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Mahatma Gandhi-A Study

(Being a study of what he is and what he loves and preaches)

-BY-HARISH CHANDRA KAILA

Publishers :

A. N. Ahuja & Co., 6, Mirdard Road, NEW DELHI.

Price Annas 10.

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TO

My Mother Shrimati Jamuna Devi WHO IS NO MORE



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TO THE READER

Sector and and

L ET me explain why I have written a book on Mahatma Gandhi when there is no dearth of such books in the market. The simple answer to it is—if you excuse a little egoism that I have presented Mahatmaji from my own angle. And hence the heading, 'Mahatma Gandhi—A study'.

We write about characters because they bring a certain message. Likewise Gandhi also brings one. And what is that? Is it the message of peace or love for mankind? No, not merely that. To be exact it is the message of SACRIFICE of which he is an incarnation.

By the way it is not a biography of his. The book aims at playing the tune of his life to the reader.

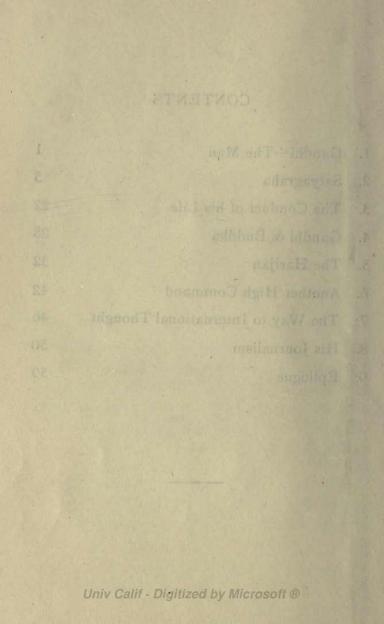
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CHAPTER I

GANDHI-THE MAN

GOD fulfils Himself in many ways. Sometimes He works by inspiration. Some years back He sent Swami Dayanand who reached the acme of moral, mental, and physical development. Now He sees His own image in the skeleton of a man—Gandhi.

To Gandhi at the start of his life God offered two things *i. e.* L' Allegro and *Il' Pensoroso* and asked him to choose one. Both aim at pleasure. The former relates to sensuous pleasure and the latter to pleasure of the mind. And you see in his life all through how he prefers the latter to the former. Like all noble souls he was after the pleasure of the soul. In fact they are two moods and he solemnly prefers the reflective to the sanguine one. To ascertain the truth you only need look at his portrait for a while.

Glibly they say Gandhi is great but he has faltered here and blundered there, as if somebody was infallible. In a sense we may say that all reformers social and religious and

MAHATMA GANDHI- A STUDY

even prophets have fought a losing battle, because in spite of them the world has pursued its inevitable course. No prophet has been able to give a permanent cure to humanity—all their efforts have been palliatives. But this should not make us detract from the personality of a certain man because after all it is in terms of personality that genius is guaged. I am afraid some do not make this allowance in Gandhi's case, underestimating him thereby.

And in greatness Gandhi is second to none. Just revolve the globe and find it for yourself. But what does his greatness lie in ? Simple things that you and I all understand. Satya (Truth), Prem (Love) and Ahinsa (Non-injury to animal life) are the key-notes of it. He is an embodiment of all these three. In short he follows the "Oriental Path of Greatness." He has made himself the humblest servant of India. Instead of hankering after riches, popularity and aristocratic privilege he has shunned them. His interest lies in huts and not in the palaces of town-dwellers.

And now to feel the difference, just think of one who has risen on modern lines. He seeks to be popular by spending money. The

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GANDHI-THE MAN

lust for importance troubles him all the twentyfour hours. He begins to behave in an ostensible manner. He has two minds—one for himself and the other for public. The lust for fame knows no satiety and in his case it becomes hypertrophied. And what 'is the result? He feels dissatisfied when his death-knell is ringing.

Like many, Gandhi has not renounced the world and found an abode in the mountains. He is in the stream of human activity and is contributing fast. And his life ? It is a *sastric* attempt to awaken the *kundalini*. This attempt in turn has made him the truest national symbol of India.

Gandhi is opposed to materialism. Machinery being part of materialism also falls in the range of his condemnation. He is an ardent lover of the old order. Simple machinery has given place to complex machinery and thus exits self-sufficiency and enters interdependence and he would not barter the former for the latter. He does not like to see a few become rich but he is out to secure food for the starving millions. In fact for his plain speaking in this respect he has on so many occasions been accused of conservatism. People hold he is a reactionary and his views

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are dangerous to India's interests. Accuse him of conservatism or anything else you please, but it is not on a slippery foundation that he takes his stand. (He is firm in his conviction and is not bothered by the worst criticism made about it.) It is so because his inner soul has always revolted against it and its dictates he cannot afford to conceal.

He is not a religious bigot; he is a shrewd judge of religions. He finds adequate replies to his doubts in the Hindu religion and refers to it for anything he needs for his inner development. The study of Hindu scriptures, the Bible, the Qoran, and Zend Avesta has made him a friend of religious toleration. And what is the outcome of all this ? His ethics appeal to us as a reasonable rule of living.

To sum up. Those who ravage countries are heroes; those who by means, fair or foul, manage to come to the top are leaders but those who are responsible for constructive pursuits are great men. In what category Gandhi falls even a child will tell you.

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CHAPTER II

SATYAGRAHA

THE study of Mahatma Gandhi would be incomplete without the study of satyagraha so often preached and so dearly loved by that great soul.

In the beginning it is desirable to make the significance of the word clear and also explain how it took its birth. The term 'passive resistance' did not appeal to Gandhiji and he fixed a prize to be given to one who suggested the best name for it. Magan Lal Gandhi succeeded by suggesting the word sadagraha and Gandhi made it all the more clear by changing it into satyagraha. Breaking the word the meaning is simple to understand. Sat means truth and Agraha means firmness or sticking to truth or firmness in truth.

Satyagraha has had both favourable and adverse criticism. It is the time when the European nations predominate and it is natural that they condemn it. They consider it a sign of weakness and hold that it is not a successful method of counteracting physical force and physical force must be met with physical force. They think satyagraha is a weak weapon; it breeds pusillanimity. In the struggle for existence all people have resorted to force and they must continue to do so in ages to come.

There is no doubt that satyagraha has not had much success so far, but condemning it only on that score is unsound. The world is not truly civilized-true civilization will dawn some day-and when it happens people will realize what satyagraha means. The advocates of satyagraha are few and those who truly practise it are fewer still. Why it is so is quite simple to understand. It is easy to give way to wrath when someone attacks you and uses physical force but it is difficult to control yourself and win your enemy by love. The former means absence of control over yourself and the latter just the reverse. And suppose for example that you suppress your adversary in that manner and become the victor, it will be a forced and by no means an everlasting win, but the latter if it actually happens will last for ever. The victory of physical force is great but the victory of moral force is greater still. Univ Calif - Digitized by Microsoft ®

Satyagraha is a wonderful discovery. God has made mankind. A is stronger than B and B stronger than C. The woman is weaker than man. If physical force governed the world does it mean that the weak should continue to be ruthlessly annihilated ? Have they no means of escape? If this were so God would be unjust. But no. Whereas physical force is a gift with the few, moral force can be cultivated by all. The weak can use this weapon easily. All can utilize it equally well. And the weak have an equal possibility of scoring over the strong in this respect. A strong man with a weak heart cannot resort to satyagraha whereas a shrimp of a man with a strong heart can do it.

