

Apostle of Non-Violence

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I am the ever striving spirit of man
Which seeks social change and equity
Dignity of individual for one and all
To usher in an era of love and amity.

Apostle of Non-Violence 2007

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Price : Rs. 50.00

Published by : Hazara Singh
3-C Shaheed Udham Singh Nagar
Ludhiana-141 001
Tel. (0161) 2302888
www.hazarasingh.com

Printed at : Foil Printers, Gobind Nagar
Ludhiana (India)
Tel. (0161) 2404979, 2404093
e-mail – foil@vsnl.com

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Preface

Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated on January 30, 1948 by a co-religionist. The tributes paid to him by eminent statesmen, writers and scientists were classical in content, touching in spirit and enlightening in their message. My adoration for that immortalized mortal became a mode of conduct in day-to-day life. I feel rewarded that though I got frequently singled out with an accusing finger for my adhering to a principled stand and even was deprived of the deserved recognition, yet I never faltered in my conviction that truthfulness is an elevating force.

I had been an admirer of Abraham Lincoln ever since I read his biography *From Log Cabin to White House* prescribed as a text-book for the matriculation classes by the Punjab University, Lahore during the forties of last century. Martyrdom was his destined end. I found many things in common between his childhood and that of mine. I tried to act as 'Honest Abe' in my words and deeds which inculcated in me a determined but positive way of thinking.

Martin Luther King encountered a similar fate in April 1968. I perceived many things common among the trio and wrote a one-act play 'Valley of Elysium'. It kept dog-eared in my piles of papers.

In 1969 the birth centenary of Mahatma Gandhi was celebrated. I wrote an article 'Gandhi and Gandhism' for the Students' Magazine of Hissar Campus of Punjab Agricultural University, which was reproduced by many periodicals.

'Relevance of Gandhian Thought Today' is the text of a talk given by me from Jalandhar Station of All India Radio on October 2, 1994 on the 125th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

Destination, a book of poems, which I dedicated to the pioneers and martyrs of freedom struggle, contains a section 'Pathfinders'. It includes my tribute among others to Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

Abdul Ghaffar Khan was a stalwart contemporary of Mahatma Gandhi in the freedom struggle against imperialism. His adherence to non-violence, universal love, truth and fearlessness in his campaigns transformed the bellicose Pathans into disciplined freedom fighters. I happened to pass an eventful day with him in August 1946. I recorded that experience in the form of a thrilling episode.

All these texts have been compiled as *Apostle of Non-Violence*, which is my humble contribution to the observance of October 2, birthday of Mahatma Gandhi as International Day of Non-Violence.

Ludhiana

Hazara Singh

I Non-violence

Non-violence is often scoffed at as a refuge
For cowards, escapists and the spineless folk
Tyrants are adored despite their wicked deeds
But progress during peace not paid due heed.

Violence, an eruption of malice or rash revenge
Frantic step of haughty powers, gripped by fear
Or their craze to capture new fields of wealth
Prompts them to dictate their terms or aggress.

The Buddha and Alexander held opposite views
The gospel of former based on truth and love
Still a sublime force, though, millenniums old
The realm of warrior flopped after his death.

The pithy dictum that history makes man wise
Not upheld by the continual wars, hot or cold
But men of vision opted for passive measures
Their moral moves dumbfounded the oppressors.

World has plenty for the basic needs of all
But not enough for a few avaricious cliques
All aspire to advance free of fear and want
Co-existence alone sustains such a yearning.

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Destination, p. 3

II

World Peace

How, yearning for world peace be realised
How, war as policy of State be restrained
How, the gains of peace, as well, be surveyed
Call for action that ought not be delayed.

Tolerance paves the path to universal peace
Adieu to war offers remedy for the maladies,
Inflicted by dislocation, hunger and disease
Branded as dogs of war by votaries of peace.

The war-mongers stoutly declare and defend
That war-preparedness ensures lasting peace
Wealth and talent consumed by such pursuits
Render flocks of people miserable destitutes.

War, a bane for humanity, is indulgence of devil
Peace, a protective bliss, reveals glory of God
Still the mighty nations despite mass protests
Rush to impose doctrine of pre-emptive threats.

Cost of destructive weapons drains exchequers
The winner shudders panicky even after victory
Hence barriers be replaced by bridges of amity
It is how, world would learn to live in harmony.

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III

Gandhi and Gandhism

Mohan Das Karam Chand Gandhi (1869-1948), hailed as Father of Nation, complimented as apostle of global goodwill and viewed as pathfinder for humanity belongs to all people and to all ages. Through his words and deeds, he identified himself with the oppressed and suppressed, the discarded and degraded and the homeless and friendless, not caring for the religion they professed, the colour of skin they possessed and the race or country to which they belonged. He had been an explorer of truth, practised it and laid down his life while propounding it. Truthfulness lent clarity to his thinking and fearlessness to his actions.

M.K. Gandhi felt the pinch of indignity hurled at the coloured by the Whites during his stay in South Africa, where he had been sent from Bombay for certain legal pursuits. His conscience revolted, but he calmly considered as to how far he was justified in protesting against the supercilious behaviour of the Whites, when in his own country one fourth of population was treated in still a worse manner on the plea of their being low by birth and thus being condemned as untouchables. A society which does not extend equality to its constituents has no moral right to protest if another people treat it with contempt due to its political subjugation, economic backwardness and retrogressive social outlook.

The basic weakness of his people dawned on Gandhi when a searching observation by Leo Tolstoy.

‘he wondered as to how thirty thousand employees of East India Company could enslave four hundred million Indians, unless the latter chose to have them fettered’,

posed a big why and how to Mohan Das Karam Chand Gandhi.

The perusal of Ruskin’s *Unto this Last* was another source of light and inspiration for him. The association of enlightened missionaries like C.F. Andrews who believed in human equality, based on economic justice, lent further strength to his beliefs. He returned to India determined to devote his energies to the removal of untouchability, forging of communal harmony and above all restoring to women the position, long denied to them. His countrymen impressed by his sincerity of purpose started addressing him, thereafter, as Mahatma.

The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre at Amritsar on April 13, 1919, which was the culmination of the infamous Rowlatt Act manipulating to deny even the grant of Dominion Status to India within the Empire by stifling ordinary legal protection, brought Gandhi actively into the struggle of Indian Independence. He had the courage to denounce imperialism as a curse against humanity while many an Indian complimented it as a blessing for India. He practised thereafter the concept of swaraj and swadesi and propounded it through mass campaigns viz. Civil Disobedience Movement, Salt Satyagrah and the Quit India trumpet call, which led to the crumbling of an empire about which it was boasted that the sun did not set on its geographical vastness.

The term “Gandhism” denotes the views of Mahatma Gandhi on various social economic and political problems. He was a statesman who cared for the next generation and not for periodical elections.

