

Gandhi Faces The Storm

By Gene Sharp

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

We have great pleasure in publishing this study of Gandhiji's last days by an American student of his, Shri Gene Sharp. Shri Sharp is an American pacifist and conscientious objector. As such, he had to go to jail in U.S.A. in 1953. Before he was clapped in for his pacifist views, he wrote on February 20, 1953, to Shri M. P. Desai, who was then editing the *Harijan*, saying, "I am sending you one copy of each of two books which I have just completed. The smaller one, *Gandhi Faces the Storm*, is an attempt to show the inner Gandhi during his last two years, his evaluations of what had gone wrong, where he had failed, what was needed if India and the world were to go forward to a society of peace and justice."

And he added, "I feel this sort of research is important in our preparation for future non-violent struggles, here, in India, in Africa and other parts of the world.... I send these in hopes that they might be of use to you in your work and that toward that end it might be found advisable to publish them in India. .. .If you are interested I will make arrangements to clear the way."

And speaking about himself he said at the end, "I am only 25 years old. In the next few weeks I shall go to prison for civil disobedience in refusing to be conscripted into the armed forces. I may get anywhere between one and five years, with the likelihood of being two or three. I doubt that I will be allowed to do much research or writing in prison, but I hope to do more before I go in, and after I come out."

Shri Sharp is an active worker of the Peacemaker Research Committee of America. A study like this one being published now, as a result of the reverential study of Gandhi, is bound to be welcome to all who care to understand Gandhiji. Shri Sharp, in his prefatory note, tells the reader about his book, and hence no more is needed to be said about it by us. We gladly publish it with the hope that it will evoke sympathetic response particularly in young minds and provoke them to study Gandhi in the manner of the young author of this booklet of deeply spiritual and human interest. On behalf of the Navajivan Trust, I thank Shri Sharp for entrusting this publication to us.

11-12-1961

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

This is the story of the inner Gandhi from 1946 to his death. It is the story of his wrestling and searching, anguish and faith, his determination and courage.

No one can understand Gandhi if he does not know what Gandhi went through during those two years. No one can evaluate his work unless he knows Gandhi's own evaluation.

In this small volume I have tried to carry across to the reader the main trends in Gandhi's thinking and his final conclusions, being as true to the spirit as I could. Whenever possible, I have allowed Gandhi to speak for himself.

This is not a cold analytical study, for Gandhi's passion cannot be conveyed in those terms. This is not a biography of those years, for it is the essence which has been sought, rather than the facts and details for their own sake. The presentation is generally not chronological, for thinking and feeling must be conveyed in thought groupings and subjects.

Gandhi Faces the Storm is intended for those who already have some knowledge of Gandhi and who wish to learn more. For those who may be interested in a more detailed study, I would refer them to the original sources, suggesting that they first do an extensive study of Gandhi's life, philosophy and programme, for it is only in that context that these two years become most meaningful.

It is only through making basic changes in ourselves and in our society that we shall be able to build a world of peace and justice. The message of Gandhi must be understood, evaluated and acted upon. I hope that this study will prove to be of some value in our work in developing the way of life and programme that can meet the basic condition of our age.

There are several words of non-English origin, which may require more explanation than is offered in the text. They are given below:

Satyagraha : a literal translation of which means reliance upon or insistence upon Truth, which has the connotation of essence of being; is the word which is used to describe both Gandhi's philosophy and his method of righting evil. A Satyagrahi is a believer in Satyagraha.

Ahimsa: roughly translated, means love or nonviolence, but it has more connotations, referring to- non-killing and non-injury to all forms of life. The specific connotation will depend on its use.

Swaraj: roughly translated means independence or freedom; actually means much more, referring to true self-rule by the people.

This small volume originally began as an introduction to a chapter of another book.¹That chapter was an account of Gandhi's 1948 fast for Hindu- Muslim unity in Delhi. I felt that that fast could not be properly understood without putting it in the perspective of the two previous years. Soon, however, the essential material had grown as long as the chapter itself and it was no longer practical to include it in the same volume. The significance of the material was also much greater than simply as an aid to the understanding of that fast, and so it was decided to attempt to publish it separately.

I wish to thank my mother, Mrs. P. W. Sharp, for the assistance she has given in the final preparation of the manuscript.

May this not be simply another book about Gandhi which will be read merely for curiosity. May the reader examine Gandhi's message in his heart.

It is now eight years since the above words and the following pages were written, being completed in Brooklyn, New York, in February 1953. It is now difficult for me to evaluate them. Though based on study of Gandhi and his writings, this was not an attempt to offer a scientific analysis of his actions -or thoughts. Rightly or wrongly when writing these pages I felt that I somehow inwardly "understood" something of Gandhi's anguish and sense of mission, and that in this interpretation and selection of his own words, I was conveying at least part of that to readers

who might find it helpful and meaningful. Although I have made minor editorial revisions, I have attempted no major changes in the manuscript. That I could not do without writing a very different book. I do not think I could now write this one again. For this some may be grateful, and others may find it regrettable. I must leave the judgment to others, but asking only that they consider their judgment carefully, and not be afraid to challenge their own fixed moods or views on non-violence and Gandhi—especially where they find the interpretation presented here disturbing. I can only hope that these pages will be helpful and meaningful, and perhaps even help some to understand Gandhi more fully, and to remind others of certain of Gandhi's views they may wish to forget, or have not remembered. To those who wish to study further these years, I refer them to Gandhi's writings in *Non-violence in Peace and War*, in two volumes, *Delhi Diary*, and Pyarelal's *The Last Phase*, in two volumes, all published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad-14, India.

I am especially grateful to Shri Jivanji D. Desai, Managing Trustee of the Navajivan Trust, for offering to publish this interpretation and to both himself and his assistants for valuable suggestions for modifications in the manuscript and for assistance in many ways in the actual publication. In addition to the Navajivan Trust for permission to include the excerpts from Gandhi, I wish to thank Harper and Brothers, Publishers, New York, for permission to quote from Louis Fischer's *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*; George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London, for quotations from Louis Fischer's *A Week with Gandhi*; also to "Candidus" for quotation from his survey of 1947, in *The Times of India*, January 1, 1948; and to Gopal Das Khosla for quotation from his *Stern Reckoning*.

Oxford

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1 Gandhi Wields the Weapon of Moral Power, pub. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad-14, India, 1960

PART I

A PARABLE

Two pine trees stood at the timber-line of a high mountain. A cool breeze was tenderly moving the fluffy clouds across the sky above. The breeze whisked the glistening snow at the peak and rippled through the branches of the two isolated pines.

One tree was tall and thin. Its slender branches were graceful, like arms luxuriously clothed. The other was short and stocky with sinewy arms and useful covering.

There they stood—together and yet apart—like two men on the steps to eternity.

The breeze strengthened. The clouds rolled past more quickly. The arms of the pines waved in the wind. The fluffy clouds had been driven on, and in their place were large lightless ones. The gusts grew. The breeze became a cold gale.

Night quickly covered the world. The sky was dark. And the wind, as though with the tentacles of an enraged octopus, lashed and twisted the two who stood there. It roared round the rugged granite crags and whipped the two who clung between two worlds. They stood alone in blackness where the wrinkled earth touched the endless sky. No stars and no moon looked down on them. They and the wind were alone.

The howling western wind tested the wooden-worldling and the well-rooted watchman.

The forces of the universe contended in the night.

The testing tempest reached its crest. Through the storm sounded the twisting and cracking of wood— a crash, a thud, and then, silence.

The wind quickly faded. The gently shifting clouds made no sound.

The dawn poured over the horizon. The short sturdy one stood alone.

Far down the side of the mountain lay all that was left of the other. Now he lay broken and crushed, caught on a jutting grey boulder.

That one had grown tall and slender but he had sunk no deep roots.

He who remained stood alone, with arms lifted to the heavens. His source of strength had been deep. His head had been in the clouds and his feet in the rocks of the mountain. He had withstood the test of the universe.

The balmy breeze gave him a tender caress.

The sky again was ocean blue—deep and still.

The rays of the sun quietly shown on the glistening snow, the grey rock, and the solitary pine.

CHAPTER I: GANDHI'S ANGUISH

The man who was called the Father of India was heavy at heart as political independence came to India on August 15, 1947.

Gandhi had been invited to come to New Delhi to take part in the formal inauguration of independent India. He refused, saying, "I cannot participate in the celebrations of August 15th." ¹

He was busy fighting the riots in Calcutta. He issued no message to the people. He fasted and prayed.

The following day he wrote to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, "Is there something wrong with me, or are things really going wrong?" ²

Gandhi was disappointed. He had reason to be, for as Louis Fischer put it, "Millions adored the Mahatma, multitudes tried to kiss his feet or the dust of his footsteps. They paid him homage and rejected his teachings. They held his person holy and desecrated his personality. They glorified the shell and trampled the essence. They believed in him but not in his principles." ³ That was not what Gandhi wanted.

Gandhi's anguish was deep in his heart. India had not understood or followed his message.

The years that he had been the new star leading India to her new born freedom, had been years for him of inner searching, devotion, struggle and hard work.

The strength of Gandhi's weapon of moral power had been demonstrated. The people had followed his method in their outward behaviour during the nonviolent struggles. The Congress Party had accepted his leadership and his message of non-violence as an expedient way to political freedom. The vast majority of the people had followed him because of a mixture of motives, including practicality and reverence for his saintliness.

As the time approached and finally came when India became free from British control, those who had followed Gandhi out of expediency left him. Nehru and other Congress leaders had been very close to him. Many of them loved him. Nehru, a man with deep inner conflicts concerning Gandhi and his non-violence, was inwardly sorry that he could not follow Gandhi. Not understanding and not believing, Gandhi's political associates went their own way.

Only a very few people had to any considerable degree understood his message and had dedicated themselves to the cause of truth and love and the building of a new civilization. Only a handful had developed the real non-violence of the brave which could move mountains and flinched from nothing in its unshakable faith.

And because the people had not understood, they were now in the throes of destruction and sterile turmoil.

For months Gandhi had been deeply disturbed. The India of August 15, 1947 was not the India of his dreams. The path his people had been following those months before that day, had not been the path of truth and love. Riots had swept his country. The peasants were still landless. There would be a change in rulers but not true freedom for India. It appeared that India was headed for an imitation of Western depersonalized economic production and becoming another military State. The Congress had gone one way. Gandhi had gone another. There were rumours of war. The world had just concluded World War II. It seemed not to have learnt that the way of violence would not bring it peace. Would men yet destroy themselves with violence? Would they learn the way of love?

