability.

Non-Violent Economy and Sustainability

Violence is associated with the quest for power implying desire to possess all materials and resources. This aspect is all about power which comes through wealth and desire to rule, exhibiting the superiority over others. A centralized method of production generates accumulation of capital leading to concentration of wealth.

Concentration of economic wealth implies competition leading to violence and consequently maintaining hegemony and supremacy over others. Therefore, the need to expand based on greed instigates

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more and more of competitive environment for production and consumption. Facilitating and producing at large-scale, this process of production encourages warfare. Such a system would lead to coordination of raw material supplies, production and need to find markets for finished products, which in turn would ultimately lead to imperialism and warfare.

It has been argued⁵ that globalization and emergence of international markets increases the need for nations to adopt an integrated approach for policy formulation considering both internal or domestic policies as well as external cooperation, since the economies are highly dependent on each other. Energy being a crucial resource influencing the process of evolution of human society and economic development creates the need for cooperation among the actors in international system.

It is evident that globalization has instigated cooperation and competition for power and led to hegemony over resources and markets. Inability in attaining energy security will ultimately have severe consequences on economic security, social security and also environmental security. Considering energy security as a part of security concerns of a nation, it requires substantial attention both at the international level and local level, incorporating international relations and cooperation as well as local, internal or domestic need and local requirement.

A decentralized system of governance in the situation of scarcity of capital is the only plausible option. Further, in case of excess labour, the case of unemployment and underemployment, the centralization would aggravate the problems all the more. Decentralization method would be the best way of producing goods when raw material and markets are in the proximity of producing centres. This system would lead to far more equal distribution of wealth and also making people tolerant. This process of production includes distribution of wealth in a more equitable manner. A decentralized setting empowers each producer and makes him an entrepreneur, improves his standard of living, further uplifting the average intelligence of nation as a whole.

In decentralized framework there will be no disturbance of peace at nation – wide level. Moreover, where there are small producers working in a decentralized setting, the raw material required for production would be exploited only locally. The system will not entail to exercise its power over the raw materials. Therefore, such an economy would lead to non-violent economy where supply meets its own demand without any violence involved. Such an economy does not provide any opportunity for a wealthy person at the cost of another. This would further inculcate human values among the people

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living in the society. Effectively speaking a sense of human values will direct economic activity and various negativities in the global environment such as international rivalry, jealousies and competition would be minimised leading to human progress, peace and prosperity.

There can be numerous examples that could be illustrated here which symbolize the success stories of anti-globalization and protectionism. The survival of economies after the segregation from the globalized, interconnected economies is the case of Cuba which decently performed after the US embargo in 1960. It is worthwhile quoting the example of Island of Peace or 'Community of Ark' founded in 1948 in France by Lanza del Vasto (1910-81) which is entirely based on Gandhi – Kumarappa principles. The community functions on truth, love and tolerance and is a perfect example of simple life. This community is a classic example, which preferred to use simple tools and believed that complicated machinery is a product of human greed. It is this simple technology that benefits worker by constructing their physical, mental and spiritual health. In the process, the community disconnects itself with the modern economy propagating injustice towards poor.

Another example that is worth illustrating at this point is the functioning of village Mendha, a small village of Gonda tribals in central India. It is in the Dhanora tehsil of Gadchiroli district in the State of Maharashtra. Though it is very much in contact with the outside world, it has maintained its unique characteristic like, non-existence of disputes and differences of opinion in the village, no problem of poverty, hunger or unemployment and no economic disparities. The village functions effectively on the basis of unanimous decision of village community for taking critical decisions of village community under village assembly called *gaon-samaj-sabha* comprising all the adult villagers as its members. In the meeting of village assembly it was decided to impose Rs.150 on the practice of cutting trees in the forest for fruits, leaves and branches or even honey. The villagers depend on forests for food and fuel and use biogas as source of energy. Finally this village serves as a remarkable example of people's power.⁶

As a result, it can be established that a non-violent, peaceful economy can be accomplished in decentralized settings, contributing to economic growth and development at a localised level, improving the standard of living of individuals, ensuring a better quality of life. This setting at the same time generates human value system among the individuals in the economy, much capable of creating a non-violent, peaceful environment.

Now looking at the objective of the paper to propose an efficient,

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non-violent and sustainable system, which will produce the most efficient and inclusive pathways for energy transition, it is essential to evaluate energy security in both centralized and decentralized settings.

Energy Security in Centralized Setting

Energy security is observed as one of the strategically laid down objectives in present scenario where energy security has been conceptualised to include global challenges like climate change, issue of sustainability and affordability under the purview of sustainable development goals. Various factors defining energy security can be specified as energy accessibility, transmission and energy losses, energy conservation and energy efficiency and corporate social responsibility. This section would evaluate the status of energy security in centralized settings, the loopholes, drawbacks and various implications of centrally governed system on the status of energy security.

Energy Accessibility

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of 2000 explicitly refers to energy access. In September 2010, United Nations launched the target of universal energy access by 2030. Access to energy holds a significant role for energy services in meeting the MDGs. Energy access in fact is the key foundation for MDGs. Energy access not only ensures basic amenities in the form of basic infrastructure like, schools, hospitals, factories and many other socio-economic productive activities, but also provides healthy, pollution free environment congenial for increasing more and more of productive, economic activities channelized in favour of growth and development. On the other hand, energy poverty becomes a biggest hurdle in achieving millennium development goals.

As a consequence, energy accessibility may or may not be directly connected to energy poverty. India faces an acute level of energy poverty claiming at the same time per capita electricity consumption falling short of world's average. Developing countries still undergo majority of energy demand unfulfilled while developed countries have already saturated their energy demand. According to census of India 2011 more than a third of country's household largely rely on sources other than electricity for lighting needs. Nearly two-thirds of households in the country use fuels such as firewood, dung-cake, charcoal and agricultural residue for cooking needs.

During the post-independence era, a large number of energy access schemes and programmes have been rolled out like subsidized

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provision of energy commodities like LPG and kerosene through public distribution system. The two prominent goals of social justice and equitable social order rely on greater economic equality. Moreover inclusive growth has been a part of contemporary policy discourse within the country. Inclusive development can be defined as growth coupled with equal opportunities.

United Nations General Assembly designated 2012 as the 'International Year of Sustainable Energy for All.' India's policy makers consider energy access as a top priority. The policy makers believed that centralized energy planning will be the pathway to resolve the issue of energy poverty mainly implying delivery of piped or bottled LPG and grid-based electricity. Apart from availability, the issue of affordability is another concern of energy poverty. The most energy-intensive household activities pertain to the rural areas therefore subsidies on consumption of these fuels have been predominant to make these essential fuels affordable but the provision of rural energy programmes is hardly sufficient for cooking and lighting. 'Millions of families who have been lucky enough to benefit from such a programme prepare their evening meal under the glow of an electric light — in a smoke-filled kitchen over an unimproved wood or dung-burning stove.'⁷ Many of the home based industries have been ignored substantially where nearly 18.3 million people in India are employed, constituting almost 4 per cent of working population of the country. Therefore, in order to visualize and alleviate energy poverty and income poverty, such household industries have to be incorporated for an inclusive growth.

Transmission and Distribution Losses

The process of supplying electricity to consumers is associated with technical and commercial losses. Technical losses are mainly due to energy dissipated in the conductors and equipment used for transmission, transformation, sub-transmission and distribution of power. Such technical losses are inherent in the system and can be reduced. While the commercial losses are due to defective meters, pilferage and errors in meter reading and in estimating unmetered supply of energy. The transmission and distribution losses in India have risen to 23 per cent in 2012-13 and around 22.77 per cent in 2014-15;⁸ this continuous rising losses is a matter of serious concern. 'There are several reasons for T&D losses like inadequate investment on transmission and distribution, improper load management, poor quality of equipment used in agriculture pumping in rural areas, cooler, air conditioners and industrial loads in urban areas. Commercial losses are due to making unauthorized extensions of

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loads, tampering the meter readings by mechanical jerks, stopping the meters by remote control, improper testing and calibration of meters.⁹

There are many detrimental consequences or impact of such transmission and distribution losses. Such losses further provide disincentives for private sector participation in power distribution. In most of the States, agriculture tariff is based on unit horsepower of motors, such loads get sanctioned at low load declaration, but after getting connections, consumers tend to increase the connected loads without applying for sanctions. Energy consumed in unmetered supply has great repercussions on accounting for errors in estimation. In most of the cases, unmetered agriculture consumption is over estimated. The Electricity Boards supply power to agriculture sector on the pretext of arranging supply of electric power for irrigation and claim subsidy from the State Government.

Considering supply of electricity to agriculture sector as a generous gesture by the State Government, all Electricity Boards have eliminated energy meters for agriculture sector. Thus, absence of energy meters provides enough opportunity for fudging consumption figures, estimating average consumption at much higher value than actual. The activities related to fudging are more in the States, where agriculture activities are predominant.

Energy Conservation and Energy Efficiency

Energy is used for transportation, cooking, heating and cooling rooms and manufacturing. A substantial demand for energy consumption depends upon how people use energy, turning machines off when they are not using them or choosing to buy efficient vehicles, energy efficient appliances, using technology that requires less energy to perform the same function, for example, incandescent bulb to produce same amount of light. Energy conservation is any behaviour or action that leads to lesser and lesser use of energy like turning off lights while leaving the room, recycling of aluminium cans etc.

As stated above, both energy conservation and energy efficiency are the concepts pertaining to habits of the individuals. This directly suggests that the system needs to inculcate awareness among the people in the society regarding the harmony with the nature, so that they become more conscious of their actions. The act of consumption and production are visualised in a more efficient manner, consuming lesser and lesser from the environment and consequently generating lesser and lesser waste.

The need of the hour is to create consciousness about conserving natural resources and preserving our environment, eventually

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suggesting an economy not leading to economy of violence. Such elements are embedded in the genesis of Gandhian thoughts and J.C. Kumarrapa's notion of non-violent economy.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a concept to promote and incorporate sustainable and inclusive investment processes. CSR has economic, social and environmental dimensions. The concept of CSR evolved in Western societies. With the intensified challenges of globalization, environmental concerns have taken the centre stage of all global challenges. In the late nineteenth century, welfare of employees and the consequent impact on society raised concerns and later with labour movement and industrial revolution, social welfare was ensured at a limited scale in the form of construction of hospitals and provision of food coupons. CSR originated as an obligation of businessmen to pursue the policies with the motive and intention of attaining value of society. The sphere of corporates is more than one of financial performance, highlighting the significance of corporate social performance. Certain socially responsible business decisions can be justified on the grounds of long-run economic gains, paying back for its socially responsible behaviour. Further, this concept of CSR encouraged corporate managers to be considered as public trustees through shareholding system.¹⁰

Later in 1960s and 1970s, with rapid growth of social movements advocacy by labour groups, consumer protection and environmental preservation, certain fundamental ethical principles came to be laid down in terms of responsible enterprise that takes care of the interests of employees, suppliers, dealers, local communities and the nation as a whole. According to this evolved concept of social responsibility, instead of striving for larger returns to shareholders, a responsible enterprise is more concerned with society at large.

In the present times, businesses integrate CSR into core operations through value chains both at national and global levels. Global value chains refer to widespread range of cross-border, value-added business activities involving an interactive network between individual companies, their stakeholders, both locally and globally. In such cases managing CSR throughout the value chain is next to impossible. CSR, therefore, becomes more challenging than governance, assessment and information management.

A centralized system usually leads to a violent economy, full of elements of greed, competition and concentration of power in the hands of few elite groups in the society. Under such circumstances the urge to maintain supremacy and hegemony and with the motive

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of accumulating more and more of raw material, the countries develop a spirit of competition which destroys the basic nature of mankind and that is peace and non-violence.

Therefore, in terms of criteria chosen to evaluate energy security namely, energy accessibility, transmission and distribution losses, energy conservation and energy efficiency and corporate social responsibility, a centralized system has delivered a very inefficient energy system which is severely trapped in the nexus of political economy, leaving a large proportion deprived of energy access.

Energy Security in Decentralized Framework

There is a systematic pressure being laid down on energy system for an energy transition. Climate change, which is a consequence of unprecedented use of energy over a long time period, therefore, generates a deep concern for curtailing the carbon emissions coupled with the objective of attaining energy security and the search for new approaches to delivery of energy and energy services. The target of reducing carbon emissions along with the desire to enhance national energy security, shift from a net exporter to a net importer of energy, high fossil fuel prices, electricity blackouts in summer and ongoing geopolitics are some of the significant reasons to reconsider centralized energy system.

The energy system usually falls into a locked-in to centralization scenario, but it is facing a shift in favour of decentralized initiatives. A decentralized energy system is a system of generating energy source near the place it would be used instead of getting generated by a large plant much far away from the area which requires energy access and it is grid connected. In this system, all the plants are connected to distribution network rather than transmission network for example, small-scale plants that supply electricity to a building, industrial site or community or micro generation i.e. small installation of solar panels, wind turbines or biomass/waste burners supplying only to a building or small community, Combined Heat and Power plants (CHP), micro-CHP plants replacing domestic boilers generating electricity and heat at home. Other examples are non-gas heat sources such as biomass, wood, solar thermal panels, geothermal energy or heat pumps etc.¹¹ This kind of localized generation reduces transmission losses and strengthens the energy security by supplying electricity to the places that are not grid connected. Though the initial installation cost could be high, in the long-run, such decentralized energy set ups can prove to be more competitive, leading to stable prices as compared to traditional energy due to the provision of special decentralized energy tariff.

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A decentralized system can bring about several community benefits such as local independence, energy security, low carbon emissions, reduced business vulnerability during peak hours and new job opportunities in fuel production. Even from the developers and investors point of view, decentralized energy is a cost-effective method of achieving energy security in terms of energy accessibility and environmental sustainability. Moreover, the decentralized framework of energy provision would empower the local population and communities by promoting opportunities to attain sustainable, competitive and efficient energy choice.

The present concerns of environment have been guiding the business operations, research areas, R&D and innovation with the motive to decouple economic growth from greenhouse gas emissions. This situation would call for radical shift of business planning to enjoy competitive advantage in both domestic and international market. Under such circumstances, there arises the need for energy transformation streamlined towards sustainable consumption and production by using a strategic approach of energy use, resource efficiency and waste management.

This lays the foundation for energy transition towards clean, renewable energy sources. As a result, the emerging energy sector, which brings together expertise in product and process design, resource management, renewable technologies and decentralized energy generation and distribution becomes a vital part of risk management. Therefore, energy transition towards renewable energy sources is eventually a part of bigger debates like sustainable consumption and production. This further instigates a radical shift to resource efficiency in manufacturing and supply chain operations, using energy as strategic driver to start a journey.