He felt acutely the necessity of a national flag for rallying Indian people under it. The tricolour suggested by Raizada Hansraj Sondhi of Jalandhar, after necessary modifications, was adopted as national

flag with its saffron strip at the top symbolizing chivalry and sacrifice, white in the middle representing truth and non-violence and the green at the bottom promising prosperity through development of agriculture and the spinning wheel superimposed in the white strip reflecting the determination of our people to end economic exploitation of India by the imperialist powers. For the first time in the history of India her people from the Cape of Cameron to Peshawar and Dwarka to Shillong, rising above narrow parochial considerations felt the thrill of mustering under a common flag.

Mahatma Gandhi perceived the necessity of a common language. He suggested that Hindustani i.e. Hindi without its sanskritized vocabulary and Urdu freed from persianized diction be adopted as a language for communication. Had the educators, writers and the media paid due heed to his suggestion, the aspirations of national unity and emotional integration would not have remained confined to occasional academic discussions.

Gandhi was convinced that glory of a country is reflected by the respect extended to its womenfolk. He understood the truth behind the adage that great mothers produce great children and great children make a nation great. He accordingly endeavoured to win for women a befitting place in society. He was also convinced that the essence underlying the dictums ‘Future belongs to the nations which are chaste’ and ‘Self-control is more effective than birth control’ can be better demonstrated by women than men.

He lent a new dimension to the Indian struggle for independence by adopting 18-point constructive programme which strove for the economic reconstruction and social regeneration of India through self-help. This was a fruitful exercise in the extension of nationalism and political awakening to the slumbering villages as well as to the stinking city slums. It also brought an emotional understanding between the educated few and the illiterate millions.

His journals *Young India* and *Harijan* showed a new path to journalism by demonstrating that for healthy social change communication implied the passing on of information to people, they need in a language they understand.

The advice which he gave to Mulk Raj Anand after going through the manuscript of his novel *Coolie* stated unambiguously the obligation of writers to themselves as well as to society i.e. to render their creative work didactic, recreational and ennobling.

He gathered around him a galaxy of equally great men and women; recluses and academicians, professionals and reformers, pacifists and revolutionaries, Indians and aliens; a phenomenon rare in history.

Mahatma Gandhi believed firmly in non-violence and held strongly that means must justify their end. His intrinsic greatness led to his martyrdom, the destined end of pathfinders for humanity. The impact of his precepts and practices on Indian people is so great that his birthday falling on October 2 is observed as a national holiday* and his assassination day, January 30, as Martyrs' Day.

The sonnet that follows, sums up as to what we owe to this great man.

We had been a motley crowd, proud of caste or clan
Devoid of feelings or notions that make a nation
Your precepts and practices made you an apt mason
Clans evolved as a nation under an innovated plan.
All fears vanished, our faces no longer looked wan
Your plain words and firm deeds served to awaken
A process of integration they did inwardly hasten
In the march for freedom, you remained in the van.

You treated the untouchables as children of God
You raised women high in various walks of life
You gave us the Tricolour to symbolise our aims
Your spinning wheel shook off the Crown and Rod
You laid down your life to curb communal strife
Bapu the father of nation, every Indian exclaims.

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* From October 2, 2007 it will also be observed as International Day of Non-Violence as decided by the UN General Assembly.

IV

Relevance of Gandhian Thought Today

The advance or decline of a nation depends upon the excellence or deterioration of its educational system because it influences the human resources which are more valuable than its natural wealth and geographical vastness. Gandhiji was convinced that multitudes of Indians living in villages, sprawling the forests and swarming the city slums require elementary education for being awakened from the slumber of ignorance perpetuated by caste system and cleverly exploited by the imperialist rule. The Wardha Scheme of Education, which aimed at the imparting of there Rs alongwith the vocational skills, was drawn accordingly. He stressed on character-building of pupils expecting the teachers to set an example by consistency in their precepts and actions. He often recalled painfully an incident from his childhood in that context. He was ridiculed for his having not responded to the prompting by his teacher during inspection of his school to copy correct spellings from the slate of a fellow pupil sitting ahead of him, Gandhiji lamented that how a nation could become great and fearless in character when the teachers tempted their wards to resort to unfair means.

Woefully we watch that our educational system has collapsed due to the evil which Gandhiji had deplored. Universities to a great extent have been reduced to intellectual slums. The educational institutions at the lower level have become commercial shops. Exploitation of students through coerced group tuitions in place of regular classroom instruction, encouragement to resort to mass copying in the examination centres and the abetment of examiners to undeserved evaluation have made a mockery of assessment of merit which is mostly not earned but extorted or purchased.

A radio talk on October 2, 1994 in connection with the 125th birthday of Mahatma Gandhi.

Gandhiji's precept of 'See no evil, hear no evil and talk no evil' is still relevant, in case the degradation in national character is to be checked by enforcing an educational system inculcating diligence, honesty, truthfulness and co-operative attitude. Home life gets disrupted, statecraft is corrupted, commerce becomes sheer profiteering and evil pushes out virtue from all walks of life when an educational system breaks down. This is the social, political and economic malady, which is frustrating our regeneration and development envisaged through political freedom.

Gandhiji stressed on the imparting of elementary education through mother tongue. Ah! we are indulging in a rat race to have our wards taught in public schools with English as medium of instruction. When we were slaves our country was robbed of the raw material so that industry in Britain could flourish at the cost of our cottage crafts. Instead of raw material, we now supply to the West, English-knowing technical and professional manpower. This brain drain keeps us making further poor. Craze for comforts abroad is weakening our national spirit which Gandhiji had revived. Serious heart-searching is needed as to how we may preserve our trained human resources for our own uplift and development.

Gandhiji had no hesitation in admonishing his wife when she felt tempted to pilfer a part of public donation with which he was going to start satyagraha in South Africa. He had the moral guts to ensure that members of his family, including him, performed menial work according to their turn at the community centre. Had we cared to be consistent in words and deeds like Gandhiji, scams would not have made a shamble of our financial institutions, nepotism would not have polluted public life and dehumanized hordes of government employees would not have been fleecing the masses whose servants they are enjoined to be.

During 1968 Martin Luther King, the great American crusader for civil rights for the Blacks complimented Mahatma Gandhi as follows :

the sheer utilitarian approach of John Stuart Mill did not impress me as it might meet the aspirations of an egalitarian society, but failed to inspire the down-trodden;

the revolutionary campaigns by Marxists, though stirring at first sight, yet destination keeps deluding them, because suppression and exploitation assume new forms;

it is in the Gandhian emphasis on truth, love and tolerance through non-violence that I discovered the clue to social change, I have been contemplating in the American multiracial society.

If the Gandhian approach could convince a crusader in far off America that love instead of hatred and passive resistance in place of violent campaigns, constitute the potent means for achieving equal civil rights, the political parties in India proclaiming to be the champions of the down-trodden should delve deep into the Gandhian way of social reform.