CHAPTER II: SUSPICION, HATRED AND BLOOD

The years of 1946 and 1947 were bloody years. The embers and flames of suspicion and hatred between the Muslims and the non-Muslims had been fanned until they blazed brightly enough to be seen round the world. The period had never been equalled in the history of India. Almost all parts of the country were affected: Bombay, Calcutta, Noakhali, Bihar, and then the Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province and Sindh. Hindus, in a minority in Noakhali and other parts of East Bengal migrated, seeking safety in Calcutta (which is in West Bengal), in Bihar and in other parts of the country. Muslims, who were in a minority in Bihar and in West Bengal, migrated also.

For years Gandhi had fought against the feelings of mistrust and suspicion and hatred between the Hindus and the Muslims. As political independence approached the riots seemed to grow. Jinnah, President of the Muslim League, insisted on partition and the creation of Pakistan. His Direct Action Day on August 15, 1946 resulted in four days of savage riots in Calcutta, with even official estimates stating that 5,000 were killed and 15,000 wounded.

Gandhi was filled with shame and humiliation over the events. He thought others also ought to be. In reference to the Bombay riots early in 1946 he said, "See what is happening in Bombay—the Bombay where I have passed so much time, which has given the public causes so much money and which, I had thought, had fairly imbibed something of Ahimsa [love and non-violence]. Will it prove the burial ground of Ahimsa?"⁴

Several parts of the West Punjab burst into flame in March 1947. Hindus and Sikhs numbering nearly half a million left their homes, and fled to the eastern part of the Punjab. They brought vivid, blood-curdling tales of atrocities, which in turn fanned the flames still higher throughout the country. Then came retaliation.

There were police and military efforts to stop the riots, but these brought no real peace, no real solution. In the Punjab the active rioting had been stopped by April

1947 but the people were silently preparing for the future as they built up stores of weapons. "True peace," Gandhi declared, "will only come when at least one side, if not both, adopt the true bravery that non-violence gives."⁵

The riots were on such a scale that civil war was actually expected by some. If that came, it "would mean that India would lend a hand not only to her own destruction but to the destruction of the world. Was the land that was bounded by the immortal Himalayas and watered by the healing stream of the Ganga, going to destruction through violence?"⁶

If the people thought they were going to get their independence simply by the end of British rule in India, then they were sadly mistaken. If they kept fighting among themselves, then some other power or powers would step in. In reference to the cowardly attacks by the Hindus of Bihar on the Muslim minority, Gandhi declared in mid-November 1946, "Bihar has forged a link in the chain of our slavery. If the Bihar performance is repeated or if the Bihar mentality does not mend, you may note down my words in your diary: Before long India will pass under the yoke of the Big Three with one of them probably as the mandatory power. The independence of India is today at stake in Bengal and Bihar."⁷

Jinnah demanded the partition of India. Gandhi had always opposed it. He regarded it as the vivisection of his country and as "blasphemy". He seemed to sense intuitively the results that would follow. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and all other people were brothers and should live in unity, he had always declared. But Jinnah demanded Pakistan. The flames of hatred and suspicion had been fanned and had blazed. The riots in turn had kindled more flames.

The British were ready to turn over the government to Indians, but to which ones? Pakistan could only be created if the Congress consented to it. The British could not create Pakistan and antagonize the majority of India just to please Jinnah and a group of the Muslims. Therefore, Gandhi reasoned, the Congress should not accept it. A non-violent man did not yield an inch to violence or threat of violence.

But the Congress leaders, tired and wanting a rest for the people and themselves, not wanting to postpone political independence for the sake of keeping India united, and lacking conviction in the way of non-violence, finally and reluctantly accepted Pakistan. Along with that came the partition of the provinces of Bengal and the Punjab. That too Gandhi opposed. "If Pakistan is wrong, partition of Bengal and the Punjab will not make it right. Two wrongs will not make one right."⁸

The only way to avoid the calamity was by the non-violence of the brave, that which came from one's deep inner being, out of conviction. It was only such non-violence which had the power to combat such an evil against high odds. That, however, the people did not have and could not develop overnight. Some people had urged Gandhi to take the lead in fighting partition. They felt that more people were behind Gandhi than he thought. But against whom was he to take the lead? It was the Indian people themselves and the Congress leaders who had consented to partition.

He might have undertaken a fast to sting his people's conscience. In fact, Herbert Matthews telegraphed to the *New York Times* on June 2, 1947, just before Mountbatten's plan for the partition was announced, "Mr. Gandhi is a very real worry, since if he decides to go on a 'fast unto death' it would well wreck the whole plan."⁹ But Gandhi did not do that, for partition itself was not the root of the problem. Under that lay the suspicion and hatred which resulted in the riots and threats of civil war. They in turn made partition possible. It was the suspicion and hatred which had to be attacked. Gandhi had to prove that Hindus and Muslims could live in peace. That fact alone was able to stop partition and save his people. So Gandhi devoted himself to healing the wounds of India. The people themselves would decide the future by the way they behaved and lived.

The riots had not ended with partition. From August to December 1947, murder, arson and looting were common. The provinces of East and West Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province and Sindh were the scenes of the worst convulsions.

Five millions of people were migrating. Hindus and Sikhs were leaving Pakistan. Muslims were leaving India. Refugees poured across borders on foot. Never in world history had there been such happenings. Rumours, tales of horror, reports of atrocities and exaggerated newspaper reports caused the flames to burn on. Pakistan issued total denials of the happenings. That too fanned flames.

"I would prefer to die rather than live in an India where such brutalities are practised,"¹⁰ Gandhi declared on October 1, 1947. The riots pierced Gandhi's heart.

There were those who deliberately and intentionally fanned the flames of hatred and violence. There were both Muslims and Hindus who preached hatred. While supporters of the Muslim League preached distrust and hatred of Hindus, the reactionary Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh (R.S.S.) preached hatred of the Muslims. As the reports of atrocities and wild rumours spread, the hatred, of the caste Hindus against Muslims was roused. The Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh, known as the R.S.S., wanted all Muslims completely cleared out of India. The new Government of India, however, was trying to build a secular State and was pledged to the protection of minorities. The racial-religious fascist ideology was clearer and more articulately defined in the R.S.S. It had been founded in 1925. Until 1938 it had been closely associated with the Hindu Mahasabha. Then it began to develop a separate policy, while still keeping contact with it. The organization was based on a military model. Membership was estimated at between one and five million. Youths were drilled in Nazi fashion. The two organizations did all they could to inflame the people. The members of the R.S.S. took active part in the riots.

Vallabhbhai Patel appealed to the Hindu Mahasabha to join the Congress, telling them that Hinduism preached a broader outlook on life than they held. He also invited the R.S.S. to join and appealed to it not to weaken the Government's administration by creating unrest in the country.

CHAPTER III: KASHMIR—A PRELUDE?

The struggle in Kashmir began in September 1947 when Muslim tribesmen entered the State from the North-West Frontier Province. Later regular Pakistani troops entered the State. Kashmir was one of the princely States over which there was dispute as to whether it would accede to India or Pakistan. Other disputed States were Hyderabad and Junagadh. There were 500 odd princely States which acceded to one country or the other.

Gandhi told a prominent Muslim leader that if there were a moral principle involved that would have to be given up in order that a certain State might join the Indian Union, then so far as he was concerned that State and all of the princely States could join Pakistan. "An India reduced in size but purged in spirit might still be the nursery of the non-violence of the brave and take up the moral leadership of the world, bringing a message of hope and deliverance to the oppressed and exploited races. But an unwieldy, soulless India would merely be an imitation, and third-rate imitation at that, of the Western military States, utterly powerless to stand up against their onslaught. He had no desire to outlive the India of his dreams."¹¹

The Government of Kashmir acceded to India. The Maharaja was Hindu. Most of the people were Muslim.

Pakistan's role in the Kashmir dispute came in for Gandhi's severe criticism. Gandhi said that the facts seemed to be that, despite denials, Pakistan was behind the invasion of Kashmir. India had sent troops to assist the defence. He declared, "The Union troops had gone there at the call of the people of Kashmir as well as the Maharaja to help them in defending the beautiful valley."¹² He considered Sheikh Abdulla, who headed Kashmir's new reform Government, to be the real head of Kashmir.

Gandhi was always one to admire courage, even if the way it was expressed was wrong. "...though he did not approve of the use of arms by the Union Government for aiding the Kashmiris and though he could not approve of Sheikh Abdulla⁵s resort to arms, he could not possibly withhold admiration for their resourceful and praiseworthy conduct, especially, if both the relieving troops and the Kashmiri defenders died heroically to a man. He knew that if they could do so, they would perhaps change the face of India."¹³

Gandhi's position on Kashmir was often misunderstood and he was accused of abandoning his non-violence. That was not true. He did not support the use of arms for the defence of Kashmir. He told his prayer meeting audience that they should remember that he had repeatedly said that he no longer had influence in the matter over his friends in the Indian Cabinet. "He held on to his views on non-violence as firmly as ever, but he could not impose his views on his best friends, as they were, in the Cabinet. He could not expect them to act against their convictions and everybody should be satisfied with his confession that he had lost his original hold upon his friends."¹⁴ He had said that a heroic violent defence would "perhaps" change the face of India. If the defence of Kashmir were purely non-violent in intention and action, he was sure that the face of India would be changed "even to the extent of-converting to the defender's view the Union Cabinet, if not even the Pakistan Cabinet".¹⁵

And how would such non-violent defence work? "The non-violent technique, he would suggest, would be no armed assistance to the defenders. Non-violent assistance could be sent from the Union without stint. But the defenders, whether they got such assistance or not, would defy the might of the raiders or even a disciplined army in overwhelming numbers. And defenders dying at their post of duty without malice and without anger in their hearts against the assailants, and without the use of any arms including even their fists would mean an exhibition of heroism as yet unknown in history. Kashmir would then become a holy land shedding its fragrance not only throughout India, but the world."¹⁶

Gandhi, however, felt his own inadequacy and impotence. If he had the perfect mastery over self described in the final lines of the second chapter of the Gita, he said, his word would have the needed strength. He needed more self-control.