Let us see how the satyagraha campaign can be useful today. The world today is experiencing another great war. In spite of many efforts to establish everlasting peace we are where we were. The Famous Ford Peace ship with all its delegates and noble ends in view met with no success and flopped in the year 1917. Close upon it came the League of Nations with all its big boasts. Even this had a short span of life. Covenants were violated and openly violated.

The champions of peace almost quarrelled at the Disarmament Conference. The League sought to end war and establish eternal peace. But by what means-Covenants ? Force ? And that the League could not maintain a force that would keep any first-rate power from breaking the peace was admitted by a well-known advocate of the league of Nations the other year. Just consider it if satyagraha were included in the covenants of the League as the weapon to "kill" brute force. The League had representatives of nations, the warring nations, but was there one like Gandhi? For example, if the league resorted to satyagraha would not there be success? The worshippers of modern warfare will say no, but a little reflection will show that an affirmative reply can be found. Basing our conviction on the fact that true satyagraha always ends in victory, we see the above could be remedied. At the expense of heavy suffering, satyagraha would end war. If satyagraha has proved an unfailing remedy elsewhere why not here ? It is not a matter of ridicule but a matter of true concentration. Where force has failed to conquer force, satyagraha would surely have succeeded. Univ Calif - Digitized by Microsoft ®

Evidently Europe needs a Gandhi and the need is sorest now. People have volubly talked of the difference between the west and the east—and in some cases the former being given inconsiderate preference over the latter but it has yet to learn many things from the east. If the west cannot find a solution to the world menace listen to the notes ringing in the east, the notes of "pure", everlasting peace. Physical victory is short-lived—only 20 years between 1918 and 1939—but moral victory though far more difficult to attain, is everlasting. Europe has tried satyagraha (though only in small affairs) with success and still it does not look like catching the hint.

In seventeen days ended Poland and Finland shared the same fate though her subjugation took a longer period. The former met physical force with physical force and could hold out only for a fortnight. No doubt the Poles have placed on record a few instances of valour to be remembered by posterity, but what is the ultimate end? Have they been able to defend their country? Have they been able to maintain its independence? In short, have they achieved the end for which they fought? The reply evidently is in the negative. Now just apply the satyagraha test to them. They would have been tortured, trampled, killed and all else, but would that have brought victory to the Nazis? How were they to be conquered if their hearts remained unconquered in spite of severest pressure? Could the Nazis as the only other alternative kill the whole of Poland?— Impossible. Because whom will the rulers rule in the absence of the ruled? No doubt satyagraha would have demanded far greater patience, perseverence, determination and moral courage but the Nazis would never have had complete victory.

Now consider Finland's case. The Finns met with success in the beginning; weather also helped them; they imported war material worth many thousands from abroad, but still they knew that defeat was the only thing they could "attain." All these things could not turn defeat into victory. Satyagraha has not been tried for big emergencies so far, but it is high time Europe tried it and set the pace for others.

Self-trust is the essence of satyagraha as it is of heroism. Heroism and satyagraha have much in common and satyagraha, heroism and

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truth are chums. A satyagrahi's soul is at war with falsehood and therefore he sticks to his mission in spite of disheartening criticism by those who surround him. Undaunted he moves on, not taking leave of righteousness at the same time. True satyagraha like true heroism is just, hospitable, temperate, and unmindful of petty calculations. "The false prudence which dotes on health and wealth is the butt and merriment of heroism," says R. W. Emerson, the American Carlyle, and is it not equally true of satyagraha? A satyagrahi is the enemy of falsehood and wrong and naturally he or she fights against all the agentsexternal and internal-that help the spread of the above and what else except self-trust would be useful in such a campaign? "Trust in God and do the right" seems to be the fittest maxim for a satyagrahi and trust in God, in a way, means trust in one's ownself.

It is the law of nature that all good actions have something repulsive about them—that something at least repels us for a time. We do not easily follow it; even the prudent fail to fight and overcome this weakness but after some time the truth comes to light and people find it in unison with wisdom. And the same is true of satyagraha. Satyagraha has not reached its climax so far but time will tell what value it has.

It is not everybody who can realize the worth of satyagraha because it is devoid of the commonplace bravery on its face. It is not bright, attractive, and obstreperous; it is true, calm and collected. The lustre of physical force is absent in it. It does not catch you at the very first glimpse but affects by and by. It smells of true heroism. An analogy can be found in the action of rivers and seas. Supposing destruction to be the achievement of the two by which we have to gauge their capacity, a river with its speedy and billowy waters is always destroying but sea waters which seem stagnant ordinarily, do far greater harm. Again with a little addition of fresh supplies river water overflows (just as one who is a slave of physical force gets angry very soon and uses it at the slightest pretext) but the sea water like a satyagrahi acts steadily and surely. "

Satyagraha falls in the category of heroism and holds a prominent place. It persists and thereby is a test of your fortitude. Your mind cannot be coerced into it but you Univ Calif - Digitized by Microsoft @

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resort to it at the call of your soul. And even if it happens otherwise it is not satyagraha of the real type and is bound to fail you and your colleagues in due course.

Individual brilliance is a potent, factor in the campaign of satyagraha. Just as in the game of cricket individual brilliance counts more than it does in the game of hockey and football so also it does in satyagraha when referred with respect to physical force. You may die when others are dying; you may have a plunge into a fight when others are doing it. Combination and heat of the excitement may inspire you but in satyagraha you cannot do it unless your soul dictates you to do it. Many have won fame in the field of battle but each one of them is not brave, but in satyagraha the victory is sure only if each one of the participants is brave. The whole edifice may fall by one man's lapse.

Satyagraha is a great economic force and the campaign of satyagraha may well be termed as economic warfare. Suppose for the time being that the end of modern wars and satyagraha is the same or in other words violence and nonviolence both seek to achieve the same endthat they want to decide the truth and truth ultimately wins. And suppose further that they are launched to reach the same goal— Peace—and there is peace at the end of them both. The question arises which is the better method? Which is the right approach? To judge it you have to examine the course of the two and let us do it.

How costly is modern warfare ? Half the money of nations is spent on defence and it looks as if defence is the end of life. During war more of it is pooled at the expense of industries, education and agriculture. Britain had 18 capital ships before the present war started and five were under construction. Other nations had six to eight. Just imagine how heavy a capital ship is and what a voracious deity ! Tons and tons of iron are used. It takes years to manufacture such a ship. And leave aside the number of its offspring. The nation's purse is considerably lightened. And a ship sinks in no time-the attainment of a tiny submarine. All that money and time spent on it goes waste in a few minutes.