Relevance of Mahatma Gandhi's stress on the effectiveness of non-violent approach for crusading against oppression, whether religious, racial or political, has proved to be valid when we look at two contemporary events. The armed intervention by a superpower and the gun diplomacy resorted to by the other, instead of saving Afghanistan, led to the disintegration of the intervenor and a perpetuating ruin of the country, which both wanted to save in their own way, based on violent campaigns. The non-violent approach adopted by Nelson Mandela and Clark for wiping off the scandalous humiliation of racial segregation, holds a firm promise for restoration of human dignity and the prosperity of a society torn by narrow tribal considerations and trampled long by an arrogant ethnical minority. The conciliatory methods by these two South African statesmen earned for them world-wide applause. They were jointly selected for the award of Nobel Prize for Peace. On the other hand, the armed intervention of the superpowers not only missed its mark, but also condemned the posterity to terrorism, religious fundamentalism and drug abuse.

The sincerest tribute to Gandhiji during his 125th birth anniversary celebrations would be, if his countrymen, who adore him as Father of Nation, pledge to solve their caste, communal and territorial conflicts not by reducing the legislatures to wrestling arenas, not by widening religious differences and not by raising

deceitful slogans with an eye on the ensuing elections. but by keeping, in mind his observation that **the world has plenty for the needs of all but not enough for the greed of even one.**

Mahatma Gandhi belonged to all peoples and to all ages and his thought shall remain relevant in its essence for ever.

**Seven Social Sins :
Enunciated by Mahatma Gandhi**

Politics without principles
Wealth without work
Pleasure without conscience
Education without character
Commerce without morality
Science without humanity
Worship without sacrifice

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V

**Valley of Elysium
(One-Act Play)**

Tolstoy Farm A place in the valley named by Mahatma Gandhi associating it with the great Russian writer Leo Tolstoy.

Day April 4, 1968

Characters

Abraham Lincoln A former President of USA, assassinated on April 14, 1865.

Mahatma Gandhi Popularly called 'Father of Indian Nation', assassinated on January 30, 1948

Martin Luther King Black American, assassinated on April 4, 1968

Scene (i)

Tolstoy Farm in the Valley of Elysium. Mahatma Gandhi wrapped in a white sheet, spinning and humming the hymn :

'Lead kindly light lead'.

Abraham Lincoln enters the stage from the right side.

M. Gandhi : Hail, brother Lincoln, hail. It is so rarely that we meet even in the Valley of Elysium, where no worldly problems jolt our minds.

A. Lincoln : I am beholden to you brother Gandhi, for the gracious welcome, I find waiting for me always here. Great events are taking place on the earth. The dream that inspired both of us is marching towards reality.

M. Gandhi : What event has thrilled you so deeply?

A. Lincoln : I heard that wonder-machine of Marconi announcing from the earth below that Martin Luther King was to lead the great march for liberty to secure racial equality for all Americans.

M. Gandhi : How I wish that this voice before resounding in the planets and the space may reach first the hearts of people living on earth itself!

A. Lincoln : I was touched when I heard Martin Luther King impressing on his followers that for all the social reforms, he contemplated to bring about, he would adopt the path of love and non-violence as practised by you in India.

M. Gandhi : Hatred and force are not going to solve any of the problems. Rather, the resort to them aggravates the existing tensions and prejudices.

A. Lincoln : God having created man in His Own Image, the hatred excited by extraneous considerations of colour and race amounts to an act of sacrilege.

M. Gandhi : When in my childhood I discovered that many people in my country were despised as untouchables, I felt shocked. I argued with my mother as to how the scavenger, who kept our house clean, could be not worthy of touch. I asked her whether he had not been created, like all of us, by God.

A. Lincoln : I too could not bear the scene, when I found in my country helpless black people chained, flogged and auctioned like cattle. My conscience revolted and I protested how a country assuring liberty to all of its citizens could have masters and slaves side by side.

M. Gandhi : I told my countrymen, if India was to become free, a part of her population could not be condemned as untouchable. Position of a person should be judged from his worth and not assigned according to his birth.

A. Lincoln : I too felt that colour of skin was not the real test of worth of a citizen. The Lord having sermonized ‘Love thy neighbour’, it is duty of the Whites to extend fraternal feelings to the Blacks.

M. Gandhi : When I had been in South Africa I myself experienced the indignities, a coloured person was made to suffer.

A. Lincoln : How did you feel about that?

M. Gandhi : That put me to a serious heart-searching. I argued with myself as to how far I would be justified in protesting against such outrages committed by the Whites, when in my own country millions of people were treated in the same contemptuous manner by their own countrymen.

A. Lincoln : In what way did it influence your political thinking?

M. Gandhi : I got convinced that mere political freedom would be no solution of the ills, my country had been suffering from. It would simply mean change of masters; the dark apathetic Indians in the chairs of authority in place of the supercilious White Britishers.

A. Lincoln : What did you suggest instead?

M. Gandhi : I enlightened my countrymen that freedom should mean a change for the better in the lot of the humblest and the weakest sections of society. They should have social equality and economic justice to feel the thrill of political freedom.

A. Lincoln : How did you strive for that?

M. Gandhi : I named the untouchables as Harijans, children of God, thereby implying that any scorn hurled at them, would be scoffing at God Himself. Harijan uplift became a part and parcel of my crusade for liberty : political, social and economic. Thereafter I always stayed in the Harijan localities to make them feel that I was one of them.

A. Lincoln : Was that all?

M. Gandhi : No. No. The women folk in India got, if not greater, at least the same consideration from me for their uplift. It had been my conviction that for transforming a society, heed was to be focused at homes, where life revolved around women. If they were neglected, posterity would be doomed.

A. Lincoln : What a great truth you practised! It is only the properly groomed women who, as mothers, can bring up a generation free from hatred, fearless in action, and rational in thinking.

M. Gandhi : While working for realisation of the end, I had in mind, I never overlooked the means, I practised. I always sought that the means should be as noble as the end itself.

A. Lincoln : This had been my own profession and practice too when I staked my all to keep America united.

M. Gandhi : Cheap politicians proclaim that truth is something entirely inconsistent with political pursuits. They feel so because they care only for the next election and not for the coming generation.

A. Lincoln : When I contested the election for presidency of the United States for the first time, I was advised by many of my supporters to keep silent on the issue of slavery.

M. Gandhi : How could an upright person like you accept that counsel?

A. Lincoln : For most of my partymen the winning of election was an end in itself. For me it was a way to achieve the end; that in America all citizens would enjoy liberty irrespective of their colour, creed and place of birth.

M. Gandhi : Politics based on truth ushers in the rule of God Himself.

A. Lincoln : My rivals tried to trick me in by asking me in a public meeting, as to what would be my attitude towards slavery, if I happened to win the election.

M. Gandhi : Why were they in doubt about that?

A. Lincoln : They were crafty and had posed a question, reply to which in either way would pay them temporarily. If I said that I would abolish slavery, most of the Whites in southern states would be enraged with me and if I replied otherwise, my manifesto would be belied. But I cared more for truth and thereby lost the first presidential election, I contested.

M. Gandhi : But in fact you won. Your opponents lost miserably a few years thereafter.

When I started the first civil disobedience movement in India, I made it clear to my workers that none of them would resort to violence. Of course, I was convinced that imperialism was the worst crime against humanity, being perpetrated through the use of brutal force. But to meet force with force would have been the negation of truth itself.