But the defence of Kashmir was not non-violent. The fighting and warfare continued. How was the problem to be solved? Partition of Kashmir was suggested. Gandhi said that it was enough that India had been divided and labelled such talk "fantastic". He wanted the two countries to quit their quarrelling and solve their own disputes without having to depend on a third party. India and Pakistan should sit down and thrash out the Kashmir affair as they had previously done on many other disputes. If they couldn't do that, then they ought to each choose from among themselves "good and true persons who would direct their steps".¹⁷The first step to any solution "was an open and sincere confession of past lapses. Hearty repentance broke the edge of a guilt and led the way to proper understanding".¹⁸ Ultimately the people of Kashmir should decide their own fate by referendum.

Was Kashmir to be a prelude to a general war? As late as early January 1948 the rumours of war between India and Pakistan were still widespread. Premier Nehru of India said that war was not inevitable and could be avoided, while India's Deputy Premier, Vallabhbhai Patel said that war with Pakistan was not ruled out as a possibility. Pakistan's Refugee Minister, Gaznafar Ali Khan, said that there was no chance of war, but that one should be prepared for all eventualities. Gandhi pleaded for amity.

CHAPTER IV: MILITARY RULE FOR INDIA?

Gandhi had always dreamt that a free India would be an India which did not rely on arms and the military. Yet, somehow he had sensed that when India became free, she would not live up to his dreams. In 1920 he had said, "I believe absolutely that she has a mission for the world. She is not to copy Europe blindly. India's acceptance of the doctrine of the sword will be the hour of my trial. I hope that I shall not be found wanting."¹⁹

Then, nine years later he wrote in *Young India*, "This I know, that, if India comes to her own demonstrably through non-violent means, India will never want to carry a vast army, an equally grand navy, and a grander air force. If her self-consciousness rises to the height for freedom, the world values will have changed and most of the paraphernalia of war would be found to be useless. Such an India may be a mere day-dream, a childish folly. But such, in my opinion, is undoubtedly the implication of an India becoming free through non-violence."²⁰

As the years passed and political independence came nearer, he realized more and more that the way the Congress and the people had accepted non-violence was not the way that would enable them to stick to it after political freedom came. In 1940 after failing to convince members of the Congress Working Committee not to pass the resolution, later approved by the All-India Congress Committee, offering full, active support of and participation in the World War II if Britain would grant India immediate independence, Gandhi said to several of the A.I.C.C. members, "I should not like to die before my death. I do not want to prepare India for military defence from today. We should never forget that we are not the whole of India. The Congress is without doubt a powerful organization, but the Congress is not the whole of India. The Congress may not have an army, but those who do not believe in non-violence will. And if the Congress too surrenders, there is no one to represent the no-army mentality. This was my argument in a nutshell. But I failed to carry conviction."²¹

In August 1940 he wrote, "When we talk of armed preparation, we contemplate preparation to meet any violent combination with our superior violence. If India ever prepared herself that way, she would constitute the greatest menace to world peace. For, if we take that path, we will also have to choose the path of exploitation like the European nations."²²

Indians took over the country in the provisional government and Nehru became Prime Minister on September 2, 1946. But the military budget was not abolished nor even reduced. In the transition period before the formal granting of independence, the military grew in influence and strength. Was it a sign of things to come? He had warned his people of the path they were following, "I have told our people not to depend on military and police help. You have to uphold democracy, and democracy and dependence on the military and the police are incompatible. You cannot say it is good in one place and bad in another. Military help will degrade you. In a democracy, if the electorate sets up a hooligan as the head of the Government, they then lie in the bed they have made or else convert the electorate through Satyagraha if necessary. That is democracy."²³

Democracy and the military spirit were a contradiction of terms, he declared. His people must turn away from the military way to the way of love. If they did not, "it will be bad for India and the world. It will mean goodbye to freedom. It might even mean a military dictatorship".²⁴And military dictatorship was no freedom. Gandhi had declared nearly two decades earlier that it was hardly worth the fuss to replace a white military rule with a brown one, for the masses would be subject to the same spoliation or even worse.

Gandhi could be no party to the expected rise of military expenditures in politically free India. Was it possible that India would have to pass through a stage of military rule? His countrymen had said for years that they did not want an army, Gandhi said. He still stood by that statement, but others no longer did. He hoped that his people would give up all thought of huge armies. They would lead nowhere. With them the independence would be worth nothing. In mid-September

1947 a scientist asked Gandhi what scientific men should do if the free Indian Government were to ask them to do research for war purposes and on the atom bomb. Gandhi promptly replied, "Scientists to be worth the name should resist such a State unto death."²⁵

In the previous July he had said that he could not see India having a selfish policy which would cause her to "become a menace to world peace, another Japan or Germany calling itself falsely a democracy".²⁶ A few days later he had said, "If the Congress was pledged to the policy of non-violence, there would be no army supported by it. But she sports an army which may eat up the civilians and establish military rule in India unless the people listen to me."²⁷ A nation which had won its freedom without using arms should be able to keep its freedom without resorting to arms also.

Political independence came, but the army remained. Even Gandhi's close associates supported the military programme. On November 29, 1947, he soberly declared, "Our statesmen have for over two generations declaimed against the heavy expenditure on armaments under the British regime, but now that freedom from political serfdom has come, our military expenditure has increased and still threatens to increase and of this we are proud! There is not a voice raised against it in our legislative chambers. In spite, however, of the madness and the vain imitation of the tinsel of the West, the hope lingers in me and many others that India shall survive this death dance and occupy the moral height that should belong to her after the training, however, imperfect, in non-violence for an unbroken period of thirty-two years since 1915."²⁸

India had not followed Gandhi out of conviction, and when the situation changed, she found it easy to give up the way of love and non-violent resistance. And with that giving up, Gandhi saw that she was giving up her soul and her freedom for a mess of pottage.

CHAPTER V: LAND FOR THE PEASANTS?

The tremendous economic inequality of his country had always disturbed Gandhi. He had tried to tackle that problem and was still thinking how best to do it. Economic equality was one of the points in his constructive programme for building a new non-violent social order. In May 1947 he declared in New Delhi, "Today there is gross economic inequality. The basis of Socialism is economic equality. There can be no Ramarajya [Kingdom of God] in the present state of iniquitous inequalities in which a few roll in riches and the masses do not get even enough to eat.'²⁹

The vast majority of the populations were peasants. The land they farmed, he had said, belonged to God, and therefore to the tiller. But landlords dominated rural India. The men who did the actual work on the land received but a fraction of the produce of their labour. That was exploitation. The ownership of the land had to be changed, as the only rightful owner was the man who did the work himself, who raised the crops.

Louis Fischer asked Gandhi in June 1942 what would happen in a free India, what his programme was for the improvement of the lot of the peasantry. "The peasants would take the land," Gandhi replied. "We would not have to tell them to take it. They would take it." "Would the landlords be compensated?" Fischer asked. "No. That would be fiscally impossible, you see." Gandhi said as he smiled, "Our gratitude to our millionaire friends does not prevent us from saying such things. The village would become a self-governing unit living its own life."³⁰ Gandhi foresaw as part of the 1942 civil disobedience movement the peasants' seizing the land without compensation. There might even be some violence, he said, or the land-lords might co-operate by fleeing. There might be fifteen days of chaos but Gandhi felt that that could soon be brought under control.

People could not build up wealth without using violence and threat of violence and without the cooperation and help of other members of society. Therefore, no one had any moral right to use wealth for personal advantage or for the exploitation of others. The present owners or proprietors, so long as they were not prepared to give up their possessions beyond those needed for meeting their immediate needs, should change their attitude and act as trustees of the property, using it for the benefit of the community, rather than for profit. Only if they did that, were they entitled to continue to hold it.

In 1945 Gandhi said, "I have no doubt that if we have democratic Swaraj [independence, self-rule], as it must be if the freedom is won through non-violence, the Kisans [peasants] must hold power in all its phases, including political power."³¹ He hoped that when they had political power, their grievances would be redressed through legislative channels. But, he went on, "If the legislature proves itself to be incapable of safeguarding the Kisans⁵ interests they will of course have the sovereign remedy of civil disobedience and non-co-operation."⁸²

The common people could bring in a new day in which they would no longer be exploited and dominated by a few. "The present power of the zamindars [landlords], the capitalists and the rajas [rulers] can hold sway only so long as the common people do not realize their own strength. If the people non-co-operate with the evil of zamindari [landlordism] or capitalism, it must die of inanition."³³

Not only a change in ownership, but extensive village work with the constructive programme was necessary, for the aim was to establish genuine self-rule for the people, "not substitute one class-rule by another which may even be worse."³⁴

Political independence had come. The peasants had not seized the land. The peasants did not have their freedom.

CHAPTER VI: GANDHI AND THE CONGRESS PARTY

Gandhi had seen that the Indian National Congress was going one direction and he the other. So, in May 1946 he suggested that the Congress should not be hypocritical and that it should remove the words "legitimate and peaceful" from the article describing the methods it would use to gain independence, and also that the clause about Khadi should be removed from the Congress constitution. "Experience shows," he declared, "that the people who form the bulk of the Congressmen are not wedded either to truth or nonviolence or to Khadi... It will be open to anyone to be truthful and non-violent and to wear Khadi if he or she chooses to, only there will be no deception practised on India or the world."³⁵

In those days the Congress was by far the most important political party. Within it there was political corruption and its office seekers demanded high salaries. Without being a political theorist or a student of political science Gandhi realized that a one-party system was not satisfactory. In such a case the party ceases to be critical of the government and simply gives its approval to the action of the government. Significant criticism and opposition were needed. J. B. Kripalani, President of the Congress, resigned on November 15, 1947, protesting about not even being consulted over important government decisions when he was the president of the party that was in power. Gandhi approved of Kripalani's action. In an effort to keep the Congress from becoming a monolithic structure, Gandhi nominated Narendra Dev, the Socialist leader; the Socialists at that time were still within the Congress. The nomination was approved by Nehru, but others opposed it. Gandhi was defeated by the political machine and the government men and Rajendra Prasad, a gentle, well-intentioned man, who had been closely associated with Gandhi was elected.