And how much you need for the construction of cannon that carry ruin over a range of many Univ Calif - Digitized by Microsoft O

miles. Thousands of labourers use the hammer at a time; the forests are rendered barren their wood being placed at the disposal of the champions of modern warfare. The various parts of a cannon's food are procured from the remotest parts of the earth-parts where the irrational are pressed into work day and night to supply material. The deepest mines are dug by myriads of human beings day and night. And it consists of parts beginning from a small nail to one which is hundreds of thousands of inches in length and breadth. You will simply be bewildered if you go through the whole process. The town of Woolwich which specializes in the manufacture of such goods is a great town (says A. G. Gardiner)-a town whose activities alone are equal to all the labour of a city like Leeds-all devoted to the God, the Great God Gun who lies there mystic, wonderful, waiting to speak his oracles to man.

There are in fact three Gods i. e. the God of Land, the God of Water and the God of Air. The first God moves on land, the second on water and the third God, the God of Flight who is delicate but most destructive is supposed to be the greatest

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scourge of mankind to-day. Compared to other Gods it is no less expensive to feed. It is evident that this God has found the greatest favour with the white man and the nation's last farthing is used to keep the fire burning for it. In short, war on land, water and air,—how much does it cost ? Nations have to search for the best mathematical brains to calculate it. Satan has fashioned himself into an angel of light and the war ministry is a necessary evil from Bremen to Gold Hook (Europe). Some nations become bankrupt and the debt is not cleared till another war starts. All this goes waste and yet the disputes of mankind remain unsettled.

On the other hand what is spent on satyagrah warfare? No expenditure, not a single penny spent. A war without money and yet always ending in victory.

And the physical force of which peoples talk so highly is not real physical force. The promethean phase including many subsequent centuries is over and the change has imparted absolute newness to life. Today if a country is powerful it depends upon its mechanical force. Real physical force is not required in modern warfare. The greatest attempts are being made to

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convert physical energy into mechanical energy. Of the total destruction of the world you can measure how much is really due to physical force. And the mechanical force has weakened the man and the more he specializes in it, the more it will weaken him. A man accustomed to using a gun loses heart when without it. This mechanical force is enslaving us. Battles are no longer fought face to face. The stories of Rustum and Sohrab are gone. The sword is no longer used to test one's mettle. Wreckage is done through machines and physical force is only required so far as their manipulation is concerned.

Satyagraha will show that your real physical force is how much torture you can stand and how many privations and reprisals you can suffer. For it you need to preserve your physical force too although it is a moral victory. The health standard of nations has considerably gone down and yet they boast of physical force. So whereas the "modern physical force" weakens the nerves of human beings, satyagraha strengthens them. Satyagraha is a food of the nerves and consequently an elixir for the health of nations.

In Mahatma Gandhi's life the term civil disobedience is as conspicuous as satyagraha. Thinking of the two side by side one naturally hits upon a question. What is the relation between satyagraha and civil disobedience one may ask? Is one the outcome of the other or an offshoot of it? What are the factors that are common to both and where do they differ? The relation between the two is worth discussing here.

Literate Indians know that the last Civil Disobedience Movement though starting from a very small affair, the salt dispute, made itself felt. It is akin to satyagraha and it seems the clue has been taken from satyagraha itself. For the first time in the history of the world such a movement was started. Satyagraha broadly speaking is passive resistance and that was what the people were required to resort to during the last agitation. Non-co-operation with those who were not on the side of truth was the aim of the movement.

To understand the meaning just weigh the words. Non-co-operation is possible even if your cause is wrong. You may non-co-operate with Univ Calif - Digitized by Microsoft @

your adversary over a matter for which there is no justification. But satyagraha, as the word by itself means, is fight for the truth. For example, during the last agitation non-co-operation was abused like this. Children non-cooperated with their guardians over petty affairs. Wherever their demands-right or wrong-remained unsatisfied they resorted to this thing. They even resorted to fasts and hunger-strikes were very common. I definitely know of a boy of 12 at Amritsar who during the last movement showed his non-co-operation by abusing the British Government openly before mammoth gatherings in the Jallianwala Bagh. And yet some people respected him and loved him. Later the habit grew so much that he extended his non-co-operation to his parents and friends. So much so that over trifling matters he hunger-struck or fasted. And the malady ultimately took such a turn that he had to be sent to a reformatory school.

Non-co-operation is no doubt a weapon to win your cause but its demerits prevent us from using the term as a substitute for satyagraha. Whereas satyagraha means fight for the truth non-co-operation means fight for the truth and untruth both.

Again in non-co-operation you may have recourse to force to win your cause. You can meet force with force. You may use any other such means against your opponent, but in satyagraha it is absolutely prohibited. You can only launch a struggle by peaceful means, by the total elimination of force. The world history supplies many examples of non-co-operation of the hot type but it is only in India that it has been purged of the cat force and it is not out of place to say that it is Gandhi's achievement. The proud privilege of having eliminated the dark side and retaining the bright one goes to India alone and Gandhi is the forerunner in this respect. Lapses here and there have been but on the whole it has been well maintained.

India today is not a military country. It is a fact. The champions of *lathi* and *belcha* to please note. We are far away at least from modern militarism. Our symbols of militarism are a laughing-stock for the westerner. Do not cite me instances of the bravery of a few Indians during the Great War. Don't begin to talk of your glorious past nor revel in the glory of the future. Enough of such reasoning. The

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fact is that the spirit of militarism is dead. A country lacking the above spirit and with the greatest offence and defence resources is not a military country. One gun can scare away 40 *belchas* or *lathis*. A small western country may non-plus India—I mean real India.

Having said that let me come to the point. If the extremities X and Y of a certain line represent non-violence and violence respectively, it is undisputed that we are near X and the European countries near Y. And suppose further that the same end-Victory-is achieved by reaching the two. Wouldn't it be foolish to run to Y? Even if India were freed today it would take years to overtake the west in this respect. So why not run back and reach the nearer extremity? We have never experienced this thing so far and is it not the opportune time to do it? It will save time and also bring the required fruit. Today we are nearer non-violence than violence. People hold disarmament conferences and nothing results. They, instead, arm all the more. Why should not we then give the lead to the west when we are already disarmed?

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CHAPTER III

THE CONDUCT OF HIS LIFE

THE Pyramids of Egypt are broad at the base and conical at the top. The foundation being strong they have stood the onslaughts of time. The building of Mahatmaji's greatness is like them. At the base he has placed moral character. He has spent most of the time making the foundation strong and the process never comes to a halt. The other things i.e. his views, politics, religion and ethics follow. You may find fault as you go up but the foundation is too strong to be harmed. In a sentence the rays of his greatness pass through the prism of morality. I ask myself two questions. What is the motive power in him? Moral character is the answer. Again I ask, what is the secret of his success ? The answer again is moral greatness.