When I learnt that some workers at Chauri Chaura had resorted to violence, I at once called off the movement. I was not prepared to sacrifice the principle of truth and non-violence for the sake of temporary popularity and gain.

A. Lincoln : I too had been convinced that the use of force did not solve a problem, but made it more complicated. When I put down the Civil War effectively in my country, I thought that I was successful in abolishing slavery and segregation. I little realised that a law failed to bring about a change as long as there was no change in hearts.

(A sudden bang of pistol firing is heard)

A. Lincoln : (As if experiencing an excruciating pain) This is a similar bang which put an end to my life on earth.

M. Gandhi : I am also reminded of a similar pistol fire, when on my way to prayer meeting, I was shot thrice at my chest.

A. Lincoln : I had to lay down my life because I stood by the truth that all citizens of America, whether black or white, have a right to equality, fraternity and liberty.

M. Gandhi : I was assassinated by a co-religionist, because he was not prepared to accept that India was a secular state where people of all religions and faiths have a right to live.

A. Lincoln : I fear that some other upright person has laid down his life today at the hands of a frenzied assassin, blinded either by racial hatred or religious bigotry.

M. Gandhi : People of God will continue to embrace martyrdom smilingly and fearlessly in order to secure for everybody and anybody the right to live and let live.

A. Lincoln : It will not be long when the great soul who has paid the price for truth will be joining us. Let us prepare ourselves to receive him.

M. Gandhi : Yes. Let us move to the outskirts of valley to welcome that distinguished martyr.

(Both Lincoln and Gandhi move away)

A. Lincoln and M. Gandhi looking towards the earth expectantly. Soon after Martin Luther King bleeding in the chest enters the stage.

M. L. King : Brothers I did my humble best to push your dream towards reality.

A. Lincoln : Tell us how it happened on the earth today. We heard that you were to lead the great march for liberty a few days hereafter.

M. L. King : I cherished your dream that the day was not far off when our nation would understand in full the truth that all human beings are created equal. I longed to see the day when sons of the former slaves and those of the former slave owners would regard themselves

as brothers. The hope inspired me that my nation would soon begin to judge her people not from the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.

A. Lincoln : Segregation is the most horrible crime as well as a sacrilege.

M. L. King : Most of my countrymen shared my view that the practice of social segregation would mar the greatness of America in technical and scientific field reducing it to morally weak nation not living upto its own professions.

A. Lincoln : What methods did you adopt to secure justice for the oppressed?

M. L. King : The sheer utilitarian approach of John Stuart Mill did not impress me as it might meet the aspirations of an egalitarian society but failed to inspire the down-trodden.

The revolutionary campaigns by Marxists, though appeared to be stirring at first sight, yet destination kept deluding them, because suppression and exploitation assumed new forms.

It was in the Gandhian emphasis on truth, love and tolerance through non-violence that I discovered the clue to social change.

(Turning to M. Gandhi)

I became deeply fascinated by your campaign of non-violent resistance. As I delved deeper into your philosophy, my faith in the power of love increased and I had been convinced about its potency in the area of social reform.

M. Gandhi : Love is the manifestation of God Himself. This supreme unifying principle of life has been preached by all religions. In love there is the key, which unlocks the door leading to ultimate truth.

If my countrymen had resorted exclusively to force and hatred to get rid of the British rule, they would have lost as much as they were likely to gain. The British were made to realise through non-violent campaigns the gravity of their crime against humanity being perpetuated through imperialistic rule.

M. L. King : What an enviable performance?

M. Gandhi : Non-violence is not weapon of the weak, but is a peaceful protest by those who are morally strong. My countrymen heeded my advice that true democracy could not come through untruthful and violent means for the simple reason that the natural corollary to their use would be to remove all opposition through suppression or extermination of antagonists. We had a double win — we achieved freedom and the Britishers packed from India not as enemies but as friends.

M. L. King : I pursued your methods in letter and spirit. Resort to violence does not solve any problem effectively. It may weaken the opponent but does not reform him. I got convinced that if the down-trodden black American succumbed to the temptation of using violence, he would be exposing his posterity to seething hatred in that plural society.

M. Gandhi : This very advice was accepted by my countrymen when we were campaigning to get emancipation from the British rule. This restraint yielded fruitful gains. There are more Indians now living in U.K. than there were Britishers in India, when they ruled over us. Co-operation between the two peoples is waging a successful war against the real enemies of mankind; unemployment and ignorance.

M. L. King : What else could I have done to make my campaign more effective?

M. Gandhi : Love and truth are two pillars of non-violent resistance. The sympathy of American women as a whole should be aroused to put an end to oppression against the Blacks.

Women are the fountain-head of love. If they instill in their young ones that racial hatred is unnatural and the resort to violence is horrible, the posterity will forget all prejudices. Salvation of humanity as a whole depends on the spirit of sacrifice and the enlightenment of women, because they are natural messengers of the gospel of non-violence.

M. L. King : How I wish that women realise as much their obligation as they are conscious of their rights!

M. Gandhi : Your martyrdom has gone a long way to win the peaceful struggle you had been waging. The assassin lost, because he was a coward. He was afraid of your mounting moral power. The Blacks by not giving vent to the feelings of revenge have won. They have shown that they are free from hatred which blinded the reasoning capacity of the assassin. The restraint shown by the oppressed has aroused moral conscience of the world at large. Imperialism and racialism, two great enemies of mankind, are finding disfavour with every right-thinking person.

M. L. King : Yes. Yes. Most of the Americans now not only feel but also practise that we are all God's children. Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, whether Black or White are joining hands and singing :

Free at last, free at last

Thank God Almighty

We are free at last.

M. Gandhi : Why Americans only, people all over the world should join this chorus. The world is a place to live and let live and not to slap and stab.

A. Lincoln : Fearless death for a noble cause is the noblest legacy for posterity. Socrates waged a crusade against sham, barren traditions and oppressive authority with his unwavering voice of truth. He had to drink a cup of poison, but his martyrdom ushered in an era of reason and truth.

M. Gandhi : Reason reveals truth and truth imparts fearlessness to human soul. Socrates gave this message through his words and deeds.

(Turning to King)

Your noble death is also a challenge to the goodness in man. I am sure that universities all over the world will create chairs to popularise your words and deeds to make man, as presaged by P.B. Shelley :

Equal, unclassed, tribeless and nationless

Exempt from awe, worship, degree; the lord

Over himself, just, gentle, wise, yet man

A. Lincoln : Yes. Yes. The posterity can be saved from the scourge of hatred and war only through such precepts and practices.

M. Gandhi : Brother King, death for a noble cause is the highest reward that life can give. It 'll teach people how to live to usher in that era, which Rabindra Nath Tagore foresaw :

Where the mind is without fear

And the head is held high.