Gandhi then tried to build a new group which would be capable of carrying on the programme and struggle for the building of a new society. During the first half of December 1947 he held a series of conferences with the constructive workers.

These were the people who led and directed the work of removing untouchability, developing basic education, hand spinning, village industries and other aspects of Gandhi's constructive programme. They worked through various organizations which had been set up for those purposes. Gandhi wanted these organizations to combine. He told the Constructive Workers⁵ Conference that he did not want them "to go into power politics; it would spell ruin. Or else why should not I myself have gone into politics and tried to run the government my way? Those who are holding the reins of power today would easily have stepped aside and made room for me, but whilst they are in charge they carry on only according to their own lights".

He proceeded, "But I do not want to take power into my hands. By abjuring power and devoting ourselves to pure, selfless service of the voters we can guide and influence them. It would give us far more real power than we shall have by going into the government. A stage may come when the people themselves may feel and say that they want us and no one else to wield power. The question could then be considered. I shall most probably not be alive then."³⁶

Gandhi insisted it was necessary to "banish the idea of the capture of power and you will be able to guide power and keep it on the right path... There is no other way of removing the corruption that threatens to strangle our independence at its very birth".³⁷ By being outside the government, one could check and counteract and influence it. Inside one could not.

Gandhi wanted to attract the intellectuals to assist the constructive programme. To do that meant that he had first to penetrate their hearts, then their reason could be convinced.

The Congress was no longer a vehicle which could be used. "We must recognize the fact that the social order of our dreams cannot come through the Congress party of today..."³⁸ Thus Gandhi and the Congress had come to the parting of the ways.

The day before his assassination he drafted a proposal for abolishing the Congress as it had existed and suggesting a constitution for converting it into an Association

for the Service of the People (Lok Sevak Sangh). That group would work for the establishment of a non-violent society.

He began his proposal, "Though split into two, India having attained political independence through means devised by the Indian National Congress, the Congress in its present shape and form, i.e. as a propaganda vehicle and parliamentary machine, has outlived its use. India has still to attain social, moral and economic independence in terms of its seven hundred thousand villages as distinguished from its cities and towns. The struggle for the ascendancy of civil over military power is bound to take place in India's progress towards its democratic goal. It must be kept out of unhealthy competition with political parties and communal, religious bodies. For these and other similar reasons, the A.I.C.C. [All-India Congress Committee] resolves to disband the existing Congress organization and flower into a Lok Sevak Sangh under the following rules with power to alter them as occasion may demand."³⁹

He then listed the proposed rules and method of organization for the new association. It would have affiliated the various autonomous organizations which were carrying out the various aspects of the constructive programme.

Needless to say, the All-India Congress Committee did not accept his proposal. The Indian National Congress did not disband itself. Gandhi was killed before he could take his next step.

CHAPTER VII: WHITHER THE WORLD?

World War II had only recently ended, but peace had not really come. Totalitarianism, preparation for war and threat of war still continued.

The way of violence would never lead to peace. Only by following the way of truth and non-violence could men ever find the way to world peace.

Gandhi had tried to speak out during the war. He had written open letters to the British people, to Hitler and to the Japanese. But for his efforts he had been called a fifth columnist. Those who had shouted the loudest had understood the least. They had not wanted to understand.

Peace was not something which could be settled around a table. Peace required that people live peaceful, co-operative, loving, courageous lives. Basic changes in the world were required before wars would end. "I have no doubt that unless big nations shed their desire of exploitation and the spirit of violence of which war is the natural expression, and atom bomb the inevitable consequence, there is no hope for peace in the world."⁴⁰

World War II was over, it was true. But what had really been accomplished? The seeds had been sown for a new war. "The United Nations," Gandhi declared, "set out to fight Hitler with his weapons and ended by out-Hitlering Hitler."⁴¹ "...what had happened in Europe was that Hitlerism had only been destroyed by super-Hitlerism and this chain was endless. It would go on like that."⁴²

Those were harsh words for the Western man who prided himself in his humanitarianism, but who at the same time was so blinded to the results of his methods, so completely lacking in humility to consider even for a moment that perhaps he was wrong and Gandhi right.

But how was Gandhi's way to work against Hitlerism? So many who asked that question had never bothered in the slightest to find out how Gandhi's way worked against lesser odds. How could they be expected to understand it in this situation?

How could one understand how one could raise one hundred acres of wheat if he did not yet understand that the seeds sprouted, grew into plants and bore more wheat?

Gandhi said that we had to find out how nonviolence could destroy Hitlerism. The way of violence simply increased it. "It was only when a nation refused to be beaten by Hitlerism or any combination of forces of violence, and stuck to its post at the cost of its life, but not at the cost of its honour, that it had a chance of survival. So that non-violence alone was the only guarantee of protection against the heaviest odds. Unless we could develop this courage and this type of resistance, democracy could never survive."⁴³

"Mankind is at the crossroads," he said. "It has to make its choice between the law of the jungle and the law of humanity."⁴⁴ He felt the same eight years earlier when he said, "There is no escape from the impending doom save through a bold and unconditional acceptance of the non-violent method with all its glorious implications. Democracy and violence can ill go together. The States that are today nominally democratic have either to become frankly totalitarian or, if they are to become truly democratic, they must become courageously non-violent. It is blasphemy to say that non-violence can only be practised by individuals and never by nations which are composed of individuals."⁴⁶

It was through India's following the path of love, Gandhi had felt, that the world would be led out of the wilderness of wars and totalitarianism. Now, sadly he said in New Delhi in July 1947, "I said at the Asiatic Conference that I hoped, the fragrance of the non-violence of India would permeate the whole world. I often wonder if that hope will materialize."⁴⁶ If India were to provide that real leadership, she would have to develop the real non-violence of the brave. That was what Gandhi was trying to demonstrate.

CHAPTER VIII: A NON-VIOLENT SOLUTION?

Why was India in the condition in which she found herself? Why the riots? Nearly two years earlier, Gandhi had predicted that unless the people gave more attention to non-violence, the riots would happen. And he had said early in 1938, "It has been suggested that when we have our independence, riots and the like will not occur. This seems to me to be an empty hope, if in the course of the struggle for freedom we do not understand and use the technique of non-violent action in every conceivable circumstance."⁴⁷

Why was it that after a more or less successful struggle for independence by peaceful means the tide towards civil war could not be checked by the same means? Gandhi replied in late August 1947 that that was indeed a searching question. He must answer it. What he had thought was Satyagraha, being practised by the Indian people, was not Satyagraha. It was a weapon of the weak—passive resistance. The people had pretended to resist with non-violence, while they harboured ill will and anger against their rulers. The resistance had been inspired by violence, and not by regard for the man in the British, not by a desire to convert the British through non-violence. Once the British were seen to be leaving, the true restrained feelings held by the people had come to the surface, and made people fly at each others⁵ throats when the question of distribution of power came up. The apparent non-violence had gone to pieces. It was still possible, however, to sublimate those feelings of violence by turning them into peaceful, constructive ways in working for Hindu-Muslim unity.

CHAPTER IX: WHICH WAY INDIA?

Yes, all was not well in India and the world when India neared and achieved her political freedom. Gandhi was sorry that he had to confess that he saw no sign of the Kingdom of God being born out of the coming independence. The times were difficult, but the people should not be cowards. They should have the bravery of non-violence which enabled them to stand on their own legs, and to cease to fear even death.

The times were crucial. Would India go the way of violence, or the way of Gandhi? If India were to go the way of love and non-violence, she would be an example and teach the people of the world a lesson of peace:

"I am only hoping and praying and I want all the friends here and in other parts of the world to hope and pray with me that this blood-bath will soon end and out of that, perhaps, inevitable butchery, will rise a new and robust India—not warlike, basely imitating the West in all its hideousness, but a new India learning the best that the West has to give and becoming the hope not only of Asia and Africa, but the whole of the aching world."⁴⁸

But would she? Would India perhaps choose the way of the sword instead? "It was bad enough that the small nations of the earth should denude humanity of its precious heritage, it would be awful if a subcontinent of some four hundred millions were to take to gunpowder and live dangerously."⁴⁹

It was in these times with the "mighty flood of violence" sweeping over India that the people had to learn how to resist non-violently. "Violence can only be effectively met by non-violence. This is an old, established truth."⁵⁰ "Unless we cultivate this strength," Gandhi said, "India will not fulfill the high hope I have cherished for her in my heart all these many many years."⁵¹

Gandhi believed in India's destiny to demonstrate to the world the strength of the weapon of moral power, and to lead the war-weary-people to peace and a way of

life based on love. In late November of 1946 he said, "Ahimsa...is *the* way of life and India has to show it to the world."⁵²

And yet India was not showing it to the world. Only six months later he, with anguish, had to say, "India is becoming the laughing-stock of the world. The world asks, where is your non-violence with which you have won your independence? I have to hang my head in shame. Will a free India present to the world a lesson of peace or of hatred and violence of which the world is already sick unto death?"⁵³

Many people in India did not wish to face making that decision. Many wished to choose the way of love, but were not willing to pay the price. They wished an easy way, but the easy way would lead them to military control, wars and injustice. The people of India might try to postpone, or ignore the necessity of making that decision. They might choose the way of violence. Yet the fact would still remain that only the way of love could lead them to India of Gandhi's dreams. Only by pioneering in the way of non-violence could India lead the world to peace. That face would always be there. The challenge would always exist for the people to reverse themselves, to do an about face, to repent of their ways. The need was then. Would India choose the right way in time? The need is now. Will she yet?

CHAPTER X: GANDHI'S GROWING INSIGHT

In the earliest campaigns Gandhi led, he had insisted only on outward non-violence, overt nonviolent behaviour. After Gandhi had returned to India from South Africa, the Indian National Congress in 1919, at Gandhi's suggestion, had adopted nonviolence as a policy for the restricted purpose of winning Swaraj and regulating the relations between various religious and social groups within the country. He had hoped that as the people and the members of the Congress saw Satyagraha working, they would come to accept it as a way of life, a creed. Even at that time, however, he insisted that such policies demanded honest adherence in thought, word and deed, which would eventually prepare the people for accepting Truth and love as a principle of life.

Gradually his thinking changed as his experience grew. In 1930 he had insisted for the first time that the planning and control of the nation-wide campaign had to be in the hands of people who believed in nonviolence as a matter of principle. In 1933 he became convinced that to be really effective, non-violence should be accepted as a comprehensive principle of life. The Congress continued to lag behind Gandhi's standard.