The most important factor of moral greatness is brahmcharya. Blessed be the year 1906 when Gandhi took the vow of brahmcharya. Many others followed suit and were fairly successful in their undertaking. Not only Hindus but Muslims

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and Europeans as well. And his women followers whose confidence he has always enjoyed so much did not lag behind. They showed even better "command" than men did. In his ashram even husband and wife have to live like sister and brother.

But what is his brahmcharya like? Is it with the rigid rules of the past? Though mostly it is what the Hindu scriptures tell it like but he has made changes here and there to suit the modern conditions. For instance, in brahmcharya of the old a brahmchari had absolutely to shun the company of women but here he has made this allowance. We can work side by side with ladies and yet practise celibacy. In such a brahmcharya the soul of one reaches such a height that women to him are like mothers, sisters and daughters. And it is to this end that Gandhi has sought to strive. In a few words he has summed up a great truth, "The restraint which demands abstention from all contact, no matter how innocent, with the opposite sex is a forced growth, having little or no value at all."

In the second chapter I talked of satyagraha. Here let me tell the relation between

satyagraha and brahmcharya. To become a successful satyagrahi brahmcharya is very essential. That is why his stress on brahmcharva precedes the stress on satyagraha. Here it may be asked who will be a successful satyagrahi: one who has elevated his mind. soul and body through the preservation of energy in him or one who has lost it by being a slave to one's passions ? Evidently a hypochondriac cannot resort to satyagraha. A sickly body with a sickly mind cannot undergo its ordeals. One who has indulged in sensual pleasures for many years will find it well-nigh impossible. In fact such a one is unfit for both physical and moral ordeals and satyagraha easily involves both. Be it violence or nonviolence brahmcharya pays equally in both. To return to the point the farther from brahmcharya the farther from satyagraha. Hence the greatest stress laid on it by the greatest soul of the earth.

And here just the clarification of a misunderstanding. Some people hold that the idea of Brahmcharya Gandhi took from Tolstoy. Gandhi may be Tolstoy's disciple in many respects and his parallel in many ways Univ Calif - Digitized by Microsoft @ but the above statement sounds innocent bunkum. Gandhi going out to borrow the principle of brahmcharya from Russia? It is tantamount to saying that Wally Hammond, the star English batsman learnt his strokes from India. The idea of it is so ingrained in the mind of the Hindu that such a claim becomes untenable. Say what people may, it is an attack on Hinduism and Hinduism cannot disclaim this noble heritage easily.

And this strong foundation leads to a definite conduct of life. He has all through wandered in Keats' 'vale of soul-making' and under the influence of the light that comes from within the breast has sought blessedness. He has imposed upon himself the severest toil and the highest responsibility without the expectation of reward. Smilingly he accepts the obligation cast on him by God. Very early in his life, to use a phrase of Carlyle, he opened his Goethe and closed his Byron. And this conduct has ended in one thing—SACRIFICE.

To ascertain the truth go to him with a heart that opens and receives. With David Grayson's spirit of the 'open road.' He will make you feel his equal. No 'inferiority complex' in his company. He will teach by example, not precept. He will not make you understand; he will make you feel. Talk your doubts straight to him and ask for the remedy. And rest assured in his company you will not become fossilized.

In spite of it some people have a strange mentality. Some have entered the precincts of meanness while criticizing him. I should not like to pollute this paper with their most abominable names and charges. They differ from him in one respect and give vent to their wrath in another. They comoulage the truth and do it under the cloak of criticism. And they do it because he is not afraid of calling a spade a spade and says their pitfalls to their face. His life both public and private is an open secret, but is that he should be slighted on that score? He has repudiated the charges levelled against him and others have also done . it strongly.

The scandals spread about him need not be dealt with here but a schoolmaster who seems to have made a query in good faith must be replied to. He wrote to Mahatmaji, "If God has not appointed you as His messenger.

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what you say or teach cannot be claimed to be a word of God. No one would contest the truthfulness of truth and non-violence as teachings of the prophets and principles of very high spiritual value, but their true understanding and application require a soul that is in direct communion with God. Any person who has polished his soul by suppressing or acting against the desires and cravings of flesh and the self is not a prophet." Quite right. But any person who claims himself to be a prophet and has not suppressed the desires and cravings of the flesh and the self-it should not be construed to mean anything else-is not a prophet. These and many others like them are the essential factors for communion with God. The enquirer has the answer in his own passage.

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CHAPTER IV

GANDHI AND BUDDHA

OF all saints Buddha has been judged with the least severity. And one who has studied Mahatma Gandhi even casually will find that he has much in common with Buddha. To start with they are fine exponents of the art of living. Life in their cases solidifies into veracity of thought and action. Both favour the *karm marg* and disfavour ruthless asceticism. By trying to elevate the world they have unconsciously elevated themselves. In a nutshell, what are their lives like? Two typically Indian noble stories.

Buddha's secret of success was his triumph over wrath and desire and has not the same brought Gandhi to the uppermost regions of life? Gandhi is known for his sang froid and has cut down desire after desire. The heart of Buddha was filled with pain and commisseration at the sight of a dead body, an old and emaciated man which in other words means the suffering of humanity and it also looks as if the agony of unhappy India lies latent in Gandhi's heart. He

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has downed himself simply to feel how others feel. Conquer wrath by non-wrath, sinful tendencies by virtuous ones were the words of Buddha and Gandhi seems to have acted up to all of them.

Both are not hedonists. Aversion to mundane happiness is a common factor in the life of both. Their minds have been repeatedly haunted by the question whether this happiness is real. If not—as they have found it to be—which is the avenue leading to real happiness? They have discovered the key to it. Physical pleasure has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. The pleasure of the spirit is miles ahead of it and both Gandhi and Buddha have been in search of it. In fact, it opens a beautiful vista to *nirvana*, so eagerly aimed at by men of such calibre.

According to Buddhism arhat, anagami. Sakdgami and Sotapatti are the four different states felt at the time of death. The first is supposed to be the best as those who attain final emancipation in this world are called arhats. Those who will attain nirvana after this birth are anagamis, those that will attain nirvana after one birth are sakdgamis and in sotapatti one attains *nirvana* after seven births. So if it were to be found what stage Gandhi is moving towards it will naturally be *arhat* because an *arhat* fasts along with religious observances. He will at once be placed in the category of *arhats* since he practises *ahimsa*, *astheya*, *sunrita*, *brahmcharya* and *aparigraha*.

Not to kill any animal is ahimsa, receiving things not given is astheya, speaking the truth and sweet words is sunrita, conquering wrath and desire is brahmcharya and detachment from all things is aparigraha. And now apply all these tests to Mahatma Gandhi and come to a conclusion yourself. People say, Mahatmaji's life is the true emblem of Hindu philosophy and behold here, Buddhism places him at a higher level than Hinduism does.

