

Univerza v Ljubljani  
Filozofska fakulteta



# ZAPUŠČINA MIRU IN RESNICE

ŠTUDIJE O ŽIVLJENJU IN DELU MAHATME GANDHIJA

\*

# THE LEGACY OF PEACE AND TRUTH

STUDIES ON THE LIFE AND WORK OF MAHATMA GANDHI

Uredila/Edited by: Nina Petek

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Profesorju Josephu Prabhuju  
To Professor Joseph Prabhu  
(1946–2021)

*disām madhye tārāmayānām  
manye darśanīyo bhavān*



*»Je ta Moč dobrohotna ali zlobotna? Zame je povsem dobrohotna.  
Vidim namreč, da sredi smrti vztraja življenje,  
sredi neresnice resnica in sredi teme svetloba.«*

Mahatma Gandhi, *Mlada Indija*, 11. oktober 1925

\*

*“And is this Power benevolent or malevolent? I see it as purely benevolent.  
For I can see that in the midst of death life persists,  
in the midst of untruth truth persists, in the midst of darkness light persists.”*

Mahatma Gandhi, *Young India*, 11<sup>th</sup> October 1925





## Predgovor Namrate S. Kumar, veleposlanice Republike Indije v Republiki Sloveniji

Mohandas Karamčand Gandhi – Mahatma Gandhi, apostol miru in nenasilja, rojen v skromno družino 2. oktobra 1869 v obalnem mestu Porbandar v zvezni državi Gudžarat v Indiji, je večni dar Indije človeštvu. Borec za svobodo, filozof, moralist, duhovni iskalec in uresničevalec resnice v praksi Mahatma Gandhi je živel to, kar je govoril in v kar je verjel. Verjel je, da nenasilje in strpnost zahtevata več poguma kot sredstva z uporabo nasilja, da potrpežljivost, resnica in miroljubna sredstva nikoli niso izguba časa. Načela, po katerih je živel svoje življenje, so se dotaknila duš ljudi prek meja, duš ljudi narodov in celin. Kot je tehtno povedal Martin Luther King ml., je »Mahatma Gandhi v svojem življenju poosebljal nekatera univerzalna načela, ki so neločljivo povezana z moralno strukturo vesolja, in ta načela so tako neizogibna kot zakon gravitacije.«

Globalno povezani svet, ki ga je preplavila uničujoča pandemija covida-19, nenedoma ni več bil združen, saj je vsaka država živila kot otok. Dobro delujoča soodvisnost je bila postavljena pred izziv zaradi dolgotrajnih zaprtij in nenadnih ločitev naših med seboj prepletenih življenj. Žarka svetlobe za preživetje ni bilo mogoče najti nikjer drugje kot v samem sebi. Ti časi so nam znova dokazali, da Gandhijeva načela in prakse lokalizacije, *svadešija*, zanašanja samega nase in na lokalno proizvodnjo niso bili pomembni samo v času boja za svobodo, ampak so bili tudi rešitve za čase, ki še le bodo prišli, da bi se tedaj vsi zazrli vase, ozavestili resnico situacije in poiskali v sebi moč ter se opolnomočili s tem, da se zanesemo sami nase in da smo nase ponosni.

Dne 12. maja 2020, ko so se države po vsem svetu soočale s pandemijo covida-19, je indijski premier Narendra Modi razkril vizijo, da bo Indija postala samozadostna (*'Aatma Nirbhar'*) s proizvodnjem v Indiji in podpiranjem lokalne proizvodnje blaga s poslanstvom *'Glas za lokalno'* (*'Vocal for Local'*). Korenine poslanstva *'Glas za lokalno'* (*'Vocal for Local'*) izhajajo iz gibanja *svadeši* Mahatme Gandhija iz leta 1905, ki ga je skupaj s številnimi uglednimi borci za svobodo spodbujal z namenom, da bi med prebivalci Indije vzbudil občutke ponosa na svojo državo. Indijce je spodbujal k proizvodnji in uporabi lokalno proizvedenih dobrin, da bi dosegli samozadostnost. Lokalizacija v tem primeru ne pomeni zapiranja vrat ali ustvarjanja meja, ampak poudarja krepitev **ekonomije samozadostnosti** in **ekonomije soseske**, pri čemer se blago proizvaja iz lokalno razpoložljivega materiala, z lokalno delovno silo in lokalnimi tehnikami pod lokalnimi/nacionalnimi blagovnimi znamkami za domači in svetovni trg. Lokalizacija ne preprečuje uporabe blaga/izdelkov iz drugih držav, ampak pomeni, da naj narod proizvaja in uporablja vsaj tisto, kar je mogoče zlahka proizvesti z lokalno dostopnimi surovinami in sposobnostmi. Ta lokalizacija je dobila 'glas' s posebnim pozivom premierja Narendre

Modija prebivalcem Indije med zaprtji zaradi pandemije covida-19, ko države niso imele druge izbire, kot da so se zazrle same vase in se okrepile s svojimi lastnimi zmoglostmi – zlasti v zvezi z zadovoljevanjem najosnovnejših potreb v povezavi s ključnimi sektorji, vključno z IT- in e-upravo, pametnimi mesti, urbanim razvojem, stanovanjsko politiko, industrijami, mikro-, malimi in srednjimi podjetji, prometom, železnicami, zdravstvom, vodo in sanitarno politiko, izobraževanjem in usposabljanjem itd. – kot sredstvi za zagotavljanje samozadostnosti in zaščite pravic in interesov lokalne delovne sile, katere preživetje je bilo odvisno le od državne podpore. Naloga misije '*Glas za lokalno*' ('*Vocal for Local*') Indiji ni pomagala le previhariti izzivov pandemije, ampak je okrepila več ranljivih delov države, ki jih je pandemija najbolj prizadela, in prispevala k temu, da so postali samozadostni ('*Aatma Nirbhar*'). Hkrati so ta sredstva postala ključna gonila države, da odločno nastopi z rešitvami za svet, ki lokalno povezuje z globalnim. Misija '*Glas za lokalno*' ('*Vocal for Local*'), ki temelji na Gandhijevem uvoznem načelu gibanja *svadeši*, se je danes v Indiji ponovno pojavila kot ljudsko gibanje s poudarkom na posamezniku ('*Aatma Nirbhar Individual*'), družbi ('*Aatma Nirbhar Society*') in narodu ('*Aatma Nirbhar Nation*') za splošno globalno dobro človeštva.

Medtem ko je pandemija covida-19 na številne načine pokazala pomembnost že v Gandhijevem času preizkušenih načel, sta njegovi načeli miru in nenasilja temelj, na katerem danes sloni in bo za vedno slonela stabilnost svetovne ureditve. V svetu, ki je soočen z nasiljem, so Gandhijeva načela miru in nenasilja danes enako pomembna, morda celo bolj, kot so bila v času svojega nastanka in ko so bila udeležena v indijskem boju za svobodo proti kolonialni vladavini ter doseganju neodvisnosti od nje. Nasilje je danes drugačno – sega vse od nasilja v družini do vojaške ofenzive, od kibernetičnih vojn do terorizma, od napadov na družabnih omrežjih do etničnega, rasnega, spolnega ter medverskega nasilja in še več ... Nasilje najde vse načine, da se uresniči. V tako težavnih obdobjih postanejo Gandhijeva načela smiselna in nedvomno relevantna, saj v tem času ni nobene druge možnosti in nobenega nadomestila za mir in dialog.

Med letoma 1937 in 1948 je bil Gandhi petkrat nominiran za Nobelovo nagrado za mir. V času, ko je 14. Dalajlama leta 1989 prejel omenjeno nagrado, je odbor za Nobelovo nagrado za mir dejal, da je slednja »delno poklon spominu na Mahatmo Gandhija«. Razglasitev njegovega rojstnega dne, 2. oktobra, za **mednarodni dan nenasilja** je tudi najbolj pomenljiv poklon svetovne skupnosti Gandhiju, kar je lepo uspelo tudi profesorici Nini Petek z Oddelka za filozofijo Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani z organizacijo skrbno zasnovanega seminarja v hibridni obliki, kjer so poznavalci Gandhija iz Indije, Slovenije in Združenih držav Amerike predstavili svoje referate in se skupaj spominjali Gandhija. Seminar, ki je bil organiziran septembra 2020 kot veliki finale praznovanja 150. obletnice rojstva Gandhija, nas je v časih, ko smo se borili proti pandemiji covida-19, spomnil na našo skupno moč, da uresničimo naše želje po dobrobiti svetovne skupnosti na kolektivno miroljubne, strpne in nenasilne načine.

Profesorici Nini Petek izrekam posebno zahvalo za njen neumorni trud, da je ta zbirka nastala, vsem sodelujočim za njihove pronicljive prispevke in predstavitve, Oddelku za filozofijo, Filozofski fakulteti, Univerzi v Ljubljani in Sektorju za zunanjo promocijo Ministrstva za zunanje zadeve Vlade Republike Indije pa za podporo tej publikaciji. Želim si, da bi se naše sodelovanje nadaljevalo in da bi še naprej sledili in širili sporočilo Gandhijevih naukov o miru in nenasilju za boljši, miren ter srečen svet in prihodnost.

Namrata S. Kumar,  
veleposlanica Republike Indije  
v Republiki Sloveniji



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## Foreword by Namrata S. Kumar, Ambassador of the Republic of India to the Republic of Slovenia

Born in a humble family on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1869 in the coastal city of Porbandar in the State of Gujarat in India, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi – Mahatma Gandhi, an apostle of peace and nonviolence, is India's eternal gift to mankind. A freedom fighter, a philosopher, a moralist, a spiritualist, and a practitioner of truth, Mahatma Gandhi lived what he spoke and believed in. He believed that nonviolence and tolerance required more courage than violent ways; that patience, truth, and peaceful means are never wasted. The principles by which he lived his life touched the souls of people across borders, nations, and continents. As rightly said by Martin Luther King, Jr., “Mahatma Gandhi embodied in his life certain universal principles that are inherent in the moral structure of the universe, and these principles are as inescapable as the law of gravitation.”

Gripped by the devastating COVID-19 pandemic health crisis, the globally connected world suddenly got disconnected, with each country living like an island. The well-oiled interdependence was challenged in the face of prolonged lockdowns and abrupt breaks in our intertwined lives. The ray of light for survival was to be found nowhere but within. These times showed us once again that Gandhi Ji's principles and practices of '*Localization*', '*Swadesh*', '*Self-reliance*', and '*Make-locally*' were not just relevant at the times of freedom struggle but were the solutions for all times to come, for all to adopt by introspecting and looking inwards, to assess the 'truth' of the situation searching ourselves for our own strengths and to empower ourselves with 'Self-reliance' taking pride in ourselves.

On 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020, when the countries across the globe encounter the COVID-19 pandemic, the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a vision to make India '*Aatma Nirbhar* (Self-reliant)' by '*Making in India*' and supporting the production of local goods under '*Vocal for Local*' mission. The roots of '*Vocal for Local*' lie in Mahatma Gandhi's 1905 '*Swadeshi movement*' when Gandhi Ji, along with many prominent freedom fighters of the country, promoted the '*Swadeshi movement*' to instill feelings of pride for the country among the people of India. And he encouraged the people of India to produce and use locally made goods to achieve self-reliance. '*Localization*' here does not mean closing doors or creating boundaries. Essentially, it emphasises strengthening the '**Economy of self-reliance**' and the '**Economy of Neighbourhood**' where the goods are produced from locally available material, with local manpower and local techniques under local/national brands for both, the domestic and global market. '*Localization*' here does not stop us from using goods/products from other countries. It means that the nation should produce and use at least that which can be easily produced with locally

available materials and strengths. This '*Localization*' became '*Vocal*' with Prime Minister's Narendra Modi special appeal made to the people of India during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns when every country had no choice but to look inwards and empower itself with its inherent strengths – particularly with respect to addressing the most basic needs concerning the key sectors including IT and e-governance, smart cities, urban development, housing, industries, micro-, small and medium enterprises, transport, railways, health, water and sanitation, education and skill development, etc. – as a means to ensure self-reliance and to protect the rights and interests of local work-force, which depended for their livelihood only on the state support. The '*Vocal for Local*' mission not only helped India surf through the pandemic challenges but it empowered several vulnerable sections of the country that were most hit by the pandemic helping them become '*Aatma Nirbhar*' (self-reliant). At the same time, they became a crucial driver for the country to emerge strongly with solutions for the world connecting '*Local with Global*'. '*Vocal for Local*' based on Gandhi Ji's import's tenet of '*Swadeshi movement*' once again emerged as a people's movement in India in the present times with an emphasis on '*Aatma Nirbhar Individual, Aatma Nirbhar Society, and Aatma Nirbhar Nation*' for the global good, for the mankind at large.

While the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the relevance of Gandhi Ji's time-tested principles in more than one way, his principles of peace and nonviolence are the foundation on which the stability of global order rests today and will rest forever. In a world that witnesses violence, Gandhi's principles of peace and nonviolence are as relevant today, perhaps even more than they were when first originated and put into practice for India's freedom struggle against colonial rule and attaining independence from it. Violence today is not conventional anymore. From domestic violence to the military offensive, cyber wars to terrorism, social media attacks to ethnic, racial, gender, and communal violence, and more ... It finds any and many ways of realising itself. In times so troubled, Gandhi's principles become more meaningful and unquestionably relevant, for there is no option and no substitute for peace and dialogue.

Between 1937 and 1948 Gandhi Ji was nominated five times for the Nobel Peace Prize. At the time when 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama was awarded the Peace Prize in 1989, the Nobel Peace Prize committee said that this was "in part a tribute to the memory of Mahatma Gandhi". Declaration of his birth date 2<sup>nd</sup> October to be observed as the "**International Day of Nonviolence**" is also the most meaningful tribute by the global community to him, which has been so beautifully put together by Professor Nina Petek, from the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana in the compilation of the papers presented by the Gandhian Scholars from India, Slovenia and the United States of America who gathered in the hybrid format of a meticulously designed seminar by Professor Petek, remembering Gandhi Ji collectively. The Seminar organised in September 2020 as the grand finale of Gandhi Ji's 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary celebrations,

in the times when we were collectively fighting the COVID-19 pandemic reminded us about our collective strength to achieve our aspirations for the well-being of the global community through collective peaceful, tolerant, and nonviolent ways.

I express my special gratitude to Professor Nina Petek for her tireless effort to bring this compilation to fruition, to all the contributors for their insightful papers and presentations, to the Department of Philosophy, the Faculty of Arts, and the University of Ljubljana for their support and the External Publicity Division of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, for supporting this publication. I wish our association continues and we carry on following and spreading the message of Gandhi Ji's teachings on peace and nonviolence for a better, peaceful, and happy world and future.

Namrata S. Kumar  
Ambassador of the Republic of India  
to the Republic of Slovenia





## Mahatmi, Josephu, bralkam in bralcem, nekaj uvodnih besed

Zamisel za pričujoče delo se je porodila leta 2020, ko je svet obeleževal 150. obletnico rojstva vélikega indijskega misleca, duhovnega vodje in aktivista Mahatme Gandhija. V omenjenem letu je potekal simpozij v okviru vsakoletne konference, posvečene Sørenu Kierkegaardu, in sicer v organizaciji Srednjeevropskega raziskovalnega inštituta Søren Kierkegaard, Kulturno umetniškega društva Apokalipsa, Oddelka za filozofijo Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani, Inštituta za študije menišтва in kontemplativne znanosti, Veleposlaništva Indije v Sloveniji in njene ekscelence, gospe Namrate S. Kumar, veleposlanice Indije v Sloveniji. Uspešna izvedba odmevnega dogodka je vodila do ideje, da dognanja nekaterih raziskovalcev, ki se v svojem delu ukvarjajo z raznolikimi segmenti življenja in dela Mahatme Gandhija, strnemo v monografijo, ki je, težko pričakovana, naposled pred vami. Delo osvetljuje monogovrstne vidike življenja in dela Mahatme, predvsem večplastnega soočanja, v teoriji in zlasti v praksi, s kompleksnimi dimenzijami dejanskosti v Indiji, ki je temeljilo na njegovem pojmovanju Resnice, Religije in svobode ter veri v moč nenasilja, s čimer si je prizadeval za vsesplošno dobro in je z vzpostavitvijo globalne vizije miru presegel sleherno takratno politično agendo in hkrati s tem tudi samo indijsko prizadevanje za neodvisnost.