As political independence approached, Gandhi's insight into this problem became clearer. He became more convinced of the necessity of real non-violence which was part of one's inner being, the non-violence of the brave and the strong.

India had practised non-violence out of expediency, out of weakness. Was that the way? "If the truth is told as it must be, our non-violent action has been half-hearted. Many have preached non-violent action through the lips while harbouring violence in the breast... Hypocrisy has acted as an ode to virtue, but it could never take its place. And so I plead for non-violence and yet more non-violence,"⁵⁴ said Gandhi at his Ashram at Sevagram in February 1946.

He still hoped that the people had imbibed sufficient of the spirit of Ahimsa that when the British went, there would be little fighting, and they would settle down, living as brothers, giving the world a lesson of peace. But he was not convinced that this would happen. He said, "Just now we seem unable to see our own mistakes. Those who lack the faculty of reason, or who desire to live for the sake of enjoyment, can never see the error. If there are many such, then we must conclude that our non-violence has been a weapon of the weak, *himsa* [violence] masquerading in the guise of Ahimsa. If this weakness continues we shall have to go through rivers of blood once the British rule goes. We may even come under the sway of some other foreign power or it may be that with internecine warfare the weaker side will have to submit to the one that has the mightier weapons. If we are unfortunate enough to witness such strife, believers in non-violence will joyfully die in the effort to stop it and thereby live."⁵⁵

The people had taken Gandhi's advice and had taken up non-violent resistance against their British rulers because they wanted to offer some kind of resistance and were incapable of resisting with arms. Thus their non-violence was born out of helplessness, and therefore was a weapon of the weak. Introspective and critical, Gandhi declared ten days before independence, "...our non-violence was of the weak. But the weak of heart could not claim to represent any nonviolence at all. The proper term was passive resistance. Passive resistance was a preparation for the active resistance of arms. Had it been the non-violence of the strong, the practice of a generation would have made the recent orgies of destruction of life and property impossible."⁵⁶ Non-violence with the Congress had always been a policy. As the situation changed, the Congress in effect abandoned it, if it could even be called that.

With Gandhi, non-violence had been a way of life, a philosophy, a creed. That he could not give up. Now for the Congress the policy was over. For Gandhi, in a real sense, his work and experimentation were just beginning; he had to find ways of

implementing the non-violence of the brave, for the non-violence of the weak⁴ 'can have no play in the altered circumstances".⁵⁷

"To take the name of non-violence when there is a sword in your heart, is not only hypocritical and dishonest but cowardly."⁵⁸ Hypocrisy, dishonesty and cowardice were no ways to meet the crisis in India and the world. Instead, integrity, truthfulness and the utmost bravery and courage were needed.

CHAPTER XI: THOUGH INADEQUATE, THE EFFORTS HAD NOT BEEN IN VAIN

All had not been lost. There had been some good results which had come from the practice of nonviolent resistance by the Indian people, despite all its weaknesses... "in spite of our temporizing with our ideal, non-violence has worked like a silent leaven among the dumb silent millions.⁵⁹ Had it not been for the working of full non-violence, Gandhi was convinced, "the whole mass of people would not have risen to the height of courage and fearlessness that they have...⁶⁰ By the constant hard work and persistent efforts through the previous painful years, the people had begun to see that there was a genuine power in non-violence. However, they did not see that nonviolence "in all its fullness and beauty.⁶¹The victory against the British had not been one by force of arms, but a victory by moral force. It had not been the non-violence of the brave, but "whatever it was, it had enabled a mighty nation of forty crores [four hundred million] to shake off the foreign yoke without bloodshed. It was the freedom of India that had brought freedom to Burma and Ceylon. A nation that had won freedom without the force of arms should be able to keep it too without the force of arms.⁶²

He had been wrong and under an illusion through many of the years in believing that real non-violence was being practised by the Indian people. Yet he was not sorry for being under that illusion, for had it not been for the policies which he had laid during those years, India would not have reached the point where it was. The people had not taken all the steps that were necessary for the effective organization of nonviolence. They had not fully carried out the various aspects of the constructive programme. If they had, Gandhi felt that "our movement would have taken us to our goal".⁶³But the faith in the constructive work had been weak.

There had been progress, but the progress would have been much greater if India had practised the non-violence of the brave and the strong. India could not go on temporizing with the ideal. "We cannot remain static. We must move forward or

we shall slide back."⁶⁴ If India had progressed through the limited and weak non-violence which she had practised, imagine what could be accomplished with the real reliance on truth and love! "Our Ahimsa was imperfect because we were imperfect, because it was presented to you by an imperfect being like myself. If then, even in the hands of imperfect instruments it could produce such brilliant results, what could it not achieve in the hands of a perfect Satyagrahi?"⁶⁵

Gandhi had to push on undaunted by the difficulties, many and deep, for which there were no ready-made answers.

PART II

CHAPTER XII: YET THERE WERE PAINFUL RESULTS

Despite all that had been gained, the following of non-violence out of expediency and weakness had seemingly inevitably produced certain bad and painful results. The "fake non-violence of the weak and impotent"⁶⁶ was demoralizing, Gandhi maintained, as was nothing else. It was because the struggle for political freedom had not been truly non-violent that they were then witnessing the looting, arson and murder. "...the peace, the masses maintained during that struggle of a generation with exemplary patience, had not come from within. The pent-up fury found an outlet when British Raj [rule] was gone. It naturally vented itself in communal violence which was never fully absent and which was kept under suppression by the British bayonet. This explanation seems to me to be all-sufficing and convincing."⁶⁷

Had there been non-violence of the needed quality, the public life of India would have been characterized by the utmost toleration. There would not have been the strife between Muslims and Hindus.

Non-violence meant more than simple non-killing. Simple non-killing did not appeal to Gandhi; it seemed to be no improvement on the technique of violence. Simple non-killing meant "Slow torture and when slowness becomes ineffective we shall immediately revert to killing and to the atom bomb, which is the last word in violence today".⁶⁸

Early in 1946 Gandhi sensed what would come to India. "Troublous times lie ahead of us. Our non-violence has brought us to the gate of independence. Shall we renounce it after we have entered that gate?"⁶⁹ It was renounced and the riots came. It was renounced and the military grew.

Had there been real non-violence, there would be no reliance on arms as defence against aggression. The fact that Congressmen felt that India was not prepared for

non-violent defence against armed invasion seemed tragic to Gandhi. "Surely," he pleaded, "the means adopted for driving an enemy from one's house must, more or less, coincide with those to be adopted for keeping him out of the house. If anything, the latter process must be easier. The fact, however, is that our fight had not been one of non-violent resistance of the strong. It has been one of the passive resistance of the weak. Therefore there is no spontaneous response in our hearts, at this supreme moment, to an undying faith in the efficacy of non-violence."⁷⁰ Gandhi had made that statement as far back as 1939 as he saw that Congressmen and the Congress organization were headed toward reliance upon and support of the military. He felt it just as much in 1946 and 1947. Perhaps, he said in the same statement, "The future historian will say that I should have perceived that the nation was learning not non-violence of the strong but merely passivity of the weak, and that I should have, therefore, provided for the Congressmen's military training."⁷¹"Free India can have no enemy. And if her people have learnt the art of saying resolutely 'no'⁵ and acting up to it, I dare say, no one would want to invade her. Our economy would be so modelled as to prove no temptation for the exploiter."⁷²

As others gave up their non-violence, some could not understand why Gandhi stuck to his. To them, Gandhi replied, "If the leaders have ceased to believe in Ahimsa, they should boldly and frankly say so and set about putting their house in order. For me there is no scope for any change. Ahimsa is no mere theory with me, it is a fact of life based on extensive experience. How can a man who has tasted apples and repeatedly found them sweet be induced to describe them as bitter? Those who say they are bitter have tasted not apples but something looking very much like them."⁷³

CHAPTER XIII: THE NON-VIOLENCE OF THE BRAVE AND THE STRONG

The non-violence of the brave and the strong stands in contrast with the non-violence of the weak and passive resistance, for it is the non-violence of one who accepts it as a way of life, by inner conviction based on moral considerations, as a creed. It pervades every sphere of life. Oh, the courage and bravery which it demanded and gave! There was no room for the weak in mind and spirit in this non-violence, no place here for the coward. Cowardice is "violence double distilled."⁷⁴ Ahimsa, being the highest ideal, was "meant for the brave, never for the cowardly."⁷⁵

A real Satyagrahi, a believer in such non-violence, would never flee from danger, no matter whether he was in the company of many or whether he stood alone, even if he were to lose his life by maintaining his courage, for "to lay down one's life, even alone, for what one considers to be right, is the very core of Satyagraha. More no man can do."⁷⁶

Such "non-violence knows no defeat."⁷⁷ But it must be genuine and not watered down for the sake of numbers. Gandhi would have not shed a tear if he were the only one left to represent such nonviolence. For if he truly represented it, it would have its effect. Even in this age of the atom bomb, there was no weapon like non-violent resistance, Gandhi declared. Instead of making cowards of men, it infused courage in men and women alike. He recommended such non-violence because he was convinced that "it was the weapon of the really brave."⁷⁸

Such non-violence, reliance on truth and love, and the courage which came with it, had power which no other weapon could equal. "The sword of the Satyagrahi is love and the unshakable firmness that comes from it."⁷⁹ The strength of non-violence was far more powerful than that of the sword. "The nonviolence of the strong is any day stronger than that of the bravest soldier fully armed or a whole host."⁸⁰ He was convinced that the non-violence of the brave provided the most

sure and most effective method for facing both foreign aggression and internal disorder, as well as for the gaining of political independence. "...the weapon of violence, even if it was the atom bomb, became useless when matched against true nonviolence."⁸¹"It is such non-violence that moves mountains, transforms life and flinches from nothing in its unshakable faith."⁸² It was true, he said, that very few understood how to wield that mighty weapon. To do that, much understanding and strength of mind are needed.

CHAPTER XIV: INDIA NEEDED SUCH NON-VIOLENCE

An India in which brother was violently fighting brother, an India which was building a military machine, and a world which had finished World War II only to prepare with yet deadlier weapons for another war, desperately needed the non-violence of the brave.