Time and circumstances are great forces. So far as they are concerned Buddha was luckier. He lived in a religious age and a free land. People were more faithful and honest then. The history of those days is free from the outbursts of fanaticism. His greatest adversaries —the learned Brahmins—did not cross the boundaries of healthy rivalry. He as well counted on royal support. He was related to the ruling

GANDHI AND BUDDHA

families at Kapilvastu and Magadha. Asoka's contribution moreover, to his cause, cannot be ignored. But Gandhi has to work his way in an age of doubt, with disheartening environments. Indians today are a motley nation with unscruplous persons galore. The greatness of many is nipped in the bud. Buddha would not have found the task easy to-day. Let us while judging Gandhi take into consideration all these factors although despite them his success is of no mean order.

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CHAPTER V

" THE HARIJAN "

"I have lost all power of speech-making. But I can still beg for the Harijan". — Mahatma Gandhi.

ANU never wanted the Harijans to be a segregated portion of Hinduism. The wide gulf between the Hindu and Achhut is a forced growth. Manu was a great law-giver-greatest of his age. His institution has wisdom in it. He set the Hindus on the golden path and the drift-away has been due to the misinterpretation of the law. He never wanted it to be exploited like this. He had given us a strong foundation. In the course of years the Brahman assumed a sort of 'divine right' and the condition of the Acchhut deteriorated. Hence the difference between the two. It is sad that nobody pointed out the defect till the 20th century or say the last years of the 19th century. Swami Dayanand did a little. He set the ball rolling. But he could not make it his life-mission. He was busy otherwise. Anyway he left some active followers. They did something in the north but the south

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remained untouched. The evil was most manifest in the south.

Let us thank Manu en route to the real topic. His wisdom has done its work. The Hindu society has during all these years stood all types of onslaughts—both *ab intra* and *extra*. We owe it all to his caste-system. And thank God we are out of the danger zone now. In spite of a serious misunderstanding we are safe. Yet how salutary had it been had we understood the point in Manu's institution? Any nation based on his principles can lead the world and Hinduism did lead at one time.

But here we are concerned with Mahatmaji, the greatest of all reformers as regards the uplift of the Harijan. Dayanand was his forerunner. Dayanand initiated and Gandhi improved, and does not the latter's improvement amount to originality? In fact both deserve fulsome praise for their work. And yet both come from orthodox Hindu families.

Gandhi is the best interpreter of Manu's law. He believes in its absolute efficacy and side by side is also a unique friend of the untouchable. He holds that caste-system has done immense good to Hindu society and it must 'stay'. The

varnas mean something. The Harijan question is a side issue. The caste-system in its true colours is not to blame in this case. Condemning it on that score is a folly. We should condemn those who have changed its shape. The system with its merits is the real caste-system. It is an age-long institution. It has served as the back-bone of Hindu society all these centuries. Should we bring to naught the wonderful idea of a great man? Should we disclaim it without sufficient reason? Purge it of all its defects and see what it means. The very lover of the caste-system should naturally be a lover of the Harijan too. If you don't agree just look at Mahatma Gandhi. He wants both to 'live'

And what a sweet name 'Harijan' is! 'Satyagraha' is self-explanatory while 'Harijan' has applied meaning. The one pertains to the world the other smells of the Nobler Self. Both are wonderful names. Evidently Mahatma Gandhi is an adept at giving names. The latter name will live as long as Hinduism lives. It aims at eliminating the contempt for the untouchable. Just consider the words 'Achhut' and 'Harijan' side by side and note the big difference. Breaking the latter into two parts 'Hari' and 'Jan' remain, meaning thereby the 'man of God'. And it proves that they are as much the men of God as any high-placed Brahmin. There is no difference between His any two "creations." If you love His men you love Him. You cannot claim His love without loving humanity. Look at Christ, Mohammed and all others. Before loving God they loved their fellow beings.

But here we must examine the treatment the Harijan receives at the hands of the orthodox. It is almost the very right of existence that is denied to him. There is a bar sinister to contact with them. The one humble to the extreme the other haughtiness personified. The one yielding the other pressing. The one a good servant, the other a bad master. Miss Mayo has talked rot but it is not all rot. Why should not we confess our drawbacks? In a word: India is a slave country and the Harijan, a slave of the slaves ! It is the right of superiority abused and exploited to one's own advantage.

Temple entry is the most conspicuous aspect of the Harijan 'dispute'. A Harijan cannot enter a temple. He cannot see the *pratima*. He is considered too low for that. They say he pollutes it. That is the irony of Indian thought. The question is, is anybody too low to worship God? Does it sound sense? And yet the 'Pandit' backs such whims by vedic sanctions. They refer also to the sastras. The Vedas preach the *karm* theory. Action counts more than caste. Through good actions a Harijan can become the most pious of individuals. Through them he can become a Brahmin in the real sense of the word. Also there is no bar to a Harijan entering any one of the rest three groups.

And the orthodox is not only cruel to the Harijan alone. Those who aim at reform and support his cause are also not spared. He resorts to unruly behaviour on many occasions. I quote the famous case of Shri Vaidyanath Iyer. The sanatanists at Madura spread palpable lies about him and his wife. It was in connection with the opening of the Menakshi Temple at Madura. Other supporters of the Harijan uplift have also had to face "music" and privations. Swami Dayanand was attacked many a time. In fine, despite great reaction the antagonist of the above movement has been most apathetic, most obstinate. It is useless to quote more examples here as people are already too well aware Univ Calif - Digitized by Microsoft,®

of them.

Temple entry being the problem at issue we can say that it is the point wherefrom reform should emanate. Before other contact materializes let us throw open all our temples to the Harijans. But here a question crops up to which Mahatmaji has referred in his weekly. Should such a thing have the force of law behind it? What would be the result if it were made illegal for the Brahmin to forbid a Harijan to enter a temple? Legal force is really great but in this case it does not apply with advantage. For the underlying idea is to convince the Brahmin that he is on the wrong path and that his attitude towards the untouchable is a crime against God. And this as such must be backed by our religion itself.

To settle a religious problem we should better have recourse to the religion itself. In days gone by law and religion were not two very different things. If our religious scriptures convince the Brahmin of the dangers attending the evil the problem is solved. A religion must cure itself. The ills of Hinduism at one time were cured by the advent of Buddha and Buddhism. (Here be it noted that the corrective needed by Hinduism was in the main responsible for the appearance of Buddhism.) The reaction in such cases is very great and issues forth from the same source.

And if the remedy cannot be found in the same religion we have got to look to other ones. No religion can claim to be infallible howsoever its champions might pose. Merits and demertis exist in every religion. We should simply be broad-minded enough to allow other religions to influence our own for the eradication of a certain evil existing therein. Almost all religions preach universal brotherhood. Let us take a leaf out of any one of them. Anyway that was by the way. Hinduism can evolve a remedy of its own as it has been doing since its birth.