Prispevke, ki so poleg slovenščine dostopni tudi v angleškem jeziku, pri čemer upamo, da bo delo nagovorilo najširše občinstvo, so pripravili štirje slovenski raziskovalci in dva tuja. Med snovanjem dela nas je septembra 2021 nepričakovano zapustil eden od avtorjev, dr. Joseph Prabhu s Kalifornijske državne univerze v Los Angelesu in Univerze za dodiplomske študije Claremont Graduate University, izjemen poznavalec Mahatme Gandhija v svetovnem merilu, filozof, mirovni aktivist ter pretanjen in navdihujoč sogovornik, ki si je v gandhijevskem duhu tudi sam neutrudno prizadeval za boljši svet. V spomin nanj z največjim spoštovanjem posvečamo sleherno misel, ki tke pričujoče delo, le-to pa se tudi začinja z njegovim prispevkom »Gandhijeva religiozna etika kot preizkusni kamen« (»Gandhi's Religious Ethics as a Touchstone«). Članek dr. Josepha Prabhuja je bil leta 2005 objavljen v zborniku *Studies in Indian Arts, Philosophy and Interreligious Dialogue (In Honour of Bettina Baumer)* (ur. Ernst Fuerlinger in Sadananda Das, New Delhi: D. K. Printworld), pri čemer se iskreno zahvaljujem uredniku, dr. Ernstu Furlingerju z avstrijske Univerze za kontinuirano izobraževanje Krems – Donavske univerze Krems (University for Continuing Education Krems – Danube University Krems) za prijazno dovoljenje za ponovno objavo prispevka, hkrati pa tudi za dovoljenje za prevod članka v slovenščino.

Prispevku dr. Josepha Prabhuja sledi članek »Sebstvo v razmerju do drugih: Gandhijeva misel v 21. stoletju« dr. Prema Ananda Mishre s Fakultete za gandhijevske

študije Univerze Gudžarat Vidyapith v Ahmedabadu, ki jo je leta 1920 ustanovil sam Mahatma. Prispevek raziskuje različne vidike razumevanja razmerja med sebstvom in drugim s perspektive Gandhijevega svetovnega nazora, sledi pa mu članek dr. Janeza Kreka z Oddelka za temeljni pedagoški študij Pedagoške fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani »Gandhijevska satjagraha kot dejanje«, v katerem analizira pojmovanje Gandhijeve *satjagrahe* z vidika nenasilja in odločitve zanj kot forme dejanja ter z vidika Simbolnega in Drugega. Prvi polovici razprav sledita t. i. berilo in album, tj. prvoosebna pričevanja Mahatme iz njegovega življenja, izbrana iz dela *Avtobiografija. Zgodba o mojih eksperimentih z resnico*, in fotografski utrinki iz različnih obdobj njegovega predanega delovanja v Indiji in drugod po svetu. Drugi del monografije se začne s prispevkom »Vpliv Teozofskega društva na družbeno in politično življenje Indije ter na življenje in delo Mohandas Karamčand Gandhija« Antona Rozmana iz Teozofskega društva Slovenije, ki proučuje raznolike vplive teozofske misli na Mahatmo, dr. Andrej Ule, upokojeni profesor za filozofijo z Oddelka za filozofijo Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani, pa v nadaljevanju v razpravi »Duhovni temelji Gandhijeve satjagrahe« predstavi Gandhijevo pojmovanje *satjagrahe* z vidika idej o nenasilju, Resnici in radikalni človečnosti. Delo zaključí kratek sprehod po nekaterih segmentih unikatnega filozofskega nazora Mahatme kot mnogovrstnega prepleta idej in nauk iz številnih tradicij, ki pa jih je vztrajno preizkušal na nepredvidljivem terenu vselej spreminjajoče se družbene dejanskosti. Strnjen je v prispevku urednice z naslovom »Gandhijeva filozofija kot izkustvena živeta resnica«.

Kot so zgovorni vsi prispevki, je Gandhijeva misel prvenstveno izkušnja, ki svoji najbolj avtentičen izraz privzame onkraj teoretičnega, slednje pa ji daje značaj dinamičnosti, kreativnosti in neponovljivosti, pri čemer pa, kar je še posebej izjemno, hkrati tudi duha univerzalnosti, neminljivosti, nadčasnosti, vselejšnje relevantnosti in aktualnosti, celo onkraj meja same Indije. Tako lahko sklenemo, da je Gandhijev rabelj brez dvoma zmotno mislil, da lahko s tremi streli za vselej utiša Mahatmo; uspelo mu je pokončati Gandhija kot človeka iz mesa in krvi, a Mahatma kot nezamenljivi zgled človeštva in človečnosti nagovarja globalno občinstvo in izzive sodobnosti ter hkrati predstavlja neizčrpen vir navdiha. Gandhi ostaja še kako živ tako v prizadevanjih za notranjo izpolnitev kot tudi harmonijo zunanjega, saj si številni v Indiji in po svetu namreč še danes neomajno prizadevajo za uresničitev vrednot, utelešenih v Mahatmi, ki so kažipoti k bolj humanemu svetu. V trenutkih premnogih razočaranj, obupa, kolapsa najtemeljnějšíh vrednot in nasilja v vseh možnih oblikah Gandhijeva misel »Sredi smrti vztraja življenje, sredi neresnice resnica, sredi teme svetloba« odmeva še silneje in nas vselej znova opominja, da je v svetu, prežetem z raznolikostjo, z življenjem sredi smrti, mirom sredi vojne, prijateljstvom in ljubeznijo sredi gneva in sovraštva, mogoče najti povezovalno os, temelj, prek katerega je Mahatma združil ne samo nekonsistentnosti in dihotomije v svoji teoretični misli in delovanju, ampak tudi

celotno Indijo. Dokazal je, da harmonična Unija *je* uresničljiva, pri čemer pa je treba najprej korenito »pretresti«, spremeniti samega sebe, nato pa še vse preostalo. Vendar, kot bi dodal Veliki Duh, na blagodejen in dobrohoten način.

Urednica  
Reykjavik, 3. april 2022



## A Few Introductory Words Dedicated to Mahatma, Joseph and the Readers

The idea for the present monograph was born in 2020 when the whole world was celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi, the great Indian thinker, spiritual leader and activist. That same year, a symposium took place within the annual conference dedicated to Søren Kierkegaard and organised by the Central European Research Institute Søren Kierkegaard, Apokalipsa Cultural and Artistic Association, the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, the Institute of Monastic Studies and Contemplative Sciences, the Embassy of India in Slovenia and Her Excellency Ms Namrata S. Kumar, the Ambassador of India to the Republic of Slovenia. The successful delivery of this high-profile event led to the idea of bringing together the findings of some of the scholars whose work revolves around various segments of the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi and publishing them in a monograph, which has been eagerly anticipated and is now finally before you. The monograph sheds light on diverse aspects of Mahatma's life and work. In particular, his multifaceted confrontations, in theory and, above all, in practice, with complex dimensions of the Indian reality that were based on his concept of Truth, Religion and freedom. It also looks at his faith in the power of nonviolence, which he pursued for the common good and, through his global vision of peace, went beyond any then contemporary political agendas and thus, beyond India's struggle for independence.

The contributions to the monograph are available in Slovenian and in English and it is our hope that they will appeal to a broader public. They were written by four Slovenian and two foreign researchers. In September 2021, while the publication was written, one of the authors, Dr. Joseph Prabhu from California State University and Claremont Graduate University, a world-renowned expert on Mahatma Gandhi, a philosopher, peace activist, an insightful and inspiring conversational partner who worked tirelessly in the Gandhian spirit to make the world a better place, left us unexpectedly. With the greatest respect, it is to his memory that we dedicate every thought compiled into the present monograph, which begins with his paper "Gandhi's Religious Ethics as Touchstone". In 2005, it was published in the journal of *Studies in Indian Arts, Philosophy and Interreligious Dialogue (In Honour of Bettina Baumer)* (ed. Ernst Furlinger and Sadananda Das, New Delhi: D. K. Printworld) and I would like to express my sincere gratitude to its editor, Dr. Ernst Furlinger, from the Austrian University for Continuing Education Krems – Danube University Krems for his kind permission to republish the paper and have it translated into Slovenian.

The paper by Dr. Joseph Prabhu is followed by "Self and Its relation to the Others: Gandhian Thinking in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", written by Dr. Prem Anand Mishra from the

Faculty of Gandhian Studies of the University Gujarat Vidyapith in Ahmedabad, the institution that was established in 1920 by Mahatma himself. The paper explores various aspects of understanding the relationship between self and the Other from a Gandhian worldview and is followed by a paper by Dr. Janez Krek from the Department of Fundamental Pedagogical Subjects, Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana, titled “Gandhian *Satyagraha* as an Act”, which analyses the concept of Gandhian *satyagraha* from the perspective of the Symbolic and the Other and that of nonviolence as protest. The first section of discussions is followed by Readings and Album, i.e. Mahatma’s first-person accounts of his life, selected from his autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, and photographic glimpses from various periods of his unwavering action in India and elsewhere in the world. The second section of the monograph begins with the paper “The Impact of Theosophical Society on India’s Social and Political Life and the Life and Work of Mahatma Karamchand Gandhi” by Anton Rozman from the Theosophical Society, Slovenia, which explores various impacts of theosophical thought on Mahatma. Dr. Andrej Ule, a retired professor of philosophy from the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, touches upon Gandhi’s concept of *satyagraha* from the perspective of nonviolence, Truth and radical humanity in his paper “The Spiritual Foundations of Gandhi’s Satyagraha”. The monograph concludes with a brief overview of some segments of Mahatma’s unique philosophical creed in terms of a diverse intertwinement of ideas and doctrines stemming from various traditions that he endlessly tested in the unpredictable area of the ever-changing social reality. It is summarised in the paper written by editor Dr. Nina Petek titled “Gandhi’s Philosophy as Truth Lived Experientially”.

As is the case with all the contributions to this monograph, Gandhi’s thought is foremost an experience that takes its most genuine expression beyond theory and gives it a dynamic, creative and inimitable character, while at the same time, and this is particularly remarkable, it is pervaded with the spirit of universality, immutability, timelessness and ever-lasting relevance and topicality that go beyond the borders of India. Therefore, it may be concluded that Gandhi’s assassin was no doubt mistaken when he thought he would silence Mahatma with three shots; he did manage to assassinate Gandhi as a flesh-and-blood man, but Mahatma as the irreplaceable model of humankind and humanity, still addresses the global audience and the challenges of contemporary time. He is an eternal source of inspiration. Gandhi remains very much alive in the pursuit of inner fulfilment and outer harmony, with many people in India and around the world still unwaveringly striving to put the values incarnated in Mahatma into action – values that are a guideline to a more humane world. In moments of disappointment, despair, collapse of the most fundamental values and violence in all its forms, Gandhi’s thought “in the midst of death, life persists, in the midst of untruth, truth persists, in the midst of darkness, light persists” is more and more resonant and is a constant reminder that

in a world full of diversity, life and death, peace in the midst of war, friendship and love in the midst of wrath and hatred, it is possible to find a unifying axis. This is a foundation through which Mahatma united not only inconsistencies and dichotomies in his theoretical thought and action, but also India as a whole. He is proof that harmonious Union *is* attainable, but it first requires a violent “shake-up”, a change in oneself followed by a change in everything else. However, as the Great Soul would say, in a gentle and benevolent way.

Editor  
Reykjavik, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2022





*»Ni spokoja brez nevihte, ni miru brez spora.  
Spor je neločljivo povezan z mirom. Brez spora ne moremo spoznati miru.  
Življenje je nenehen boj, notranji ali zunanji.  
Zato je nujno, da mir dosežemo sredi spora.«*

Mahatma Gandhi, *Ljubi otrok: Pisma M. K. Gandhija Ester Faering*

\*

*“Yes, there is no calm without a storm, there is no peace without strife.  
Strife is inherent in peace. We should not know it without.  
Life is a perpetual struggle against strife whether within or without.  
Hence the necessity of realizing peace in the midst of strife.”*

Mahatma Gandhi, *My Dear Child: Letters from M. K. Gandhi to Esther Faering*



## Gandhijeva religiozna etika kot preizkusni kamen

**Joseph Prabhu**

*Oddelek za filozofijo, Kalifornijska državna univerza, Los Angeles, Združene države Amerike*

### Izleček

Gandhi je bil pogosto označen za svetnika med politiki. Zaradi svetniške zavezanosti nenasilju so ga primerjali s svetim Frančiškom Asiškim, svetim Pavlom in celo s Kristusom. Toda če dobro premislimo, je taka oznaka popolnoma protislovna. Po eni strani se zdi, da politika s trgovanjem z močjo, nemoralnim makiavelizmom in s tem, ko preračunljivost postavlja nad načela ter uspešne razplete nad tankovestna sredstva, ni ravno obetavna pot do svetosti. Vpeljevanje politike v duhovnost vselej razvrednoti in izpridi duhovni svet, po drugi strani pa se zdi, da vnašanje duhovnosti na politično prizorišče izkazuje naivnost in neučinkovitost na področju, kjer glavno vodilo predstavljajo prav posvetne strasti in pretkanost. Gandhi tradicionalnemu dualizmu med religijo in politiko pripisuje manjši pomen in poskuša med njima vzpostaviti »nedualen« odnos. Zdi se, da religija, ki je mišljena zlasti, vendar ne izključno z vidika etike, v tem novem pojmovanju nakazuje, da spoštuje resnico in je v službi življenja, pri tem pa ne ostaja za vrati prostora meditacije ali svetišča, temveč se nujno preliva v družbeno sfero. Posledično je pojmovanje politike predru-gačeno, saj ta postane kar najobsežnejše delovanje v javno korist in je vsaj v idealnih razmerah daleč stran od sektaštva, bolestone ambicioznosti in iger moči, s katerimi jo običajno povezuje. Prav to gandhijevsko pojmovanje etike predstavlja uskladitev nedualnega razmerja med religijo in politiko. Po eni strani Gandhi tako osebno kot družbeno etiko postavi v središče religije, po drugi strani pa si ta, sedaj etična religija, prizadeva za svojo izpopolnitev na področju politike, ki predstavlja prizorišče udejanjanja resnice in najvišjega potenciala delovanja v javno korist.

**Ključne besede:** Bog, religija, politika, *mokša*, *dharma*

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1 Glej tudi Rolland, R. *Mahatma Gandhi*. London: The Century Co., 1924, in Andrews, C. F. »The Tribute of a Friend«; v: *Mahatma Gandhi: Essays and Reflections on his Life and Work*, ur. Radhakrishnan, S. London: Allen and Unwin, 1949.

poleg drugih, posvaril tudi Bal Gangadhar Tilak: »Politika je igra posvetnih ljudi in ne *sadhujev*.«<sup>2</sup> Vpletanje politike v duhovnost namreč vselej razvrednoti in izpridi duhovni svet, po drugi strani pa se zdi, da vnašanje duhovnosti na politično prizorišče izkazuje naivnost in neučinkovitost na področju, kjer glavno vodilo predstavljajo prav posvetne strasti in pretkanost. Morda je tudi zato sam Kristus, kot se zdi, podpiral dualizem: »Dajte torej cesarju, kar je cesarjevega, in Bogu, kar je Božjega!«

Nasprotno pa Gandhi, ne da bi zanikal razlikovanje med cesarjevim in Božjim, zavrača strogo delitev med njima. Pogosto je dejal: »Lačnemu se Bog prikaže v obliki kruha.« Ta izjava je bila mišljena tako dobesedno kot simbolično. Gandhi tradicionalnemu dualizmu med religijo in politiko pripisuje manjši pomen in poskuša med njima vzpostaviti »nedualen« odnos. Zdi se, da religija, ki je mišljena zlasti, vendar ne izključno z vidika etike, v tem novem pojmovanju nakazuje, da spoštuje resnico in je v službi življenja, pri tem pa ne ostaja za vrati prostora meditacije ali svetišča, temveč se nujno preliva v družbeno sfero. Posledično je pojmovanje politike predrugačeno, saj ta postane kar najobsežnejše delovanje v javno korist in je vsaj v idealnih razmerah daleč stran od sektaštva, bolesterne ambicioznosti in iger moči, s katerimi jo običajno povežemo. Prav to gandhijevsko pojmovanje etike predstavlja uskladitev nedualnega razmerja med religijo in politiko. Po eni strani Gandhi tako osebno kot družbeno etiko postavi v središče religije, po drugi strani pa si ta, sedaj etična religija, prizadeva za svojo izpopolnitev na področju politike, ki predstavlja prizorišče udejanjanja resnice in najvišjega potenciala delovanja v javno korist.