The non-violence of the weak, if it could even be called that, was not effective in stopping riots. "To quell riots non-violently, there must be true Ahimsa in one's heart, an Ahimsa that takes even the erring hooligan into its warm embrace."⁸³

"If my argument has gone home," he asked his countrymen in 1940, "is it not time for us to declare our changeless faith in non-violence of the strong and say we do not seek to defend our liberty with the force of arms, but will defend it with the force of non-violence?"⁸⁴ He had pleaded hard with the Congress Working Committee in 1940 to live up to the non-violence of the strong. But few Congressmen indeed were interested in that.

India's Satyagraha had been a very imperfect instrument, an experiment in the right direction. But it had not been enough. "If we knew the use of non-violent resistance which only those with hearts of oak can offer, we would present to the world a totally different picture of free India instead of an India cut in twain, one part highly suspicious of the other, and the two too much engaged in mutual strife to be able to think cogently of the food and clothing of the hungry and naked millions who know no religion but that of the one and only God who appears to them in the guise of the necessities of life. Not for them the sanguinary strife or the cinema pictures showing them how efficiently to cut one another's throats!"⁸⁵

How was this non-violence of the brave to be cultivated? Gandhi confessed that his effort had formerly been rather "desultory". "I have not concentrated upon it, or given it the weight I might have. This was all right while I was devoting all my energy to forging means to give battle to the Government. But it had the result of

retarding the growth of pure Ahimsa, so that today we are not even within ken of the Ahimsa of the strong,"⁸⁶ he admitted in 1940. In the years which followed he spent much more time thinking on this question. Such cultivation included, "consciousness of the living presence of God within one..."⁸⁷, insistence on quality rather than quantity, the practice of non-violence in the domestic field of one's living, and much more. By July 1947 he was able to say that "it was truer (if it was a fact) to say that India was not ready for the lesson of the Ahimsa of the strong than that no programme had been devised for the teaching..."⁸⁸

It was necessary to cultivate the non-violence of the brave and the strong, for "not until the Congress or a similar group of people represents the non-violence of the strong, will the world catch the infection".⁸⁹ And it was that non-violence which the world needed if it were to find its way out of the wilderness of exploitation, wars, totalitarianism and lostness.

CHAPTER XV: THE IDEAL MUST BECOME A FACT

Except for Gandhi's personal actions and certain of his individual fasts, India had had no experience with the non-violence of the strong. It was thus not enough to say that such non-violence was needed. "It serves no purpose for me to continue to repeat that the non-violence of the strong is the strongest force in the world. The truth requires constant and extensive demonstration."⁹⁰

And that was what Gandhi was trying to do to the best of his ability during the last years of his life.

He did not want people to follow him without doing their own thinking. "What if the best of my ability is very little?" he wrote in 1946. "May I not be living in a fool's paradise? Why should I ask people to follow me in the fruitless search? These are pertinent questions. My answer is quite simple. I ask nobody to follow me. Everyone should follow his or her own inner voice. If he or she has no ears to listen to it, he or she should do the best he or she can. In no case should he or she imitate others sheeplike."⁹¹

CHAPTER XVI: FACING THE STORM

Facing the happenings and conditions of India, and the facts about the kind of world in which he lived, and then trying to find what he could do to change his India and his world put Gandhi to a genuine and severe test. He felt his own inadequacy. As he tried in the various situations to implement his ideal and to stop the blood-shedding his India was going through, he felt a darkness surrounding him.

He had difficulty in finding the best way of implementing and demonstrating truth and love in those situations. Yet, it was he, not the ideal, which was at fault. He had felt this inadequacy and darkness as early as 1940. Then he said, "The growing darkness around, far from damping my zeal and dimming my faith, brightens them, and makes the implications of non-violence more clearly visible to me."⁹² While trying to quiet the rioting in Bengal in December 1946 he wrote in a note to Pyarelal, "I see I have not the knack. I have not yet quite found the key to Ahimsa. Here I am out to perform a stupendous *yajna* [sacrifice] but my unfitness for the task is being demonstrated at every step."⁹³

The atmosphere in which he was working was full of violence. That made it very difficult for those who believed in non-violence to operate. Describing the situation in which he found himself he said in late November of 1946, on the eve of his departure for Noakhali, Bengal, "I find myself in the midst of exaggeration and falsity. I am unable to discover the truth. There is terrible mutual distrust. Oldest friendships have snapped."⁹⁴

In that situation Gandhi did not feel adequate. The way to apply his principles practically was often far from obvious. It was as though a darkness had descended over him and he could not see the road before him very far. Yet, there in the distance the goal was still brightly lit. "I have never experienced such darkness in my life before. The night seems to be pretty long,"⁹⁵ he wrote. It was true that the

night was always darkest before dawn, but he was still surrounded in complete darkness even though some of his friends seemed to see the early streaks of the breaking of the dawn.

Gandhi felt inadequate in two ways. First, he felt that he did not have the required detachment, the ability to keep on striving toward the goal in the way he knew was right, even though there seemed to be no visible results from his work. Second, he felt his inadequacy as a teacher of non-violence and that his technique in applying the principle was not sufficient.

It was said that a man who was pure and non-attached would live to be 125 years old. Some said even 135 years. Gandhi had said that he was hoping and expecting to live to be 125 years old. Now, with the inner testing and the outer turmoil, he changed his mind. One night he wrote in his diary, "It seems to be so very hard to maintain detachment of mind in the midst of raging fire."⁹⁶ He said he had lost hope of living 125 years. "Why could I not suffer this anguish with unruffled calmness of spirit? I am afraid I have not the detachment required for living to 125 years."⁹⁷ "The loss of hope," he declared in New Delhi in June 1947, "arises from my knowledge that I have not attained sufficient detachment and control over my temper and emotions which entitle one to entertain the hope. One day I found to my cost that I had not attained the required detachment. No one has the right to live at all unless it is a life of service. And a man without detachment in terms of the Gita cannot render full service."⁹⁸

Gandhi did not want either his friends or those who would come after him to accept automatically everything that he had done or said. Neither did he want others to reject non-violence because of his own weaknesses and mistakes. "...I must warn you against carrying the impression on with you that mine is the final word on non-violence. I know my own limitations. I am but a humble seeker after truth. And all I claim is that every experiment of mine has deepened my faith in non-violence as the greatest force at the disposal of mankind."⁹⁹ So he had spoken as early as 1937. Now, ten years later, he said, "The utmost that can be said

against me is that I am an incompetent teacher of Ahimsa. If such be the case, let us pray that my successor will be much more competent and successful."¹⁰⁰ I am not vain enough to think that the divine purpose can only be fulfilled through me. It is as likely as not that a fitter instrument will be used to carry it out and that I was good enough to represent a weak nation, not a strong one. May it not be that a man purer, more courageous, more far- seeing is wanted for the final purpose?"¹⁰¹

Gandhi felt that he had not found the best ways of applying and implementing the principles of truth and Ahimsa. His technique was faulty. His principles were being tested in the social turmoil in which he was living. He was trying to find the best way of applying those principles so that all might see that even in such severe circumstances they worked. On the eve of his departure for the villages in Noakhali, Bengal, he said, "Truth and Ahimsa by which I swear, and which have to my knowledge sustained me for sixty years seem to fail to show the attributes I have ascribed to them. To test them, or better, to test myself, I am going to a village called Shrirampur..."¹⁰² Two months later, he wrote, "I know positively that Ahimsa is a perfect instrument. If it did not answer in my hands the imperfection was in me. My technique was at fault."¹⁰³ "I have come here to put Ahimsa to the acid test in this atmosphere of rank distrust and suspicion."¹⁰⁴ He was searching for and experimenting in new ways of applying the principles he knew were true.

Though he had to pioneer through uncharted ways in heavy darkness, his duty, as he saw it, was to strive on and do the best he could. What more could any man do? What more could he be expected to do? If a man did all he could, and kept on doing it even in the face of seeming failure, then he should not be disturbed because he seemed not at the moment to succeed. Rather he should feel at peace with himself for keeping on trying. The problems could not be avoided. One could not run away. There was no place to which to flee. "...when a man leads a thoughtful life," he wrote in a letter, "there is no room for worry. My present

mission is the most complicated and difficult of my life. I can sing with cent per cent truth:

'The night is dark and I am far from home, Lead Thou me on' "¹⁰⁵

"Success or failure is not in our hands. It is enough if we do our part well. I am leaving no stone unturned. Ours is but to strive. In the end it will be as He wishes."¹⁰⁶ The darkness would be lifted; the light would come. When, he did not know, but it would come. That was what was important.

To work in such a situation against such odds requires great bravery. Gandhi declared that he had never had more hazardous or difficult jobs. "The path of true non-violence requires much more courage than violence. We have not been able to give proof of such non-violence.... We have not yet developed the spirit of sacrifice to the extent of laying down our lives in non-violent action."¹⁰⁷ "The poet has sung: 'The path of truth is for the brave, never for the coward.' The path of truth is the path of nonviolence."¹⁰⁸ To trod that path required bravery of heart and mind.

Before this time he had never had the chance to test his non-violence in the face of the Hindu-Muslim riots. Some might have argued that it had been cowardice which had prevented him from seeking the chance. That might or might not have been true, he said, but it was past. The test had come.

And with that test, Gandhi knew, might come the losing of his life in order that he might gain it. . .He will purify me and make the path of non-violence clear. No one should take it to mean that the sacrifice of my life will arrest all violence. Several lives like mine, will have to be given if the terrible violence that has spread all over, is to stop and non-violence reign supreme in its place."¹⁰⁹ Whether Gandhi's work and teaching of truth and non-violence had really taken root in India would be seen after his death.

Many people were eager to criticize and by shallow thinking and superficial reasoning attempt to prove that Gandhi's adherence to the way of love was wrong.

To them and others who sought to advise him, he said, "...I can say to all my counsellors that they should have patience with me and even share my belief that there is no hope for the aching world except through the narrow and straight path of non-violence. Millions like me may fail to prove the truth in their own lives, that would be their failure, never of the eternal law."¹¹⁰

CHAPTER XVII: GANDHI'S EFFORTS

Gandhi tried to tread bravely the path of truth and non-violence. He consistently opposed partition in the pre-independence conferences with Indian and British leaders to which he was invited. As the riots and violence grew, Gandhi repeatedly urged his people to stop the madness. When Nehru became Prime Minister of the Interim Government, Gandhi was living in a hut in the Harijan [untouchable] quarter of Delhi.