*(Both Lincoln and Gandhi clasp King and lead him
to the Valley of Elysium)*

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VI Pathfinders

Abraham Lincoln

The great Abraham Lincoln, torch-bearer of equality
Apostle of global goodwill, pathfinder for humanity
Rough diamond in appearance, noble in his feelings
Upright in his thinking and humane in all dealings
Laid down his life to establish for all the right:
To live with heads high, free of scare and fright
Colour or religion which so often depends on birth
May not deny anyone the reward of intrinsic worth.

Lincoln could not bear that in the land of liberty
Blacks were not citizens, rather gainful property,
Owned by White masters, kept under social fetters
For tiresome labour on wages of crumbs and tatters.
With ill-gotten wealth, masters lived with pleasure
But rose to oppose loudly each progressive measure.
Slaves doomed to a life of endless toil and boredom
Got lynching as justice, if bid was made for freedom.

16th President of USA (1861-65) who abolished slavery and curbed Civil War opposing that progressive measure. Assassinated by a White racist on April 14, 1865.

Gandhi in Africa

On being elected President, Lincoln abolished slavery
Grit shown in the Civil War bore mark of his bravery
His friends grew cold, the opponents rose as rebels
Indifference to liberation was seen at many levels.
Contempt as well as ridicule hurled from every side
Altered not his conviction, rather higher it did ride.
Patience and calmness displayed in strife or battle,
Are tests of greatness and virtues of rare mettle.

When the Civil War with double strength was won
With no malice in his mind, ill will towards none
He hastened to assure all, whether foe or friend,
That era of hate and fear had come to a firm end.
When all, Black or White, Red Indian or Gentile
Shall live as brothers without any grudge or guile.
A racist and a diehard, a man devoid of reason
Killed out of rancour this pioneer of great vision.

Log-Cabin to White House is a historic event
The account of a life, honest, amiable, decent
Fatherly, fair, fearless, diligent but humorous
Even the rabid rivals found him magnanimous
Tall man with a big heart, destined to be great,
Died for an ideal which altered mankind's fate.
People singed with hatred or paralysed by fear
Find Abraham Lincoln: a peerless guide and seer.

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With a self-imposed obligation
Coined as 'White Man's Burden'
They too followed the colonists
With beaded rosaries in hands
Wearing loose impressive robes
To lands either declared dark
Or those inhabited by heathens
For showing the heavenly light
To bring them, thus, in Lord's fold
As they loved the natives ardently.

The love changed soon into that for gold,
White ivory and pastures, lush and green.
Though the man, black, dark or wheatish
Did not see much of the blessed light,
After that sun did not set on the Empire.
The rosaries and pastures changed hands,
Messengers of the Lord became landlords.
White Man's Burden bonded the coloured
The obligation turned into segregation
Beloved natives got reduced to chattels.

It was M.K. Gandhi who showed them light
Truth was his guide, righteousness his path
Pride or hate was not known to his pursuits
He kissed instead the hand that slapped.
An apostle of peace, crusader for goodwill
Though frail in frame yet strong in mind
Clear about goal, given to rightful deeds
Softened racial ego with moral strength
Preached and followed the gospel of Lord:
'The lowest also has the right to equity'.

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Mahatma Gandhi launched satyagraha (passive resistance) against racial segregation at Church Street in South Africa on September 11, 1906. Dr Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India, participated in the centenary celebration of that struggle based on truth and non-violence.

Martin Luther King

Martin Luther King was not ruler of any land
But of hearts, thrilled by his awakening dream;
Inspired by norms, basis of beneficial reforms,
Desired to be pursued to elevate human beings.

‘When many, not exploited for a privileged few,
When colour lowers not an individual’s worth
When talents not harnessed for a vicious loot
Depriving other people of their rightful means’.

King felt pained that the laws were inoperative
Racial prejudice in latent form still lingered
Human rights, sought abroad, were within denied
In letter and spirit the system got nullified.

The policy of moderates, to just watch and wait
Did not help as it merely lulled the depressed
A discourse on Gandhi revealed the missing link
Between tenets and practice of Christian faith.

The wicked hold was not easy to be weakened
Protesting moves could be likewise resented
Non-violent approach free of hate or revenge
Would impart moral force to the mute oppressed.

Almost a century after the historic Civil War
America started simmering with racial unrest,
Organising itself as a deterrent Black Power
For exposing lapses of pioneers of New Order.

King would not endorse the counter arrogance
As it might activate, so far, dormant factions
Knowing well the fate of saviours of humanity
Wavered not in launching a passive movement.

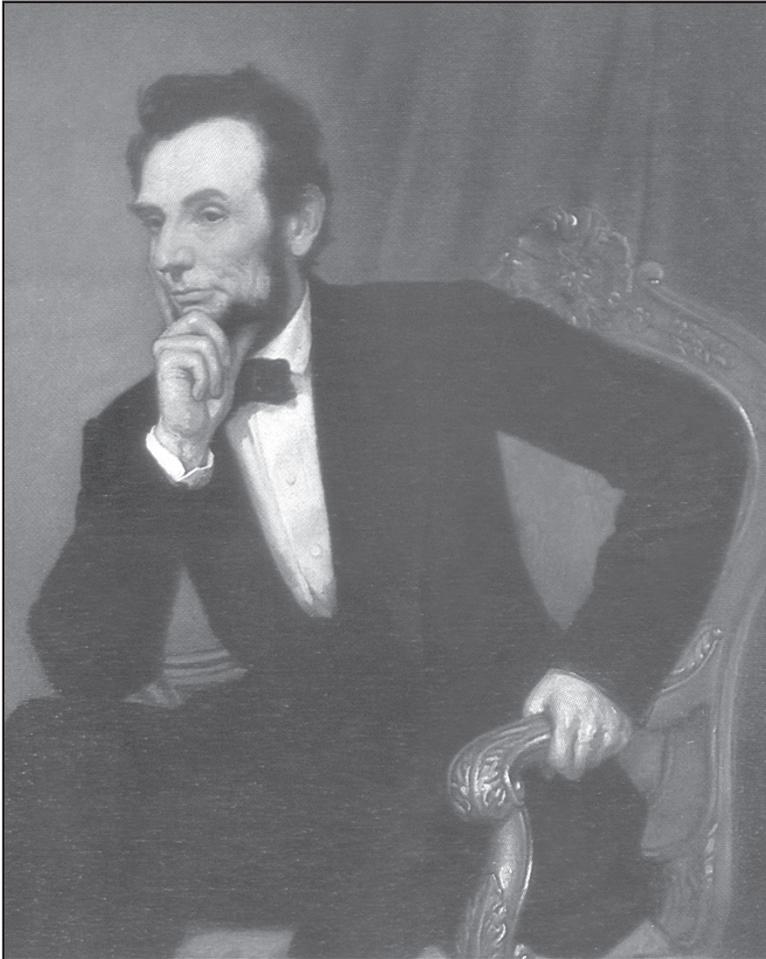
The Nobel Peace Prize awarded to him therefor
Approving passive norms to awaken the deprived
Firmly accepted relevance of his mass campaign
Higher than war heroes, rode this peace champion.