S pričujočim prispevkom želim prikazati, da spričo nedualnega razmerja, ki ga Gandhi opaža med religijo na eni in etiko ter politiko na drugi strani, njegovo pojmovanje vseh treh področij dobi pečat dialektičnosti in spremenljivosti, kar omogoči, da se vsa tri področja postopoma in vzajemno oplemenitijo. Toda takšno dialektično usklajevanje ni brez tveganj in nevarnosti, ki jih pogosto prinašajo poskusi predrugačenja pojmovanja. Moj prispevek je razdeljen na tri dele: najprej bom predstavil tri temeljne pojme Gandhijeve religiozne etike, nato bom podal nekaj misli o Gandhijevem pojmovanju *mokše* oziroma duhovne osvoboditve in njenem razmerju do *dharme*, na koncu pa bom poskušal ta pojmovanja povezati s sedanjo situacijo.

## Gandhijeva religiozna etika

Gandhi je moralist v pravem pomenu besede, pa vendar je o njegovi etiki težko pisati s filozofskega stališča, saj se je načeloma ukvarjal s prakso in ne s teorijo ali abstraktno

2 Aiyar, »Gandhi, Gokhale, and the Moderates«, 103.

mislijo; takšna uporabna filozofija pa naj bi razkrivala »resnico« v preizkušnji doživetega. Od tod izhaja podnaslov njegove avtobiografije *Zgodba o mojih eksperimentih z resnico*. Eksperimenti napotujejo na dejstvo, da se resnica konceptov, vrednot in idealov izvrši šele v praksi; pred praktično izvršitvijo ti namreč ostajajo dozdevni in abstraktni. Poleg tega je Gandhijeva etika neločljivo povezana z njegovo religijo, kar je že samo po sebi nenavadno. Čeprav se je opredelil za hindujca, je to bil bolj v filozofskem kot v religijskem smislu in je bil do številnih hindujskih obredov in običajev kritičen. V skladu z njegovim religiozno-filozofskim idealom bi njegovo religijo lahko opisali kot življenje sebstva, ki poskuša sebe uresničiti kot Sebstvo ter tako doseči *mokšo* oziroma duhovno osvoboditev. Ker pa je bil *karmajogi*, je moral uresničevanje Sebstva izraziti prek posvetnega dela in banalnosti vsakdanjega življenja in ne z odpovedjo posvetnemu. Gandhiju lastna etika ima neomajno duhovno podobo, ki splošno veljavnost pridobi ravno spričo dejstva, da si jo prizadeva predstaviti na filozofsko nezaznamovan način. Ko torej trditev »Bog je Resnica« spreobrne v »Resnica je Bog«, to stori z utemeljitvijo, da je slednja trditev splošnejša in bo dosegla odziv tudi pri nevernikih:

Bog je Resnica, a Bog je tudi marsikaj drugega. Zato raje pravim, da je Resnica Bog [...]. Častite lahko preprosto karkoli, kar mislite, da je resnično, saj je spoznanje Resnice relativno. Zapomnite si le to, da je Resnica samo ena izmed mnogih poimenovanih značilnosti. Je živo utelešenje Boga, je edino Življenje, in jaz Resnico enačim z najpolnejšim življenjem. Tako postane nekaj oprijemljivega, saj Bog je vse svoje stvarjenje, vse Bivanje in služi vsemu, kar biva.<sup>3</sup>

Ta trditev izpričuje Gandhijev prirojeni čut za strpnost in vključenost, saj verjame, da so njegovi ideali resnice in nenasilja dostopni tudi tistim, ki se ne strinjajo z njegovo religiozno metafiziko. Za nekatere moralne trditve je značilno, da jih lahko razumemo in utemeljimo na različne načine, a se zanje izkaže, da so veljavne na različnih ravneh razumevanja. Tako je lahko načelo iskrenosti utemeljeno na preudarnosti (»iskrenost je najboljše vodilo«) ali vzbujanju zaupanja in spodbujanju sožitja v družbi (utilitarizem), na varovanju lastne integritete in pravičnosti pred zakonom (Kant), kot dolžnost do drugih, ki so svobodni posamezniki s čutom za moralo (Kant in nekatere oblike krščanstva), ali kot kozmična dolžnost (*dharmična* utemeljitev), če omenimo le nekaj možnosti. Prav tako se ljudje lahko poenotijo glede nekaterih človekovih pravic, pa čeprav jih utemeljujejo precej drugače. V podobnem duhu je Gandhi želel, da bi se njegovemu nauku o nenasilju približalo kar največ ljudi. A če želimo razumeti posebno utemeljitev in interpretacijo njegovih idej o etiki, ne moremo mimo religiozne metafizike, ki predstavlja njihov temelj in izhodišče. James Hart to lepo povzame, ko pravi:

3 CWMG:68:81.

Ko vedantska tradicija zagovarja, da je vsako sestvo kot Sestvo popolnoma in nespremenljivo takšno, da ga ni mogoče popredmetiti, zagovarja, da ima resnica stvari in drugih sestev obliko vzročnosti, ki ni vzročnost materialnih predmetov. Temeljno občutenje samega sebe in drugega, ki ga vzbudi zavezanost Resnici, pomeni neskladnost sestev z materialnimi, »nesebstenimi«, brezdušnimi predmeti. *Abinse* je prakticiranje nekakšne transcendentalne redukcije, saj ohranja najosnovnejšo resnico. In zavedanje o najosnovnejši Resnici, resnici o sestvih in pomenih, tvori osrednji pomen *abinse*.<sup>4</sup>

Prek spodnjih uvodnih opomb bom analiziral in komentiral nekaj Gandhijevih ključnih etičnih konceptov. Za Gandhija resnica ni niti izključno niti predvsem značilnost trditev, čeprav ne zavrača pomena stvarne resnice ali vzporejanja trditev in dejanskega stanja, ki jih bodisi potrdi bodisi zavrne. Njegovo mnogostransko pojmovanje resnice izpostavlja predvsem ontološke, moralne in eksistencialne vidike. Z ontološkega vidika je *satja* izpeljava iz *sat*, ki je samobivajoče bistvo, tako dejstvo kot najstvo stvarnosti. Ta izpeljava je Gandhija vodila k temu, da je pogosto dejal: »Nič ne obstaja v stvarnosti, razen Resnice, vse drugo je utvara.« Onkraj varljivega tuzemskega toka naravnih pojavov je večna Resnica, ki jo je Gandhi imenoval tudi Absolutna Resnica. Toda ljudje lahko zaradi omejenih zmožnosti dostopamo le do relativne resnice. S to trditvijo Gandhi zagovarja epistemološko ponižnost in strpnost; vse naše dojetje resnice je nujno pristransko, zato je sklicevanje na popolno spoznanje neutemeljeno in nevarno.

Ontološki vidik resnice nakazuje objektivnejše pojmovanje resnice, moralni in eksistencialni vidik pa sta usmerjena k subjektivnejšemu, skoraj kierkegaardovskemu pojmovanju resnice kot subjektivitete, globoko osebnega čuta za resnico, ki jo lahko izkusimo le prek dejanj. Raghavan Iyer izpostavi dualnost subjektivnega in objektivnega vidika resnice:

Gandhi resnice ni mogel obravnavati izključno kot objekta razuma ali preprosto kot ploda človeške odločitve. Zanj [...] resnica ni nič manj bleščeča od stvarnosti in do nje ni mogoče dostopati brez razumevanja Večnega zakona narave. Ko pa jo enkrat ugledamo in usvojimo, moramo ravnati v skladu z njo. V tem smislu je treba resnico odkriti in ustvariti, jo najti in udejanjiti [...]. V tem aktivističnem pogledu na resnico [...] ni dovolj, da misel temelji na resnici; pokazati se mora v življenju mislečega in biti vidno zastopana v njegovih dejanjih.<sup>5</sup>

Kot smo že nakazali, se je Gandhijeva ideja o resnici najbolje odslikavala v politiki, ki jo je v skladu s svojim moralnim nazorom pojmoval kot prizorišče kar najobsežnejšega javnega delovanja v korist dobrega. Ideja, v kateri je Gandhi zajel moralno pojmovanje

4 Hart, »Recent Works in Gandhi Studies«, 156.

5 Iyer, *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, 154.

politike, je bila *satjagraha*, ki jo je zasnoval kot praktičen eksperiment vpeljevanja resnice in nenasilja na politično področje. Gandhi je tej ideji začel slediti zgodaj v politični karieri, ko je izraz *satjagraha* izbral za ime svojega odporiškega gibanja proti zatiralški vladi Južne Afrike. Svojo odločitev je pojasnil takole: »Resnica [*satja*] pomeni ljubezen in trdnost [*agraha*] in je sopomenka izraza za silo. Tako sem Indijsko gibanje za neodvisnost poimenoval *satjagraha*, torej sila, ki je rojena iz resnice in ljubezni do nenasilja.«<sup>6</sup> Silovit in aktivističen značaj *satjagrade* naj bi odpravil pogosto zmotno prepričanje – da namreč predstavlja nedejaven odpor, preprosto nastavljanje drugega lica. Čeprav je Gandhi vztrajal, da se je nasilju treba upreti z ljubeznijo in razumevanjem, je menil, da izbira nenasilnih sredstev odpora ne sme zamegliti pogleda na mogočen cilj – uveljavljanje pravičnosti in resnice. Zapisano je celo, da je dejal, da bi, če bi moral izbirati med nedejavnim sprejemanjem krivice in nasilnim odporom, izbral slednje. Kljub temu pa je bil prepričan, da je nenasilen odpor boljši od obeh možnosti.

*Satjagraha* se začne kot razprava z nasprotnikom ali oporečnikom, da bi skupaj prišla do pravične rešitve, ob zavedanju, da nobena stran nima monopola nad resnico oziroma nima popolnoma prav. Cilj je torej doseči razumen kompromis, ki bo sprejemljiv za obe strani. Šele ko so vsi postopki razpravljanja, prepričevanja in sprejemanja kompromisov izčrpani in se izkažejo za neuspešne, lahko uporabimo tehniko neposrednih ukrepov *satjagrade*. *Satjagraha* obsega izvajanje dejanj, kot so nesodelovanje (stavka, bojkot, izprtje, post), državljanska nepokorščina (neplačevanje davkov, neupoštevanje posebnih zakonov ali odredb), obveščanje javnosti o svojih prizadevanjih s pohodi, shodi, stavkovnimi stražami in drugimi oblikami mirnega protesta ter konstruktivni programi (cenejša stanovanja, izobraževanje, zdravstvene ustanove, združne banke za revne). Velik del takšnega nenasilnega odpora predstavlja *tapas* – pripravljenost trpeti, da bi dosegli svoj cilj. Thomas Pantham pravi: »*Satjagraha* predpostavlja, da ko z razpravo ne zmoremo doseči uma, *satjagrabiji* z argumentom trpljenja zatiralcu ali nasprotniku sežejo do srca. Poleg tega je trpljenje, ki ga povzročimo sami sebi, izhod v sili, ki je v službi resnice in lahko nadomesti nasilje nad drugim, ki resnico zanika.«<sup>7</sup>

Ideja *satjagrade* obsega tudi vprašanje sredstev in ciljev, ki sta za Gandhija dve plati iste medalje. Gandhi odločno zavrača splošno sprejeto politično idejo, da cilj opravičuje sredstva. Še več: meni, da nemoralna sredstva spridijo in popačijo potencialno dobre cilje, zato prav toliko ali celo še bolj poudarja sredstva, ki jih opiše kot cilj v dejanjih. »Sredstva lahko primerjamo s semenom, cilj pa z drevesom; med sredstvi in ciljem je enaka neizpodbitna vez kakor med semenom in drevesom.«<sup>8</sup> Silovit in aktivističen značaj *satjagrade* logično napeljuje k ideji nenasilja.

6 CWMG:34:172.

7 Pantham, »Habermas' Practical Discourse and Gandhi's *Satyagraha*«, 292–310.

8 CWMG:10:431.

Gandhi se nedvomno sklicuje na džainistično načelo *ahimsa*, ki prepoveduje namerno poškodovanje ali povzročanje škode kateremukoli bitju, vendar ga razume onkraj preproste negativne formulacije in zanj pomeni največjo ljubezen, ljubezen do bližnjega. »Če sledim *ahimsi*, moram svojega sovražnika ali tujca ljubiti kakor lastnega očeta ali sina, ki greši. *Ahimsa* nujno vključuje resnico in smelost.«<sup>9</sup> *Ahimsa* je torej uporaba moralne sile z namenom prepričevanja nasprotnika ali oporečnika. Od nasilja se razlikuje v tem, da spoštuje neodvisnost in dostojanstvo drugega. Razlikuje se tudi v nenehni pripravljenosti na pogovor in pogajanje z drugim ter, če je usklajena s pravičnostjo, vodi v sklenitev kompromisa. Ker pa posameznik v najboljšem primeru lahko resnico dojema le pristransko, je nujno, da nanjo pogleda z vidika drugega in poskuša doseči višjo ali dialektično spravo med nasprotujočima si ciljema. Izpogajani kompromis ima nasproten učinek od nasilja, ki vključuje poraz in ponižanje nasprotnika ter neizogibno sproži krog zamere, škodoželjnosti in nadaljnje nasilje.

Seveda pa Gandhi ni bil tako naiven, da bi menil, da je do takšnega moralnega prepričevanja mogoče priti zlahka. Dobro se je zavedal, da se ljudje, ki imajo oblast nad drugimi, le-tej ne bodo odrekli brez prisile. Uporabiti moramo vsa zgoraj omenjena sredstva *satjagrahe*, da nasprotnika moralno prisilimo k pogajanju. Res je, da v tem primeru uporabimo prisilo, toda pri tem še vedno spoštujemo moralno neodvisnost in dostojanstvo drugega, tudi tako, da smo sami sebi pripravljene povzročiti trpljenje. Ta taktika predpostavlja, da je nasprotnik vsaj malo dovzeten za tak moralni klic. To dovzetnost je bil Gandhi pripravljen priznati večini ljudem, a se je obenem zavedal, da obstajajo blazneži, tirani, posiljevalci in napadalci, ki ne spadajo v to kategorijo. V takšnih skrajnih primerih je bil Gandhi pripravljen uporabiti fizično silo za samoobrambo, kot denimo takrat, ko je odobril uporabo vojaške sile, da bi dosegel umik pakistanske vojske leta 1948, saj je menil, da gre za napad na Kašmir. Manj zadovoljiv je bil njegov odgovor na vprašanje Martina Buberja, ki ga je pozneje nejeverno vprašal, ali meni, da bi Judje morali uporabiti *satjagraho* proti Hitlerju.<sup>10</sup>

Trije koncepti, ki sem jih obravnaval, *satja*, *satjagraha* in *ahimsa*, nam lahko pomagajo vsaj delno spoznati strukturo Gandhijeve etične misli. Kot sem omenil že zgoraj, lahko ideji resnice in nenasilja zagotovo najdemo v džainističnih, budističnih in hindujskih tradicijah, čeprav je razlika med Gandhijevim in tradicionalnim pojmovanjem teh idej precej velika. Visoki standardi moralne in duhovne discipline, na katere se sklicuje Gandhi, so bili tradicionalno del *sadbane* menihov in svetnikov, nikakor pa ne ljudi v političnem življenju. Prav nasprotno: politični misleci, kot sta bila Manu in Kavtilja, so odobravali uporabo fizične sile tako v samoobrambi kot za uveljavljanje politične

9 Pismo v *Modern Review*, oktober 1916, cit. v Iyer, *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, 180.

10 Buber, M., J. L. Magnes. *Two Letters to Gandhi*. Jeruzalem: Rubin Mass, april 1939, omenjeno v Dalton, *Mahatma Gandhi: Nonviolent Power in Action*, 228. Glej tudi Gandhijeve pogovore z drugimi Judi, o katerih Dalton razpravlja na str. 134–138.



discipline. Gandhi pa je precej omilil tradicionalni dualizem med etiko na eni in religijo in politiko na drugi strani. Namesto tega poskuša med njima vzpostaviti nedualno razmerje, v katerem religija, pojmovana kot čaščenje Življenja, ki je v službi Življenja, nujno vodi v politiko, na prizorišče udejanjanja najvišjega potenciala delovanja v javno korist, medtem ko politiko pred izkoriščanjem oblasti in konflikti sektaških interesov rešuje moralno očiščenje, ki ga v največji možni meri omogoča prav religija. Zelo pomembno je, da Gandhijevo visoko moralno pojmovanje religije in politike razlikujemo od njunih ideoloških pojmovanj, ki so v današnjem času vse preveč pogosta. Zaradi vzpona religijskega fundamentalizma in desničarskih religijskih skupin je vsak miroljuben človek ob združevanju religije in politike gotovo zaskrbljen. Iz mojega pisanja bi vendarle moralo biti razvidno, da sta moralni nadzor in ravnovesje, ki ju je Gandhi vpeljeval v religijo in politiko, prečistila obe področji in ponudila njuno drugačno in plemenitejše pojmovanje, ki mu še nismo dorasli.