The riots ate at Gandhi's heart. In October 1946 the violence spread to the hitherto untouched villages. Those in Noakhali and Tipperah areas of East Bengal were the first to be affected. Gandhi decided to go there. He did not know what he would accomplish but he felt he had to try if he were to be at peace with himself. There were riots in Calcutta the day he left there.

In revenge for the happenings in Noakhali and Tipperah, riots broke out in Bihar where the Hindus outnumbered the Muslims six to one. Thousands were killed. That pained Gandhi as few things could have done. He issued a statement to the people of Bihar which opened, "Bihar of my dreams seems to have falsified them."¹¹¹ He informed them that as penance he was undertaking the lowest diet possible. "The low diet will become a fast unto death, if the erring Biharis have not turned over a new leaf."¹¹² Reassuring messages came from Bihar. New reports of Hindus, outnumbered five to one, fleeing from Muslim wrath had come from Noakhali. Gandhi decided to proceed there, abandoning the idea of a fast for Bihar. He left Calcutta on November 6, 1946.

Except for Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose, his Bengali interpreter, his permanent stenographer, Parasuram, and Manu Gandhi, he dispersed his disciples to settle in other villages and try to restore peace. Gandhi and his three assistants settled alone in various villages, often hostile and isolated, trying to wean the people from violence and hatred. He stayed in each village two or three days, then

walked barefooted to the next, covering in that manner 49 villages during the pilgrimage. The work continued from November 7, 1946 to March 2, 1947. In January the response of the people improved. By the first of March the situation was sufficiently better that Gandhi felt that although the mission was not complete, it was safe to leave and return again later.

He then left Bengal for Bihar, where he preached repentance and restitution. He insisted that Hindus call back the Muslims who had fled, help them rebuild their homes and re-establish their businesses. Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan, "the Frontier Gandhi", and General Shah Nawaz, Muslim hero of the Indian National Army, accompanied him on the tour.

He spoke at the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi on April 2, 1947. He told the delegates from the Asian countries that he hoped that the West would be conquered by Asia's message of truth and love. "This conquest will be loved by the West itself. The West is today pining for wisdom."¹¹³

Gandhi was frequently consulted by Mountbatten and Indian leaders regarding the negotiations in preparation for independence. At the request of Mountbatten, Gandhi and Jinnah issued a joint statement on April 15, 1947, deploring the acts of lawlessness and renouncing the use of force to achieve political ends. When Gandhi was in Delhi for the conference he usually lived in the Harijan Colony on Kingsway.

Gandhi returned to Bihar on April 13, 1947, setting out to make the people peaceful, thereby proving the threat of civil war false, and keeping India united. General Nawaz, who had remained in Bihar, reported that Muslims were returning to villages and that Hindus and Sikhs were helping them. Reports of renewed rioting came from Noakhali.

Nehru called Gandhi back to Delhi, where he met the Congress Working Committee on May 1, 1947. The Committee accepted Pakistan. Gandhi was chagrined. He then hurried to Calcutta in Bengal. There he remained six days, trying to bring

peace, trying to persuade the Muslims not to urge partition because of the disastrous results that would follow. If he were successful, the Hindus might not urge partition of Bengal and the creation of Pakistan might be stopped. Unsuccessful with the men at the top, Gandhi sought to go directly to the people at the bottom.

Then Gandhi went to Bihar again, and on May 25th, at Nehru's request, he returned again to New Delhi. Mountbatten announced partition, and on June 15th the All-India Congress Committee overwhelmingly approved of the plan.

Gandhi remained in New Delhi in June and July, and then left for Calcutta. He arrived there on August 9th. For a whole year Calcutta had been torn by bloody strife. The city was virtually divided between Hindu and Muslim zones. In five days Gandhi appeared to have caused the storm to disappear. But on the 31st at night a mob attacked the place where Gandhi stayed. A brick was thrown at him and someone swung a bamboo rod at his head. Both narrowly missed. Gandhi realized that all was not well in Calcutta and resolved upon a fast unto death, or until the people of the city came to their senses. Gandhi's suffering got inside the people and brought them to realize what they had been doing. The fast lasted seventy-three hours. After that, though the Punjab and other parts of India blazed with riots, not only the city of Calcutta but both east and west Bengal were free of riots.

On September 7th, he left Calcutta *en route* to the Punjab, but when he arrived in Delhi, the city was in such a condition that he could not leave until the madness was stopped. The surface expressions of the tension quieted down, but the hatred smouldered, waiting for a chance to blaze brightly again. In early December Gandhi held conferences with his constructive programme workers. The tension continued to smoulder, occasionally flashing into flame. Finally Gandhi felt that he had to sting the people's consciences and hearts so that the danger would be removed. He fasted once more. By keeping Delhi peaceful, he hoped to keep India

peaceful. The fast lasted from January. 13th to 18th. After that Delhi was peaceful.

The second day after the fast a small hand-made bomb was thrown at Gandhi from a nearby garden wall during prayer meeting. Some extreme Hindus had been roused by the success of Gandhi's fast in bringing more brotherhood and unity to the people. The members of the Hindu Mahasabha and the R. S. S. did not want brotherhood and unity. There was a plot to kill Gandhi.

On the way to prayers on January 30th, Gandhi was shot. He died with a smile on his face and the name of God on his lips. Not only India but the whole world was shaken. He had given his life in order that others might also find new hope.

CHAPTER XVIII: NO PLACE FOR GANDHI IN THE DEVELOPING INDIA

Gandhi was a man of peace, truth, love, and courage. The growing India was a country of riots, falsehood, hatred and cowardice. The two did not go together. Gandhi had to dissociate himself from the latter and struggle to find his own way and try to change India to become the India of his dreams. That would not be an easy task. He spent his energies toward that end without considering his health or life. The riots had to be stopped.

With passion in his voice, he said, "In the India as I see it shaping today, there is no place for me. I have given up hope of living 125 years. I might last a year or two. That is a different matter. But I have no wish to live if India is to be submerged in a deluge of violence, as it is threatening to do. There is the communal frenzy and they are talking of militarization and industrialization. India might become a first class military power and a highly industrialized country. But where is the place for village industries or Khadi [hand-spun and hand-woven cloth]—symbols of non-violence in such India?"¹¹⁴

A month later, late in June 1947 he declared in New Delhi, "The statement that I find no place for myself in a society that bases itself on violence has nothing to do with the reported loss of hope. I deliberately use the adjective 'reported' for I do not want to harbour the thought of hopelessness. What was true when the report was made, need not be and, is not true in an equal measure today.

"It must be clear that there can be no place for a man of peace in a society full of strife. Yet he may live the full span of 125 years and may hope by ceaseless striving to make a place for himself. That is exactly the meaning of my second statement and no more. I am in that society, though not of it. The statement registers my protest."¹¹⁵

If all was going so badly and he could have nothing to do with it, then why did he not pioneer a new way, chart a new course and let others follow if they would? Of

this, Gandhi said: "One more question has been and is being asked. If you are sure that India is going the wrong way, why do you associate with wrong-doers? Why do you not plough your own lonely furrow and have faith that if you are right, your erstwhile friends and followers will seek you out?" His reply in late June 1947 was, "I regard this as a very fair question. I must not attempt to argue against it. All I can say is that my faith is as strong as ever. It is quite possible that my technique is faulty. There are old and tried precedents to guide one in such a complexity. Only, no one should act mechanically."¹¹⁶

Gandhi was never one to act mechanically. He had to feel and know that what he was doing was right. He was trying to find the path, the technique and method of demonstrating that his truth and nonviolence were' most relevant to his country's condition. He would not claim to have found the way until he had.

CHAPTER XIX: GANDHI, HIS COUNTRYMEN AND HIS MESSAGE

Yes, the people had not really understood or followed Gandhi. When his way had ceased to seem to be the most expedient and easiest way out of India's difficulties, then the people in large degree, while still revering him, had left him, and the Congress had gone its own way. "The plain matter of fact," Gandhi said, "is that I am not the current coin that, I had fancied, I once was. Mine is a voice in the wilderness."¹¹⁷

It could well be argued that Gandhi had not really understood the nature of the Indian National Congress and the groups and persons which controlled it, that he had failed to really foresee what would happen when the crisis eased and political independence neared and came, what would happen when the next movement of the people would become a threat to the power, wealth and prestige of the wealthy class. His insight here may not have been as penetrating as it could have been. Consequently he had not laid plans to meet what seems to have been an inevitable eventuality. Yet he was far from naive in the situation.

As early as January 1930 he had declared, "My non-violence would not prevent me from fighting my countrymen on the many questions that must arise when India has become free. A mere academic discussion can only hamper the present progress of nonviolence. I know, however, that, if I survive the struggle for freedom, I might have to give non-violent battle to my own countrymen, which may be as stubborn as that in which I am now engaged. . . .

"My collaboration with my countrymen today is confined to the breaking of our shackles. How we would feel and what we shall do after breaking them is more than they or I know."¹¹⁸

Then in June 1942 he said, "...Of course after the formation of the National Government my voice may be a voice in the wilderness and nationalist India may go war-mad."¹¹⁹

Humility is a rare virtue. Many are those who are ready to tell others who are far more qualified than they, what to do. Few are those who are willing to listen to those who know more than they. Some said that Gandhi's heart-searching and penetrating speeches were depressing. Some went so far as to say that he should not speak at all.

Of the many who were eager to tell him what to do, Gandhi said in a post-prayer talk, "This multitude of advisers reminds me of a painter who had exposed his painting in a shop window without glass inviting critics to mark the parts they did not like. The result was a daub. The painter had simply tried to show that it was impossible to please all parties. He was, therefore, satisfied that he had painted a good picture. His business was to produce a work which satisfied his artistic taste. Mine is a similar case. I hope I never speak for the sake of speaking. I speak because I feel that I have something to say to the people."¹²⁰

In addition to Gandhi's simply being revered, while ignoring his insight and message, there were overt anti-Gandhi feelings and expressions. While he was touring Noakhali district trying to stop the bloodshed there, the roads and paths which Gandhi was to walk barefooted were occasionally strewn with filth and broken glass and anti-Gandhi signs were hung from trees over the paths he would follow. While living in the Harijan quarter on Kingsway, Delhi, in early April 1947 for three consecutive evenings Gandhi broke off the prayer meeting because there were objections to his reading from the Koran. Gandhi continued to receive mail, but 95% of it was abusive and full of hatred. Hindus claimed he favoured the Muslims; Muslims denounced him for opposing the partition and creation of Pakistan. At the close of August 1947 in Calcutta, rioters had attacked the place he was living and Gandhi narrowly escaped injury. During the early part of his fast at Delhi in January 1948 some people had cried, "Let Gandhi die!" After the fast a bomb was thrown at him at prayers, and days later he was assassinated.