A decentralized energy or distributed energy holds a very crucial role in the process of shift to sustainable consumption and production. There are several benefits associated with decentralized energy method of supplying electricity. A reduced degree of transmission losses implying increased conversion efficiency, increased use of renewable, carbon – neutral and low carbon fuels, and greater degree of security for businesses and investments. A decentralized energy system leads to more flexibility for generation to meet the local demand patterns for electricity and heat. This also implies greater awareness of energy issues through community-based energy system, driving a change in social attitudes and more efficient use of energy resources.

The emerging market for decentralized energy products and services has to be recognized and supported by institutional

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arrangements. This would further imply training and skill development, warranty and assurance schemes, a reliable connectivity between centre, decentralized and microenergy systems. Given the diversity of decentralized energy, the emerging energy system should be guided by resources, technologies, expertise and pattern of demand. This would optimise products and services to meet demand. The aim behind the decentralized energy system is to engage more and more of people in business, thus creating more employment, improving the standard of living and fill the existing supply gap in the centralized structure or framework.

The Community of Ark represents a self-sufficient energy system that is also renewable. Firewood cut from community's forest was used for indoor heating, water heating and cooking. The community uses categorically energy saving approach using no electricity, while candles were used in indoor lighting, and cellars are used without needing refrigeration. The community also used other indigenous techniques like water-powered sawmill to generate electricity.

Conclusion

Economic growth and development over the years have immensely deteriorated the environment leading to climate change. Emissions due to use of primary energy sources are the basic reason for climate change. Climate change being the biggest challenge of mankind requires energy transition towards renewable energy sources. Developing countries, which are already under the pressure of multitude problems like unemployment, poverty, inflation, lack of capital etc. need to evaluate various alternatives that could efficiently foster energy transition delivering an efficient outcome.

The paper examined role of energy in economic development and the present needs and concerns. India stands committed to the Paris Agreement and is already moving in the path of clean energy transition, making significant accomplishment in attaining targets after Paris Agreement. This calls for energy transition towards renewable energy sources effectively implying a non-violent and sustainable economy.

The paper argued that a decentralized setting provides a non-violent and sustainable aspect of economy by empowering the local communities, making them self-sufficient and self-reliant. This makes the region economically stronger demolishing all the impediments in achieving inclusive growth and equality in the system. The paper also demonstrates several weaknesses of a centralized setting usually leading to a violent economy, full of elements of greed, competition and concentration of power in the hands of few elite groups in the

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society. Such a system proves to be a failure in terms of energy security, when evaluated on the basis of criteria such as energy accessibility, transmission and distribution losses, energy conservation and energy efficiency and corporate social responsibility.

Evaluating energy security in a decentralized system, the paper reveals that a decentralized system, which is based on localized energy generation, reduces transmission losses and strengthens the energy security by supplying electricity to the places that are not grid connected. The emerging market for decentralized energy products and services has to be recognized and supported by institutional arrangements. This would further imply training and skill development, warranty and assurance schemes, a reliable connectivity between centre, decentralized and microenergy systems. Given the diversity of decentralized energy, the emerging energy system should be guided by resources, technologies, expertise and pattern of demand. This would optimise products and services to meet the demand.

In the present era of value chain CSR is mandatory at firm level or unit level due to which State action becomes inevitable to promote private governance. In the global value chain world the interplay between the public and private shapes the business and investment environment. Further the governance of value chain also requires a regulatory and enforcement role for government including legislation. This reinforces the role of centre in promoting the growth of indigenous technology to compete the value chain by making it as cheap as possible. Since the value chain businesses are in operation in different parts of the world, they need to be protected by multilateral legal institutions like WTO and United Nation. This secures the role of government in the sense of supporting the regulatory and legal framework to safeguard the integrity and patent of technology innovated at indigenous level. Considering the enhanced role of State, the Centre must support and promote decentralized, local value chain businesses, empowering the regional economies, ensuring inclusive growth.

Finally, the paper argued that a decentralized setting provides a non-violent and sustainable growth of an economy. It is evident that a decentralized energy system will provide suitable pathways to adopt energy transition in the society towards a cleaner, renewable energy source. Such a system not only guarantees energy security but also empowers the regions to be more self-reliant and self-sufficient leading them towards inclusive growth, equality and poverty alleviation. Such a system is bound to attain a non-violent and sustainable economy characterised by minimum conflicts, devoid

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of unnecessary competition leading to hegemony or supremacy and at the same time no concentration of power in elite groups. The paper also proposes a bottom up approach, adopting a decentralized framework along with the top down approach implying some centralized action. It is argued that a top down approach is necessary to promote and strengthen bottom up policies to make them effective.

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Relevance of Economic Ideas and Ideals of Mahatma Gandhi and J.C. Kumarappa in Today's Context of Decentralization and Development

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to recall some of the prominent development ideas and ideals of Gandhi and his close associate Dr. J. C. Kumarappa, with a view to reminding the Government and the people about their relevance in the present context of our aggressive pursuit of 'destructive development,' without caring for the environment or 'Nature' in general on the one hand and in the context of the currently ongoing process of decentralization and local development on the other. .

Key words: Sanatana Dharma, local development, natural change, development with divinity, Deendayal Upadhyaya.

1. Introduction

BEFORE INDEPENDENCE, INDIA suffered a deep economic, social and cultural degradation because of the long years of political and economic dominance of the West. India had almost lost its social, economic and cultural values it inherited from its ancestors in Bharat, who contributed a great deal to the world and lived peacefully under the umbrella of 'Sanatana Dharma,' since the birth of human species on this earth. The famous Indus-Valley Civilization and the peaceful

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and prosperous Society then in Bharat are their contributions to the world. However, the reminiscence of this has been completely ignored or destroyed by the foreign rulers. Also, the local economic, social and cultural values had been replaced by those of the West, developed after the Industrial revolution and the dawn of the modern society and modern development there, driven by the greed for more material progress at the cost of spirituality guided real values in life. Indian society had fallen under the grip of western development and culture, and it was very much attracted by the western lifestyle, believed to be more 'civilized.' They preferred this over their nature-born native civilization, culture and lifestyle, and tried to ape the west in all respects. The educated Indians were in the forefront of this. All ancient values eroded gradually and the new western values took their place. 'Dharma' naturally got abandoned and the ancient social system was replaced by modern society. Religions, particularly organized religions, took the place of Spirituality and Dharma of the ancient Bharat. Consequently, conflicts in society began, society got divided on the basis of religions, and Dharma disappeared or got discarded. This situation continued even after India became Independent, despite the strong vision and alternative development views of Gandhi for whom 'Sanatan Dharma' was the only authority for all his thoughts, words and deeds.

The Gandhian path of development would have been the most appropriate choice of the first Government at the time of Independence. Unfortunately, this Government under Jawaharlal Nehru never accepted Gandhian prescriptions for economic development. On the other hand, he was enthusiastically interested in following the western development path blindly without caring for the 'have-nots' in the country. After having rejected the Gandhian path and having followed the western style industry-oriented development path for more than six decades after Independence, a rethinking now is useful only if we have the determination, courage, boldness, sincerity, faith and above all soft corner for the poor without any hypocrisy to accept and adopt the Gandhian principles in development from now onwards. In the context of the fast changing framework of modern society, it is now doubtful how Gandhian thought could be acceptable to the people and their leaders who run after luxuries and pleasures, particularly when we are a very strong partner of the global economy, striving for rapid development at any cost, even ignoring all the issues accompanying it. At the same time, we know that the only way to bring peace and happiness to mankind is to work towards achieving an economy for which Gandhi stood for.

Dr. J. C. Kumarappa was a close associate and follower of Gandhi and worked for the promotion of his development ideas and ideals. He strongly supported Gandhi's notion of trusteeship, non-violence, ahimsa, human dignity, freedom, equity, spiritual values, cottage and village industries and so on. He promoted Village Industries Associations. Kumarappa worked as a professor of economics at the Gujarat Vidyapith in Ahmedabad and also as the editor of *Young India*. It was he who founded the All India Village Industries Association in 1935. He was called 'the Green Gandhian' by the historian Mr. Ramachandra Guha, as he strongly stood for environment and sustainable development. In every respect Kumarappa was a truly strong Gandhian and the economic development visions of both were the same or very similar. It was he who coined the term 'Gandhian economics.' An attempt is therefore made in this paper to recall some of the prominent development ideas and ideals of Gandhi and his close associate Dr. J. C. Kumarappa, with a view to remind the government and the people about their relevance in the present context, our aggressive pursuit for 'destructive development,' without caring for the environment or 'Nature' in general on one hand and in the context of the currently ongoing process of decentralization and local development on the other.

2. Basis of Gandhian Economic Thoughts: A 'Natural Economy' Built on 'Dharma'

The world today is almost at the peak of economic development. The people are enjoying the fruits of this development. There have been great improvements in the lifestyles of the people during the past several centuries. True that education, including scientific and technological innovations, has contributed a great deal to the growth of wealth and comforts in life. The wealth under our disposal and the luxuries around us, however, have made majority of us inhuman. There is now a growing tendency among the people to become more selfish, immoral, unfaithful, self-centered, cruel, arrogant, egoistic, brutal, corrupt, quarrelsome, competitive, envious, greedy and discontented. All good human qualities have almost disappeared already from the society. The society is also facing numerous problems and crises that stand in the way of the people from enjoying a peaceful living on this earth. The people, the governments and the development policy-makers world over have conveniently forgotten the basic fact that material growth alone is not sufficient enough to provide the people a happy, peaceful and prosperous life on this earth. Peace and happiness are experienced not by the human body, but by the human mind. While material growth contributes to the health of the body, it

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does not contribute much to the improvements of mental health, peace and happiness unless it is accompanied by spiritual growth too. Gandhi had recognized this very well.

No doubt, that a debate or serious examination of the relevance of Gandhian economic and social thoughts in the present context is very appropriate. However, there is a fear that this may remain only as a mere academic discussion, without much practical impact on our economic and development policies being followed now for several decades. An economy envisaged by Gandhi and Kumarappa is not one that is to be brought in by force or compulsion by anyone, but has to be realized with the collective willingness and cooperation of all to work for it. Mere discussions will not help, only strong and concrete action is what is needed. When Pandit Nehru totally ignored the development ideas and ideals of Gandhi and did not opt for the Gandhian path of development for India, Dr. Kumarappa had expressed his strong view that if we had done this with all our strength of will and determination we would have been contributing, not only to the welfare of our country, but also for the brotherhood of mankind as a whole. Unfortunately, we missed the bus miserably and what we face now is the aftermath of this great blunder of not following the Gandhian development strategies in India by the first Nehru government in the early fifties.

Dr. J.C. Kumarappa had always adored and accepted Gandhian thoughts in full with all sincerity. Gandhi's devotion to Truth and Non-violence is the one that attracted him most. He believed that at a time, when the world is steeped in violence, wickedness, unfaithfulness and false propaganda, Gandhi's principles alone can save and beckon the world. The love of Kumarappa for Gandhian views is evident from his article "Gandhian Economy and The Way to Realize It," published by Gandhi Seva Gram Ashram, Wardha as part of their 'Articles Series' on 'Gandhian view on Economics'.

There are two concepts, one of 'Natural Economy' and another of 'Artificial Economy.' The 'Natural Economy' is one based on 'Eternal Natural Principles' ('Sanatana Dharma'). This is sustainable and can bring peace, prosperity and happiness to humanity. It is fully based on 'Truth and Non-violence,' the basic components of 'Dharma.' It satisfies the demands for meeting primary needs of our body, mind and intellect to keep them strong and in good working condition, without infringing up on the rights of others. It ensures 'Shreyas' and not 'Preyas' or in other words, not 'Development with Destruction,' but 'Development with Divinity.' There is no room for any kind of violence, corruption, competition, conflicts or quarrels in such an economy. Gandhi and Kumarappa stood for such an economy,

which alone is sustainable. On the other hand, an 'Artificial Economy,' originated and followed in the West, particularly after Industrial Revolution, is production, consumption and market oriented. In such an economy, everything is organized with a spirit of competition and all economic activities are organized purely with profit motive. Goods are produced, not to satisfy the just minimum needs of the people, but with a view to creating more demand from the people and making more profit by selling more in the market aggressively. Promotion of consumerism and thereby maximum sale and profit is the focus in the 'Artificial Economy.' It creates a great many artificial desires in the people for more material pleasures. Factories produce to their full capacity, using capital intensive technologies, and then promote their sales among the people through various methods, including false advertisements in different medias. Ordinary village people, for example, will be attracted to newly made clothes, shoes, etc., of different fashions, produced in the factories, the use of which is believed to make them modern and more 'civilized.' Thus, they create a market for their own goods and control other people's lives in this manner. For this they require political and economic power, and to obtain such power, it is necessary, many a times, to resort to unethical practices in their business. Unethical business is one easy way of creating wealth in an 'Artificial Economy.' Such business and advertisements are totally against Gandhian ideologies. The spread of this kind of western economic system and their domination on other countries have taken place through this process of industrial production and trade. Foreign trade and foreign domination in various ways have their origin in this process.

3. Human Beings ignore 'Natural Laws of Change'

In the context of sustainable development it is imperative to know a little deep about 'Nature' and its 'Laws.' The universe, including the earth and the human beings came into existence millions of years ago. They undergo constant transformations since their origin. These transformations or changes are inevitable, as they are governed by the permanent natural law of change. All animate and inanimate objects and phenomena around us are parts of the earth, which is a part of this universe. All these undergo changes, changes in different pace, dimensions, intensities, forms and so on, basically governed by some natural principles and in some natural order. However, the human beings, one of the species of the several species of creatures in this world, because they are endowed with very many distinct special features and characteristics, different from other creatures, believe themselves to be 'superior' to all the other creatures, not only in this

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world, but also in the whole universe. Therefore, they proclaim themselves as having authority and command over all other animate and inanimate objects in this world and the universe. This is the greatest blunder ever committed by man out of his misunderstanding.