The Harijan of India is part of Hinduism and the betterment of Hindu India lies in owning him. Mahatma Gandhi has struck at the root of things. According to him charkha, agriculture and uplift of the Harijans constitute the true happiness of India. The uplift of the poor in India means swaraj. Very small things can bring us freedom. Let us rid our society of all its shames. For the uplift of our brethern nobody checks us. The Harijan question is part of the above. Let us make the real advance towards swaraj. Let us set our house in order first. Nobody will stand in our way while doing this. The case of Harijans has got to do much with swaraj.

Let another fact be pointed out. All the varnas except 'Shudra' have drifted away from the paths laid down for them by Manu. Does the Brahmin read and teach to-day? Does the Kshatriya protect the country and administer justice? Does the Vaishya trade and work for the financial betterment of the country? No is the answer to all these questions. But the Shudra still sticks to his work. His vocation is agelong. The division of labour has taken a different turn; it has changed in the case of the first three but not in the case of the fourth. Why the Shudra looks like a different being is the fault of the change we have undergone. We have drifted away from the golden path and we put the blame on others. And when there is an intermixture of the first three varnas why not include the fourth also? Why shut it up all together ? Moreover this intermingling of the first three groups means that the Shudra alone retains the purity of blood. Others have lost and are losing all these years. Purity of blood was one factor of Manu's principles.

And we are now in a precarious position. Let us either run back and welcome Manu's principles or go further to reshuffle Hindu society without any such discrimination. The position we are in today will end Hinduism some day. It is not advisable to stand here for the curse of untouchabality stares us in the face. Therefore let us adopt either of the two methods open to us.

We know that more than one societies exist for the Harijans. They are doing useful work in certain areas. But in spite of them the progress is very slow. We have not attained in the direction what we ought to have by this time. No doubt it is partly due to the fact that efforts are being made in the teeth of orthodox opposition but there is another reason also. Different sabhas for Harijans mean exclusion. In the first instance they are already shut up and in the second they have exclusive bodies of their own. They live apart. They have their different ashrams. Again the problem of their coming in contact with Hindu society remains unsolved.

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So we have seen that exclusive bodies mean exclusion. The solution is that Harijans should have easy access to our society. They should become part of Hinduism. How many people really come in contact with them? Only a few who are working for their uplift. They (the Harijans) again remain a different unit. Let them be our partners in everything. It is no use opening schools for them. Let them join our institutions. Let them be our equals. Real Harijan uplift is not being carried on at all places. There are certain centres only. But there will not be substantial progress unless we make it our home problem. Many homely things count. For instance let our women realize the duty they have to discharge in this connection. They should also make an advance in this direction.

The thing we should aim at is the dispelling of the 'inferiority complex' from the Harijan's mind that has lived all these years. When this is off, the problem is solved. And this will be more useful than a hundred bodies designed to improve the state of the untouchable. Improving their condition and yet keeping them at arm's length is a fatal policy.

CHAPTER VI

ANOTHER HIGH COMMAND

TNDIA is a very unfortunate country. Her I political mix-up is a problem. Only an angel will descend from the Heavens to untie the atrocious knots we have let ourselves into. It is already like a jigsaw puzzle and still fresh ramifications are the order. One does not know what the real trouble is. Is it social, communal, religious or political or something else? Is the Congress, Government, Muslim League or Hindu Mahasabha to blame? After all who is at fault? Take any six months of the political activities of India. You will find a number of meetings and as many resolutions passed but all efforts subsequent to them have gone abegging. Take the deliberations of any other such body and the same thing holds good. Of late, affairs have been moving at such a pace and yet we are without a way being found out of the impasse.

It must be admitted at the very outset that of all Indian bodies Congress is the sanest. The country's cream is there. But may I put one question to the heads of the Congress? Let me address them direct. When you realize that the bulk of the trouble of India lies in her social degeneration what is the use of attaching too much importance to politics? Swaraj is to come when it will but are you following the right path? You are fifteen people on the High Command-fifteen fertile heads. The destinies of India are in your hands and you will certainly control them some day. But are you quite sure you are doing the right thing just now ? Doubtless you are our social leaders as well but has not the impulse for politics in you overflown the impulse for social uplift work? Are not the rules of good to be preferred to the rules of state? Unnecessarily you have been plunged into the 'war of statements' issued to the press by your antagonists and lost leaders. They have wasted a lot of your time and have put the nation many paces backward, with the result that day by day the 'Bird of Liberty' flies away and away.

And if this "amount" of politics is all that you have to devote yourself to, half a dozen from among you will be able to do that. You will ask me where will the rest of the High Command go? Let it come to the field social service. We know they won't make so much name and fame in their new domain (because our newspapers never give the social leaders the 'boost' they deserve) but they will be doing more valuable work.

Now supposing for the time being that Congress needs as many people on the High Command as at present there are and that it cannot dispense with even one of them. Agreed. But then should not Congress strive to establish another High Command for social uplift work? Can't they select another fifteen who will not utter a word of politics and give our society a thorough overhaul? For example, for Harijan work will Thakkar Bapa do and nobody else come to his rescue? Alas we have not realized that politics is no substitute for social service !

And now think for a while that the new body has been established and both the old and the new have started functioning side by side. Will you say disinterestedly which will do more useful work or provide us with a better approach to freedom? Is it social uplift work or specialization in politics? Congress has lived all these many years and at least for the last decade and Univ Calif - Digitized by Microsoft @

ANOTHER HIGH COMMAND

a half has been the leading institution of India. If it had been a body designed to rid India of her ills wouldn't its work have been greater than it is today? I wish we had clamoured less for swaraj and done genuine work and even today it is not too late to mend.

Really this Gandhi of ours is sublime. He gets at the origin of things.) It is he who asserts with greater force than anybody else that the masses deserve our greatest attention. In history he will go down as a unique social leader. This 'extra-delicate' condition of our country has dragged him into the uncertain game of politics. The pity is that Congress has ignored the real aspect of his 'drive'. What is needed is a social uplift blitz. Will it emanate from you?

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THE WAY TO INTERNATIONAL THOUGHT

L IFE has flowed into countless channels. The old uniformity is gone. No doubt easy and quick means of communication seem to make us head towards a uniformity in the art of living but fresh offshoots of life are appearing at a much faster pace. There is a race between uniformity and newness. Today it is physically impossible to know something of everything try or pose however one may. The cleverest man in one's own realm is a fool in the domain of another. There he can be easily tricked or led astray. Like a "crude" villager who is having a seasond cheat to deal with and does not know what to do man has to confront life at some stages.