The testing time came for a multiracial nation
Massive rally for civil liberties was mobilised
For reminding the pioneers of lofty pledges taken,
When a fanatic shot dead the peaceful campaigner.

The swelling assemblage paid befitting tribute
By remaining peaceful, free of hate and rancour
Consonant with epitaph, epilogue of that dream,
Reading ‘Thank God Almighty, I’M Free At Last’.

The martyr saved America from an ominous split
Not geographical, which Civil War firmly nipped
But a cancerous chasm, fostered by racial venom
Posing dark threat to its vast plural social fabric.

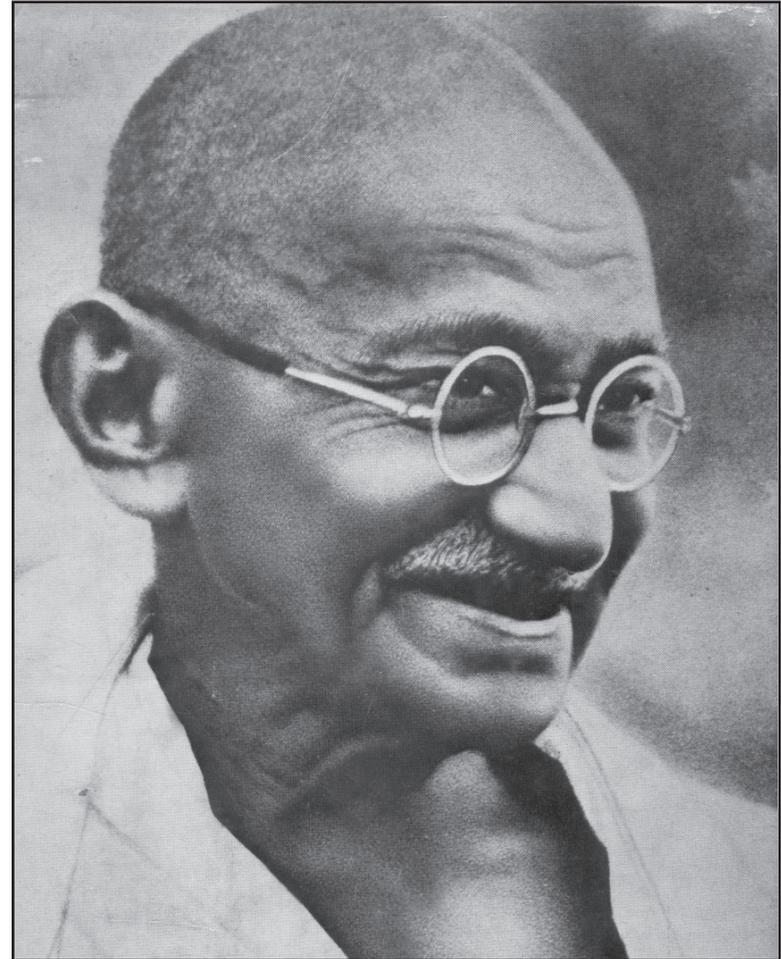
Eighteen years after that momentous martyrdom
President Reagan offered what nation owed him,
Third Monday of January, King’s month of birth
Declared Federal holiday; a rare national honour.



Abraham Lincoln

(February 12, 1809 – April 14, 1865)

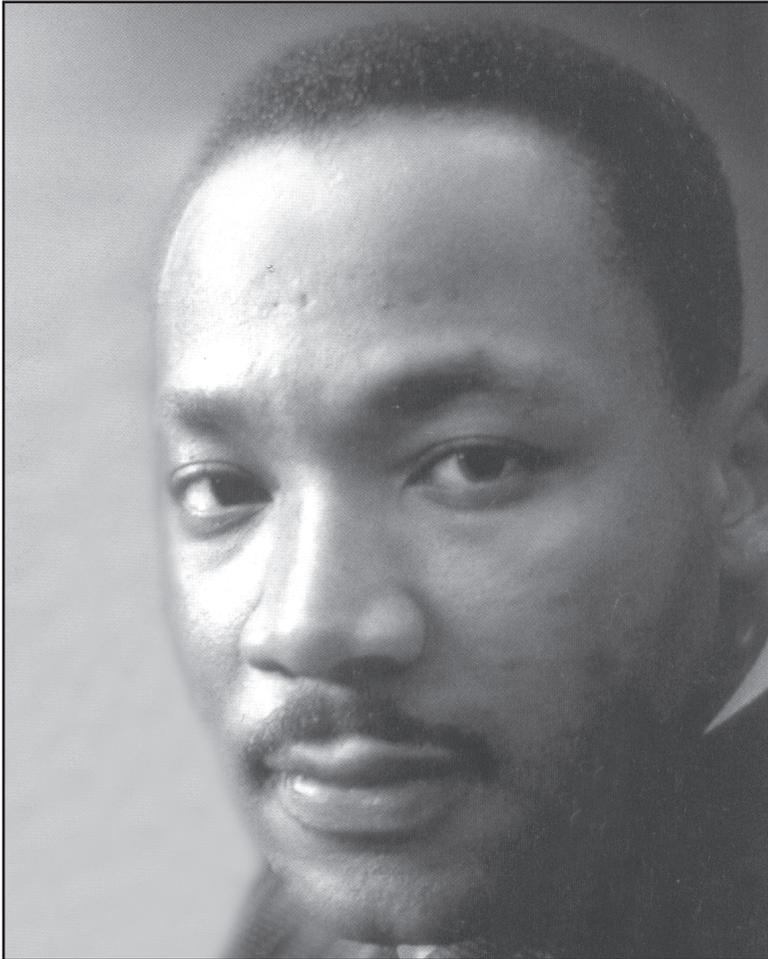
Died for an ideal which altered mankind's fate



M.K. Gandhi

(October 2, 1869 – January 30, 1948)