## Gandhijeva etična religija

Razmerje med *dharmo* in *mokšo* je bilo v indijski tradiciji predmet mnogih razprav. Čeprav se večina strinja, da ideal *mokše* prevlada nad zahtevami *dharme*, so vselej razpravljali o natančnih vezeh med tema idealoma in vrednostjo *dharme* z vidika *mokše*. Po eni strani je *dharma* obravnavana kot sredstvo za doseganje *mokše*, z vidika *mokše* pa je *dharma* s togo strukturo klana/kaste/družine pogosto obravnavana kot ovira za *mokšo*. Po pravovernem prepričanju ima *dharma* absolutno veljavo tudi za človeka, ki je dosegel *mokšo*, vendar je od nekdaj obstajalo – in še vedno obstaja – veliko vplivnih stališč, ki to trditev postavljajo pod vprašaj. Navsezadnje je *mokša* stanje zavesti, ki izhaja iz resnične narave stvari, medtem ko *dharma* spada na področje delovanja in volje. Drugače rečeno, *dharma* ohranja uveljavljeni družbeno-etični red, *mokša* pa je »osvoboditev« od tega reda, da bi dosegli samouresničitev – svobodno duhovno individualnost, ki presega področje etike.

Toda za Gandhija *dharma* ostaja na prvem mestu. Čeprav govori o *mokši*, poudarja etično upravičenost do *mokše* in ne *mokšo* samo po sebi: »Prišel sem do spoznanja, da se nihče, ki je še živ, ne more imenovati *mukta*; kvečjemu lahko rečemo, da postane primeren za *mokšo* [...]. Potreba po osvoboditvi ostaja, vse dokler ostaja vez s telesom.«<sup>11</sup> V tem lahko prepoznamo močno vzporednico s Kantom: tako kot Kant postavi pravico pred dobro in krepost pred srečo, Gandhi poudari iskanje *mokše* in ne ideala *mokše* same po sebi. Pri obeh gre za stroga moralna merila in poudarek na procesu, ne rezultatu. To med številnimi drugimi dokazi potrjuje tudi Gandhijeva izjemna želja, da bi se ponovno rodil kot eden od nedotakljivih, saj bi tako lahko služil najbolj ubogim med ubogimi. To je v

11 CWMG:32:136.

nasprotju z vsemi običajnimi idejami o *mokši* kot osvoboditvi od etičnih zahtev družbenega reda za uresničitev svobodne duhovne zavesti. Tako kot *bodhisattva* se tudi Gandhi ne želi osvoboditi od takšnih zahtev. Njegovo pogosto sklicevanje na *advajta vedanto* je zavajajoče – vsaj če gre za Šankarovo različico: doseganje višjega stanja zavesti, pri katerem izgine tančica iluzije, *maje*, ga ne zanima preveč; raje z vso resnostjo obravnava ta svet kot področje, v katerem izpolnjujemo svoje *dharmične* dolžnosti.

V nasprotju z večino indijske religijske tradicije, ki je v glavnem kontemplativna, je Gandhijeva religija izrazito aktivistična. Pri tem se pravilna in nepravilna prepričanja določajo v praksi, ne pa z mišljenjem ali spoznanjem. Ta aktivizem je povezan z izrazito etičnostjo njegove religije – oblikovanjem pravih nagnjenj, naravnostjo in razmerji v povezavi z zahtevami soljudi in narave. Le v takšnih zahtevah in prek njih se vzpostavi pravi odnos do Boga. Gandhi se popolnoma strinja s svetim Janezom, apostolom in evangelistom, ki pravi, da je tisti, ki razglašá ljubezen do Boga, ki ga ne more videti, obenem pa ne ljubi bližnjega, ki ga lahko vidi, lažnivec in dvoiličnež.

Ekonomist in filozof John Maynard Keynes je nekoč vzpostavil razliko med religijo in etiko, rekoč, da se religija ukvarja z odnosom posameznika do samega sebe in Poslednjega, etika pa z odnosom posameznika do drugih in do predposlednjega. Gandhi je menil, da sta oba sklopa dualnosti v Keynesovem opisu razumljena napačno – dualnost sebstva in drugega ter Poslednjega in predposlednjega. Glede prve dualitete bi se Gandhi spričo svojega trdnega prepričanja o medsebojni povezanosti celotnega življenja in pogleda na sebstvo z vidika razmerja popolnoma strinjal z mislijo angleškega pesnika Johna Donna: »Noben človek ni otok, popolnoma sam zase [...]. Smrt slehernega človeka vzame del mene, ker pripadam človeški vrsti [...], in zato nikdar ne pošiljaj poizvedovat, komu zvoni; zvoni tebi.«<sup>12</sup> Glede druge dualnosti, namreč dualnosti Poslednjega in predposlednjega, Gandhi sicer ne zanika področja nadnaravnega, vendar je trdno prepričan, da ga je mogoče doseči zlasti s popolnim sprejemanjem naravnega. Gandhi je upal, da bo Boga ugledal v obrazih soljudi, predvsem revnih in zatiranih.

Pokomentirajmo štiri značilnosti Gandhijeve etične religije. Prvič: je povsem posvetna zadeva. V kulturi, kjer ciklične predstave o času in verovanje v *karmo* ter reinkarnacijo pogosto – po mojem mnenju zmotno – vodijo v ravnodušnost do posvetnosti, Gandhi prevzame Buddhov občutek nujnosti, da moramo svoje odrešenje doseči v tem življenju in da moramo to storiti s popolnim sprejemanjem sedanosti, ne glede na to, v kakšnih okoliščinah se znajdemo. Gandhiju je občutek nujnosti, ki je običajno povezan z linearnim pogledom na svet v smislu »eno življenje, ena priložnost«, uspelo uskladiti z verovanjem v *karmo* in reinkarnacijo ob razlagi, da naša sedanja dejanja določajo naravo naših prihodnjih ponovnih rojstev. Pri tem pa ga ni posebej zanimalo razglabljanje o ponovnih rojstvih ali o kateremkoli drugem svetu, razen sedanjem.

12 V slovenskem prevodu v Hemingway, E. *Komu zvoni*. Prev. Janez Gradišnik. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 2005.

Drugič, kot smo že poudarili, je bila Gandhijeva religija bolj družbena in korporativna kot individualistična. Njegova ideja *svaradža* ali moralnega samoobvladovanja ni povezana s Kantovo idejo avtonomije, s katero jo včasih zmotno primerjajo. Čeprav Gandhi ceni vrednote samoobvladovanja, ki so del Kantove samozakonodaje, bi, če bi mu predstavili kantovski pogled, zagotovo kritiziral njegovo razdrobljenost in izoliranost – občutek, da je treba samozakonodajo uresničevati brez družbenih vezi in pripadnosti lokalnemu okolju. Pri Gandhiju, nasprotno, ni šlo za osvoboditev od takšnih vezi, saj so prav te vezi osnova človeškega bivanja. Če bi se hoteli osvoboditi od njih, bi se izognili svoji temeljni človeški odgovornosti. Dviga k Božanskemu in Univerzalnemu ni mogoče doseči tako, da se razvežemo od človeškega in partikularnega, temveč tako, da ju sprejmemo in si prizadevamo postati dostojen izraz Božje navzočnosti. Znova in znova, zlasti v komentarju h *Bhagavadgiti*, Gandhi poudarja združevanje dveh moralnih idealov – zunanjega, ki je družbena dolžnost, in notranjega, ki predstavlja odrekanje in razdružitev. Cilj torej ni odrekanje dejanju, temveč odrekanje v dejanju, kar je resnični cilj *karmajoge* in pot nesebičnega služenja.<sup>13</sup>

Tretjič: Gandhijevo izpostavljanje posvetnega in partikularnih vezi je v skladu tudi z njegovim poudarjanjem kontinuitete sredstev in ciljev. V prvem delu smo omenili njegove metafore iz narave, o semenih, drevesih, koreninah in vejah, ki jih uporabi, da pokaže, kako neločljivo so zanj sredstva povezana s cilji. V ostrem nasprotju s tistimi, ki poudarjajo cilje in uspešno doseganje ciljev, ne glede na uporabljena sredstva, pa Gandhi poudarja moralni in eksistencialni pomen sredstev. Po eni strani so cilji v prihodnosti, na prihodnost pa že po definiciji nimamo popolnega vpliva. Poleg tega obstajajo tudi nenamerne posledice naših lastnih dejanj in dejanj drugih deležnikov, ki vplivajo na naša dejanja. Cilji so torej onkraj naše presoje; tisto, na kar se moremo in moramo osredotočiti, so sredstva. Toda tudi tu Gandhi razlikuje med sredstvi, ki veljajo zgolj za instrumentalna, in sredstvi, ki izražajo namen. Sredstva, ki jih razumemo kot instrumente, postanejo skupek nujnih in pogosto napornih korakov do cilja, vendar je cilj tisti, ki terja našo pozornost, kot denimo takrat, ko opravljamo neprijetno delo samo zato, da bi zaslužili nekaj denarja. Sredstva, ki jih razumemo kot izraz namena, postanejo cilji v procesu delovanja, tudi če vemo, da cilja ne bomo dosegli. Uspeh se ne meri z dejanskim doseganjem ciljev, temveč s predanostjo. Martin Luther King mlajši, znan Gandhijev učenec, je imel na predvečer umora Mahatme znano pridigo, ki povzema Gandhijevo misel: »No, ne vem, kaj se bo zgodilo zdaj. Čaka nas nekaj težavnih dni. Ampak zame to zdaj resnično ni pomembno, kajti bil sem na vrhu gore .... Videl sem obljubljeni dežel. Morda ne bom prišel tja skupaj z vami. Ampak ... Nocoj sem srečen. Nič me ne skrbi ... Moje oči so videle slavo Božjega prihoda.«<sup>14</sup>

13 Glej Gandhi, M. K. *The Gospel of Selfless Action or the Gita According to Gandhi*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1946.

14 King, »I See the Promised Land«, 279–286.

Četrtič: Gandhijeva religija je bila celostna. Omenili smo že, da je Gandhi vero razumel kot naravno vodilo v politiki in pri delovanju v družbeno korist. Tisti, ki so se udeleževali njegovih bogoslužij, so bili pogosto presenečeni, saj je zlahka prekinil govor o perečih političnih problemih, se od njih odmaknil in jih po opravljeni molitvi znova spontano vpeljal v govor. Ta celovitost je ključ do izjemno širokega razpona zanimanj in stisk, ki so pritegovali njegovo pozornost: vse od teologije do nege zob, od reševanja sporov do komunalne ureditve, od političnega organiziranja do neskončnega eksperimentiranja s prehrano. Notranje življenje in zunanje delovanje, osebna rast in delovanje v korist drugih so sestavljali nedeljivo celoto. Gandhi je vse življenje dojemal kot sveto in svoje življenje kot molitev.

## Kratek pregled

V prvem delu prispevka sem se osredotočil na Gandhijevo religiozno etiko, v drugem pa na njegovo etično religijo, da bi poudaril zanju značilno nedualnost. V zadnjem delu bom na kratko pokomentiral sklicevanje na indijske tradicije, nato pa obsežneje povezavo s svetom nasploh.

Prvič, v okviru indijske tradicije Gandhijeva etika kot etika predstavlja najpomembnejši etični prispevek Indijca v sodobnem času. Etika kot enovita in koherentna miselna struktura ni področje, ki bi mu indijski misleci posvečali veliko pozornosti, vsaj ne v primerjavi z drugimi področji filozofske in religijske misli. To velja kljub dejstvu, da je večina indijske filozofske in religijske tradicije izrazito vrednostno naravnana in da osrednjo pozornost namenja idealom *dharme* in *mokše* ter pojasnjevanju razmerja med njima ter drugimi vrednotami in vprašanji. To je navidezno protislovje. Denimo, pokojni Bimal Matilal, eden najuglednejših indijskih filozofov, je potožil takole: »V indijski filozofski tradiciji zagotovo obstaja vrzel. Indijski poklicni filozofi se v zadnjih 2000 letih dosledno ukvarjajo s problemi logike in epistemologije, metafizike in soteriologije ter včasih pomembno prispevajo k svetovni filozofski dediščini. Toda indijski poklicni filozofi z izjemo nekaj bežnih pripomb in pronicljivih opazanj zelo redko razpravljajo o tem, kar danes imenujemo moralna filozofija.«<sup>15</sup> Namesto tega so indijski misleci razmišljanja o morali vključevali v raznolika filozofska, literarna in teološka besedila v sanskrtu in narečjih, ne da bi sistematično pojasnili načela in norme, ki jih opredeljujejo kot moralna.

Gandhi ni bil ne filozof ne sistematični mislec, temveč človek dejanj. Kljub temu se je moral v svojem življenju soočiti s številnimi etičnimi izzivi in razmišljati o številnih

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15 Glej Matilal, B. »Moral Dilemmas: Insights from Indian Epics«, v: *Collected Papers, Vol. 1*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999.

moralnih vprašanjih, saj je bil, kot smo že omenili, moralist v pravem pomenu besede. Ko neindijski moralni filozofi iščejo sodobnega indijskega moralnega misleca, s katerim bi lahko razpravljali o indijski etični misli, se vselej obrnejo na Gandhija.

Njegov prispevek k religiozni misli je morda spornejši. V indijskih religijskih tradicijah prevladujejo modreci in mistiki, Gandhi pa ni bil ne eno ne drugo. Natančneje bi ga lahko opisali kot globoko religioznega človeka, ki je dosegel veliko dobrega. A ko razpravljamo o religiozni misli, je pomembno upoštevati kakovost razmisleka. Gandhi kot mislec ponuja model etične religije, ki je v indijski tradiciji razmeroma redek. Kot smo že nakazali, je, upošteva glavni predmet zanimanja pri *mokši*, ki naj bi bila »onkraj dobrega in zlega«, v precejšnjem delu tradicije navzoča ambivalenca do etike. Tagore in Aurobindo, denimo, sta bila precej kritična do Gandhijevega moralizma, čeprav prvi svoje kritike ni izražal javno. Tagore, ki se je šolal v duhu spekulativne veličine *upanišad* in občudoval estetsko vitalnost in duhovno globino klasičnih indijskih tradicij, se je z Gandhijem razhajal v praktično vseh pomembnih političnih vprašanjih, od *svadešija* do množične državljanske nepokorščine, od posta do kolovrata, od celibata do tehnologije. Temelj teh nesoglasij je bila bistvena razlika v stališčih in nazorih. Tagore, metafizični pesnik, je močno nasprotoval Gandhijevemu puritanizmu in zanj utesnjujočemu moralizmu. »Odrešitev zame ni v odpovedi. Objem svobode čutim v tisočerihih vezeh užitka.«<sup>16</sup>

Aurobindo je Gandhija še bolj ostro kritiziral. Po eni strani je Aurobindo v času svojega političnega udejstvovanja odkrito zagovarjal nasilje, kadar to zahtevajo okoliščine, Gandhijevo neomajno stališče do nenasilja pa se mu je zdelo enostransko in omejeno. Ko se je Aurobindo odrekel političnemu aktivizmu zavoljo jogijske izkušnje, je imel, v duhu svojih prizadevanj za integralno jogo in nekakšno gnostično mistiko, Gandhija za precej suhoparnega misleca, čigar moralna strogost še zdaleč ni vodila k duhovni svobodi, temveč je največkrat botrovala samoodtujitvi in nasilju nad samim seboj. Po Aurobindu so Gandhijeva etična razmišljanja spadala na področje nižje stopnje duhovnega razvoja in so bila celo na tej nižji stopnji nepopolna in pretirana.<sup>17</sup>

Tako močno različna stališča niso bila le posledica osebnostnih razlik, temveč tudi dejstva, da sta si indijsko tradicijo prilastila vsak na svoj način. Tako Tagore kot Aurobindo sta bila mistično naravnana misleca, naklonjena spekulativnemu in metafizičnemu bogastvu *Ved*, *upanišad* in indijske filozofske tradicije. Gandhijevo poznavanje in občutljivost za starodavne in klasične indijske tradicije je bilo veliko bolj omejeno – privlačili so ga zlasti njihovi moralni in didaktični vidiki. To je na neki način omogočilo njegovo razvpito razlago *Bhagavadgite*, ki jo mnogi dokaj upravičeno označujejo za

16 Tagore, *Collected Poems and Plays of Rabindranath Tagore*, 34. Glej tudi Ray, S. »Tagore-Gandhi Controversy«; v: *Gandhi, India, and the World: An International Symposium*, ur. Ray, S. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1970, 119–141.