Then in vain do we try to be cunning in one sphere because we soon find we are idiots elsewhere. And in vain do our well-wishers try to make us crafty to fight the battle of life because this craft is nothing but reflex selfishness. They deceive themselves and they deceive us. The natural faculties of man—truth, innocence, honesty and others—are killed in this manner. They tell us a hundred tricks but they don't know that the number of tricks in this world ends only at infinity. And what is the outcome of this training? Soon we begin to move with "idiotic" or "private" bodies as the Greeks called it. We begin to move within the ringfence of egoism.

In the light of the above let us examine what the root cause of the ills of the world is. Underneath the skin-deep altruistic surface of things reigns supreme the Goddess of egoism. Her presence has been detected and pointed out by Gandhi. In the wake of it he has diagnosed the case and suggested the cure. But the pity is that the patient behaves in a peculiar manner. It does not care for the proper functioning of teeth, stomach and bowels but continues to use breath-sweeteners. And what when the real evil has not been exorcised? Destruction raised to the nth degree as we see to-day.

There is another important 'branch' of egoism. Vested interests of Europe, it appears, are out to discover a Midas touch—the touch that turned everything into gold. They know the fatal end of Midas but they cannot see their own in the light of that. Some people there it looks are perfecting the art of becoming rich which in turn is automatically perfecting the art of making the neighbour poor. Vainly one asks, where is that 'Utilitarianism' which originated with Beccaria, was propounded by Bentham, advocated by John Stuart Mill and culminated in the exposition of Spencer ? Presumably it has not beatified the world though it has beautified the pages of dictionary all right. Instead we find the typhoon of selfishness hitting the fabric of civilization—selfishness that like a banyan tree has thrown off shoots from its main branches which in turn have grown down and taken root in the earth as separate stems.

And this egoism plus man-created inequality gives birth to a new mentality. It consists in looking down upon God's race and treating the subordinates as bond-servants. Happen it naturally must because handfuls of silver to a chosen few and starving the rest of the populace is the order. Those chosen few live in a world of their own. They begin to lose the power of introspection and ultimately bid good-bye to conscience. And begin to think that God poured all the common sense in their heads and made the

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rest a set of fools. Accursed are the countries where such a mentality exists. It breeds the germs of hate. 'It is a victory for the devils and a sorrow for the angels and an insult to God.' And that Gandhi has fought this mentality all his life is writ large on his face.

Despite it let us believe that the world is progressing though in an ugly manner. But what is this ugly manner due to and how are we to overcome it? Hardy, Galsworthy and Wells-all have made bona fide efforts to suggest ways to overcome it but probably they have not made clear what it is due to. We have seen that it is the 'gift' of egoism and all that it includes. So what is needed is to make the rational realize that self-interest is not above everything and since humanity needs peace at all costs it must govern itself by the rules of equity. "Kill the Ego" is the maxim we learn from Mahatmaji's life. He looks forward to a period when in the words of the poet 'this divine universe would no longer be a chaos and a curse'. Unto this last he is calling you and this is the way to international thought.

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CHAPTER VIII

HIS JOURNALISM

THE 'Statesman' writing under the caption " 'The Question of Language' paid a glowing tribute to Mahatmaji on his rare achievement as a journalist. Though even the Englishman is too painfully conscious of the superiority of an Indian in the matter of learning a foreign language, yet it can be safely said that only a few Indians possess real command over the English language. Both Gandhi and Jawaharlal are versatile writers and are two fine examples of two styles, the simple and scholarly. Jawaharlal has come up like a meteor and some believe him to be world's one of the best present writers. In his case travel. study and quickness of senses have been responsible for this achievement while in the case of Gandhiji it is part of his Mahatmaship. Gandhi writes so well because in his case it is difficult to separate the inward from the outward

Mahatma Gandhi is a writer of his own type. His style is Gandhi himself. His success in the field of journalism makes even the Englishman wonder at it and yet he is not a journalist by vocation. He has flow though not much of the grace of an author. The peculiarity found in his creation is not to be found anywhere else. He depicts sentiment in the most understandable language. His words mean what he wants them to do. Every line has some connection with the previous line and the following one. He is simple, direct and convincing. It also depends on his sound power of reasoning and clearheadedness. His examples and arguments carry conviction even to the commonest reader in no time.

It would be beneficial if a selection of his writings were made to be included in the text-books for the Indian student who cannot easily decide which way to go as a writer. The English author, he cannot copy, try however he may. Let him follow an Indian style. And no name in this connection would be more suitable than Mahatma Gandhi's. In fact a doze of Gandhi about the matriculation stage and one or two later of Jawaharlal will make the task of the student easier when he takes up Macaulays, Emersons, Hazlitts, Ruskins and others. Such authors he always 'handles' with trepidation.

'Hitting' is an art in modern journalism. Some journalists have claimed success merely by becoming good 'hitters'. Mahatmaji never does so. It is different that even saints express moral and religious indignation on occasions. He never scolds like a worldly man. He fills his pages not by invectives against human beings but against institutions.

His writings are devoid of rhetoric, poetic prose, similies and the dazzle of a fashionable writer. He avoids digressions and superfluity. It seems he never exerts while writing. There is such a flow. No "frills", no graces can you ascribe to his composition; it is so simple and full of innocent originality. But he is good at using some commonplace catchy phrases and coins a little when required. In fact Ruskin minus his occasional gorgeousness is true Mahatma Gandhi. Like Plutarch he studies character and genius emerges forth automatically. Probably he is a prototype of Newman when describing concrete facts.

Though he mostly aims at journalism he occasionally produces literature. His writings

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exist to teach. They belong to Thomas de Quincey's both discursive and higher understanding. He teaches you through 'pleasures of affection and sympathy.' According to Quincey there are two types of Literature *i.e.* Literature of Knowledge and Literature of Power. The function of the first is to teach and the function of the second is to move, and many a time Mahatmaji in his literary pieces seeks to approach the first through the second. Not many have done it and those who have attained mastery over it are fewer still. Mostly people talk of the first in their literary writings.

The power of God is working behind it. Every sentence speaks of the Nobler Self. His writings can easily be contradistinguished from those of his contemporaries. There are some people who out of a dozen writings would pick out his composition even though his name may not be there. And he, like some, would not take leave of truth simply to introduce force into his creation. Nor like Hardy, would he begin to fan his wrath against God.

After a general survey of his style it is in the fitness of things to cite a few examples of his writings to illustrate the point. They have been taken at random from the 'Harijan' files. They are as follows:—

1. Here note the interdependence of each sentence on the one that precedes and the one that follows:—

'Fasting is a potent weapon in the Satyagraha armoury. It cannot be taken by everyone. Mere physical capacity to take it is no qualification for it. It is of no use without a living faith in God. It should never be a mechanical effort nor a mere imitation. It must come from the depth of one's soul. It is therefore always rare. I seem to be made for it. It is noteworthy that not one of my colleagues on the political field has felt the call to fast. And I am thankful to be able to say that they have never resented my fasts. Nor have fellow-members of the Ashram felt the call except on rare occasions. They have even accepted the restriction that they may not take penitential fasts without my permission, no matter how urgent the inner call may seem to be !'