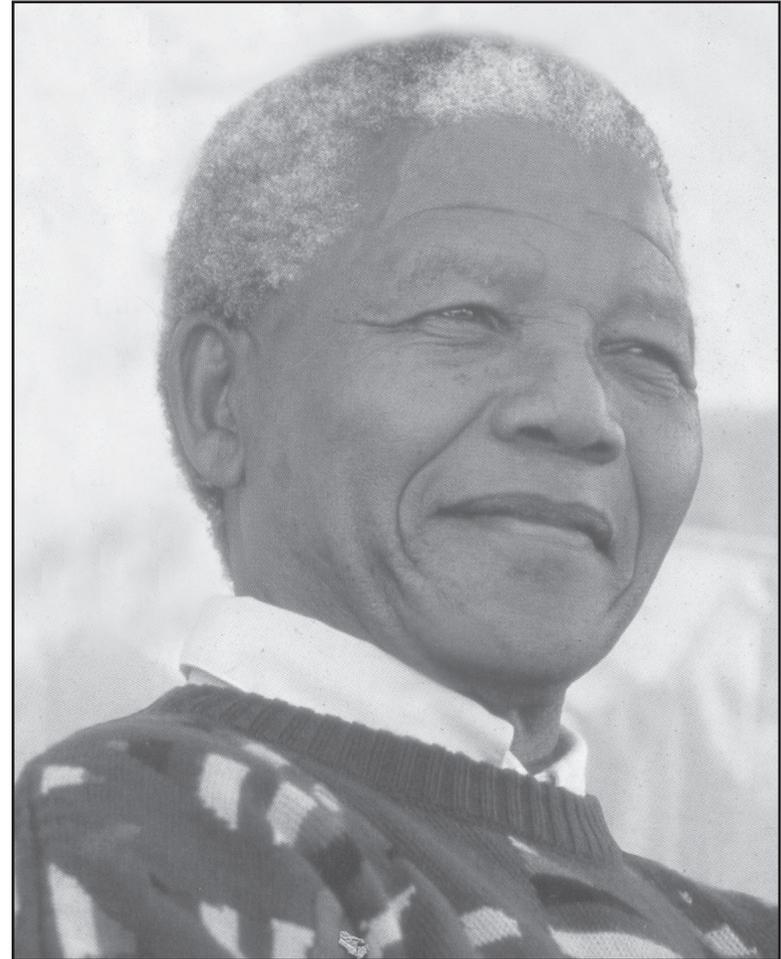
The lowest also has the right to equity



Martin Luther King

(January 15, 1929 – April 4, 1968)

Higher than war heroes, rode the peace champion



Nelson Mandela

(July 18, 1918 – _____)

The non-violent approach adopted by Nelson Mandela and Clark for wiping off the scandalous humiliation of racial segregation, holds a firm promise for restoration of human dignity and the prosperity of society trampled long by an arrogant ethnical minority.

VII

A Day with Frontier Gandhi

Abdul Ghaffar Khan, popularly called 'Khan Badshah', also adored as Frontier Gandhi, and a stalwart among the pioneers of freedom struggle came to India in 1969 to participate in the Gandhi Centenary Celebrations. That reminded me of the day, which I passed with him during August, 1946. I was then President of the Punjab Students Congress. We had organised a students' camp at S. D. High School, Moga to educate the young with the current social and political problems of the country. S. Partap Singh Kairon, inaugurated the camp and on his advice I reached Delhi, a couple of days later, where he had gone to attend the meeting of All India Congress Working Committee. He had offered to endorse my request to a few Congress leaders, that they should visit Moga to address the trainees. None of the high-ups in the Congress, we talked to seemed to heed my request. The Congress Working Committee was seized with the important proposition whether to participate in the interim government under Lord Wavell or not. Acharya J. B. Kriplani put me off jokingly by excusing that he was afraid of the hefty Punjabis. Dr Keskar, the then one of the two secretaries, All-India Congress Working Committee, first enthusiastically accepted my request, and a few hours later when I met him to finalise the programme of his visit, expressed his inability due to other pressing engagements.

At Birla Mandir

The Congress Working Committee met for its last sitting at Birla Mandir to avail themselves of the advice of Mahatma Gandhi. When the members rose for evening tea, they came out one by one; the radiant briskly walking Pt Jawaharlal Nehru, the unusually silent but composed S. Patel, the modest and humane Rajinder Prasad, the elegant and graceful Maulana Azad and many others.

The last to come out was the bare-headed tall Khan Badshah wrapped in a white sheet and holding a staff in hand. I hesitantly approached him and sought his permission to talk to him. He affectionately placed his hand on my shoulder and his very touch removed my entire despondency. He stepped towards a corner with me, where there happened to be lying a single chair. He pressed that I should sit and he would keep standing because I might have been tired while standing outside waiting for him. It was an awkward situation for me. Neither I could decline nor comply with it. Fortunately, S. Partap Singh Kairon seeing me talking to Khan Badshah also came there. He wanted to be sure that the programme of his visit to the camp was arranged not according to my youthful fancies, but with full consideration to the convenience of venerable leader. Khan Badshah informed me that he was leaving for Peshawar the same night by Frontier Mail. I proposed that he should break his journey at Ludhiana, drive with me on a waiting car to Moga, address the trainees there for a few minutes and then in that very car I would take him to Lahore via Ferozepur, where he could catch the same train. I had calculated that the stoppage of Frontier Mail at Ludhiana, Jullundur, Amritsar and Lahore itself, would spare enough time for us to catch it again, in spite of a circuitous journey. S. Partap Singh Kairon was not convinced. He took me aside and warned me that in case my plan failed, I would be exposing the Frontier Gandhi to a lot of danger, as the Muslim League after the misfire of its Direct Action Day on 16th August, 1946 at Calcutta, was desperate and was bent upon to arouse the passions of Muslim masses to demonstrate against the nationalist Muslim leaders. Khan Badshah perhaps over-heard the apprehension of S. Kairon. He intervened and readily accepted my offer assuring me emphatically that a man of God was never afraid of the slogans of a few bigots. It was settled that I would meet him four hours thereafter at the Delhi Railway Station.

My delight knew no bounds when I found that a leader of the eminence of Khan Badshah had so readily acceded to my request. When the flush of excitement got abated I wondered from where I

would get a car at Ludhiana. I was also not sure whether a taxi would be available there or not for I had experienced earlier the hardship caused by official restrictions imposed on taxies in their interdistrict travel.

A Providential Help

During the two or three hours at my disposal I had to give a ring to my co-organisers at Moga intimating not only about the visit of Khan Badshah to the camp but also to make sure that they would be able to send a car to Ludhiana. Fortunately, at the Telephone Exchange, New Delhi, a young man met me who had seen me earlier at Ludhiana during a students' conference. He belonged to Ludhiana and his family had a car. Learning the predicament I was in, he there and then gave an urgent ring to his people that their car should wait for me at Ludhiana Railway Station, and he explained to the driver my physical appearance on the phone.

I rushed to the Delhi Railway Station to meet Khan Badshah as arranged. He did not permit me to purchase his ticket, because he said that he travelled at his own expenses for all of his political undertakings. As the train reached Ludhiana, I requested Khan Badshah to detrain only after I had made myself sure about the car, which was to take us to Moga. I ran out and thanked God to find the car waiting for us. I rushed back to bring Khan Badshah who had by that time packed his simple bedding and was keenly looking out for me. We came out and within three quarters of an hour reached Moga.

At Moga Camp

The trainees hastily assembled as it was still early in the morning. Khan Badshah declined to sit in a chair. He squatted on a mat with the trainees and addressed them for a few minutes. He told them that during his night journey he was pained to listen to a fellow traveller enquiring from a hawker whether he was selling Muslim or Hindu *shakinjibi*. He said that such communal fissures had been created among Indians by the English and that harm could be undone only if we considered ourselves Indians first and Indians

last. **He observed that the message of love, truth and non-violence of Mahatma Gandhi had transformed the bellicose Pathans into disciplined fighters for freedom.** He was busy with his sermon impressing on the young trainees to devote themselves to selfless service of motherland when I politely requested him to rise for breakfast. He desired that he would have it with the trainees, a gesture which greatly thrilled all of us.