17 Glej Minor, R. »Sri Aurobindo's Dismissal of Gandhi and his Nonviolence«; v: *Indian Critiques of Gandhi*, ur. Harold C. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003.

idiosinkratično in hermenevtično arbitrarno. Viri njegovega navdiha so bili epi in pobožni svetniki srednjeveškega hinduizma, seveda pa sta nanj močno vplivala tudi džainizem in rodni Gudžarat.

Toda kljub tej ozki naravnosti – in morda prav zaradi nje – je Gandhi ustvaril model etične religije, ki se je opiral na zapostavljeno in sorazmerno podcenjeno področje indijske tradicije – pot *karmajoge* ali duhovne uresničitve z družbenim delovanjem. Čeprav so drugi, kot denimo Buddha, poudarjali vez med sočutjem do trpečega človeštva in duhovno celovitostjo, je bil prav Gandhi tisti, ki je Buddhovemu sporočilu dal novo razsežnost, in sicer razsežnost neposrednega političnega delovanja, kar je bila radikalna poteza. Gandhi je upal, da bo s tem dosegel dvojno preobrazbo: po eni strani je želel politiko očistiti tako, da bi osrednjo vlogo namenil moralnim in religijskim normam, po drugi strani pa je upal, da bo religijo očistil tako, da jo bo obranil nevarnosti, ki jih prinašata ukvarjanje s samim sabo in narcizem. Če nekoliko predrugačimo Jezusovo sporočilo, lahko rečemo, da kdor svoje življenje zaradi družbenopolitičnega delovanja izgubi, ga bo rešil. Tagore je bil ob vseh nesoglasjih z Gandhijem dovolj pronicljiv, da je to opazil:

Njegova osebnost je izžarevala nepopisno moč, kakor glasba, kakor lepota. Njegov vpliv na druge je bil velik, saj je razkrival spontano darovanje samega sebe [...]. Čeprav je njegovo področje delovanja politika v praksi, je v zavest ljudi prišla podoba njegovega značaja, ki so jo enačili z velikimi mojstri, katerih duhovni navdih zaobjema in obenem presega vse raznolike pojave človečnosti in zaradi katerih se obraz posvetnosti obrne k svetlobi, ki prihaja iz neusahljivega vira modrosti.<sup>18</sup>

To dialektično ravnovesje med moralno, politiko in religijo je izjemno obetavno, obenem pa prinaša precejšnje tveganje. Nevarnost poduhovljenja politike, ki se je številnim zdela povsem mogoča, je v tem, da idealizira človeško naravo, postavlja nemogoča merila vedénja in nazadnje iz najboljšega ustvari sovražnika dobrega. Ker se v tem pisanju bolj osredotočam na razmerje med religijo in etiko, se ne bom podrobneje ukvarjal s posledicami, ki jih je Gandhijev moralizem imel na politiko. S tem, ko moralna merila postanejo temeljna na vseh področjih, se pojavi nevarnost, da bo religija zreducirana na etiko, kot denimo v Kantovi moralni filozofiji. Gandhi se tej nevarnosti izogne s prepoznanjem transcendentnih prvin religioznega in sklicevanjem nanje. Pravi namreč: »Dokler semena morale ne zalijemo z religijo, ne more vzkliti [...]. Če izluščimo bistvo vseh moralnih zakonov, bomo ugotovili, da je najvišja oblika morale poskus delovanja v korist človeštva.«<sup>19</sup> Daleč od tega, da bi religijo zreduciral na etiko, Gandhi poskuša etiko pov-

18 Tagore, »The Poet's Verdict«; v: Radhakrishnan S. (ur.), *Essays and Reflections on His Life and Work. Presented to him on his Seventieth Birthday October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1939*, 286.

19 Gandhi, M. *Ethical Religion (Nithi Dharma)*. Madras: Ganesan, 1922, cit. v Iyer, *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, 48.

zdigniti k religiji, obenem pa vzpostavi sistem nadzora in ohranjanja ravnovesja v religiji, kar preprečuje, da bi se spridila.

Omemba morebitne izprijenosti religije opozarja na eno od velikih nevarnosti našega časa – pojav temne plati religije, saj ta postaja ideološka. Charles Kimball je izpostavil štiri znake razvrednotenja religije, ki sicer predstavljajo nenehno nevarnost, vendar se v zadnjem času pojavljajo še posebej pogosto:

1. Vztrajanje pri neomajnosti trditev o resnici v svoji lastni tradiciji in s tem povezano demoniziranje in razčlovečenje drugih, ki mislijo drugače znotraj te iste tradicije in širše.
2. Slepa poslušnost religijskim avtoritetam, ki imajo tako veliko moč, da sprejemajo odločitve, ki vplivajo tako na pripadnike njihovih tradicij kot tudi na ljudi zunaj njih.
3. Vzpostavitev idealnega ali mesijanskega časa z apokaliptičnim predznakom, v katerem je uničenje razumljeno kot uvod v »poslednjo sodbo«.
4. Trditev, da cilj opravičuje sredstva in da so v imenu varovanja določene religije ali njenih interesov dopustna vsa sredstva, tudi nasilna. To lahko včasih zavoljo doseganja ciljev privede do »svetih vojn«.<sup>20</sup>

Različne oblike sodobne religije v različni meri razkrivajo nekatere ali vse od omenjenih značilnosti, in sicer na različnih stopnjah, ne glede na to, ali govorimo o etničnem tribalizmu, fundamentalizmu ali porastu religijskega nasilja. V takšnih okoliščinah se mi zdi, da je Gandhijevo neomajno vztrajanje pri moralnem samopreizpraševanju in očiščenju prek idej o resnici, nenasilju in povzročanju trpljenja samemu sebi (*tapasja*) kot nujna posledica vsakršnega političnega udejstvovanja nujno potreben kamen spotike in izboljšava.

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Joseph Prabhu je bil akademik in mirovni aktivist, redni in zaslužni profesor filozofije in religije na Kalifornijski državni univerzi v Los Angelesu (CSULA) ter izredni profesor za študije religije na Univerzi za dodiplomske študije Claremont Graduate University. Uredil je knjigo *The Intercultural Challenge of Raimon Panikkar* (Orbis Books, 1996) in souredil dva zvezka publikacije *Indian Ethics: Classical Traditions and Contemporary Challenges* (Ashgate Publishing Co., 2007; Springer and Oxford University Press, India, 2019). Uredil je tudi knjigo *Raimon Panikkar as a Modern Spiritual Master* (Orbis Books, 2019). Posthumno bodo izšle njegove knjige *Raimon Panikkar as an Interreligious Thinker*, *Liberating Gandhi: Community, Empire, and a Culture of Peace in Hegel, India and the Dark face of Modernity*. Bil je višji sodelavec Centra za preučevanje svetovnih religij na Univerzi v Harvardu (Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University) in Centra



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Med letoma 2005 in 2011 je bil član upravnega in izvršnega odbora Sveta Parlamenta svetovnih religij. Je tudi član svetovalnega odbora Inštituta Toda za mirovne raziskave, ki je povezan z Mednarodnim združenjem Soka Gakkai, in Guibordovega centra v Los Angelesu (Guibord Center of Los Angeles). Sopedredoval je Odboru Parlamenta svetovnih religij vse od njegove ustanovitve leta 2007 v Južni Kaliforniji. Poleg tega je bil član skupine strokovnjakov, ki je svetovala Visokemu komisariatu Združenih narodov za človekove pravice in Mednarodnemu varnostnemu forumu s sedežem v Ženevi.

Kot gostujoči profesor je predaval na več kot sedemdesetih univerzah v Aziji, Afriki, Avstraliji, Evropi in Združenih državah Amerike, med drugim na univerzah v Kaliforniji, Berkeleyju in Chicagu. Nazadnje je bil gostujoči profesor na Oxfordskem centru za hindujske študije v jesenskem semestru leta 2015. Leta 2016 ga je Kalifornijska državna univerza v Los Angelesu počastila s celoletnim nizom predavanj, poimenovanih »Joseph Prabhu Fund for Interfaith Peace and Justice«.



## Gandhi's Religious Ethics as Touchstone

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### Abstract

Gandhi was often called a saint among politicians. His saintly adherence to nonviolence brought him comparisons to St. Francis of Assisi, St. Paul, and even to Christ. And yet, when one thinks about it, that appellation bears a deep ambivalence. On the one hand, it would seem that politics with its power-mongering, amoral Machiavellianism, and its valorisation of expediency over principle, and of successful outcomes over scrupulous means is an unpromising avenue for saintliness. Bringing politics into the spiritual realm invariably coarsens and corrupts it. On the other hand, introducing spirituality into the political arena would seem to betoken naivete and ineffectiveness in an area driven by worldly passions and cunning. Gandhi weakens the traditional dualism between religion and politics and attempts to fashion a non-dual relation between the two. In this new conception, religion seen primarily, though not exclusively, in ethical terms connotes a reverence for truth and a service to life which do not stop at the door of the meditation room or the temple but spill over necessarily into the social sphere. Politics in turn is reconceptualised as public service on the largest possible scale and is, at least ideally, far removed from the factionalism, raw ambition, and power-games usually associated with it. It is this Gandhian notion of ethics which mediates the non-dual relationship between religion and politics. On the one hand, Gandhi makes ethics both personal and social, the core of religion, and on the other this ethicised religion seeks its fulfilment in the realm of politics seen as the arena for both the realisation of truth and the greatest potential public service.

**Keywords:** God, religion, politics, *moksha*, *dharma*

Gandhi was often called a saint among politicians. His saintly adherence to nonviolence brought him comparisons to St. Francis of Assisi, St. Paul, and even to Christ.<sup>1</sup> And yet, when one thinks about it, that appellation bears a deep ambivalence. On the one hand, it would seem that politics with its power-mongering, amoral Machiavellianism, and its valorisation of expediency over principle, and of successful outcomes over scrupulous means is an unpromising avenue for saintliness. Thus, Bal Gangadhar Tilak among others warned Gandhi before he embarked on a political career in India, "Politics is a game of worldly

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1 See among others Rolland, R. *Mahatma Gandhi*. London: The Century Co., 1924, and Andrews, C. F. "The Tribute of a Friend"; in: *Mahatma Gandhi: Essays and Reflections on his Life and Work*, ed. Radhakrishnan, S. London: Allen and Unwin, 1949.

people and not of *sadbhus*.”<sup>2</sup> Bringing politics into the spiritual realm invariably coarsens and corrupts it. On the other hand, introducing spirituality into the political arena would seem to betoken naivety and ineffectiveness in an area driven by worldly passions and cunning. It is perhaps for these reasons that Christ himself appeared to be in favour of a dualism: “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.”

Gandhi by contrast without denying the distinction between the domain of Caesar and that of God repudiates any rigid separation between the two. “To the hungry person God appears in the form of bread”, he often said, a statement that he meant both literally and symbolically. He weakens the traditional dualism between religion and politics and attempts to fashion a non-dual relation between the two. In this new conception religion seen primarily, though not exclusively, in ethical terms connotes a reverence for truth and a service to life which do not stop at the door of the meditation room or the temple but spill over necessarily into the social sphere. Politics in turn is reconceptualised as public service on the largest possible scale and is, at least ideally, far removed from the factionalism, raw ambition, and power-games usually associated with it. It is this Gandhian notion of ethics which mediates the non-dual relationship between religion and politics. On the one hand, Gandhi makes ethics both personal and social, the core of religion, and on the other this ethicised religion seeks its fulfilment in the realm of politics seen as the arena for both the realisation of truth and the greatest potential public service.

What I suggest in this essay is that the non-dual relationship that Gandhi sees between religion on the one hand, and ethics and politics on the other, gives his conceptions of all three domains a dialectical and fluid character, which allows for their progressive and mutual enrichment. But this dialectical mediation is not without the risks and dangers that any attempt at reconceptualisation often carries. I shall divide this essay into three parts: first, I will provide an account of three key terms of Gandhi’s religious ethics; second, I shall offer a few reflections on Gandhi’s notion of *moksha* or spiritual liberation and its relation to *dharma*; and finally, I shall try to relate these Gandhian conceptions to our present day situation.

## Gandhi’s Religious Ethics

Gandhi is a moralist through and through and yet it is difficult to write philosophically about his ethics. This is because Gandhi is fundamentally concerned with practice rather than with theory or abstract thought, and such philosophy as he used was meant to reveal its “truth” in the crucible of experience, hence the subtitle of his

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2 Aiyar, “Gandhi, Gokhale, and the Moderates”, 103.

autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. The experiments refer to the fact that the truth of concepts, values, and ideals is fulfilled only in practice. Prior to that practical fulfilment they remain spectral and abstract. Furthermore, Gandhi's ethics are inextricably linked with his religion, which itself is unconventional. Though an avowed Hindu, he was a Hindu in a philosophical rather than a sectarian sense, and there was much Hindu ritual and practice that he subjected to critique. In accordance with this religio-philosophical ideal, his religion could be described as the life of the self attempting to realise itself as Self, and thus achieving *moksha* or spiritual liberation. But *karmayogi* that he was, Self-realisation had to be expressed through work in the world and the details of daily life rather than through renunciation of the world. Gandhi's own ethics have a decidedly spiritual cast, but because he takes pains to express them in a neutral philosophical manner, he intends them to have general validity. Thus, when he switches from affirming that God is Truth to saying that Truth is God, his rationale is that the latter is a more general statement which has resonance even for unbelievers:

God is Truth, but God is many other things also. That is why I prefer to say that Truth is God [...]. You may simply worship what you find to be the truth for Truth is known relatively. Only remember that Truth is one of the many qualities that we name. It is the living embodiment of God, it is the only Life and I identify Truth with fullest life and that is how it becomes a concrete thing, for God is His whole creation, the whole Existence, and service of all that exists.<sup>3</sup>

This statement is a testament to Gandhi's innate sense of tolerance and inclusiveness in that he believes that his ideals of truth and nonviolence are accessible even to those who do not share his religious metaphysics. It is a feature of some moral statements that they can be differently interpreted and justified and yet be shown to have validity at different levels of understanding. Thus, the precept of honesty can be justified on the grounds of prudence ("honesty is the best policy"), or of promoting trust and social harmony in society (utilitarian), safeguarding one's own integrity and righteousness before the law (Kant), as duty owed to others as autonomous moral agents (Kant and some versions of Christianity), as a cosmic obligation (a *dharmic* justification), to mention only some possibilities. Likewise, people may agree on certain human rights, even though they ground those rights quite differently. In a similar spirit, Gandhi wanted his teaching of nonviolence to have the widest possible adherence. But if one wants to understand his own particular justification and interpretation of his ethical ideas, one cannot escape the religious metaphysics that serves as their ground and presupposition. James Hart captures this well when he writes:

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3 *CWMG*:68:81.

When the Vedantic tradition holds that each self as Self is profoundly and irreducibly nonobjectifiable, it moves in the direction of holding that the truth of things and other selves has a form of causality other than that of material objects. The fundamental sense of oneself and the other which the commitment to Truth awakens is the incommensurability of selves with material, unserved, unbesouled objects. *Abin̄sa* is the practice of a kind of transcendental reduction because it preserves this most basic truth. And being awakened to this most basic Truth, the truth about selves and meanings, is what provides the central importance of *abin̄sa*.<sup>4</sup>

With these prefatory remarks I shall briefly analyse and comment on some of Gandhi's key ethical concepts. Truth for Gandhi is not merely, or even primarily, the property of statements, though Gandhi does not deny the importance of factual truth or the correspondence between propositions and states of affairs in the world that either confirm or refute them. Rather, his multifaceted notion of truth emphasises ontological, moral, and existential aspects. Ontologically, *satya* is derived from *Sat*, the self-existent essence, both the Is and the Ought of reality. It was this derivation that led Gandhi often to say, "Nothing exists in reality except Truth, everything else is illusion." Beyond the illusory temporal flux of phenomena lies the eternal Truth, what Gandhi also called Absolute Truth. However, we humans with our finite capacities can have access only to relative truth, an assertion Gandhi uses to justify epistemological humility and tolerance. All our perceptions of truth are inevitably partial and therefore claims of cognitive absoluteness are both unwarranted and dangerous.