2. And here is a saint's truthful confession:-

(a) 'Rajkot seems to have robbed me of my youth. I never knew that I was old.
 Now I am weighed down by the

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knowledge of decreptitude. I never knew what it was to lose hope. But it seems to have been cremated in Rajkot. My Ahimsa has been put to a test such as it has never been subjected to before.'

(b) 'And so I have left empty-handed, with body shattered, hope cremated. Rajkot has been to me a priceless laboratory. My patience has been solely tried by the tortuous politics of Kathiawad. I have asked the workers to confer with Darbar Shri Virawala, to forget me and Sardar Patel, and if they get enough to satisfy their least wants, they may accept the offer without reference to either of us. I have told Darbar Shri Virawala, 'I am defeated.' May you win ! Placate the people by giving as much as possible and wire to me so as to revive the hope which I seem to have lost for the moment.'

3. The following passage shows the indignation of a saint:—

'I have since read the report in the 'Hindu' of the happenings in Shrirangam. Dr. Rajan has given a graphic account of the disgraceful

MAHATMA GANDHI-A STUDY

behaviour of the so-called Sanatanists there. I have no reason to doubt Dr. Rajan's account. It is a shame that innocent women are being exploited for supporting a wrong. I have a vivid recollection of what used to happen to me during my Harijan tour. So far as I could see the opposition was confined to a handful only. I never opened a temple until I was satisfied that there was no opposition worth the name from the temple-goers. But the organisers of the opposition resented the very propaganda I was conducting. No doubt their opposition proved fruitless. My point however is that it was unscrupulous and violent. If I survived the year's tour it was no fault of theirs; it was God's grace. Sixtyfour charges were recorded against me. Not one of them was true. I am therefore loath to believe the complaints now made about the campaign in the south. I have not found any of them substantiated. Uutouchability is itself a lie. Lies are not known to have been supported by truth, even as truth cannot be supported by lies. If it is, it become itself a lie. There is no wonder therefore, tha from everywhere evidence continues to pour in that the Sanatanist opposition is confined to a few and that the few

do not hesitate to resort to any method, however unscrupulous it may be.'

4. And here is his force of argument :---

'I have not hardened my heart. I have never claimed to be a messenger of God except in the sense in which all human beings are. I am a mortal as liable to err as any other. Nor have I claimed to be a teacher. But I cannot prevent admirers from calling me a teacher or a Mahatma, as I cannot prevent traducers from calling me all sorts of names and ascribing to me vices to which I am a stranger. I lay both praise and blame at the feet of the Almighty and go my way.'

5. And here are the words of sympathy from the pen of a great soul:—

'Of course my whole heart is with the Poles in the unequal struggle in which they are engaged for the sake of saving their freedom. But I am painfully conscious of the fact that my word carries no power with it. I wish I had the power to stop this mad destruction that is going on in Europe. I belong to a country that has lost its independence and is struggling to be free from the yoke of the greatest imperialist power on earth. It has adopted the unique method of non-violence to regain its lost freedom. Though the method has proved its efficacy to an extent, the goal seems far off. All that I can send to the brave Poles is my heart-felt prayer for the early termination of their fearful trial and for the grant of the required strength to bear the suffering whose very contemplation makes one shudder. Their cause is just and their victory certain. For God is always the upholder of justice.'

And in spite of all the above factors one will easily believe that Mahatma Gandhi is not a born writer just as he is not a born politician. These two qualities are later growths though the development makes them seem innate.

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CHAPTER IX

EPILOGUE

LET me wind up things. The reader must have reached some conclusion by now. Now that Gandhi has been dealt with from various angles every reader is at liberty to find out for himself where he has gained. A little cogitation will show that something in him must appeal to you and appeal well. And things give different impressions to different minds. Whether he strikes you as a saint, reformer. religious or political head or a journalist is for you to seek.

But somebody may ask why in the presence of such a reformer the change is not very marked. And more especially when we have so many redoubtable followers of his. The reason for it is not far to seek. We must realize that the disease of India is old and chronic. It is not a matter of one or two years or even one or two decades but two whole centuries. Beginning from the opening of the 18th century to the very end of the 19th, it may be termed as an 'Era of Stupidity.' The condition of the people was most deplorable. They wilfully misunderstood and bickered with one another. Not to speak of religious toleration they did not have even the outer colouring of it. And they were conservative to a fault.

They boasted of education but they were in fact ill-educated Their education was traditional. Formal schooling and knowledge did not go hand in hand. Text-books were few and writing in them was gospel to them. Religion was considered all knowledge. Beyond that they could not tolerate anything as part of education. Originality was discouraged and mugging encouraged. By the way an old man even todaythough a product of the closing years of this period-is not convinced, try however you may, that education was defective in his days. And how proudly he talks of his 'learnt by heart' books of the primary standard. The only thing that goes to the credit of the people of the said era is that they studied religious scriptures and did it time and again.

And some of our Nawabs and Rajas had not the understanding of a common man. Administration? Their knowledge of it was unscientific. To disprove it people begin to

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cite a few exceptions. Mr. A did such and such thing. Mr. X was such a genius. Do not talk of exceptions. The people on the whole were stupid. Their culture was not the culture of India of the old. The malady of hatred was having its toll and people had evolved peculiar dogmas.

Then came the worst. Whereas we had no culture of our own we came under the influence of another culture—the culture of the west which did not suit us in most parts. There was a very unhappy intermixture of the two. We could not decide which was better. We had lost our own and we had not the intelligence to examine the new one. We were naturally in two minds.

Two schools of thought arose, the one favouring the one, the other the other. Broadly speaking we are still in such an age. But today our faults are covered by outward show. My point however is that the case has become hopelessly chronic. Now you can decide whether the fault lies with us or Gandhi. When a nation has lost the purity of its culture, be it bad or good, it is difficult and takes time to wake the people up from their trance. That is the tragedy of the whole affair.

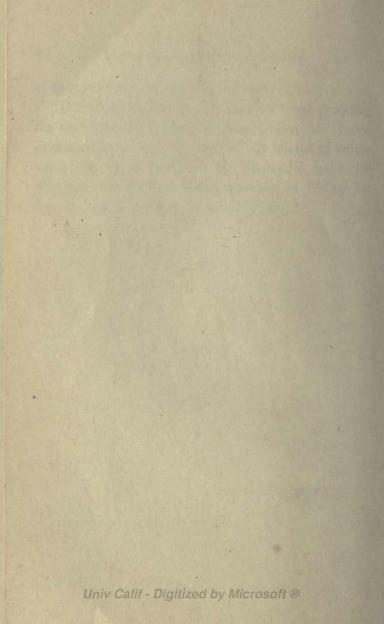
But this should not prevent us from praying for the life of this man for whom we have profound love and reverence. A friend of mine was just right when a few months back he finished his editorial with the words "May he live as long as India needs him !"

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