While all species in this world, except these human beings with special endowments, respected the 'Nature's Rule' and accepted the 'Natural Laws of Change,' the human beings, with their questioning and inquisitive mind, felt themselves capable of 'interfering' with the 'Nature's Rule' and 'Natural Laws of Change.' When they slowly knew that they can bring, to a large extent, the 'Nature and its Resources' to their command for their advantage and intervene in the 'Natural Change Process,' they began to 'Conquer Nature' deliberately and to bring their own 'Patterns of Changes,' which they thought more preferable and useful to them. Consequently, the 'Natural Changes,' supposed to have happened, underwent distortions and disorders at the hands of the human beings and resulted in 'Man-made Changes' in this world. These man-made changes, disrespecting the 'Natural Process,' caused imbalances in the Nature and the 'Natural Pattern of Change.' Man now feels proud of his enormous abilities to interfere with 'Nature' and tame it, and in his vast knowledge and capacity in exploiting abundantly 'Nature' and 'Natural Resources' for producing goods and services for his changing consumption needs and lifestyles. He is now proud of having made, over the years, a 'developed and civilized human society' and having brought all other species on this earth under his command and mercy. He, however, does not realize that he is in a fool's paradise and that what he conquered so far is nothing when seen against the infinite wonders of this universe and 'Natural Process of Changes' that still decides his destiny on this earth.

Man's pursuit for knowledge, for unravelling the secrets of nature and its dynamism, for innovations in science and technology, for economic growth and material production for his luxurious consumption etc., is, no doubt, his inherent nature and he is bound to continue to do it because it is also part of the 'Natural Change Process.' However, man should understand that he has no absolute 'freedom' for participating in this 'Process.' The mother gives her children freedom to do whatever they want to play or do. But when the children, while playing, jump on her, disturb her dress or tear off her clothes, give her body pains, inflict injuries, put unnecessary and unwarranted demands for many things, behave furiously and angrily towards her and finally cross all the permitted boundaries, the mother warns them, punishes them, if necessary and advises them to control themselves to enjoy the permitted freedom to play. The 'Mother

Nature' is not different. She takes the best care of her children with everything they want for a joyful and peaceful living with her. She enjoys so long as her children 'behave' as per the 'code of conduct' laid down by her, but becomes disturbed, sorry and sometimes angry too, when children breach the 'code of conduct' and behave madly. This is the state of the human beings today. They have thrown away all the 'code of conduct' and are taking the 'Natural Laws' into their own hands and interfering with 'Nature' injudiciously, all in the name of knowledge pursuit, development, material growth, luxurious consumption, comforts and worldly pleasures. We worry about the adverse consequences of our injudicious and unlimited exploitation of natural resources with all modern technology for satisfying our development greed. But we have failed even to identify the basic reason for this kind of a threatening situation, at least now, to avoid further future calamities. The basic reason, in fact, lies in our 'development concept' we follow and the goals we pursue.

Therefore, for making sustainable development possible and bringing peace and happiness in the human society, we should realize that material growth needs to be accompanied or supplemented by an equally essential and important counterpart, the spiritual growth of the people. Gandhi had advocated this very forcefully. A proper balance between the two is inevitable to achieve a peaceful, happy and prosperous living. In fact, material growth and spiritual growth need not be in conflict or in competition with each other; they can supplement each other and together build up a peaceful, happy and prosperous world society. Unless this truth is understood, accepted and practised by all stakeholders of economic development, there is no hope for establishing sustainable and peaceful world society. No ray of hope, however, is visible for cleansing the society and making the people morally wiser to strike a balance between their material and spiritual pursuits so that they do not add to the miseries in their life, but build up a sustainable world of peace and prosperity. Our well established very popular spiritual/religious preachers and their organizations in different countries and in the international development organizations and the governments should come together on one platform to take up this issue seriously.

4. Gandhi Incorporated Religious Values, 'Dharma' in Development Paradigm

There is skepticism among researchers and planners at large in incorporating religious values in the development paradigm, which Gandhi strongly wanted. But there is recently some consensus among at least a few in the field of development, in adding a spiritual

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dimension to development concept to ensure peace and prosperity to humanity. Initiatives in looking at 'Development' from a religious or spiritual point of view, of course, are so far scanty. The 'Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity' in New York is an institution taking efforts for some years now in organizing discussions and studies in this field. One of their occasional papers 'Science, Religion and Development: Promoting a Discourse in India, Brazil and Uganda' is thought provoking. Their books 'The Lab, the Temple, and the Market: Reflections of Science, Religion and Development,' 'Science, Religion and Development: Some Initial Considerations,' 'Science, Religion and Development: Some Aims and Challenges' and 'May Knowledge Grow in our Hearts: Applying Spiritual Principles to Development Practice — The Case of Seva Mandir' (2010) are also very interesting. It is time for all who aspire for peace, prosperity and happiness in this life for a stock taking of the 'destructive development path,' traversed by the humanity over the centuries and the injuries we inflicted on the 'Nature' in the course of our journey on this development trajectory. This path never takes us to sustainable development which we aspire for. We should articulate with the people on the change and attitude that they need in their approach to development and encourage them to live in harmony with 'Nature,' which is a *sine qua non* for sustainable development and human sustenance on this earth. Adoption of Gandhian economic thoughts in our development strategies is the only way.

There is no dearth of warnings from many quarters about the dangers of our destructive path of development. All of them give serious warning about the possible extinction of humanity in the near future, if remedial measures are not taken immediately by all concerned. It is worth recognizing in this context that we end up now with such a critical situation, just because of the type of economic development followed and popularized by the western developed countries after the industrial revolution and particularly after the World War II. The first step in averting the possible catastrophe, therefore, is to adopt the Gandhian development concept in our development policies for achieving sustainable development ('The Hindu', January 21, 2007, for example, had a headline "Just Ten years to save the World" for a news item, giving a warning from the 'Intergovernmental Panel on Climatic Changes,' on global warming and consequent dangers to humanity). The final report of this Panel, published in February 2007, contains many frightening conclusions. The report says that about 24 billion tons of carbon dioxide, generated each year by human activities, accelerate global warming, posing great threat for human survival on this earth. Several articles and news

items came out in the Indian newspapers following this report in 2007, all advocating for remedial measures. The editorial column in 'The New Indian Express' on February 4, the articles by Gopal Raj in 'The Hindu,' February 5 and April 10, the editorial and an article by Ramesh Thakur and Colin Bradford in 'The Hindu,' February 10, an article by Daphne Wysham and Smitu Kothari in 'The Hindu,' April 9, an article by Krishnan in 'The Hindu,' April 13, and an article by Prabhakaran Nair in 'Mathrubhumi,' April 15 are just some of the references on this subject. People read all these, but they could not make any real impact.

5. Redefining 'Sustainable Development' as 'Development with Divinity'

It was in the Club of Rome classic Report (1972), '*Limits to Growth*,' written by a group of scientists led by Dennis and Donella Meadows of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology that the concept of sustainable development was first mooted. In 1980, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature published a world conservation strategy in the context of sustainable development as a global priority, where the term "sustainable development" was used. The 1982 'United Nations World Charter for Nature' referred to five principles of conservation by which human conduct affecting nature is to be guided and judged. In 1987 the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development released the Brundtland Report, titled '*Our Common Future*.' Here the concept of sustainable development has been developed beyond the initial intergenerational framework, focusing more on the goal of 'socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable economic growth.' In 1992, the UN Conference on Environment and Development published the Earth Charter, giving an outline for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century.

The report 'Millennium Development Goals (MDG)' for the 21st century, charted by the UN in 2000, has identified several components of sustainable development including economic development, environmental protection and social development. Sustainable development calls for a systematic approach to growth and for managing natural, produced and social capital for the welfare of the present and future generations. It addresses issues associated with both land development and human development such as education, public health, and standard of living. The latest in the series of initiatives for sustainable development by the UN is its report, "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," specifying 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), formally adopted by the United Nations

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General Assembly in September 2015.

The destiny of human society is basically determined by two factors, the education it receives and the development pattern it aims and achieves. All the ills that we see in the present-day world and the fantastic development and affluence too, are the offsprings of the type of education and development we pursued in the past. Human society world over, from its savage state, has now come a long way. The 21st century society is now at the peak of material progress. However, the ever-ending pursuit of mankind for money, wealth, comforts, pleasures and luxuries, has landed him not in a world of peace, prosperity, happiness, but on a turbulent volcano of hatred, conflicts, disputes, ethnic and communal wars, distrust and dissatisfaction, tension and cross-country terrorism. Moreover, this kind of development has led to growing miseries, increasing destitution, rising poverty, widening disparities, mounting conflicts and tension, increasing violence and growing unrest among different sections of the society and countries of the world. We miserably failed in building a morally strong, cultured, disciplined, peaceful, healthy and prosperous society, all due to the shortcomings in our education and development perspective. The mainstream economists, development theorists, policy makers, political stalwarts and all international development agencies concerned with the well-being of the society at large, need to be persuaded immediately to debate on adding a new dimension to our present concept of sustainable development and move towards a concept of 'Holistic Development.'

The alternative to this kind of development is not just 'sustainable development' as suggested by the west and popular now, but 'Development with Divinity' that ensures 'Peace and Prosperity' or 'Shreyas' to the mankind. It is appropriate to recall here the views expressed in the 'Limits to Growth' (1972) and in the 'State of the World' (1990, Chapter 10) of the World Watch Institute. The 'Limits to Growth' has warned, "There are physical limits to the planetary sources. A society with strong spiritual, moral or ethical values and discipline alone can refrain from over consumption and thus prevent over-exploitation of nature." The 'State of the World' has said: "Movements towards a lasting society cannot occur without a transformation of individual priorities and values. Throughout the ages, philosophers and religious leaders have denounced materialism as viable path to human fulfillment. Yet societies across the ideological spectrum have persisted in equating quality of life with increased consumption. Personal self-worth typically is measured by possessions, just as social progress is judged by GNP growth."

6. Gandhi's Dream for 'Rama Rajya' and 'Grama Swaraj'

All Indians, including our Prime Minister Modi, celebrated Gandhi Jayanti on October 2, paying high tributes to our great 'Father of Nation.' Now we have to wait for another year to remember Gandhi as routine annual exercise. He is never remembered even by the Congress Party or its leaders on any of the other 364 days in a year. True that India got Independence, not just because of Gandhi, but because of the work of numerous other freedom fighters also. But it was the distinct leadership of Gandhi that provided the necessary energy to the followers to fight for freedom. If Gandhi were not there to plan and initiate the freedom movement and lead it, India's fate would have been different. All Indians, particularly the numerous political leaders of today who misuse the freedom and authority of governing India, should be ever grateful to Gandhi, remember him always and try to fulfil his wishes and dreams about India. His dearest dream of Gandhi was, no doubt, transforming India to a 'Rama Rajya.'

We must understand that by Rama Rajya he never meant a Hindu Rashtra, but a country of 'Dharmic Culture.' He meant by Rama Rajya 'Divine Raj,' the Kingdom of God. For him Rama and Rahim are one and the same deity. He acknowledged no other God but the one God of 'Truth, Ahimsa and Righteousness.' According to him, Rama Rajya of his dream ensures 'equal rights for the prince and the pauper. He was not for Rama Rajya by just replacement of the British army by a National army as of today. He believed that a country that is governed by even its national army can never be morally free. The weakest member of the society in such a country can never rise to his fullest moral height. For him the simple withdrawal of British power does not mean Rama Rajya and it cannot happen so long as we are nursing violence in our hearts under the garb of non-violence. He compared Rama Rajya to the state of 'Nirvana' or the Kingdom of Heaven on this earth.

Gandhi stood for sustainable development, development that meets the needs of the present and ensures opportunities for the future generations to meet their needs. His concept of sustainable development, however, is quite different from what is followed now by modern governments and development economists. Gandhi stipulates judicious use of natural resources, keeping in view the 'Dharmic Principles,' not the currently popular profit-oriented modern business principles. Never development could be sustainable if the people go on multiplying their consumption demand without any limit and we continue to exploit natural resources for producing more to meet the increasing consumption needs. The Gandhian model of

economic development is sustainable economic development in this sense and 'Development with Divinity.' All our current efforts to move towards sustainable development will be futile, unless we accept and adopt Gandhian principles to exploit natural resources only to the minimum required for meeting the minimum consumption needs of the people and stop all extravagant consumption habits and lifestyles being promoted through aggressive marketing.

For Gandhi, economic progress is not just creation of wealth. It is the increase in the capacity of the largest number of people to satisfy their needs. It is not mere accumulation of wealth, but its judicious distribution on Dharmic principles, evenly as far as possible, is a better indicator of progress. In fact, even without any additional production, it is possible to raise happiness of the people by a mere redistribution of the wealth already produced among the people at large, because as we all know that a rupee in the hands of a poor man is several times worthy and valuable than a rupee in the hands of a wealthy man. Thus, when we take a rupee from a rich man and pass it on to a poor man, the real value of that rupee increases and the satisfaction or happiness of the poor man increases. This is really the Dharmic way of development, according to Gandhi.

Rejecting all foreign goods and replacing them by 'swdeshi products' is what was advocated by Gandhi. In other words, our economy should be self-sufficient in all respects and foreign dependence for our consumption needs should be stopped or kept at the minimum. Consumption of foreign goods reduces the use of domestic good and through this we are impoverishing our people and reducing their employment opportunities. Self-sufficiency in the economy can be achieved by minimizing the consumption need. Thus, the basic solution in all the problems we face now is to learn how best we can reduce our consumption needs without sacrificing our happiness. This is possible if we approach development with a spiritual outlook and within the framework of 'Natural Economy,' as Gandhi suggested.

Gandhi's 'Gram Swaraj' is the most ideal concept in the context of decentralization and sustainable development. Judicious (not optimum in the modern economic sense) exploitation and use of local resources by the village community for production of commodities of basic needs, particularly food, clothing and housing, for the use of the local community and not for sale outside is the principle to be adopted for this. Village level cottage industries using locally available resources and providing maximum scope for employment of workers of all types are the best option for sustainable development at the village level. In fact, such a system was prevalent in ancient Bharat

under its Village Panchayats and Janapadas, which had full decision-making freedom.

A few quotes from Gandhi are most appropriate and revealing in this context. "Exploring of villages is itself against violence. If we want swaraj to be built on non-violence, we will have to give the villages their proper place." (Harijan, 20-1, 1940, p.423). "If the village perishes India will perish too. It will be no more India. Her own mission in the world will get lost" (Harijan, Aug.29, 1936, p.226). "I am convinced that if India is to attain true freedom and through India the world also, then sooner or later the fact must be recognized that people will 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 both violence and untruth." "I hold that without truth and non-violence there can be nothing but destruction for humanity. We can realize truth and non-violence only in the simplicity of village life and this simplicity can best be found in the *charkha* and all that *charkha* connotes. I must not fear if the world today is going on the wrong way. It may be that India too will go that way and like the proverbial moth 'burn itself eventually in the flame round which it dances more and more fiercely. But it is my bounden duty up to my last breath to try to protect India and through India the entire world from such a dream" (Bunch of Old Letters, 1958, p.506-07, Oct.5, 1945).