While the ontological aspect of truth points to a more objective notion, the moral and existential aspects move in the direction of a more subjective, almost Kierkegaardian, notion of truth as subjectivity, the deeply personal intuition of truth which can be experienced only through action. Raghavan Iyer brings out the duality between the subjective and objective aspects of truth:

Gandhi could not regard truth either as solely the object of reason or as simply the product of human decision. For him [...] truth is nothing less than the splendour of reality and cannot be gained without an understanding of the Eternal Law of Nature, but when it is perceived and seized it must be acted upon. In this sense truth must be both discovered and created, found and enacted [...]. In this activist view of truth [...] it is not enough for thought to be based upon truth; the life of the thinker must express it, must represent it visibly in his actions.<sup>5</sup>

As already intimated, this idea of truth for Gandhi found its fullest expression in the field of politics, which in accordance with his moral outlook he regarded as the arena for

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4 Hart, "Recent Works in Gandhi Studies", 156.

5 Iyer, *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, 154.

doing good on the largest possible scale. The idea that Gandhi used to encapsulate this moral conception of politics was *satyagraha*. This was conceived as a practical experiment to introduce truth and nonviolence into the political field. Gandhi adopted this idea early in his political career when he chose *satyagraha* as the name for his resistance movement against the repressive South African government. Explaining his decision, Gandhi wrote, "Truth [*satya*] implies love and firmness [*agraha*] and therefore serves as a synonym for force. I thus began to call the Indian movement *satyagraha*, that is to say, the force which is born of truth and love of nonviolence."<sup>6</sup> The forceful and activist character of *satyagraha* should correct a common misperception; namely, that it denotes a passivity of resistance, a mere turning of the other cheek. Although Gandhi insisted that violence be met with love and understanding, the nonviolent means chosen should not obscure the powerful end – that of establishing justice and truth. In fact, he is on record as saying that if the choice were between the passive acceptance of injustice and violent resistance to it, he would choose the latter. He was convinced, however, that nonviolent resistance was superior to both alternatives.

*Satyagraha* begins with reasoning with one's opponent or adversary in an attempt to arrive at a just solution, recognising that no party has a monopoly on the truth, or is wholly in the right. The purpose, therefore, is to work out a rational compromise that will be agreeable to both sides. It is only when such processes of reasoning, persuasion, and compromise have been tired and have proved unsuccessful that one adopts the direct action techniques of *satyagraha*. *Satyagraha* involves performing actions such as noncooperation (strikes, boycotts, lockouts, fasts); civil disobedience (nonpayment of taxes, disregard of specific laws or injunctions); publicising one's cause through marches, rallies, picketing, and other forms of peaceful protest; and constructive programmes (low-cost housing, education, health facilities, cooperative banks for the poor). A big part of such nonviolent resistance is *tapas* or the willingness to suffer for one's cause. As Thomas Pantham puts it: "It is the assumption of *satyagraha* that when reasoning fails to move the head, the argument of suffering by the *saatyagrahis* helps move the heart of the oppressor or opponent. Self-suffering, moreover, is the truth-serving alternative to the truth-denying method of inflicting violence on others."<sup>7</sup>

Contained in this idea of *satyagraha* is the question of means and ends, which for Gandhi are two sides of the same coin. Gandhi disagrees strongly with the conventional political idea that the ends justify the means. To the contrary, he held that immoral means taint and distort potentially good ends and to that extent he placed at least as much, if not more, emphasis on the means, which he described as ends in actions. "The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree; and there is just the same

6 CWMG:34:172.

7 Pantham, "Habermas' Practical Discourse and Gandhi's *Satyagraha*", 292–310.

inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree.”<sup>8</sup> The forceful and activist character of *satyagraha* leads naturally to the idea of nonviolence.

Gandhi is obviously invoking the Jain precept of *ahimsa*, or not causing deliberate injury or harm to any being, but Gandhi takes the precept far beyond its merely negative formulation to mean the largest love, the greatest charity. “If I am a follower of *ahimsa*, I must love my enemy or a stranger as I would love my wrong-doing father or son. This *ahimsa* necessarily includes truth and fearlessness.”<sup>9</sup> *Ahimsa* then is the deployment of moral force to persuade one’s opponent or adversary. It differs from violence in that it respects the autonomy and dignity of the other, whereas violence does not. It differs from violence in the perpetual willingness to dialogue and negotiate with the other and, as far as is consistent with rightness, to come to a compromise. Given that one’s grasp of the truth is at best partial, it is imperative to see and appreciate the truth in the position of the other and to try and achieve a higher or dialectical reconciliation of conflicting ends. This negotiated compromise has the opposite effect of violence, which involves vanquishing and putting down one’s opponent that inevitably sets up a cycle of resentment, ill will, and further violence.

Of course, Gandhi was not so naïve as to think that such moral persuasion would come about easily. He was all too aware that people who exercise power over others are not likely to give it up without some pressure being exerted. All the means of *satyagraha* mentioned above should then be adopted as a way of morally coercing one’s opponent to negotiate. It is true that coercion is being exerted, but it is a coercion that still respects the moral agency and dignity of the other, not least by the willingness to undergo self-suffering. The strategy presupposes that the opponent does have a minimal openness to such moral appeal, a trait that Gandhi was willing to grant to most people. However, he also recognised that there are madmen and tyrants, rapists and aggressors who would not fall within that category. In those extreme cases Gandhi was willing to use physical force for the purpose of self-defense, as, for example, when he sanctioned the use of military force to drive back the Pakistani Army in what he considered to be the invasion of Kashmir in 1948. Less satisfactory was his response to Martin Buber, when the later sceptically asked Gandhi whether he thought that the Jews should use *satyagraha* against Hitler.<sup>10</sup>

The three concepts I have discussed, *satya*, *satyagraha* and *ahimsa*, might give us some idea of the texture of Gandhi’s ethical thought. As mentioned earlier, the ideas of

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8 CWMG:10:431.

9 Letter in *Modern Review*, October 1916, quoted in Iyer, *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, 180.

10 Buber, M., J. L. Magnes, *Two Letters to Gandhi*. Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, april 1939, mentioned in Dalton, *Mahatma Gandhi: Nonviolent Power in Action*, 228. See also Gandhi’s exchanges with other Jews, which Dalton discusses on pages 134–138.



truth and nonviolence are certainly to be found in the Jain, Buddhist, and Hindu traditions, but there is a big difference between Gandhi's conceptualisation of these ideas and traditional ones. The high standards of moral and spiritual discipline that Gandhi invokes were traditionally part of the *sadhana* of monks and saints, but decidedly not of people in political life. To the contrary, political thinkers like Manu and Kautilya sanctioned the use of physical force both for self-defense and for purposes of political order. Gandhi by contrast considerably softens the traditional dualism between ethics on the one hand, and religion and politics on the other. Instead, he attempts to forge a non-dual relationship between the two, where religion seen as reverence for and service to Life necessarily leads to politics, the arena for the greatest potential public service; and where politics in turn is saved from power mongering and the conflict of factional interests by the moral purification involved in religion at its best. It is very important to distinguish Gandhi's highly moral notions of both religion and politics from the ideological conceptions of them all too common in our time. Certainly, the rise of religious fundamentalism and right wing religious groups would make any peace-loving person nervous about the marriage of religion and politics. It should be clear, however, from what I have written that the moral checks and balances that Gandhi exercised over religion and politics purified both domains and offered the world a far different and more noble conception of them that we have yet to measure up to.

## Gandhi's Ethical Religion

The relation between *dharma* and *moksha* has been much debated in the Indian tradition. While it is generally agreed that the ideal of *moksha* trumps the claims of *dharma*, the exact relationship between the two ideals and the validity of *dharma* when seen from the perspective of *moksha* have been subjects of debate. On the one hand, *dharma* is seen as a means to the attainment of *moksha*, but from the perspective of *moksha*, *dharma* with its rigid clan/caste/family structure is often regarded as an obstacle to *moksha*. Orthodoxy often held that *dharma* had absolute validity even for the person who attained *moksha*; but there were – and are – many influential views that question this assertion. After all, *moksha* is a state of consciousness consequent upon the true nature of things, while *dharma* belongs to the realm of action and will. Put otherwise, *dharma* upholds the established social-ethical order, whereas *moksha* is “release” from this order in order to achieve self-realisation, a free spiritual individuality that transcends the ethical realm.

For Gandhi, however, it is *dharma* that holds pride of place. While he does speak of *moksha*, it is the ethical worthiness for *moksha* rather than *moksha* in itself that he emphasised: “I have come to the conclusion that no one can be called a *mukta* while he is still alive; one may be said at the most to have become fit for *moksha* [...]. The

necessity for deliverance remains so long as connection with the body remains.”<sup>11</sup> The parallel here with Kant is strong: just as Kant stresses the right over the good and virtue over happiness, Gandhi accents the quest for *moksha* rather than *moksha* itself. There is the same moral rigourism and accent on process rather than outcome. This is borne out among much other evidence by Gandhi’s extraordinary wish to be reborn as an untouchable in order to serve the lowliest of the lowly. This flies in the face of all conventional ideas of *moksha* as release from the ethical demands of the social order to realise a free spiritual consciousness. Gandhi like a *bodhisattva* has no desire to be released from such demands. His frequent invocation of *Advaita Vedanta* is misleading – at least in its Shankarite version: he is not much interested in attaining a higher state of consciousness where the veil of *maya* might disappear. Rather, it is this world that he takes with full seriousness as the area in which we fulfil our *dharmic* responsibilities.

In contrast to much of the Indian religious tradition that has a largely contemplative character, Gandhi’s religion is strongly activist in nature. It is in practice rather than in thought or gnosis that the rightness or wrongness of beliefs is established. This activism goes together with the decidedly ethical cast of his religion – the formation of right dispositions, attitudes, and relationships in relation to the demands of one’s fellow men and women and of nature. It is only in and through such demands that a right relationship to God is established. Gandhi is in full agreement with St. John that he who talks of loving God whom one does not see without loving one’s neighbour whom one does see is liar and a hypocrite.

John Maynard Keynes, the economist and philosopher, once distinguished between religion and ethics by saying that religion has to do with one’s relation to oneself and the Ultimate, while ethics deals with one’s relation to others and the penultimate. Gandhi would have thought that both sets of dualities in Keynes’s account are misconceived – that of self and other and of the Ultimate and penultimate. Regarding the first, given his firm belief in the interconnectedness of all life and a relational view of the self, Gandhi would have strongly concurred with the sentiment of the English poet John Donne: “No man is an island complete in himself [...]. Every man’s death diminishes me because I am a part of the whole [...] and therefore do not ask to know for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee.” Regarding the second duality, that of the Ultimate and penultimate, while not denying the realm of the supernatural, Gandhi firmly believes that access to it is achievable primarily through the full embrace of the natural. It was in the faces of his fellow men and women, in particular of the poor and oppressed, that Gandhi hoped to see God.

Four features of Gandhi’s ethical religion may be commented on. First, it is a solidly this-worldly affair. In a culture where cyclical views of time and a belief in *karma*

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11 *CWMG*:32:136.

and reincarnation often lead – mistakenly I would argue – to temporal indifference, Gandhi shares the Buddha's sense of urgency that it is in this life that we have to work out our salvation and that we have to do so in the fully embraced present in whatever circumstances we may find ourselves. Gandhi was able to reconcile this sense of urgency usually associated with a linear view of "one life, one chance," with his belief in *karma* and reincarnation via the explanation that our present actions determine the nature of future rebirths. But he was not especially interested in speculating either about those rebirths or about any other world than this present one.

Second, as already pointed out, Gandhi's religion was social and corporate in its emphasis rather than individualistic. His idea of *swaraj* or moral self-governance was not the Kantian idea of autonomy with which it is sometimes mistakenly compared. While he certainly values the self-discipline involved in Kantian self-legislation, Gandhi had he been presented with a Kantian view, would almost certainly criticise its atomistic and insulated character – the sense that self-legislation is to be carried out free of social ties and local belonging. For Gandhi by contrast there was no question of being released from such ties, because it is such ties that constitute the warp and the woof of human existence, and to seek to be free of them is to shirk our fundamental human responsibility. The ascent to the Divine and the Universal is to be achieved not by detaching oneself from the human and the particular, but rather by embracing them and seeking to make them worthy expressions of the Divine presence. Over and over again, and particularly in the commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Gandhi stresses the synthesis of two moral ideals, the outer one of social obligation and the inner one of renunciation and detachment. The goal then is renunciation not of action but in action, the true goal of *karmayoga*, the path of selfless service.<sup>12</sup>

Third: in tune with his stress on this-worldliness and on particularistic ties is Gandhi's emphasis on the continuity of means and ends. The mention was made in the first section of the organic metaphors that Gandhi uses of seeds and trees and of root and branches to indicate how indissolubly linked means and ends are for him. In sharp contrast to those who emphasise ends and the success in achieving them whatever means one adopts, Gandhi accents the moral and existential priority of means. For one thing, ends lie in the future and the future is by definition not fully under our control. For another, there are also the unintended consequences of our actions and the actions of other agents than impinge on our own. Ends therefore lie beyond our reckoning; what we can and must focus on are means. But here too Gandhi distinguishes means seen purely instrumentally and means seen as expressive as goals. Seen as instruments means become a set of necessary and often tedious steps towards a goal, but it is the goal that

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12 See Gandhi, M. K. *The Gospel of Selfless Action or the Gita According to Gandhi*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1946.

commands our attention as for instance when we perform an irksome job merely to earn some money. Seen as expressive, however, means become ends in action and even if one knows that one may not achieve the goal it does not really matter. Success is measured not in the actual achievement of the goal but in fidelity. Thus, Martin Luther King, Jr., Gandhi's famous disciple, delivered a well-known sermon the night before Mahatma was assassinated which echoes Gandhi's sentiments: "Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it does not matter with me now. Because I've been to the mountain top ... and I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But ... I'm happy tonight. I'm not worried about anything ... My eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord."<sup>13</sup>

Fourth: Gandhi's religion was holistic. Earlier, mention was made of how Gandhi saw religion leading naturally to politics and social service. Those who attended his prayer services were often struck by how smoothly Gandhi could interrupt and break away from pressing political matters and then take them up again spontaneously after prayers were recited. This holism provides a clue to the remarkably wide range of interests and concerns that attracted his attention: everything from theology to tooth care, conflict resolution to sanitation, political organisation to endless experiments with his diet. Inner life and outer activity, self-development and service to others formed a seamless whole. Gandhi saw all of life as sacred and all of his own life as a prayer.

## A Brief Evaluation

In the first part of this essay, I focused on Gandhi's religious ethics and in the second on his ethical religion in order to highlight the non-dual character of the relation between his ethics and his religion. In this final section, I want to make a few brief comments first with reference to Indian traditions and then more broadly to the world at large.

First, within the Indian tradition Gandhi's ethics as ethics represent the most substantial ethical contribution by an Indian in modern times. Ethics as a singular and coherent body of thought is not a field to which Indian thinkers on the whole have devoted much attention, at least as compared to other areas of philosophical and religious thought. This remains true in spite of the fact that much of the Indian philosophical and religious tradition has a definite value orientation and is centrally concerned with the practical ideals of *dharma* and *moksha* and with spelling out how other values and concerns stand in relation to them. This is a seeming paradox. For instance, the late Bimal Matilal, one of India's most eminent philosophers, complained: "Certainly there exists a lacuna in the tradition of Indian philosophy. Professional philosophers of India

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13 King, "I See the Promised Land", 279–286.

over the last 2000 years have been consistently concerned with problems of logic and epistemology, metaphysics and soteriology, and sometimes they have made very important contributions to the global heritage of philosophy. But except for some cursory comments and some insightful observations, the professional philosophers of India very seldom discussed what we call moral philosophy today.”<sup>14</sup> Instead, the Indian thinkers incorporated moral considerations into various and sundry philosophical, literary, and theological texts in Sanskrit and the vernaculars without systematically elucidating the principles and norms that distinguish them as moral.

Now, Gandhi was neither a philosopher nor a systematic thinker, but rather a man of action. Nonetheless, in the course of his life he was forced to face many ethical challenges and ponder on several moral questions because, as already indicated, he was by disposition a moralist through and through. When non-Indian moral philosophers seek a contemporary Indian moral thinker to engage with Indian ethical reflection, it is invariably Gandhi to whom they turn.