Most of the people, however, still had great affection for him and were always demonstrating their feelings. As far as his teaching of truth and non-violence,

however, went, his stock had gone down. Gandhi knew that. His close associates for years had gone another direction. "It is true that I do not agree with what many of my closest friends have done or are doing,"^{120A} he said in New Delhi in July 1947. He was urged to go to the West and try to turn it from the way of violence. "I?" he replied. "I have not convinced India. There is violence all around us. I am a spent bullet."¹²¹ And what was the real difference between Gandhi and his friends and countrymen? "And what are the differences that matter? If you analyse them you would find only one fundamental difference to which all others could be traced. Non-violence is my creed. It never was of the Congress. With the Congress it has always been a policy. A policy takes the shape of a creed while it lasts, no longer."¹²²

And because they did not believe, they seemed impotent. Because they did not believe, India had been partitioned. "If only non-Muslim India were with me, I could show the way to undo the proposed partition....Many have invited me to head the opposition. But there is nothing in common between them and me except the opposition....Can love and hate combine?"¹²³

Gandhi appreciated the affection of the people and was thankful for it. Because he did, he had to express the thanks and appreciation. To do that meant that he had "to place before them and through them the world the truth which God had vouchsafed to him and to the pursuit of which his whole life was devoted, even at the risk of forfeiting their affection and regard."¹²⁴ "...Truth, though seemingly harsh, has to be uttered when utterance becomes relevant, indeed imperative."¹²⁵

And often it seemed that though he tried to present that truth before the people, they seemed not to truly listen. "Am I to give up all hope of their ever listening to me? I cannot do it whilst there is breath left in me. And if the people do not wish to listen to my non-violent dirge, there is no reason for critics to dissuade me from speaking to the public."¹²⁶ And what would happen after his death? What had happened after Jesus' death? Louis Fischer and Gandhi were talking in mid-July 1946. Gandhi had spoken of how Jesus' teachings had been disfigured when they

went to the West and Christianity had become the religion of Kings. The next day Fischer asked Gandhi, "You said last night that Paul altered the teachings of Jesus. Will the people around you do the same?" To that, Gandhi replied, "You are not the first to mention this possibility. I see through them. Yes, I know they may try to do just that. I know India is not with me. I have not convinced enough Indians on the wisdom of non-violence."¹²⁷

Would people pay lip service to his teachings, while watering them down, making them palatable, rationalizing, easing their consciences by subtly lowering the standards, replacing the revolutionary essence with reformist respectability, preserving the words and smothering their spirit? That indeed was a profound question—a question which everyone who honours Gandhi ought to plant deep in his heart to ask himself over and over again—did he really want, believe and live Gandhi's way?

CHAPTER XX: WITH A FAITH THAT BURNS IN DARKNESS

Through all of the wrestling, anguish and darkness Gandhi's faith, yes knowledge, that it was only through truth and love that the world would yet be saved, never went out. In trying to find ways of implementing and testing his way in the midst of such odds he had grown in conviction that this was the hope for men. In a letter to a European friend he wrote in late May 1947, "I am the same as when you saw me except that my faith burns, if possible, brighter than before."¹²⁸ "I am an irrepressible optimist."¹²⁹

When he was asked, "Does not your non-violence stink in your nostrils?" he replied that "the fragrance of non-violence was to him never sweeter than when it was today amidst the stink of violence of the most cowardly type that was being displayed in the cities of India such as Lahore, Amritsar and other places."¹³⁰

Even though the happenings in India were so disastrous, they had to be seen in perspective. "What is happening is this. With the end of slavery and the dawn of independence, all the weaknesses of society are bound to come to the surface. I do not see any reason to be unnecessarily upset about it."¹³¹ "We have not lived and toiled in vain all these years that we should become barbarians as we appear to be becoming, looking at all the senseless bloodshed in Bengal, Bihar and the Punjab. But I feel it is just an indication that as we are throwing off the foreign yoke, all the dirt and froth is coming to the surface. When the Ganga is in flood, the water is turbid. The dirt comes to the surface. When the flood subsides you see the clear blue water which soothes the eye. That is what I hope and live for."¹³² Yet while understanding this, one had to remember that it sometimes takes a long time for the dirt to clear if the water is constantly being stirred and polluted. The weaknesses of the society had to be met and that was not an easy task. There would be opposition and obstacles and hard work. "I know," he said, "one must push forth undaunted by difficulties."¹³³

If need be, one had to stand alone. During Gandhi's efforts to stop the bloodshedding in Noakhali, at the breaking of the Delhi fast and many other times, Tagore's favourite song that Gandhi loved very much was sung, "If no one responds to your call, walk alone, walk alone."¹³⁴ That was exactly what one often had to do if he knew deep inside that he was right. Eventually, a few might begin to understand and in time many would see that way.

Nowadays it often seems to be a derogatory charge to accuse one of being too far advanced, that he is setting his goals too high, that he could never reach them. But how is one to grow if he never tries? Gandhi was not exempt from such charges. In 1940 he had said, "I must continue to argue till I convert opponents or own defeat. For my mission is to convert every Indian whether he is a Hindu, Muslim, or any other, even Englishmen, and finally the world, to nonviolence for regulating mutual relations whether political, economic, social or religious. If I am accused of being too ambitious, I should plead guilty. If I am told that my dream can never materialize, I would answer, 'That is possible' and go my way. I am a seasoned soldier of non-violence, and I have evidence enough to sustain my faith. Whether, therefore, I have one comrade or more or none, I must continue the experiment."¹³⁵

And so he pushed on, often almost alone, with a faith that defied the darkness of the evil world in which he lived. He still believed that India would rise to the occasion and prove to the world that the achieving of independence by India and Pakistan "would be, not a menace, but a blessing to the rest of mankind".¹³⁶

CHAPTER XXI: THE TASK AHEAD

"What would the future bring? And who can predict the future?" he asked. "We are the makers of our own destiny. We can mend or mar the present and on that will depend the future."¹³⁷ If the future depends on what we do in the present, then a grave responsibility is ours. For we can make our own future. We can build a new world.

There were two jobs which were integrally related which constituted the task ahead. One of these was the perfection of the ways of applying non-violence to social conflicts. Gandhi had said that his technique was inadequate. He hoped that his successor would do better than he had. If India's freedom were to be really worthwhile, it was her duty to perfect the instrument of non-violence for dissolving social conflicts.

The other closely associated job was that of building a new non-violent society. Mere political independence would not be enough. What was needed was a new social order, a new civilization. That included equality, social and economic, and an end to all exploitation and class rule, for "violence is bred by inequality, non-violence by equality".¹³⁸ It meant a social order with no discrimination because of colour, caste, religion or sex. It meant an end to violence and wars, and a life based on love in which social conflicts were solved through non-violent methods. Instead of forcing human beings to become calloused, hard and desensitized, the new order would help them to become more sensitive, warm and creative. Instead of dependence on outside powers to do things for one, people would help themselves and control their own lives. Instead of regimentation and totalitarianism, it meant personalization and true democracy.

Despite the pretty words and flowery phrases mouthed by the supporters of the old order, the world in which Gandhi lived was far from just and free. The whole social order seemed to be diseased. And that disease could not be cured by trying

to cover up the symptoms, by not really getting at the disease itself. A mere change in political forms would not really solve the problem. And the problem was essentially the same in both the West and in India.

As early as 1925 he wrote, "I feel that fundamentally the disease is the same in Europe as it is in India, in spite of the fact that in the former country the people enjoy political self-government. No mere transference of political power in India will satisfy my ambition, even though I hold such transference to be a vital necessity of Indian national life. The people of Europe have no doubt political power but no Swaraj. Asian and African races are exploited for their partial benefit, and they, on their part, are being exploited by the ruling class or caste under the sacred name of democracy. At the root, therefore, the disease appears to be the same as in India. The same remedy is, therefore, likely to be applicable. Shorn of all the camouflage, the exploitation of the masses of Europe is sustained by violence."¹³⁹

The problem could not be solved except by basic and revolutionary changes in society. "I am a social revolutionist,"¹⁴⁰ Gandhi declared in July 1946. Nearly fifteen years earlier he had said, "Some have called me the greatest revolutionary of my time. It may be false, but I believe myself to be a revolutionary – a non-violent revolutionary."¹⁴¹

Political independence had come. That had been one step. Now there was a bigger job ahead.

Would the great powers adopt non-violence and shed their arms, fear, imperialism and exploitation? They could, he said, but it would not be easy. "It means a complete revolution. Great nations can hardly be expected in the ordinary course to move spontaneously in a direction the reverse of the one they have followed and, according to their notion of value, from victory to victory. But miracles have happened before and may happen even in this very prosaic age. Who can dare limit God's power of undoing wrong?"¹⁴²

"India was now free, and the reality was now clearly revealed to him. Now that the burden of subjection had been lifted, all the forces of good had to be marshalled in one great effort to build a country which forsook the accustomed method of violence in order to settle human conflicts whether it was between two States or between two sections of the same people."¹⁴³ That was no small task.

Did the job seem difficult? If it did, it was because of man's inertia. The universal rules of conduct were really simple and easy to apply, Gandhi felt, if the desire was there. If men were to live, they had to increasingly come under the sway of non-violence.

When a man has dreams, they can lift him up and the inspiration with which they infuse him help him to grow toward the fulfillment of those dreams. He seems to accomplish impossible tasks.

"...Sometimes a man lives in his day-dreams. I live in mine, and picture the world as full of good human beings—not goody-goody human beings. In the Socialist's language, there will be a new structure of society, a new order of things. I am also aspiring after a new order of things that will astonish the world. If you try to dream these day-dreams, you will also feel exalted as I do."¹⁴⁴

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