The decentralized development planning and local level development, currently being adopted after the 73rd Constitutional Amendment in India, should have adopted, to the extent possible, lessons from Gandhian concept of 'Grama Swaraj.' Unfortunately, this has never been considered by any one at any level in the process of formation of the three-tier Panchayati Raj system or local level planning. May be the Gandhian development paradigm is a 'utopia' for the modern society which is already under the influence of material progress, luxuries, comforts, money and wealth provided by the western type of capitalistic economic development. For the people of today the world has already reached a stage of economic development from which a going back is impossible and Gandhi and his ideals are outdated, impracticable and unacceptable in this modern context. Only when we are threatened by severe natural calamities as a consequence of the present type of destructive and devilish economic development, we hold discussions and conferences on natural resources depletion, environment pollution, sustainable development and so on. This has been going on for the past more than four decades under the auspices of several international

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organizations and agencies with no visible practical solution for the threatening problem, acceptable to the people.

Gandhi gave priority in local development for eradication of poverty, education of the masses, sanitation and health, equality for all irrespective of religion or caste, minimum exploitation and maximum conservation of natural resources, protection of cows, promotion of cottage industries, priority for man over machine, priority for agriculture over industry, prohibition of cultivation intoxicant crops like tobacco, opium and ganja, Trusteeship for production and management activities, consumption of locally produced commodities and avoiding the use of foreign goods, and above all practising a simple way of life giving priority for 'Dharma.' As a man who upheld Ahimsa, Truth and Righteousness above all, Gandhi wanted people to follow strict vegetarianism, to avoid killing of animals and hurting others, to stop use of all kinds of bad habits like smoking, use of intoxicants and liquor, to avoid all kinds of wastages, particularly of food, to discontinue aping luxurious lifestyle of others, to avoid the greed for money and wealth, to be always truthful and trustworthy and above all to travel always on the 'Path of Dharma.' Gandhi once wrote: "I want the dumb millions of our land to move healthy and happy and I want them to grow spiritually" (Towards New Horizons, 1959, p 45-46)

"Any lover of true democracy and village life can take up a village, treat it as his world and sole work, and he will find good result. He begins by being the village scavenger, spinner, watchman, medicine man and school master all at once. If nobody comes near him, he will be satisfied with scavenging and spinning" (Harijan, 26-7, 1942, p.238). Gandhi's vision of his Rama Rajya and Grama Swaraj, which he lastly expressed just 12 days before his brutal assassination in *Harijan*, should be an eye opener to us. "There will be neither paupers nor beggars, nor high nor low, neither millionaire employers nor half-starved employees, nor intoxicating drinks or drugs. There will be the same respect for women as vouchsafed to men and the chastity and purity of men and women will be jealously guarded. Every woman, except one's wife, will be treated by men of all religions, as mother, sister or daughter according to her age. There will be no untouchables and equal respect for all human beings and their religious faiths. The people will be all proudly, joyously and voluntarily bread labourers. I hope everyone who listens to me or reads these lines will forgive me if stretched on my bed and basking in the sun, inhaling life-giving sunshine, I allow myself to indulge in this ecstasy." (Harijan, Jan.18, 1948, p.526).

7. Conclusion

If Indians have at least an iota of love, regard and respect for Gandhi, because of whom only we enjoy 'Democracy and Freedom' now, it is our duty at this last phase of existence of humanity on this earth to discuss the relevance of development ideas of Gandhi and Kumarappa, and provide an opportunity to the Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi now for planning seriously for sustainable development and thereby for establishing a 'Rama Rajya' and 'Grama Swaraj' of Gandhi's vision, which is not a fascist concept as some political parties, because of ignorance and political rivalry, may say. It is not an RSS agenda against the people of India belonging to different religions, but it is only for fulfilling the great dream of Gandhi and thereby for a re-establishment of ancient Values and Dharma of Bharat. Mr. Modi has and should show the boldness to go for it and pay the real respect and regard to our 'Father of the Nation.' For this he should proceed to take suitable policy decisions for educating the people and compelling them, if necessary, for reducing their consumption and keep away from their modern luxurious lifestyle. A strong message may be sent by taking policy decisions, to begin with, for (1) closing down all luxury star hotels and bars/liquor shops, (2) stopping construction of multi-level high rise buildings, (3) blocking unlimited production or import of cars and other air-polluting automobiles, (4) controlling the manufacturing and use of air conditioners, particularly in public buildings, (5) stopping educational institutions from operating their own vehicles for the transportation of students, (6) prohibiting parents taking their children to schools or colleges in their vehicles, compelling children to walk to their schools and colleges if they are within five kilometers, (7) prohibiting all kinds false and bogus advertisements in various public medias, as part of aggressive marketing of luxurious company products, (8) closing down or limiting the number of shops for consumer items, like cosmetics as well as fancy and costly articles for ladies and children, and (9) limiting the use of mobiles. The people of today, of course, will be laughing at these suggestions and as their priority now is for maximum production and consumption for increasing their material comforts. By all probability, therefore, the above suggestions are like to remain only as an unfulfilled wish.

Before I close this paper, one more fact may be pointed out here for consideration while discussing the views of Gandhi and Kumarappa. Pandit Deenadayal Upadhyaya, one of the founders of RSS also had similar concepts and ideals to those of Mahatma Gandhi and Kumarappa, though nowhere this is seriously acknowledged by

anyone, probably because Upadhyaya belonged to RSS, which was and is supposed to be against Gandhi. In fact, Gandhi was also a staunch Hindu or better, a true 'Sanatana Dharmi,' for whom all religions are equal and 'God is Truth.' Gandhi's life, ideals thought and writings indicate this clearly without any doubt. So there is not much surprise to see very many similarities between the dreams of both about Bharat. There is scope for examining Upadhyaya's ideas and ideals or vision on decentralization and sustainable development also, leaving aside his RSS affiliation, along with those of Gandhi and Kumarappa. Deenadayal Upadhyaya's four lectures, given in Bombay from 22nd to 25th April, 1965 form the basis of this opinion about his ideals and their similarity to those of Gandhi and Kumarappa. In fact, he begins his first lecture by acknowledging that "Gandhi himself had set out his idea of the independent Bharat in his book *Hind Swaraj*" and that "Prior to this, Lokamanya Tilak discussed the philosophical basis of the rejuvenation of Bharat in his book *Gita Rahasya*."

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Notes & Comments

Paul VI and Gandhi Kindred *Maha-Spirits*

Peter Gonsalves

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MONTINI, later better known as Pope Paul VI, may have never met Mahatma Gandhi in person even though the latter visited Rome in 1931, but there is some striking evidence to prove that he admired, and even drew inspiration from Gandhi's life and teachings.

He was the first pope to set foot on Indian soil with his arrival in Bombay on December 2, 1964, barely seventeen years after India was freed from colonial rule. As pope, it was his responsibility to lead and conclude the Second Vatican Council and to initiate the long, tedious and extremely challenging process of promulgating its vision and directives. Two of the many areas that needed particular attention were interreligious dialogue and matters concerning sexuality and marriage. On both these issues, his teaching bears marked affinity with Gandhian thought.

With *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), the Council's Pastoral Constitution, the tone was set for dialogue with all persons of good will. It would seem that the Council Fathers, fully aware of the struggle for India's liberation, had the non-violent Mahatma in mind when they declared: "All Christians are urgently summoned to do in love what the truth

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requires, and to join with all true peacemakers in pleading for peace and bringing it about. Motivated by this same spirit, we cannot fail to praise those who renounce the use of violence in the vindication of their rights.”¹ The document, *Nostra Aetate* (1965), goes a step further. As the Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions, it singles out Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism and other faiths as opportunities for dialogue. “The Catholic Church rejects nothing which is true and holy in these religions... [They] often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all people.”² The document categorically states: “The Church reproves, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against persons or harassment of them because of their race, colour, condition of life, or religion.”³

Pope Paul VI’s own encyclical, *Populorum Progressio* (1967), is a milestone in its focus on holistic development for all peoples, especially those emerging from years of subjugation under colonialism. It was a clarion call for a globalization of progress in which all nations would have a stake. “We cherish this hope: that distrust and selfishness among nations will eventually be overcome by a stronger desire for mutual collaboration and a heightened sense of solidarity.”⁴

In 1969, the centenary year of Mahatma Gandhi’s birth, Paul VI paid rich tributes to the Father of the Indian Nation in a letter to the President of India, Varahagiri Venkata Giri:

Gandhi had a high appreciation of the value of human dignity, and a keen sense of social justice. With warm zeal and a clear vision of the future welfare of his people, he worked tirelessly to achieve his goals, ever instilling in his followers the admirable principle of non-violence. He strove to make his countrymen conscious of injustices in their social system, and to spread among them a spirit of equality and brotherhood. His efforts and example, even when not entirely successful, have left their mark upon the men of his own and our generation.⁵

In matters concerning sexual morality, Pope Paul VI published his historic encyclical *Humane Vitae*,⁶ in which he made the practice of spousal chastity the bedrock of the ideal Christian marriage. He propagated “responsible parenthood” based on an aspect of “paramount importance:” the formation of “a right conscience [as] the true interpreter” of God’s purpose for a healthy family life. This depended on self-control and the method of Natural Family Planning, rather than the use of artificial contraception. As an example, he pointed to Gandhi’s choice for ‘conjugal chastity,’ that provided the inner strength to lead by example in an extremely complex and volatile socio-political context.⁷

Gandhi expressed his own opinion on the matter in his
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autobiographical series published between 1925 and 1929 in his journal *Navjivan*. Looking back at the nearly twenty years of keeping the *brahmacharya* vow, he admitted that it filled him with “pleasure and wonderment.” The power of celibacy for achieving greater things became self-evident: “The freedom and joy that came to me after taking the vow had never been experienced before 1906.”⁸ – the year he began *satyagraha* in South Africa. He also observed the same power at work in those who took the vow and, contrarily, in those who did not. In an interview with Ramachandran, a student of Gandhi’s good friend, the Rev. C. F. Andrews, asked him if he was against the institution of marriage, since he consistently advocated celibacy, which the Anglican pastor disapproved.

Gandhi: Yes, I know [that Andrews disagrees]. That is the legacy of Protestantism. Protestantism did many good things, but one of its few evils was that it ridiculed celibacy.

Ramachandran: That was because it had to fight the deep abuses in which the clergy of the age had sunk.

Gandhi: But all that was not due to any inherent evil of celibacy. It is celibacy that has kept Catholicism green up to the present day.⁹

Yet again, when citing the extraordinary accomplishments that one who practices sexual self-discipline is capable of, Gandhi holds up unmarried Catholic educators (numerous during his time) as models to be imitated. His audience consists of rich Indians ever eager to multiply profits rather than share their wealth by sponsoring the free education of their less fortunate brothers and sisters.

Making money is not the object of education. If the Roman Catholic community is foremost in the world in the matter of education, it is so because it has from the beginning decided that those who are to be engaged in teaching should give their services free, accepting only what is necessary for their maintenance. Besides, they are of mature age and unmarried, so that they are able to devote all their time to the single job of teaching. We may or may not be able to reach that level, but there is no doubt that we ought to take a lesson from their example.¹⁰

Furthermore, Gandhi predicted the sexual revolution that would give rise to all kinds of promiscuities once artificial means of birth control became popular. “Artificial methods are like putting a premium upon vice. They make man and woman reckless.... The remedy will be found to be worse than the disease.”¹¹

At the heart of *Humane Vitae*, however, is the appeal for an education of one’s conscience to moral responsibility. And to hear

one's conscience, interior silence is necessary. The Pope recalls how Socrates was profoundly attuned to his conscience – that divine voice for which he was accused of having a 'demon.' Then he adds: "Gandhi [too] obeyed a 'still small voice' which in certain moments made itself heard within him."¹²

Besides the two above mentioned issues that united Paul VI and Gandhi as kindred spirits, he was also concerned about India's development. For instance, there is evidence to prove that he did much to alleviate the drought and food shortage that threatened India in 1966. He sent a personal gift of \$ 100,000 to the Government of India; he wrote to the President of the United States to give India special consideration; he appealed to various Catholic relief organizations as well as to UNICEF to increase their aid to India, and requested his own Office for the Propagation of the Faith to dispatch a shipment of food.¹³

India's national leaders, most of whom were close collaborators of Mahatma Gandhi, were deeply moved by the Pope's solicitude. In March 1968, a confidential memorandum was sent to the Vatican Secretariat of State to learn whether the Holy Father would be willing to accept the newly created 'Nehru Award' set up by the Indian Government to honour the world's most distinguished promoters of international peace.¹⁴ The 1968 Award, the memorandum said, was "unanimously proposed to be made to the Holy Father." A few days later, the Vatican's Secretariat of State replied that "the present Holy Father has established the practice of not accepting awards and prizes of this nature" and that he was, of course, "profoundly grateful" to the Vice President and the Prime Minister of India and the distinguished members of the jury for proposing his name.¹⁵

On January 30, 1978, the thirtieth anniversary of Gandhi's assassination, Paul VI sent a pertinent message to the Indian people through All India Radio: "No to violence, Yes to Peace!... To reject violence and to accept all the conditions and demands of Peace is an activity of the highest dignity; it is an expression of the truest patriotism. May God give his peace to India. May the love and peace of God abide in your hearts forever!"¹⁶ The message turned out to be his parting gift to India. He breathed his last on August 6, 1978.

Today, forty years later, we are happy to acclaim him a *Maha-Atma*, a Great Soul, a Saint of the Catholic Church for all people of good will!