Rushing to Lahore

The fifteen minutes which he spent at Moga seemed to have passed like a wink. We got into the car and in the way I showed him the place near the Hussainiwala Bridge where the martyrs Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru had been cremated unceremoniously by the British. He bowed his head to the martyrs.

We sped through Lahore and on the Nisbat Road, late A.C. Bali of *The Tribune* happened to notice me and waved for a halt. He had seen Khan Badshah and was keen to ascertain his reaction about the current political situation. Khan Badshah told me to carry on and whispered paternally that he was very shy of press and publicity.

The Slip, but Our Grit

The Frontier Mail had left Lahore a minute earlier when we reached the station. Khan Badshah complained that we could have caught the train, had I not wasted time in making enquiries at the booking window. We drove direct to Shahdra. The Circular Road leading to Shahdra was so over-crowded with carts that we reached slightly late there too. The railway crossing was closed and we watched helplessly the train steaming off by us. We sped to Gujranwala, the next stoppage, and reached there fifteen minutes ahead of the train. The car slackened in speed when we were yet a furlong or so from the railway station. The driver reported that the petrol was exhausted. Fortunately, we were quite near the station. What would have been our lot if that situation had occurred when we were still miles away from the destination. I thanked God again.

We had to walk about two hundred yards to reach the station. Khan Badshah was very particular to reimburse the amount spent by me to purchase a ticket at Lahore for him for Peshawar. All the time he was feeling sorry that I had been put to a lot of inconvenience. The train arrived. I wanted to touch his feet, but Khan Badshah gave me an affectionate hug and invited me to visit him at Nathia Gali, the centre of his political activities in N.W.F.P. Who knew that about a year thereafter the country would be partitioned and we would become foreigners for each other.

I heaved a sigh of relief. Coming out of the station, the first thing I did was to inform telegraphically S. Partap Singh both at his Delhi as well as the Kairon address that my plan had not misfired.

Though I have been living at Ludhiana since 1955, yet I have not been able to meet that gentleman, whom Providence sent to Telephone Exchange, New Delhi to help me.

Hussainiwala Visited Again

I happened to pass a month near Hussainiwala Bridge during 1966 when, as an N.C.C. Officer, I was attached with an army unit for higher training. I crossed the bridge so often to visit the tomb of martyrs and looked wistfully beyond the custom checkpoint towards the city of Lahore, where I passed the golden years of my life. Incidentally it was the same bridge, crossing which, I entered free India as a refugee on September 6, 1947.

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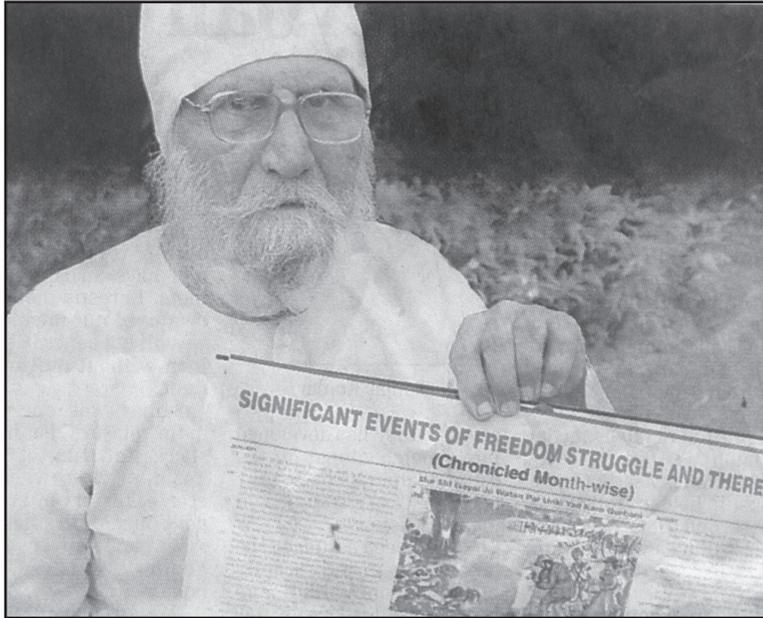
Abdul Ghaffar Khan with M.K. Gandhi

Abdul Ghaffar Khan (1890-1988) founded *Khudai Khidmatgars* ‘Servants of God’ popularly called ‘Red Shirts’ *Surkh Posh* based on belief in the power of M.K. Gandhi’s notion of *satyagraha*, a form of active non-violence, encapsulated in the declaration :

‘I am going to give you such a weapon that the police and army will not be able to stand against it. It is the weapon of Prophet, but you are not aware of it. That weapon is patience and righteousness. No power on earth can stand against it’.

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About the Author



Name : Hazara Singh

Date of Birth : November 30, 1922

Qualifications: M. A. , LL. B.

Teaching Career : Started as Lecturer in English at Khalsa College, Amritsar on October 3, 1950.

Retired as Head, Department of Journalism & Languages, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana in November, 1982.

Educational Achievements : Was awarded Rattigan Gold Medal by Khalsa College, Amritsar for standing first in B. A. (1945).

The scholarship won on the result of Intermediate Examination (1943) was confiscated by the then Punjab Government for his having taken part in the Quit India Movement.

Participation in Freedom Struggle: Was sent behind the bars thrice during 1942-45 for active participation in freedom struggle.

President, Punjab Students Congress (1945)

Membership of Educational Bodies:

Fellow, Panjab University, Chandigarh, (1956-62).

Published Work : Writes in English , Urdu and Punjabi.

(a) **Bulletins**

- 1 Guru Nanak Dev (S.G.P.C., 1969; G.N.D.U., Amritsar, 1987)
- 2 National Service by the Youth in a Welfare State (PAU, 1973)
- 3 Children Day (PAU, 1973)
- 4 Autonomy of Universities (PAU, 1979)
- 5 Reassessing the Role of Mass Media (PAU, 1981)
- 6 Teaching of English at PAU, 1981
- 7 Reminiscences of Quit India Movement, 2007

(b) **Manuals**

- 1 On the Use of Library (PAU, 1981)
- 2 Style in Writing Technical Papers and Theses (PAU, 1976)
- 3 Correct Pronunciation of English Words Commonly Mispronounced, 1981
- 4 Gurmukhi te Shahmukhi Lippy vich Punjabi Likhna Parhna, 2006

(c) **Books**

- 1 Sikhism and Its Impact on Indian Society (S.G.P.C., 1971, Revised 1999)
- 2 Aspirations (Poems), 1981
- 3 Yearnings (Poems), 1987
- 4 Expectations (Poems), 1999

- 5 Lala Lajpat Rai - An Appraisal, 2003
- 6 Happy Meaningful Life, 2004
- 7 Destination (Poems), 2007
- 8 Freedom Struggle against Imperialism, 2007
- 9 Apostle of Non-Violence, 2007

(d) Wall Charts

- 1 Let Us Pledge to Reconstruct India of Their Dreams,
2004, 2006
- 2 New Man in New World, 2004
- 3 Significant Events of Freedom Struggle and Thereafter,
2004, 2006

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