His contribution to religious thought is perhaps more contested. India's religious traditions are dominated by sages and mystics, and Gandhi was neither. More accurately, Gandhi could be described as a deeply religious person who achieved great goodness. In any case, when we discuss religious thought it is the quality of reflection that is the relevant consideration. As a thinker, Gandhi offers a model of ethical religion which is relatively rare in the Indian tradition. As already indicated, given the primary interest in *moksha* which is said to lie “beyond good and evil”, there is in much of the tradition an ambivalence toward ethics. Both Tagore and Aurobindo, for instance, were quite critical of Gandhi's moralism, even if Tagore muted his criticism in public. Tagore, schooled in the speculative magnificence of the *Upanishads* and admiring the aesthetic vitality and spiritual profundity of the classical Indian traditions, disagreed with Gandhi on practically every important political issue from *swadeshi* to mass civil disobedience, fasting to the spinning wheel, celibacy to technology. Underlying these disagreements was a fundamental difference in attitude and outlook. Tagore, the metaphysical poet, strongly disagreed with Gandhi's puritanism and (to him) stifling moralism. “Deliverance is not for me in renunciation. I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight.”<sup>15</sup>

Aurobindo was even more scathing in his criticism of Gandhi. For one thing, Aurobindo in his days of political activism openly advocated violence when the occasion demanded it, and he found Gandhi's absolute stand on nonviolence to be one-sided and limited. And when he gave up political activism for yogic experience, Aurobindo,

14 See Matilal, B. “Moral Dilemmas: Insights from Indian Epics”; in: *Collected Papers, Vol. 1*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999.

15 Tagore, *Collected Poems and Plays of Rabindranath Tagore*, 34. See also Ray, S. “Tagore-Gandhi Controversy”; in: *Gandhi, India, and the World: An International Symposium*. Ed. Ray, S. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1970, 119–141.

with his quest for integral yoga and a kind of gnostic mysticism, considered Gandhi to be quite a pedestrian thinker, whose moral rigour far from leading to spiritual freedom more often than not led to self-alienation and violence to oneself. For Aurobindo, Gandhi's ethical reflections belonged to a low stage of the development of mind and even at that low level was partial and exaggerated.<sup>16</sup>

Such sharp differences were due not only to differences in personality but also to their respective appropriations of the Indian tradition. Both Tagore and Aurobindo were mystically inclined thinkers, sympathetic to and appreciative of the speculative and metaphysical richness of the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, and Indian philosophical traditions. Gandhi's knowledge of and sensitivity to ancient and classical Indian traditions was much narrower – he was attracted primarily to their moral and didactic aspects. In a way, this facilitated his notorious interpretation of the *Gita*, which many regard, with some justification, as idiosyncratic and hermeneutically arbitrary. The sources of his inspiration were the epics and the devotional saints of medieval Hinduism, with, of course, a deep Jain influence coming from his native Gujarat.

And yet in spite of this narrowness of focus and perhaps because of it, Gandhi produced a model of ethical religion that drew upon a neglected and relatively unappreciated strand of the Indian tradition – the path of *karmayoga*, or spiritual realisation through social action. Even though others like the Buddha had emphasised the connection between compassion for suffering humanity and spiritual integrity, it was Gandhi who took the Buddha's message in a new direction, namely into direct political activity. This was a radical move. In doing so, Gandhi hoped to achieve dual transformation: on the one hand, he wished to purify politics by making moral and religious norms central to it, and, on the other, he hoped to purify religion by saving it from the dangers of self-absorption and narcissism. Modifying Christ's injunction slightly, only those who lose their life in socio-political service can hope to save it. Tagore, for all his disagreements with Gandhi, was perceptive enough to note this:

The influence which emanated from his personality was ineffable, like music, like beauty. Its claim upon others was great because of its revelation of a spontaneous self-giving [...]. That is why, though his realm of activity lies in practical politics, people's minds have been struck by the analogy of his character with that of the great masters, whose spiritual inspiration comprehends and yet transcends all varied manifestations of humanity, and makes the face of worldliness turn to the light that comes from the eternal source of wisdom.<sup>17</sup>

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16 See Minor, R. "Sri Aurobindo's Dismissal of Gandhi and his Nonviolence." In: *Indian Critiques of Gandhi*, ur. Harold C. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003.

17 Tagore, "The Poet's Verdict"; in: Radhakrishnan, S. (ed.) *Essays and Reflections on His Life and Work. Presented to him on his Seventieth Birthday October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1939*, 286.

This dialectical balance between morality, politics, and religion carries both great promise and significant risks. The danger of the spiritualisation of politics, for many regarded as the realm of the possible, is that it idealises human nature, sets impossible standards of behaviour, and ends up making the best an enemy of the good. As I am focusing in this essay more on the relation between religion and ethics, I shall not dwell further on the implications of Gandhi's moralism for politics. In making moral standards foundational in all spheres, there is a danger of the reduction of religion to ethics, as, for instance, in the moral philosophy of Kant. Gandhi avoids this danger by recognising and invoking the transcendent elements of the religious. He says: "So long as the seed of morality is not watered by religion, it cannot sprout [...] if we take out the essence of all moral laws, we shall find that the attempt to do good to mankind is the highest morality."<sup>18</sup> Far from reducing religion to ethics, Gandhi attempts to elevate ethics to religion, while at the same time providing checks and balances on religion and its possible corruption.

Mention of the possible corruption of religion brings into focus one of the great perils of our time – the emergence of the dark side of religion as it becomes ideological in nature. Charles Kimball has highlighted four signals of the debasement of religion, which while they have been perennial dangers, have nonetheless emerged with particular force in recent times:

1. The insistence on the absoluteness of the truth claims in one's own tradition and the correlative demonising and dehumanisation of others who differ both within one's own tradition and those beyond.
2. The blind obedience to religious authorities who are thus given great power to make decisions that affect both the people of their particular traditions and those outside them.
3. The establishment of an ideal or messianic time bearing apocalyptic overtones, where destruction is seen as a prelude to some "final judgment."
4. The assertion that the ends justify all means, and where in the name of protecting the religion concerned or its interests, any means including violent ones are tolerated. This can sometimes lead to waging "holy wars" to achieve one's ends.<sup>19</sup>

The different forms of contemporary religion display some or all of these features in varying degrees, whether one discusses ethnic tribalism, fundamentalism, or the rise of religious violence. In such a situation, it seems to me, that Gandhi's unyielding insistence on moral self-examination and purification via the notion of truth, nonviolence, and self-suffering (*tapasya*) as a necessary corollary of any political engagement is a much needed touchstone and corrective.

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18 Gandhi, M. *Ethical Religion (Nithi Dharma)*. Madras: Ganesan, 1922, quote in Iyer, *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, 48.

19 See Kimball, C. *When Religion Becomes Evil*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2002.

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In 2016, California State University, Los Angeles, honoured him with an annual endowed lecture series in his name, called the Joseph Prabhu Fund for Interfaith Peace and Justice.



## Sebstvo v razmerju do drugih: Gandhijeva misel v 21. stoletju

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### Izvleček

V prispevku se ukvarjam z Gandhijevo filozofijo kot odgovorom na ključno vprašanje 21. stoletja, tj. o razmerju med sebstvom in drugim. Najprej raziščem, na kakšni osnovi je sebstvo v Gandhijevem svetovnem nazoru povezano z drugim. Zagovarjam stališče, da sebstvo in drugega povezuje pojem odgovornosti, v razpravi pa se osredotočim na lastnost odgovornosti ter preučim, kako Gandhi utemlji odgovornost sebstva do drugih. Obenem obravnavam temeljno vprašanje 21. stoletja, namreč kako z vidika Gandhijevega svetovnega nazora odgovorno ravnati v družbenem in političnem življenju. V prispevku pojasnim tudi razmerje med svobodo in odgovornostjo znotraj Gandhijeve paradigme in pokažem, da svoboda ne pomeni le svobode pred zunanjo prisilo in prevlado, temveč tudi samoregulacijo s samoomejevanjem. Namen razprave je poudariti, da sebstvo in drugi v Gandhijevem svetovnem nazoru nista različni kategoriji, temveč je drugi posameznikovo razširjeno sebstvo.

V prispevku poskušam omenjena vprašanja osvetliti s preučevanjem Gandhijevih izvirnih zapisov, ki jih uporabim kot temeljne vire. Obravnavano temo raziščem z nekonvencionalnim pristopom »od znotraj navzven«, tj. Gandhija preučim z vidika njegovega pojmovanja. Menim, da je to najprimernejša metoda za raziskavo omenjene teme, saj omogoča razgrnitev Gandhijeve očitno nekonvencionalne ideologije.

**Ključne besede:** sebstvo, drugi, odgovornost, svoboda

Življenje v globaliziranem in multikulturnem svetu 21. stoletja predstavlja priložnost in izziv. Priložnost je v tem, da smo prek posrednih in neposrednih sredstev izpostavljeni védenju in razumevanju različnih odtenkov ljudi, kultur in skupnosti, s katerimi vzpostavljamo stike; obenem pa je izziv, saj se moramo na različnih ravneh spoprijeti s posamezniki, skupinami in skupnostmi, ker menimo, da so drugačni od nas. Ta družbeni pojav se kaže v praksi, ki na različnih ravneh ustvarja družbena nesoglasja, saj v družbi vzpostavlja binarno nasprotje med nami/njimi, ki je utemeljeno na rasi, etnični pripadnosti, verovanju in veroizpovedi. Ta družbeni pojav se v sodobni družboslovni literaturi kaže v procesu, ki ga imenujemo »ustvarjanje drugega«. Proces drugosti sproža spore in nasilje na različnih ravneh – lokalni in globalni – ter na številnih področjih,

ki segajo od osebnega do javnega življenja. To pomeni, da imamo opravka s problemom »razmerja med sebstvom in drugim«.

Misleci/filozofi indijske in zahodnih tradicij so se s problemom »razmerja med sebstvom in drugim« ukvarjali z različnih zornih kotov. Tudi Gandhi se je spoprijel z vprašanjem »sebstva« (ki sega od posameznikovega do nacionalnega sebstva) in njegovim razmerjem do »drugega« (zunaj sebe kot posameznika v odnosu do britanskega naroda in nadvlade). S tem vprašanjem se je ukvarjal v teoriji in v praksi. V pričujočem besedilu se osredotočamo na teoretski del njegovih pogledov na razmerje med sebstvom in drugimi.

## I.

Kako Gandhi pojmuje razmerje med sebstvom in drugim? Če želimo raziskati temelje razmerja med sebstvom in drugim z vidika Gandhijevega svetovnega nazora, najprej spomnimo na njegov koncept *mokše*, tj. osvoboditve. Gandhi je trdil, da je glavni cilj posameznika doseči *mokšo*.<sup>1</sup> Njegovo pojmovanje *mokše* je filozofsko in pragmatično. Ker je bil mož dejanj, je bilo tudi njegovo razumevanje *mokše* poglobljeno in praktično. To pomeni, da je svoj koncept *mokše* pojmoval dejavno in praktično. Trdil je, da človek lahko doseže *mokšo* le v sodelovanju z drugimi. Za Gandhija to pomeni: če je glavni cilj življenja doseči *mokšo*, je upoštevanje drugih bistveni sestavni del doseganja *mokše*. Človek ne more prezreti drugih, saj *mokša* ni nekaj, kar bi bilo zunaj sveta drugega. Kar zadeva razmerje med sebstvom in drugim z vidika Gandhijevega pojmovanja *mokše*, Parekh ugotavlja: »Ker sta bila sebstvo in Drugi soodvisni polariteti, vsak od njiju je namreč ustvaril drugega in bil obenem ustvarjen z drugim, je *mokša* vključevala spremljajoče procese razgradnje 'Dругega' z doseganjem popolnega istovetenja z vsem stvarstvom. Hindujska religijska tradicija je poudarjala prvo in Gandhi temu ni veliko dodal. Njegov veliki prispevek predstavlja način, kako je opredelil slednjo in povezal nova spoznanja.«<sup>2</sup>

Drugič, temelj odnosa med sebstvom in drugimi v Gandhijevem modelu lahko raziščemo v njegovi analizi človekove narave ter posameznikovega mesta in vloge, ki ju ima v svetu. Po Gandhiju je človeško bitje trojica živalskosti, človeškosti in božanstva. Trdil je, da človekovo vedenje vodijo številni dejavniki, kot so moralna merila, občutek za sram, zavest in dolžnost. Zanj sta bila občutek za družbeno in osebno odgovornost in zavedanje, da je človek del celote, ki je povezan z drugimi, temeljna izraza etičnega življenja.

Tretjič, temelj odnosa med sebstvom in drugimi z Gandhijevega stališča lahko raziščemo tudi v njegovem pogledu na *purušartha*. Gandhi ne sprejema stališča, da je

1 Gandhi, *An Autobiography. The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, xii.

2 Parekh, *Gandhi's Political Philosophy*, 95.

posameznik načeloma nemočen pred silami, ki nanj vplivajo odzunaj in odznotraj. S sklicevanjem na *puruṣārtho* trdi, da odgovornost, ki jo čutimo, ni zgolj utvara. Ta odgovornost je stvarna; izbira, ki jo človek opredeli z zavestjo, pa je izrazita in globoka.

Pa vendar si lahko zastavimo vprašanje: kaj je opredeljujoča značilnost odgovornosti po Gandhijevem prepričanju? Zdi se, da Gandhi trdi, da je odgovornost stanje zavestnega občutka dolžnosti do sebe in drugih/družbe. Poleg tega zanj odgovornost ni le teoretični konstrukt za filozofsko razpravo o vlogi posameznika v svetu, temveč vključuje tudi dejavno zavedanje o namenu izvršenih dejanj in njihovih pripadajočih posledicah. Gandhijevo pojmovanje odgovornosti razgradi binarni koncept odgovornosti do sebe in do drugega. Razlog je v tem, da posameznik ni ločen od drugih, ampak je drugim enak. Po Gandhijevem prepričanju to pomeni, da drugih ni, obstaja le sebstvo oziroma njegove različice. Gandhijevo prepričanje o »enosti z drugimi« je načeloma temeljilo na njegovem dojetanju božanskosti človeštva, saj je trdil, da je posameznik »sestavni del celote« in »ne more najti [Boga] ločeno od preostalega človeštva.«<sup>3</sup> Temelj Gandhijevega pojmovanja odgovornosti je prav ta intersubjektivna opredelitev temelja bivanja.

Toda kaj po Gandhijevem prepričanju pomeni biti odgovoren v praktičnem smislu? V Gandhijevem smislu reči, da je človek odgovoren, pomeni, da je zmožen pravilno razumeti vprašanje, kaj je resnično/pravilno na političnem in družbenem področju. To pravilno razumevanje resničnega/pravilnega in temu skladno ravnanje tvori Gandhijevo relativno resnico. Poudarimo, da z vidika njegovega prepričanja ni dovolj zgolj poznavanje odgovornosti, treba je namreč tudi ustrezno *ravnati*. Poleg tega vsaka odgovornost temelji na »védenju« in »volji do delovanja«, ki sta usmerjena k Absolutni Resnici. Gandhi v svojem pisanju poudarja, da je vsak človek odgovoren tako do sebe kot do drugih ali družbe. Tako sta po Gandhijevem prepričanju sebstvo in drugi povezana s pojmom odgovornosti.

## II.

Poglejmo, na kakšni osnovi Gandhi opredeli odgovornost sebstva do drugih. V Gandhijevem pisanju sicer ni mogoče najti nobenih sistematičnih obravnav te teme, vendar lahko zasledimo nekaj filozofskih konceptov, ki nam posredujejo dovolj namigov, da lahko v njegovem pogledu na svet rekonstruiramo osnovo odgovornosti sebstva do drugih.