Notes and References

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7. In an earlier study, I had underscored the argument that "it was primarily this rigorous discipline of subverting his own bodily and worldly instincts that would give him the fearlessness and determination to subvert violent empires and unjust social structures." Peter Gonsalves, *Khadi: Gandhi's Mega Symbol of Subversion*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2012, 199.
8. *Autobiography*, Ahmedabad, Navajivan Trust, 2005, 192.
9. CWMG, vol. 25, 252-253.
10. CWMG, vol. 6 (1907) 268.
11. CWMG, vol. 26, 280.
12. Paolo VI, "Udienza Generale, Mercoledì, 17 maggio 1972" in, *Vatican.va*, (trans. mine), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/audiences/1972/documents/hf_p-vi_aud_19720517_it.html (02-02-2013).
13. Cf. Letter, protocol no. 62891, marked 'Confidential' to Rev. Jerome D'souza S.J. from the Segreteria di Stato di Sua Santità, Vatican, January 25, 1966 in File no. JER. D'S 39/bis, JEMPARC, Shenbaganur, India.
14. The 'Nehru Award,' the confidential memorandum stated, "is adjudged by a distinguished jury, the Chairman of which is the Vice President of India. The Award is accompanied by a cash prize of Rs. 100,000. The first Award was made to U. Thant last year [1967] and he went to Delhi to receive it. There is a citation on the achievements of the Recipient, and a suitable reply." See "Letter to the Secretary of State" sent by Fr. J. D'Souza, 23-03-1968 in, File no. JER. D'S 38, JEMPARC, Shenbaganur, India
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With India's Messiah – Schlomith Flaum and Mahatma Gandhi

Shimon Lev

THE HEBREW KINDERGARTEN teacher Schlomith Frieda Flaum (1893–1963) was born in Kaunas (Kovna), Lithuania, on 18 March 1893 and died in Israel on 2 January 1963 at the age of seventy, lonely, miserable, penniless, and forgotten.¹

Her exceptional and remarkable life story appears at first glance to be unreliable and even invented, but research and closer examination reveal that everything she describes is entirely true. This fact further emphasizes the tragic, almost unbelievable contrast between her extensive travels and meetings with prominent personalities, intellectuals and educators all over the world, and her lonely, forgotten life and death.

Flaum visited Europe, the Middle East, North America, South Africa and Asia. In most places she stayed for long periods, trying to experience that place as well as she could and travel around. As an educator, she focused mainly on new methods of teaching. However, she also met many important and exceptional personalities and was able to establish warm, personal contact with most of them.

Flaum immigrated from Lithuania to Eretz Israel (Palestine) in 1911 and worked as a kindergarten educator in the Jerusalem. She began her travels in 1920, which focused on studying modern pedagogical methods and meeting famous educationists. These travels were certainly exceptional for an unmarried (Jewish) woman at that time. From what we know Flaum left Palestine in 1920 for Rome to study the Montessori Method of education. In February 1920, Flaum sailed from Rome to New York and probably stayed there until the summer of 1921. In New York, Flaum attended the Teachers' Training course at Columbia University.

East and West was the subject of a lecture Tagore delivered at a Jewish synagogue in New York during his third visit to the United States, sometime between October 1920 and March 1921. He gave the lecture in a synagogue (perhaps for the first time in his life) at the

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invitation of Rabbi Stephen Wise.² Flaum attended the lecture and heard Tagore for the first time. She later wrote: “He stood and spoke like one uttering gold coins. His voice was melancholic – almost the voice of a woman.” She then realized that “there are other worlds that we have not yet seen.” This first meeting with Tagore would change her life.

After Tagore’s above mentioned lecture, she went with two classmates from the pedagogical course at Columbia University to visit Tagore in his hotel. Flaum recounted:

One afternoon, the three of us went to his hotel in New York. With warm handshakes did he greet us. [...] Tagore’s words flowed, and we listened. It was hard to believe that beyond these walls, within which we were enclosed, lay the busy city of New York [...] Thus did the conversation turn to the topic of education and his school in the village of Santiniketan (abode of peace). A school for boys and girls... elementary school and high school... from all over the world visitors come to see it... you, too, come... please. Only a year later did I begin to act towards realizing my heartfelt desire to go to his school in the “abode of peace”... to observe the poet as an educator and work there as a teacher. I summoned up the courage and proposed to Tagore my wish to be a pupil and a teacher in his school, and was accepted.³

Tagore answered positively and Flaum rushed back to Palestine. After a few weeks of arranging her travel, she sailed for Bombay. Flaum arrived at Santiniketan to be a teacher of both early childhood education and the German language for Indian students preparing to study in Germany, as well as a student at Visva Bharati International University. Her two-year stay in India from 1922–1924 was the climax of all her travels. Everything she did later in her life was connected to, or resulted from, her meeting with her *guru*, Tagore.

Flaum did not want to leave India before meeting Gandhi who was just released from Jail. In the following section she recounts her meeting with Gandhi whom she described as “India’s Messiah.” In the following years Flaum published extensively in the Jewish press in Palestine about Tagore and Gandhi.⁴ Flaum was only one of the people who acted to acquaint the growing Jewish population (*Yishuv*) in Palestine with India and its culture and in her numerous articles and lectures throughout the country.

I hope this first-ever publication of Flaum’s account on Gandhi in English will serve the purpose of restoring her forgotten name as the key person who contributed to knowledge about Gandhi in the small Jewish population in Palestine in her time.

With India's Messiah

"Don't tell me about holy water and stone idols – these purify, if at all, only after a long time, but the holy man purifies us by his appearance alone," says a Sanskrit proverb.⁵

When I arrived in India in 1922, Mahatma Gandhi was in jail. But his name was on everyone's lips. Wherever I went in the two years I spent in India, I heard people talking about the Mahatma with reverence and devoted enthusiasm. When I was at Tagore's school, two remembrance days were celebrated in honour of the Mahatma: the day he had visited the school and the day of his imprisonment. And how was he remembered? On these days, no classes were held at school and the students fasted in honour of the Mahatma and gave their food to the children of the adjacent villages. Each student made an artifact that was useful, something Gandhi demanded from all his disciples with no exception. In the evening, everybody assembled to listen to speeches of appreciation. On Gandhi Day, held throughout the entire country, nobody would work, they would fast and hold public meetings.⁶

My only desire before leaving India was to meet the Mahatma in person. And this desire was fulfilled. My visit to Gandhi lives on in me; it resembled a pilgrimage. In the evening, I arrived at Palm Bun [Bungalow on Juhu Beach] in Bombay, where Gandhi was staying. He needed to recuperate after the difficult operation he had when he was in jail.

One of the Mahatma's disciples went to inform him of my arrival. I waited for his response in the garden in front of the house, by the sea, with the sun setting into it and dripping onto its waters the glory of its magnificence. After a few minutes, I was summoned to the house. It was hard for me to go up the stairs – I was so excited. This was a great festive day in my life. I can still feel the emotion I experienced when I saw Gandhi sitting on a chair, gaunt and weak. I bowed to him, according to an Indian custom. He proffered his hand to me. I was drawn to him as if by magic strings.

When I spoke about Tagore's school in Santiniketan, Gandhi said a few things about it. He asked me questions and was glad to hear that the Tagore house was the same house in which he, too, had lived.

"Oh," I said. "Now I know whence all the good thoughts and lofty heartfelt emotions I had there come from."

"No," answered Gandhi. "You should rather say that we both, you and I, stayed under the poet's roof." And a benevolent smile illuminated his face.

As he spoke to me about his home, the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad, his face had a completely different expression, and his eyes sparkled. He spoke a lot about his place of peace.

He asked me about the situation in the Land of Israel and was glad to hear about our movement and agricultural settlements. He also told me some nice things about his Jewish friends in South Africa who, they alone, came to his aid and fulfilled the commandment of hospitality to him.⁷ He also told me about one Jew, called [Henry] Polak, his faithful assistant in his political struggle, who was imprisoned a number of times for this reason:⁸

Mr. Polak's honesty drew me to him strongly. As soon as we were acquainted, we became loyal friends. We immediately discovered that we have the same views on all basic issues. He liked the simple way of life and had the amazing ability to put his ideas into practice. He was the editor of the monthly journal *Critic*. Later, Polak joined me in a settlement I founded called "Tolstoy Farm."⁹ After he had left the board of editors of his newspaper, with his friendliness and social spirit, he quickly earned the love of all the members [of Phoenix Farm] and immediately became an integral part of our family. The simple and natural way of life in the settlement was completely to his taste. There was never the impression that he was looking at life ahead as something extraordinary. As a matter of fact, he felt like a fish in water in the village.

Gandhi's right hand and closest friend was Mr. [Hermann] Kallenbach, a German Jew, an architect, who worked together with him on Tolstoy Farm and was busy solving the school's problems and running it on Gandhi's behalf.¹⁰ Gandhi also spoke about a Russian Jewish woman who was his secretary for a long time and stood by him with complete devotion during his most difficult times. She was Mrs. [Sonja] Schlesin, who is now the headmistress of a girls' school in the Transvaal.¹¹ He said:

She was about seventeen years old when she came to us, and she had all kinds of strange ideas. She came to us not in order to work as a stenotypist, but more in order to gain experience. Any prejudice about race and colour was totally foreign to her. A person older or more experienced than her did not generate in her any sense of admiration. She never hesitated to offend someone so long as she told him to his face what she thought of him. Her boldness would sometimes embarrass me or put me in an awkward situation. But her honesty and good faith would abate my anger before it arose. Her devotion was great. For a long time she did not get more than six pounds for her monthly pay, and after that, she never agreed to accept more than ten. When I tried to

persuade her to take more, she would scold me vehemently, saying: "I am not here for the money. I am here because I like working for you and your ideas please me." And she was as courageous as she was devoted. She was one of the few women in whom I found a character as pure as crystal and courage that would put a warrior to shame. She was never tired of working for our ideas – day and night. She would go alone on propaganda journeys in the darkness of night and would reject any offer of accompaniment. Thousands of Indians who were always ready for battle looked to her as their leader. In the days of civil disobedience, when almost all the leaders were in prison, she ran the entire movement by herself. She took care of thousands of people, organized the accumulating correspondence in piles, and edited the *Indian Opinion* newspaper. All this filled her hands with work, but she never knew fatigue. The time I spent with this young woman will always remain a sacred memory to me.

In South Africa, the Europeans called us by the derogatory name of "coolies." In India, this word simply implies suffering, but in South Africa this word resembled the Indian term "pariah," which means impure and untouchable. The neighbourhoods in South Africa where the Indians lived were called Coolie Neighbourhoods. There was also such a neighbourhood in Johannesburg.

In the Middle Ages, Jews were similarly disparaged. It was also forbidden to have any contact with them and their designated neighbourhoods were called "ghettos." Here this fate became the fate of the Indians in South Africa, in the midst of the Modern Era.

Gandhi's wife, Kasturba, is small and thin, like a child. When she greeted me, she interlocked her little hands and raised them to her smiling mouth. With this gesture, she expressed the very same young and pure spirit that shines from all her husband's movements, as well as the infinite kindness inherent in his childish face. She examined my sari, made of handspun – Swadeshi – khaddar, and seemed to like it. I explained to her that in the Land of Israel, too, we have the same problem in our fight to exist, and what is called "Swadeshi" in India, we call "Made in the Land." I parted from Gandhi and his wife. His big brown eyes illuminated his bronze face with the love of mankind and a good heart.

And here is what he wrote in my album:

"Satya" – truth, "Ahimsa" – non-violence – love, two faces of the same coin that buys you all you need for the soul. I [communicate/commend?] it to my Jewish friends. M. K. Gandhi. Palmbun 25.3.24.

My second meeting with Gandhi took place in December 1932 [1931] in Switzerland. Gandhi came to Villeneuve to visit his friend,

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Romain Rolland.¹²

He was sitting in a small room, into which daylight entered from three windows, usually gray murky light on those rainy days, but sometimes also bright and clear. He was sitting on a rug, his legs crossed under him, and his back leaning on a low sofa. Friends came in at will while he wrote. Between chapters he raised his head and smiled, and answered questions in brief, but nothing escaped his eyes, even when his fingers twirled the silent rollers of his portable spindle. This collapsible spindle accompanied him on all his journeys and could be dismantled easily. Gandhi used his powers of invention to improve its design during the long months of his imprisonment, before ordering one from his Ashram's carpenter. He received guests during his mealtimes as well – not for a moment was he idle. He ate simple meals: goat's milk, fruit, and raw vegetables. His pocket-watch was always on his belt or on the ground, reminding him of the flight of time. A man of incessant activity but not feverish. One felt that this man had great power-of-resistance but was, at the same time, very gentle, a result of long-term physical and moral training alike.

For over two months, Gandhi had been negotiating with the English, which exhausted his strength. Despite the burden of the Round Table Conference, he made contact and spoke with the residents of the London suburbs, workers and employers in Lancashire, students and professors in Oxford and Cambridge, young communists, Indians who were banished from their homeland by royal decree, and many other groups. All wanted to discuss with him important questions about the Empire and the world. He influenced some public opinion in England, which would be useful to him later, when he returned to India to continue his struggle. After a few hours of rest in Villeneuve, he was awake and smiling again. He regained his strength completely. When the sun rises, his thin naked legs walk with quick steps, too fast for those who accompany him, along the lanes of Byron Park and on the outskirts of Villeneuve.

Every morning, except for those days on which he attends meetings in Geneva, he crosses the park that separates him from Villa Olga. There he holds polite and lengthy discussions with Romain Rolland. The two talk with complete candour about social and spiritual issues. Gandhi's two secretaries, both educated and intelligent young Indian men, are always ready to learn and enhance their knowledge, write his words down quietly. Both of them have sacrificed their entire future and social position in order to serve Gandhi and work for his idea. Together with him, and because of him, they have suffered; they were imprisoned and participated in a hunger strike.

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Then Gandhi returns to his visitors and guests [in his residence]. People of every type and age, of every status and origin come to see him. Some came merely out of curiosity, but most of them really yearn to see and hear this unique person, the only such man in his generation, who transforms his beliefs to actions and draws millions of people to follow him in the path of peace and non-violence. At one corner, I see a German painter who devours Gandhi with his eyes before starting to paint him. In the opposite corner, I see a black-haired Japanese kneading a lump of clay with his hands in order to imprint Gandhi's head on it.

Children come with flowers in their hands – workers' children and rich people's children. Gandhi greets them joyously and stands up to have his photograph taken with them. Then, like a secret flock of sparrows, Villeneuve's schoolchildren break out in patriotic song near his window... And a simple woman brings five francs in an envelope, on which is written, "For the poor women in India from a Swiss working woman."

On the only day on which Gandhi was free, he did something he had been longing to do for a long time. He went to a mountain village, where an old woman lived, an acquaintance of Miss Slade, Gandhi's English secretary.¹³ This old woman, over eighty, was a weaver.

Gandhi found her sitting and working. She was happy to see him and without any embarrassment led him to an inner room which served as a bedroom. Proudly she showed him her spindle and explained how it worked. Gandhi had not been so overjoyed in a long time! The spindle was almost completely identical to that of the poor villagers in India! Before he left, Gandhi wanted to see the cowshed, where two beautiful cows ruminated and two fat sheep lay down shamelessly.

From here, he reached Lausanne in ten minutes, where he visited sick students at the international university sanatorium and offered them words of encouragement.

Every evening, at seven o'clock, he devoted fifteen to twenty minutes to prayer (morning prayers were held at sunrise). He prayed in his room or in the guest-hall of Villa Olga, and everyone, regardless of religion, could attend, as long as they focused their heart on silent meditation. In Lausanne and in Geneva, as well as in his writings, Gandhi explained numerous times that in his view, truth is the divinity, and that the heretic who worships truth is equal to the believer who worships his God.

On 11 December, a multitude of people crowded into the Villeneuve airport. Gandhi was leaving. He was travelling via Italy, and would stay one day at a friend's house in Rome, and then from

Brindisi¹⁴ travel to Bombay by ship. There were those who were afraid that he might meet *Il Duce*. But those who heard him express, unequivocally and publicly, his resentment of every dictatorship and tyranny did not worry at all about such a meeting. Gandhi preferred to see people face to face, even those whose views and methods were foreign to him. His ardent belief gave him faith in the power of one word uttered from a candid heart, to overcome hypocrisy, and his soul knew not fear nor falsehood. The crowd surrounded him. We showered our blessings on him, and our thoughts turned to India, the country from which, perhaps, will come the redemption of the world. How many times did he tell us in those days: "I can only help Europe by freeing India, because skeptical and materialistic Europe requires a tangible example. If it comes to pass that India is freed by non-violence, the revolution will be peaceful all over the world."

His appearance infused the visitor with calm and vigor; small talk with him was akin to peacefully sitting on the beach after being tossed about for a long time in a stormy sea. Each period had its own personalities, who created action from within. Each one of us is at the centre or on the circumference of some circle, be it large or small.

My second meeting with Gandhi brought me special joy. Simplicity and good heartedness is embodied in his entire essence and appearance. He resembled the lotus, which powerfully roots itself in the land of the people of India, while at the same time spreading its upper parts all over the universe. There is a Sanskrit saying: "Nahi Karna Ksiata" (what is done is never lost).

Notes and References

1. This article is based on my new book titled: *From Lithuania to Santinketan, Schlomith Flaum and Rabindranath Tagore* published by the Lithuanian Embassy in New Delhi, March, 2108. This publication contains the chapters of Flaum's accounts about Tagore and Gandhi translated into English from her first book: Schlomith F. Flaum, *The Wandering of a Daughter of Israel... Memories, Journeys and Meetings* (Jerusalem: I. L.Meir, 1935). The Hebrew title is *Bat Israel Noddet... Zicronot, Masaot, Vepgishot*. With special thanks to Laimonas Talat-Kelpša, the Lithuanian Ambassador to India, and his wife Alina for supporting, encouraging and raising funds for this project. My special thanks to my sister the translator Dr. Esther Cohen from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and to the editors Debi Manor, Swati Mitra and Rena Ashkenazi for editing the English language of this book. The author, translator and editors have tried throughout to remain true to the original script (in

Hebrew) written by Schlomith Flaum. However, the old-fashioned Hebrew language used in the original text does not always facilitate a smooth transfer into English. The author, translator and editors have, on the one hand, made all efforts to remain loyal to the original style, and, on the other hand, to make it readable for readers today.

2. Stephen Samuel Wise (1874 –1949) was an American Reform Rabbi and Zionist leader and a close friend of John Haynes Holmes (1879 –1964), a prominent Unitarian minister and pacifist and the main person responsible for spreading Gandhi’s name in the United States. Holmes described Gandhi in his 10 April 1921 sermon as “the greatest man in the world.” Through his friendship with Holmes, Wise developed a deep interest in India, Tagore and Gandhi.

3. Flaum, *The Wandering of*, pp. 139-141.

4. In the following years, Flaum published few articles about Gandhi in the Jewish press in Palestine. Here is the list I was able to locate: “With Gandhi,” (1932) (Heb.) *Moznaim* 4, Vol. 17, pp. 11-12. “Spiritual Education by Gandhi,” part a. (14.10.1932) *Doar Hayom* 15, p. 4 (Translation of parts of the chapter: “Tolstoy Farm II” from Gandhi’s second autobiography *Satyagraha in South Africa*). “Spiritual Education by Gandhi,” part b. (16.10.1932) *Doar Hayom* 15, p. 3 (Translation of parts of the chapter: “Tolstoy Farm II” from Gandhi’s second autobiography *Satyagraha in South Africa*). “Mahatma Gandhi,” (Gandhi Fast on Behalf of the Harijans) (19.5.1933) *Doar Hayom* 15, p. 3. “Gandhi as a Worker,” (1933) *Hapoel Hatzair* 26, 13, p. 14.

5. Flaum does not give the source of this proverb. It might be based on *punyasravanakirtana* (S.B. 1.2.17): “When one drinks heavenly nectar he loses his piety, but when one hears k[cna-katha, he is freed from sin and his heart becomes purified.”

6. See M. K. Gandhi, *Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (England, Penguin, 1984), pp. 344–347. Gandhi sent the members of Phoenix Farm from South Africa to Santiniketan prior to his departure via England from South Africa. Gandhi arrived at Santiniketan for a one-month stay but left after a week, when he received a telegram announcing Gokhale’s death. The others stayed in Santiniketan until Gandhi established Sabarmati Ashram in May 1915.

7. During the Round Table Conference in 1931 Gandhi told a reporter from the *London Jewish Chronicle*, “I have a world of friends among the Jews. In South Africa I was surrounded by Jews.” (1 October 1931). Among Gandhi’s Jewish supporters to be noted here in addition to the names Gandhi mentioned to Flaum are the English Jew and founder of the Johannesburg Lodge of the Theosophical Society, Louis Walter Ritch (1868–1952) and the Theosophists Gabriel Isaac and the couple Vogel. On them see: Shimon Lev, Gandhi and his Jewish Theosophists Supporters in South Africa, in: *Theosophical Appropriations, Esotericism, Kabbalah and the Transformations of Traditions* (eds. Julie Chajes and Boaz Huss), (Beer Sheva; Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 2016), pp. 245-270.

8. Henry Salomon

Leon Polak (1882–1959) and his wife Millie Graham Polak. 9. Flaum erred here. Polak and later on his wife, Millie Graham, joined Phoenix Farm near Durban. 10. Herman Kallenbach (1871–1945) was born in Rusnė, Lithuania and was a very important supporter of Gandhi in South Africa. See Shimon Lev, *Soulmates: The Story of Mahatma Gandhi and Hermann Kallenbach* (New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2012). See also *India & Lithuania: A Personal Bond* (New Delhi-Vilnius, 2017). 11. Sonja Schlesin (1888–1956), Gandhi’s devoted Jewish secretary, who quickly became a key person in the Satyagraha struggle in South Africa. See: George Paxton, *Sonia Schlesin: Gandhi’s South Africa Secretary*, (London: Pax Books, 2006). She was a teacher, not the school’s headmistress, and in later years she demanded that Gandhi correct this mistake in his autobiography. 12. Flaum erred here; Gandhi stayed in Rolland’s Villa in Villeneuve between 6–10 December 1931 and not 1932. See Gandhi (1931) CWMG 054, 335–288. When Flaum published her article about her two meetings with Gandhi, she claimed to be one of the translators in some of the discussions: “The two are discussing spiritual and social issues with full frankness. I am translating without eloquence but as accurately as I can.” (Flaum, 1932, “*With Gandhi*,” pp. 13–14). In this chapter, she decided to omit this fact. Neither Gandhi nor Rolland mention her name in their accounts of these meetings, but Rolland does mention that he [Rolland] had “a Russian friend,” although it is not clear to whom he is referring. See Gandhi (1931) “Romain Rolland’s Letter to an American Friend,” CWMG 54, 462. It must be noted that Rolland knew Flaum well, since she had accompanied Tagore “as a secretary” to the meeting with Rolland only one year earlier. 13. Madeleine Slade, known as Mirabehn (1892–1982). She was the daughter of the British Rear-Admiral Edmond Slade, who became a follower of Gandhi and one of his closest supporters and who participated in the movement for India’s independence. 14. A city in the region of Apulia in southern Italy. Gandhi left Europe on December 14, never to visit it again.

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J. C. Kumarappa: The Educational and Cultural Ambassador of Gandhian Model of Development

Shivanand Shettar

J. C. KUMARAPPA, a close associate of Gandhiji coined a concept called 'villagism' which meant that the village must be the focus of economic planning and development. He advocated an economic thesis that was remarkable for its far sighted analysis on conserving the environment. He was quite aware of the dangers of unchecked industrialization. The only sustainable socio-political order in his view was based on what he called the 'economy of permanence' wherein he advocated that human beings should collaborate with nature to meet their needs. True to his belief, his book *Economy of Permanence* was printed originally on handmade paper which was manufactured from waste paper and grass. Ramachandra Guha, a noted historian, says that Kumarappa's writings are strewn with profound ecological consequences, though he does not express it in these terms... The environmentalists of today are only taking up where he left off. Almost in the same way the critics of the consumerist culture who are trying to explore the roots of our native culture are also taking up where he had left off. Therefore, he is not only an economist but also an educationist and a cultural thinker who was much ahead of his times.

The concept of standard of living was vague during Kumarappa's life time by his own admission. It is all the more vague today. Each person may have his own notion of a standard of living and as to what it comprises. Therefore, Kumarappa pleaded for the necessity to work out an objective standard taking into consideration the conditions obtaining in our land. Kumarappa raises a very pertinent question: 'should this standard have an economic basis or follow cultural consideration or social needs? What is meant by high or low standard?'¹ Availability or satisfaction of a wide range of material wants is considered as 'high' and very limited enjoyment of worldly goods as 'low' standard of living.

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Having considered the many ways of looking at life and their respective scales of values, Kumarappa came to the conclusion that life is not to be valued purely on a monetary basis nor what looms large in the immediate present, but that a well balanced economy leading to permanence and non-violence which calls for a comprehensive consideration of various factors making life broad based.

The market economy which literally rules our life today was not as pronounced during Kumarappa's period as it is now-a-days. Therefore, he cautioned: 'By various means at their disposal-propaganda, advertisements, setting up fashions etc. - the manufacturers, are able to induce the housewives to adopt this model of life and become their devoted customers. Let us beware of such traps which will enslave us to material wants, but offer nothing in exchange ...'²

The casual human labour is replaced by machines like vacuum cleaner and dish washing machine etc. The housewives will have to attend to the work themselves. Therefore, the labour saving devices, instead of creating leisure for the house wife are imposing additional labour on her. "In this manner both the labour and the money saved by dispensing with human labour is quickly absorbed by the manufacturers, while the simple gardener's wife sloggers on like a donkey having displaced the help of other human beings ... The simple life, on the other hand can be 'high' and present all that is finest in human life; perhaps even better than a complex life which later kills personality as it follows way set by others."³

Marketing professionals are working hard to see that even people who live at the subsistence level in remote rural areas are also lured into becoming passive consumers of everything from Cola, Pepsi, to shampoos. All they see is a vast rural market to be opened up for commercial exploitation. We are fast approaching the day when it will be easier to get soft drinks rather than tender coconut or buttermilk in our villages. The increasing presence of plastic garbage in our rural areas is a clear warning signal and a challenge to the clean India campaign.

Now it is all the more evident that our priorities are established by the market economy. Individuals are treated as customers. Even teachers are in the habit of calling their alumni as their 'products' as though they are not human beings. The commercial compulsions have brought violence in the realm of culture in a big way. The function of culture is to refine the higher senses of human beings, enrich human relationships and thus enhance joy in life. However, the modern consumerist culture has made a person into a customer and culture

into a marketable commodity. It is the market economy which is tempting the individuals to establish their priorities. They have not been able to decide as to what is their need. Therefore, the concept of an economy of limited wants propounded by Gandhiji is pushed to the backdrop. The modern man has not been able to understand the difference between the 'need' and the 'greed.' And it deadens people's capacity for refined aesthetic experience.⁴

The high consumption lifestyle through aggressive advertising and limitless market expansion is not only unsustainable but also highly dangerous for the well-being of humanity. The high price paid in ecological terms will make it the most suicidal enterprise the human race has ever seen. 'The debate of environment versus development that Kumarappa had anticipated is still racing and the verdict of history may well decide in his favour' states Guha. We desperately need alternative models of development. It is not a wise thing to handover to businessmen the task of dictating the terms to the world as it has been done today. Businessmen cannot be counted upon to have the wisdom or the will to think of the welfare of humanity, leave alone the health of the planet. That is not part of the training of business administrators for they are trained only to do everything possible to maximize profits of the corporations that employ them.

The important feature of Kumarappa's thought is his belief that social regeneration could be brought about by a moral appeal to the individuals; they could be persuaded to forsake self-interest voluntarily in favour of the welfare of all. The way to restore sanity is for village communities, cooperatives, civil societies and democratic governments to take back the autonomy and the initiative for their own development, which they seem to have traded away to the giant global business corporations. There is now a great need to re-awaken the spiritual and the traditional wisdom of the people world over. Mahatma Gandhi once contended that the earth has enough for every man's need, but not enough for every man's greed.

Westernised elite groups in India, who are in the business of mass entertainment, have actually inflicted violence on a huge scale on the diversity of arts, culture, literature, languages and the whole lot of spiritual tradition not only in India but also all around the world. Therefore, Kumarappa made a sincere appeal that no education can be complete unless it has some relation to art. Poet Tagore tried it in Shantiniketan as Gandhi tried to convert the ancient concept of *Ashrama* into a training ground for *Satyagrahis*.

On the same lines Kumarappa insisted that there should be an emphasis on folk songs, music and art in our village schooling. The sound culture of the masses has to be upheld. Unless this is done, '...

no nation can ever hope to take its place in the vanguard of the nations which has not got its roots in its own culture. We cannot shine on borrowed feathers. We have to develop our own contribution to the world of literature, art and music'.⁵

Gandhiji insisted on leading a life in harmony with nature. On the same line Kumarappa says that when life is allowed to run its natural course it is resourceful enough to provide itself for every body's needs without any further conscious effort on our part. Nature is a hard task master. It never awards permanence to grudgingly rendered work. If we wish to attain permanence we must put in whole work; no transient labour which satisfies only the passing moment will answer the purpose. Nature refuses to be brow beaten or cheated. What is interesting about Kumarappa's other dimension of personality is the application of this principle to the field of art. For example, an original work of art on a canvas involves hard work which may appear as drudgery. But such labour had to go into the making of a masterpiece. A lithograph may avoid such drudgery but its products are as good as a waste-paper when compared with the work of the real artist.⁶ He very clearly states that multiple print making or the poster culture as it is understood today is no substitute for a genuine work of art.

The originality of Kumarappa lies in the fact that he not only recognised Gandhiji's distinctive contribution to the science of non-violence but also identified the economic basis of violence involved in the so-called modern civilization. He went on to develop a new ethics based and peace-promoting way through and economy of permanence which was consistent with higher possibilities in human evolution.

The neglect of the Gandhian economic principles has not only made today's world economic order permanently crisis-prone but also more and more thinkers around the globe are recognizing the devastation caused by the reigning global economy in developed and underdeveloped countries alike in the form of unemployment, environmental degradation and community breakdown. Hazel Henderson, a noted thinker on sustainable development, who is immensely influenced by Gandhian economic philosophy remarks thus:

Economics is now widely seen as the faulty source-code deep in societies' hard drives ...replicating unsustainability: booms, busts, bubbles, recessions, poverty, trade wars, pollution, disruption of communities, loss of cultural diversity and bio-diversity ...⁷

Speaking about the gross negligence of natural resources, a
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passionate believer in Gandhian model of development Edward Goldsmith, an Anglo-French philosopher remarked thus: 'The notion that we owe nothing to posterity seems to justify, in the eyes of many people, our terrible egotism and the deliberate pillaging of the world's natural resources to which our society is so committed in order to satisfy the requirements of the corporations that control it.'⁸

Therefore Kumarappa insisted that we should never lose sight of 'Mother Nature' who is a great teacher while studying human institutions. Anything that we may devise if it is contrary to her ways, she will ruthlessly annihilate sooner or later. The western model of economic growth which has actually necessitated most violent attacks on the environment is the violence of first order. Another form of violence recognised by Kumarappa is massive disruption of community life and a very natural institution of mankind, the family. Women are so overburdened with the maintenance of modern amenities that in Kumarappa's view it is not a wonder that the complex standard of life is forcing women to get rid of the 'nuisance' of having children. Adoption of modern way of life by housewives, which is induced by the propaganda of the advertising agencies, is forcing them to develop a positive distaste for motherhood which in their view adds to an already overcrowded timetable of theirs. Indian culture is appreciated world over for the invaluable contribution of its family ethos. The institution of family helps its members to imbibe values such as love, mutual affection, care, cooperation etc. But the laws of modern economics have forced the erosion of family and community values in the so-called developed countries. People in developing countries have been thinking that these are the worthy values to be emulated by them.

Modern man is increasingly obsessed with short-term considerations and aspirations for his finite existence on this planet with the 'here and now' approach. He is least bothered about his ancestors' expectations from him or his own obligation towards the generations to come. 'This has resulted in a cognitive and behavioural disorder in the modern man.'⁹

A very interesting historical episode is recorded in a book published by the Kumarappa Birth Centenary Committee of Karnataka. Prime Minister Nehru came to Madras in 1960 at a time when Kumarappa was admitted in a hospital because of his deteriorating health. As soon as Nehru came to know about it he rushed to the hospital and met Kumarappa. It was a very touchy meeting. Silence loomed large for quite some time. Afterwards the old friends recalled their memories and discussed many things. During the discussion Nehru sought Kumarappa's suggestions for

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the then prevailing economic problems. Gradually Kumarappa expressed his ideas and suggested certain solutions. Nehru noted down the details with patience on a piece of paper. Later Kumarappa asked for the paper on which Nehru had noted down the points. When Nehru handed it over to him he took it with a smiling face and tore it off. When Nehru asked him as to what he was doing, Kumarappa replied "I did what you would have done after reaching Delhi." This is how the great disciple of Gandhi reacted who had already become a serious sceptic about the state machinery. He had distanced himself from the ruling government and the party. In any case, he communicated his message to the Prime Minister with love and concern though in an impassionate way.

While revisiting the ideas of either Kumarappa or his ideological *Guru* Gandhi, can we expect any readymade formula to overcome the multiple maladies of the modern or the so-called civilized world? The answer of many contemporary thinkers to this question is in the negative. But however the philosophy of Gandhi and Kumarappa would immensely help us to understand the source of these maladies. The crisis lies in the reigning economic system, which in turn has distorted the socio-political systems. Not only in India that, it has seriously affected education, religion and culture, but also in the world around. In that sense their diagnosis is capable of providing a medicine-kit of ideas that can help us cure many of these maladies.¹⁰

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A Note on J.C. Kumarappa Committee on Agrarian Reforms

M. Thangaraj

Introduction

THE AIM OF the agrarian reform is to free the different sections of the workforce who depended on agriculture as cultivators and agricultural workers from exploitative elements. It is a way to empower with powerful tools to improve their livelihood opportunities. Agrarian reforms protected tenants from unlawful eviction and unjust enhancement of rent. It also protected agricultural worker from exploitation and made provisions for regulation of work, equal pay for equal work and implementation of minimum wages. The objective of the paper is to critically evaluate the report submitted by J.C. Kumarappa on "Congress Agrarian Reforms Committee" to the President of Indian National Congress¹.

I. ABOUT THE REPORT

The Congress Agrarian Reforms Committee was appointed by Dr. Rajendra Prasad at the conference of Revenue Ministers in New Delhi, December 1947. The Committee was chaired by J.C. Kumarappa. The members of the Committee were: Prof. M.S. Dantwala, Mr. S. Das Gupta, Mr. T.V. Rahavalu, Mr. O.P. Ramasamy Reddiyar, Mr. N.G. Ranga, Mr. Ameer Raza, Mr. Phula Prasad Verma and Mr. K. Mitra. The report was submitted to Mr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, President, Indian National Congress, New Delhi, on 7th July 1949.

The Committee was asked to examine and to make recommendations about the agrarian reforms arising out of the abolition of zamindari system in the light of conditions prevailing in the different provinces. The Committee was also asked to consider and to report on cooperative farming and methods of improving agricultural production, position of small holdings, sub-tenants, landless labourers and generally on improving the conditions of agricultural rural population.

The Congress President observed that the Congress Economic

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Programme Committee's Report should serve as a guide to the Committee and it should be free to make other recommendations. "Just after independence, the All-India Congress Committee in its first meeting in November 1947 appointed a high level committee known as the Congress Economic Programme Committee to draw up an economic programme under the chairmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru. The Committee's report emphasized that "1. All intermediaries between the tiller and the soil should be eliminated, 2. Maximum size of holding should be fixed, 3. Small holdings should be consolidated, and 4. Suitable machinery should be created for conciliation and mutual assistance between landless and landholding peasants."²

II. HISTORY OF AGRARIAN REFORMS

The available information show that reform in agriculture was initiated by the colonial government about seven decades ago prior to independence. They are:

1. Bombay Land Revenue Code 1879 was amended in 1939 to protect tenants.
2. Agra Tenancy Act, 1881 conferred occupancy right on tenants who cultivated land continuously for 12 years. This was reduced to 7 year in 1901.
3. Bengal Tenancy Act, 1885. It was meant for regulation of rent to farmers who were recorded. The regulated rent was 1/3 to 1/4 of gross produce.
4. Madras Estate Land Act, 1908. This Act protected tenants from eviction.
5. Karachi Resolution of Indian National Congress (45th Session), March 1931. It recommended reduction of rent, exemption of rent for uneconomic holdings, etc.
6. Indian National Congress (50th Session) recommended reduction of rent, exemption of rent for uneconomic holdings, abolition of feudal levy and forced labour, etc.
7. The Congress Election Manifesto, 1935 which stated that reduction of rent, exemption of rent for uneconomic holdings, etc.
8. National Planning Committee, under the leadership of Nehru in 1936 formed sub-committee on land policy and another sub-committee on agricultural labour.
9. National Planning Committee met in 1945 and resolved 1, cultivation to be organized in collectives wherever possible; 2. private ownership to continue; 3. produce to be shared among farmers based on their contribution; 4. no intermediaries between the state and cultivators; 5. land tax be made progressive on the model of income tax.

10. A Special Committee (Congress Economic Polity) in 1947 was appointed by Nehru, Chairman, Indian National Congress. It recommended that 1. intermediaries between the state and cultivators should be replaced by non-profit agencies, such as, cooperatives; 2. Maximum size of holdings should be fixed; 3. Surplus land to be at the disposal of village cooperatives; 4, small holdings to be consolidated; 5. Steps to be taken to prevent further fragmentation.

III. THE PATTERN/FORMS OF AGRARIAN ECONOMY

The Committee has examined various forms of agrarian economy. They are:

1. Capitalist Farming/Estate Farming

In India, there are few examples of estate farming mostly in the tea, coffee and plantation. Indians and European colonists were having farms in the irrigated regions of Punjab, Sind and U.P. Sometimes waste lands were leased and estates were built-up. Such estates may be divided into two categories viz. 1. Estates owned and operated by individuals or a syndicate or a joint stock company. Local labourers were employed on wage basis. Modern techniques, improved variety of seeds and fertilizers were used. Owners or managers lived on the estate and supervised the operations. This type was common in Deccan sugarcane estates and tea estates of the hills. 2. Estates owned by a single person or a corporation where lands were parcelled out to permanent and semi-permanent tenants. Under this system of capitalist farming, it was claimed that land was used efficiently, modern techniques were used and fair wages paid to the labourers. The committee did not recommend capitalist farming, as it was depriving the agriculturists of their rights in land and turn them into mere wage earners. Thus, the committee could not favour Capitalist farming/estate farming.

2. State Farming

Under this system, the farm is managed by government officials and agriculturists who became wage-labourers. The report stated that "we do not recommend state farming as a general method of land utilization. State farming should be carried on only for purposes of experiment and research, even if it be at a loss."³ Instead of increasing the number of such state farms, the Committee recommended that for demonstration purposes, there should be less and less reliance on state farming. State farming of some limited degree may be necessary when wastelands are reclaimed and agricultural labourers

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are settled thereon. The state should continue to cultivate until agricultural labourers were trained in managing the farm. The state should withdraw after the farm was turned into collective farm. The Committee could not favour state farming also.

3. Collective Farming

Under a collective farm, the ownership of all lands and stock capital vests in the community as a whole with the exception of small homesteads for keeping livestock and for growing vegetable for domestic use. Cultivation should be carried on the whole as one unit under a management elected from among members.⁴ The profit of the farm may be divided according to the amount and quality of work by the members. It was also noted in the report that agricultural labourers settled in the collective farm may not have attachment to land. On the other hand, collective farm would get higher wages, a share in the management and profits of the farm.⁵ The Committee has favoured collective farming. "Introduction of collective farming may eliminate exploitation and may improve the efficiency of production but the individual peasant may find himself lost in the huge organization of the collective dominated by technicians. He may be no better than cog in the machine. It may also lead to an agrarian revolt."⁶

4. Individual Peasant Farming

The Committee recommended individual peasant farming. The Committee viewed that peasant farming with rights in land would satisfy the agrarian tradition of our land. The individual peasant farming must be carried on suitable units of production. Individual farming may be carried on holdings not smaller than basic holding. The size of holding should not be uneconomic and holdings smaller than the basic holdings should be assisted by a cooperative organization for credit and sale.⁷

IV. SIZE OF LANDHOLDINGS

The Objectives of Agrarian Economy

The committee has set out the following as objectives of the agrarian economy: 1. The agrarian economy should provide opportunity for the development of individual's personality; 2. There should be no exploitation; 3. There should be maximum efficiency of production; and 4. The scheme of agrarian reforms should be practicable.⁸

Warning for Insufficient Land

The Committee at the outset has stated in the report that a bulk of our agriculturists is small farmers and there is not enough land to make them bearers of economic holding. Hence, agrarian reforms should aim at shifting the surplus population on land to non-agricultural pursuits. Although improved agricultural techniques would help agriculture, farmers would not be in a position reap the benefit, without improving the size of the land.⁹ The committee has evolved the holdings into three types. They are:

1. Economic Holding

The Committee viewed that an economic holding must vary according to agro-economic conditions, agricultural techniques, standard of living, soil conditions and nature of cultivation. The Committee recommended the following taking into account regional considerations.¹⁰

- i. It must afford a reasonable standard of living.
- ii. It must provide full employment to a family of normal size and at least a pair of good bullocks.
- iii. It must have a bearing on other relevant factors peculiar to the agrarian economy of the region.

2. Basic Holding

A basic holding would be smaller than an economic holding but not palpably uneconomic and would be capable of being built up by acquisition or otherwise into an economic holding. The Committee recommended holding – basic and above – on individualistic lines. Individual farming may be carried on holdings not smaller than basic holding. There should be a multipurpose cooperative in every village or group of villages and all there should be compulsory membership for farmers engaged in cultivation — either individualistic or joint or collective.¹¹ It is important to note the Committee has introduced a new organization, such as, “multipurpose co-operative.”

3. Optimum Holding

The Committee recommended the optimum size of holding. It should be three times the size of economic holdings. Certain exemption has to be allowed in cases of joint families and charitable institutions. The Committee argued that imposition of ceiling on land holdings in one sector of the economy will create anomalies. The Committee was competent to recommend only in the field of agriculture. But the

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Committee hoped that a similar principle of distributive justice would be applied to other sectors of our economy.¹²

V. CEILING ON LAND HOLDINGS

Maximum Holding/Ceiling on Landholding

For individual farming, as there is lower limit there should be also an upper limit. The Committee recommended that very large holdings should not continue. A ceiling to land holdings should be fixed and it should not be more than three times the size of the economic holdings. The surplus above the maximum should be acquired by the appropriate authority under the Land Commission on payment of compensation decided by the Tribunal.¹³

The Committee has not suggested any model for determination of ceiling limit of the holdings.

Disposal of Surplus Land

The following is the order of the priority in respect of disposal of surplus land.¹⁴

1. Co-operative joint farms with landless labourers to be organized.
2. To be sold out to uneconomic holders.

It is to be noted that the Committee has not suggested the ceiling surplus to be given to landless.

Joint Family

While fixing the maximum limit for a joint family, the claims of all the branches constituting the joint family should be considered, provided an adult member of each branch puts in some amount of minimum manual labour in cultivation.¹⁵

VI. CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS

The Committee recommended fixation of ceiling to land holdings should be applied to the charitable institutions under the following conditions. The management of land under religious, charitable and educational institutions should be under the control of the Land Commission. If the land is cultivated by any inam and trust, it may be allowed where persons are themselves cultivators.¹⁶

Religious and Charitable Institution (Note by O.P. Ramaswamy Reddiyar)

One of the eight members of the Committee, viz. Ramasamy Reddiyar
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has supported the religious and charitable institutions in his note submitted to the Committee. He was of the view that these institutions are scattered all over India and discharge very useful functions viz. to the society. The institutions have been endowed with large tracts of cultivable land and they depend on incomes from these lands. There are a number of Hindu (temples and mutts), Muslim and Christian institutions. They maintain dispensaries, orphanages, education and cultural needs of the society. Ceiling on landholdings should not be applied and permission to own the land by the non-cultivation institution. At the same time the Committee was of the view that many of these institutions are not functioning properly and require thorough overhauling and they should not be allowed to perish. Rent receiving rights enjoyed by the religious and charitable institutions are often taken away by the government; the government should assure income to these institutions to discharge their functions.¹⁷

VII. COOPERATIVE FARMING

Cooperative Farming

Individual farming should not be allowed on holdings which are smaller than basic holdings. They should be in the course of time brought under cooperative joint farming.

Two types of cooperative farming were envisaged, viz., 1. Cooperative better farming, 2. Cooperative joint farming.

Cooperative Better Farming Society

In cooperative better farming, the individual farmers perform on cooperative basis, all operations of agriculture except farming. All cultivators of a particular region must be members without any exception in the cooperative better farming society. The size of this society will be bigger than cooperative joint farming society.¹⁸

Cooperative Joint Farming Society

In the cooperative joint farming, land, implements and bullocks are pooled. Wages to be paid according the labour they put in the farm and also a portion of profit based value of resources pooled by them.¹⁹

Collective Farming on Reclaimed Waste Land

The Committee recommended that collective farms with landless labourers should be organized and should not be settled with individual either for peasant farming or capitalist farming. The landless labourers have no tradition of individual farming. In the

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course of time the management would be transferred to the landless labourers, when they grow with the greater share in the management.²⁰

The report further states that the pattern of agrarian economy by the Committee was a composite one of individual farming assisted by cooperative organization, cooperative joint farming, collective and state farming. Each type of farming has a contribution to make in this period of transition of farming and should be given proper facilities for growth and development.²¹

Consolidation of Holdings

Consolidation of holding could never increase the size of the holdings, though it will make the holding compact. Cooperative farming will go a long way to remove the evils of uneconomic holdings.²²

Difficulties of Cooperative Farming²³

1. Caste and community difference.
2. Squabbles in village.
3. Unequal status of men.
4. Inability of most men to work under strict discipline due to weak health and friction.
5. Difficulty in getting the right type of men to manage and guide.
6. Red tape and delays in administration.

Compulsion in Cooperation

The committee recommended that if the holdings below the basic holding do not voluntarily cooperate, they would be compulsorily cooperativised.²⁴

VIII. RIGHTS IN LAND

In India, there were three types of land tenures – *zamindari*, *mahalwari* and *ryotwari*.²⁵ Permanent settlement was made by Lord Cornwallis in the zamindari areas where 10/11th was fixed as assessment and 1/11th was fixed as zamindar's remuneration. Mahalwari or joint village system was introduced in 1833 in Agra, Oudh and extended to Punjab. The ownership of property was joint or communal. Under this system the entire community was responsible for the payment of land revenue. Ryotwari was introduced by Captain Raid and Thomas Munro in 1792 in Bara Mahal districts in Madras. Intermediaries were abolished under this system.

Subletting

The cultivator would hold his rights in land if he does not sub-let his

holding except under special circumstances. Sub-letting may be allowed in cases of disability, viz. minors, widows and other disabled persons. "The election manifesto of the Congress as well as the Economic Programming Committee's report has laid down that the tiller must be brought into direct relationship with the State and all intermediaries removed."²⁶

Other Issues Relating to Rights in Land

There was a discussion about unrestricted right to transfer of land led to concentration of land in the hands on non-agriculturists;²⁷ the cultivator will enjoy the right in land, so long as he satisfies the test of good husbandry. Land is a social asset. The cultivator is more or less a trustee of the social asset. If he fails to discharge the obligation of the trust, it is only reasonable that he should divested of the trust;²⁸ conversion of land for non-agricultural uses should not be permitted without sanction of the village community or other authority under the Land Commission.²⁹ The village community should also manage the village waste lands, tanks, forests, pathways, water-channels, village sites, pastures and other village common land.³⁰ The Committee recommended that in future no letting and sub-letting of land be allowed. But it is allowed in the case of minors, widows and disabled persons. But the land already leased requires different treatment.³¹ The Committee recommended that if tenant cultivate the land continuously for six years, should get the right of occupancy over it subject to disability to cultivate the land personally.³² There should be land tribunal for determination of fair rent and reasonable price of land is to be paid to the owner and enforcement of minimum wages for agricultural labourers. The Committee also recommended to prepare the record of rights to protect the tenants.³³

IX. MACHINERY OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Rural Economic Civil Service

The land commission will function through a Rural Economic Civil Service specially recruited and trained for the work of planning and development over which the Commission will have complete administrative control. Recruitment of Rural Economic Service should be on the same line as followed in the recruitment of naval and military cadets.³⁴

X.AGRICULTURAL LABOUR**Agricultural Labour**

Indian National Congress and the government took serious note on the problem of agricultural workers. There was a debate in the parliament in February 1948 regarding the minimum wage Act by Jagjivan Ram, Labour Minister. The Committee felt that the problem of agriculture labour should be tackled on two fronts. There should be well-planned legislation both positive (such as minimum wages) and prohibitive (such as banning of agrestic serfdom) supported by the Congress workers and workers in the labour field to organize agriculture into trade unions.³⁵

High Percentage of Female and Child Labour

There were 465 females per 1000 male workers. Employment of child labour was very common in agriculture. Reason for employing child labour was that equally efficient work can be secured on a much lower pay. Child labour were employed in weeding, husking, spreading manure, watching crops, carting etc. Children were exploited in terms of day long hours of work and tedious work.³⁶

Early Implementation of Minimum Wages Act, 1948

The Committee recommended implementation of the relevant portions of the minimum wages Act at the earliest. The Committee also recommended that the minimum wage of a casual labourer (agriculture) should be fixed to provide minimum daily requirement during the period of employment.³⁷

Wage Boards

The Committee recommended establishment of a wage board consisting of one government nominee, one representative from the landed peasantry and one representative from agricultural workers should be appointed at the district level to determine the minimum wage for agricultural workers. Minimum wage rates should be announced before the commencement of the agricultural season.³⁸

Land Tribunal

The difficulty of enforcing these rates of wages would be very great in the absence of a well-developed organization of agricultural labourers. The Committee recommended that a land tribunal consisting of equal number of representatives of landed and landless peasantry with an official Chairman in each local area to 1. Implement

the decision of the Wage Board regarding the minimum wages, 2. Peaceful settlement of disputes between the landed and landless peasantry. Further the land tribunal will have an inspectorate which will be assisted in its work to a great extent by the officials of the village panchayat. One of the duties of the inspection staff should be to see that the family of the labourers gets substantial advantage out of the wage paid to the labourers. The minimum wages could be successfully implemented by a well-developed and properly functioning Village Panchayat.³⁹

Equal Pay for Equal Work

The Committee observed that there was a marked disparity in the wages of the male, female and child labour. There was no difference between the male and female labourers in respect of efficiency of work. The Committee recommended that no distinction in respect of pay for men and women should be followed at least for some operations. The Committee observed while touring different provinces, a large number of agricultural workers were going for harvesting and transplanting work from one place to another on foot. Therefore, the Committee recommended special concession and special railway accommodation for agricultural labourers. Special rest centres may also be established with the help of Village Panchayats.⁴⁰

Regulation of Hours of Work

Number of working hours of labour does not exceed 12 hours for males and 10 hours for females on any day and 56 hours per week with overtime allowance for over and above 8 hours. Sickness insurance and old-age insurance would be given to the agricultural workers. Female agricultural labourers should get maternity benefits and they should have maternity centres and health visitors.⁴¹

Organization of Agricultural Labour

There was discussion on organizing agricultural workers with peasants. There was also a discussion on organizing agricultural workers like the factory labourers. There should be a separate organization for agricultural labourers.⁴²

Housing

Agricultural labourers who are mostly Haijans are settled away from the main village. Such sites are property of landlords. If any disputes arise between the landlord and his labourer, the instrument of eviction is always available to keep the labourer under control. The Committee recommended that village sites should be owned by the village

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community so that the evils of exploitation of the agricultural labourers would be eliminated. There should be space for modern amenities, such as garden, playgrounds, etc. There should be no distinction in allotting of the sites between the different interests. Social equality should be the basis of village life.⁴³

XI. STABILIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL PRICES AND CROP INSURANCE

Computation of Fair Price

A fair price should assure the agricultural producer an income sufficient to maintain him and his family at a standard of living equivalent to that enjoyed by comparable classes of population. The fair price should also enable the cultivator to pay minimum wages to agricultural labourers and payment of premium for crop and cattle insurance.⁴⁴

Crop Insurance

The Committee was of the view that the government have subsidized crops heavily in different countries. The Committee recommended that a scheme of crop insurance should be undertaken experimentally by the State. The nature, size and scope of each experiment should be determined by specially trained experts. The funds required for these experiments should be estimated in consultation with agricultural and actuarial experts provided by the government.⁴⁵

XII. Agricultural Indebtedness

The Committee found a two-pronged problem for depleting the peasants' income — the exploitation by the money lenders in their double capacity as the credit agency and the marketing agency of the village. The exploitation works like a double edged sword – 1. high rate of interest on the loans to the impoverished agriculturists; 2. low rates for their products.⁴⁶ The Committee has proposed regulation of money lender through legislative measures as well as to organize institutional credit for the peasantry. As regards the indebtedness of the agriculturists, the Committee has suggested many measures for regulation of money lenders. Important regulations were: 1. Registration of money lenders; and 2. Licensing of money lenders.⁴⁷

CONCLUSION

Of the four forms of tenancy, viz. estate farming, state farming, collective farming, and individual farming, the Committee favoured collective farming and individual farming. It is significant to note

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that the Committee has made adequate emphasis on collective farming as the best method of farming. The Committee evolved three types of holdings, viz., economic holdings, basic holdings and optimum holdings and has linked the economic holdings with the ceiling limit of the holdings. The Committee and the Indian National Congress underscored the need for collective farming and to some extent cooperative farming (cooperative better farming and cooperative joint farming). But the cooperative movement has failed to gain momentum in Indian agriculture. The Committee has paid sufficient attention to the problems of agriculture and has recommended the implementation of minimum wage, sickness insurance, old-age insurance, maternity benefit for the women agricultural workers and unionization of agricultural workers. The Committee has also suggested measures for the fixation of fair price for the agricultural produce, viz., the fair price should enable farmers to 1. get sufficient income to maintain the family comparable to workers in other sectors; 2. pay the minimum wage for the agricultural workers; and 3. pay the premium for crop and cattle insurance.

The main characteristics of the agrarian structure which independent India inherited were:

1. Absentee land ownership;
2. Exploitation of tenants through high rents and insecurity of tenure;
3. Unequal distribution of land;
4. Tiny and fragmented holdings;
5. Lack of adequate institutional finance to agriculture.

The land reform legislation was passed by all the State governments during the fifties touching upon these measures;

1. Abolition of intermediaries.
2. Tenancy reforms to regulate fair rent and provide security of tenure.
3. Ceilings on holdings and distribution of surplus land among the landlords.
4. Consolidation of holdings and prevention of their further fragmentation and
5. Development of cooperative farming.

Important Recommendations

- i. All intermediaries should be abolished and land should belong to the tiller subject to conditions;
- ii. In future, sub-letting should be prohibited except in case of widows, minors and other disabled persons.

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- iii. All the tenants who have been cultivating land for a period of 6 years should be granted occupancy rights
- iv. Only those who put in minimum amount of physical labour and participate in actual operation would be permitted to cultivate personally.
- v. The tenants should have the right to purchase the holdings at reasonable price to be determined by the land tribunal.

There will be provision for determination of reasonable rent and commutation of rent by land tribunal.

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Book Reviews

Saral Jhingran, *Why Be Moral — A Search for a Final Justification of Morality* (New Delhi: Har-Anand , 2017, Paperback, PP. 244. ISBN: 978-81-241-1973-0, Price 550.

This book is an epistemological and ontological enquiry into life's most tempting question as to why one should adhere to morality at a time when one can have his/her wishes fulfilled through amoral judgements. This book embodies an in-depth examination of rationale behind being moral using inductive reasoning approach. The book is divided into seven parts, each demystifying the case for being moral through a normative lens. Each normative lens has certain limitations making a good case of investigating the questions like — what exactly is the moral way of life, or morality? And who asks this question?

The author, Saral Jhingran, begins with deciphering meaning of morality and presenting a logical reasoning of moral concepts and assertions. She, while unfolding the scope of morality, talks about both western and Indian school of thoughts; she calls generality or universality, rationality, objectivity and practicality as key features of morality. She illustrates a few real life immoral cases and contracts them with the western notion as to how an individualistic society looks at the scope of morality.

The second part enquires morality through utilitarian and deontological approaches. Quoting the ideas of philosophers such as Bentham, Mill and Sidgwick, the author asserts that only a moral life could lead to greatest possible happiness. Similarly, she quotes philosophers like Kant, Ross and Prichard justifying morality as the only way to be autonomous or free.

The third part is an enquiry through emotive and approval theories along with ethical relativism and intuition theories. Jhingran unravels various cognitive reactions to moral judgements, using examples from everyday life.

In part four, the author discusses the 'overriding' nature of

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morality, calling moral principles and laws as both universal and compulsory as well as true and valid. She opines good 'reason' as the final guarantor of our moral principles.

While exploring reconciliation of teleological and deontological theories in morally relevant situation, the author in fifth part of the book frames an idea of harmonization of seemingly opposite approaches to ethics.

The sixth part lays down the foundations of moral principles so as to better understand the basic philosophy behind its justification.

The final part assimilates whole idea of being moral explained previously and puts forwards a strong proposition approving morality as a quest to fulfil the higher or profounder self.

Crucial to understand the spirit of the book is the distinction we may make between what we may call human invariants and cultural universals. Human invariants are those human acts in which humans participate collectively and commonly irrespective of the clime or time they belong to. For instance, all of us are born, we eat, sleep, love, hate and die. But the meaning, interpretation that may be given to each of these human acts is going to be culturally different. We may have a holistic perspective, but a global or universal perspective is never going to be possible, as long as we are humans. In the context of the above distinction, the author's effort to offer arguments for a convincing justification of a universal morality may be critically situated and viewed. She points to certain fundamental moral principles as necessarily universal, and obligatory to all human beings by virtue of their very humanity, but as she argues, they are rooted in our common basic needs and responses to life situations. Thus, the author seems to carefully avoid relativism, while upholding, however, relativity.

The book lucidly presents the case for being moral or morality as the greatest human virtue but, through normative lenses. The author makes a sincere and convincing effort to justify the moral way of life. However, she does not seem to touch upon the difficulties or challenges for being moral during adverse situations. The negative dimension of human values are not addressed and the author might be able to convince a certain group of people who are normally and habitually moral. But what about the habitually amoral?

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