V tem kontekstu se v njegovem pisanju lahko sklicujemo na pojmovanje »vzajemne ljubezni«, pri čemer, tako se zdi, Gandhi trdi, da je vsak človek odgovoren drugim. Gandhi pravi, da naše družbeno življenje in celo narava ne moreta preživeti brez vzajemne ljubezni. Navajamo: »Čeprav je v Naravi dovolj odpora, živi s privlačnostjo. Narava se ohranja, ker ji to omogoča vzajemna ljubezen. Človek ne živi od uničevanja. Ljubezen do sebe terja

upoštevanje drugih. Narodi so povezani, ker med njimi obstaja vzajemno upoštevanje posameznikov, ki jih tvorijo. Nekoč bomo nacionalno zakonodajo razširili na svet, tako kot smo razširili družinsko zakonodajo in oblikovali narode – večjo družino.«<sup>4</sup>

Podobno lahko v Gandhijevem pisanju opazimo ponavljajočo se misel, da je človeštvo »nedeljiva celota«. To »nedeljivo« človeštvo je filozofski temelj, na katerem Gandhi opredeli posameznikovo odgovornost. Da bi spoznali pojem »nedeljive celote«, si lahko pomagamo s prisposodbo, ki jo je Gandhi uporabil za opis paradigme »nedeljive celote«. Prisposoda govori o razmerju med »kapljico vode in oceanom«.<sup>5</sup> Druga prisposoda govori o »verigi in členu«. Gandhi pravi: »[...] ni razlike med posameznikovo (beri sebstvom) in skupno rastjo (beri drugim); skupna rast je torej v celoti odvisna od posameznikove rasti in od tod izhaja čudovit pregovor v angleškem jeziku, da je veriga močna toliko, kot je močan njen najšibkejši člen.«<sup>6</sup>

Podobno kot pojem nedeljivega človeštva lahko v Gandhijevem pisanju najdemo ponavljajoče se omembe »enosti človeštva«. Ta pojem je pojasnil v različnih kontekstih, lahko pa ga razlagamo v smislu, da je človek odgovoren drugim. Nekoč je zapisal: »Človeštvo je eno, saj smo vsi enako podvrženi moralnemu zakonu. V Božjih očeh so vsi ljudje enaki. Seveda so med ljudmi razlike, ki zadevajo raso, položaj in podobno, toda višji položaj ima človek, večja je njegova odgovornost.«<sup>7</sup> Gandhi torej sprejema različne vrste razlik med ljudmi, vendar kljub temu vidi temeljno enotnost, saj smo vsi ljudje podvrženi istemu moralnemu zakonu. Poleg tega je, kot smo omenili, menil, da višji položaj prinaša večjo odgovornost.

Podobno v svojem pisanju opisuje idejo »sorodnosti z vsem«. Pojem »sorodnosti z vsem« ne zajema le ljudi, temveč tudi živali. Gandhi pravi, da njegova sorodstvena vez zajema tudi »konja in ovco, leva in leoparda, kačo in škorpijona«.<sup>8</sup> Logika »bratstva in istovetenja z vsemi oblikami življenja« in »sorodnost z vsem« je v tem, kot ugotavlja Gandhi, da imata »sleherne moški in ženska svojo, enostransko dolžnost«, saj je »človek ustvarjen po Božji podobi«.<sup>9</sup>

Gandhi v svojem pisanju omenja tudi pojem »istovetenja z drugimi«, kar nakazuje na soodvisnost. Dolžnosti do sebe torej ne pojmuje ločeno od drugih področij družbe. Zapisal je: »Dolžnosti [odgovornosti] do sebe, družine, države in sveta niso neodvisne druga od druge. Človek ne more ravnati v dobro države, če škoduje sebi ali svoji družini.

4 Gandhi, *All Men are Brothers*, 118.

5 Cit. v Roy, *Self and Society: A study in Gandhian Thought*, 103.

6 *CWMG*:34:505.

7 Gandhi, *All Men are Brothers*, 118.

8 Prabhu, Rao, *The Mind of Mahatma*, 424.

9 *Ibid.*

Podobno velja, da človek ne more delovati v korist države, če škoduje svetu na splošno.«<sup>10</sup> Prav tako zasledimo »idejo o samožrtvovanju«, iz katere lahko sklepamo o temelju odgovornosti sebstva do drugih. To najbolje ponazarjata pojem in prakticiranje *satjagrahe*. Gandhi se je kot »praktični idealist« zavedal, da lahko posameznik vede ali nevede ravna tako, da poseže v druge in jim pri tem škoduje. Prav tako je trdil, da se človek, ki se pomotoma vplete v nepravično zadevo, ne more izogniti odgovornosti. Da bi odgovornost zavaroval, trdi Gandhi, mora biti človek pripravljen žrtvovati sebe, namesto da bi žrtvoval druge. Povedano z njegovimi besedami: »Žrtvovanje samega sebe je neskončno več vredno od žrtvovanja drugih.«<sup>11</sup>

Gandhijevo pojmovanje odgovornosti ni omejeno le na strukturno analizo in posredovanje, temveč ponuja tudi filozofijo samopreobrazbe. Tako meni, da ima posameznik nalogo, da si iskreno prizadeva živeti v skladu z načeli resnice in nenasilja. Njegova temeljna načela so torej osebna in moralna, čeprav preseka binarnost osebne in javne morale ter odgovornosti in ponudi celo vrsto odgovornosti, ki vključujejo: upiranje nepravičnosti, razvijanje duha služenja, nesebičnost in žrtvovanje, poudarjanje odgovornosti namesto pravic, samodisciplino, preprost način življenja in poskus ohranjanja resnicoljubnih in nenasilnih odnosov z drugimi. Tako Gandhijevo pojmovanje odgovornosti uteleša večrazsežno odgovornost do drugih.

Pomembna oblika odgovornosti je po Gandhijevem prepričanju odgovornost do bližnje in daljne prihodnosti. Takojšnji in bližnji vidik odgovornosti ponovno opazimo v njegovem pojmovanju *satjagrahe*. Po drugi strani pa oddaljena odgovornost, ki jo mora posameznik nositi in prevzeti ustrezne metode in korake, predstavlja vizijo *ramradžje* oziroma Božjega kraljestva. Gandhijeva vizija *ramradžje*, ki pomeni »popolno nenasilno družbo«, je osnovana na »suverenosti ljudi, utemeljeni na čisti moralni avtoriteti.«<sup>12</sup>

Gandhijeva utemeljitev odgovornosti je za nas obremenjujoča. Z njegovega vidika »nismo odgovorni za to, kar počnemo, temveč tudi za to, kar dopuščamo.«<sup>13</sup> Ta Gandhijeva odgovornost »nas vplete v dejanja institucij, ki nas obdajajo, ne glede na to, ali imamo od njih kakšno korist ali ne.«<sup>14</sup> S tega vidika vsakdo, ki dopušča nepravičnost, nepravičnost tudi napaja in opravičuje, obenem pa se izmika odgovornosti. Po Gandhiju kompleksnost sodobnega časa zaplete vprašanje odgovornosti, saj jo pripisuje brezosebnim institucijam, kjer se zdi, da nihče ni odgovoren, ali pa moč in prevlado zakrinka z zahtevami po učinkovitosti ali produktivnosti. Pa vendar kompleksnost, kot trdi Gandhi, ne more razveljaviti osebne odgovornosti, vsaj če želimo še naprej obvladovati sami sebe.

10 Gandhi, *All Men are Brothers*, 120.

11 Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, 54.

12 Prabhu, Rao, *The Mind of Mahatma*, 326.

13 Tercheak, *Gandhi Struggling for Autonomy*, 194.

14 *Ibid.*, 195.

## III.

Lahko bi ugovarjali: če sebstvo čuti odgovornost do drugih, kako je s posameznikovo svobodo? To nas spodbudi k premisleku o Gandhijeви ideji svobode in njenem razmerju do odgovornosti. Jahanbegloo trdi: »Po Gandhiju ima odgovornost prednost pred svobodo, saj nas vodi k pravičnemu ravnanju z drugimi, medtem ko bi moral ideal, ki ga predstavlja svoboda, preizprašati človekovo bližino do vsakega posameznega drugega. Poleg tega proces spodbujanja stikov med nasprotniki in premagovanje zla zahteva, da spoštujemo sebstvo drug drugega – doživljanje sebe in drugega.«<sup>15</sup>

Gandhi svobode ne pojmuje absolutno, temveč jo umešča v kontekst drugih ali družbe. Ne nasprotuje individualni svobodi, temveč jo želi prilagoditi zahtevam družbenega napredka. Vendar zanj vrednotenje človekove svobode le kot svobode uresničevanja lastnih interesov brez moralne in duhovne globine ustvarja življenje brez smisla in resnice. Po drugi strani pa Gandhi kritizira neomejeni individualizem in ga poimenuje »zakon zveri v džungli«. Želel je, da bi se naučili najti ravnovesje med individualno svobodo in družbenimi omejitvami. Zapisal je: »Individualno svobodo spoštujem, a nikar ne pozabite, da je človek v bistvu družbeno bitje. Sedanji položaj je dosegel tako, da se je naučil svoj individualizem prilagajati zahtevam družbenega napredka. Neomejeni individualizem je zakon zveri v džungli. Naučiti se moramo najti srednjo pot med individualno svobodo in družbenimi omejitvami. Prostovoljna podreditev družbenim omejitvam zavoljo dobrobiti celotne družbe bogati posameznika in družbo, katere član je.«<sup>16</sup>

Po njegovem mnenju prostovoljna podreditev družbenim omejitvam zavoljo dobrobiti drugega ali družbe bogati tako posameznika kakor družbo, katere del je. Po Gandhiju torej svoboda ni le pravica, temveč odgovornost in dolžnost. Resnična svoboda ne pomeni le svobode, da posameznik počne, kar želi, temveč tudi zmožnost zagotoviti, da je tisto, kar izbere, posledica občutka dolžnosti in samozavedanja. Po njegovem prepričanju se izbira ne uveljavi kot »svoboda od omejitev«, temveč kot »svoboda v omejitvah«.

Na tej osnovi Gandhi svobodo enači s pojmom *svaradž*, tj. samoobvladovanje. V povezavi s tem Iyer ugotavlja, da je »Gandhi svobodo enačil s samoobvladovanjem, ker je želel v koncept svobode vpeljati pojem dolžnosti do drugih in do samega sebe, obenem pa ohraniti element prostovoljnosti, ki je temelj svobode. Pojem samoobvladovanja vključuje prostovoljno ponotranjenje naše dolžnosti do drugih, ki pa bo ovirano, če bomo podlegli svojim sebičnim željam.«<sup>17</sup> Ta trditev kaže, kaj je Gandhi nameraval in dosegel. Gandhi je *svaradž* namenoma dobesečno ločil od samega prenosa oblasti in politične neodvisnosti. Zanj je bila moralna zahteva po vladanju brez praktičnega izkazovanja

15 Jahanbegloo, *The Gandhian Moment*, 85.

16 Prabhu, Rao, *The Mind of Mahatma*, 312.

17 Iyer, *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, 349.



*svaradža* nesmiselna, celo nepremišljena. Menil je, da *svaradž* nastopi le s sprejemanjem velike osebne in politične odgovornosti, ki vključuje velikansko samožrtvovanje in delovanje v korist družbe. Tako zanj svoboda ni svoboda pred prisilo in prevlado, temveč tudi samoregulacija s samoomejevanjem. Gandhi je svobodo ali *svaradž* razumel v smislu osebne in politične odgovornosti, ta nauk pa je v 21. stoletju izjemnega pomena.

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## dr. Prem Anand Mishra

Prof. Prem Anand Mishra je dekan Fakultete za gandhijevske študije na Univerzi Gudžarat Vidyapith v Ahmedabadu v Indiji, ki jo je 18. 10. 1920 ustanovil Mahatma Gandhi. Na omenjeni fakulteti predava predmete s področja Gandhijeve filozofije in politične misli. V svojem raziskovalnem delu se ukvarja z Gandhijevo politično mislijo, vprašanjem miru, nacionalizma in postkolonialnimi študijami. Je avtor številnih del o Gandhiju, na primer *Hind Swaraj: A Deconstructive Reading* (2012), *Peace Research: Issues and Application* (2015), *Gandhian Humanism in the Twenty-First Century* (2015), *Position: Gandhi's Intervention in Contemporary Discourse* (2017) in soavtor *Debating Nationalism* (2018). Sodeloval je tudi pri prenovi znanstvenih revij o Gandhiju: *Journal Gandhi Marg*, *Journal of Gandhian Studies* in *The Indian Journal of Political Science*.



## Self and Its Relation to the Others: Gandhian Thinking in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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### Abstract

The present paper examines Gandhi's philosophy in response to the critical issue of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, i.e. the relation between self and the other. First, it explores the basis on which self is related to the other in Gandhi's worldview. Arguing that in Gandhi's worldview self and other are related to each other with the notion of responsibility, the study aims to discuss the nature of responsibility in Gandhi's worldview and examine on what ground Gandhi determines the responsibility of self to the other. In addition, it addresses the basic issue of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as to how to act responsibly in our social and political life from Gandhian point of view. The paper also explains the relationship between freedom and responsibility in Gandhi's paradigm and demonstrates that in his worldview freedom does not only mean freedom from outside coercion and domination, but also self-regulation through self-restraint. The study aims to highlight that in Gandhi's worldview the self and the other are not two different categories, but the other is one's extended self.

The paper seeks to examine these issues by investigating Gandhi's original writings as primary sources. It uses the unconventional "inside-out" approach, i.e. studying Gandhi in his own terms as a method to deal with the topic at hand. In my view, this is the most appropriate method for the aforementioned topic as it allows to unpack Gandhi's apparently unconventional ideology.

**Keywords:** self, other, responsibility, freedom

Living in the globalised and multicultural world of the twenty-first century is both an opportunity and a challenge. It is an opportunity as it exposes us to knowing and understanding different shades of people, cultures or communities through direct and indirect means of contact; at the same time, it is a challenge as we have to confront the individuals, groups or communities at different levels, because we think that they are not like us. Knowingly or unknowingly, a social phenomenon lies in the practice that creates social disharmony at a different level by making a binary opposition of us/them in the society in terms of race, ethnicity, faith, and religion. This social phenomenon takes place in a process which is called "Othering" in contemporary social science literature. The process of otherness has created conflicts and violence at many levels – from local to global – and there are many sites of it spanning from personal to public life. Thus, there is a problem of "relation between self and the other".

The problem of “relation between self and the other” has been addressed in many ways by the thinkers/philosophers of both Indian and western traditions. Gandhi also faced the issue of “self” (from the individual self to the national self) and its relation to “other” (from outside him as an individual to British nation and rule). He addressed this issue both in theory and practice. The focus of the present paper is the theoretical part of his views on the relationship between self and others.

## I.

How does Gandhi view the relationship between self and other? To explore the basis of the relation between self and other in Gandhi’s worldview, first of all, we may recall Gandhi’s concept of *moksha*. Gandhi argued that the main objective of the individual is to attain *moksha*, i.e. liberation.<sup>1</sup> His notion of *moksha* is both philosophical and pragmatic. Being a man of action, he had a more profound and practical understanding of *moksha*. Thus, he defined his concept of *moksha* in very active and practical terms. He argues that one can attain *moksha* only through engaging with others. Thus, for Gandhi, if attaining *moksha* is the chief objective of life, then considering others is part and parcel of attaining *moksha*. One cannot ignore others as *moksha* is not something outside the realm of other. Concerning the relation between self and other from the point of view of Gandhi’s notion of *moksha*, Parekh observes, “Since self and Other were interdependent polarities, each creating and being in turn created by the other, *moksha* involved the complementary processes of dissolving the ‘Other’ by attaining total identification with all creation. Hindu religious tradition had stressed the former and Gandhi did not add much to it. The way he defined the latter and related the two contained novel insights and represented his great contribution”.<sup>2</sup>

Second, the basis of the relation between self and others in Gandhi’s paradigm can also be explored in his analysis of human nature and the individual’s place and role in this universe. For Gandhi, the human being is a trinity of animality, humanity, and divinity. He argues that human behaviour is regulated by many factors, such as moral standards, the sense of shame, conscience, and duty. For him, the basic manifestations of ethical life are the sense of social and personal responsibility and the awareness that one is part of the whole and linked with others.

Third, the basis of the relation between self and others in Gandhi’s worldview can also be explored in his view on *purushartha*. He does not accept the view that an individual is essentially helpless in the face of the forces that affect him/her from within

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1 Gandhi, *An Autobiography. The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, xii.

2 Parekh, *Gandhi’s Political Philosophy*, 95.

and from without. By invoking *purushartha*, he argues that the responsibility one feels is not merely an illusion. It is real and the choice one determines through consciousness is substantial and profound.

Yet, one may raise the issue: what is the defining feature of responsibility in Gandhi's worldview? Gandhi seems to argue that responsibility is a state of conscious feeling of duty towards oneself and the other/society. Furthermore, for him, responsibility is not only a theoretical construct for philosophising the role of the individual in this living world, but it also involves an active awareness of the purpose of the actions performed and their corresponding consequences. Gandhi's notion of responsibility deconstructs the binary of responsibility to oneself and responsibility to others. The reason behind is that the individual is not separate from others. He/she is the same as the others. In Gandhi's worldview, there are no others, there is only the self, or versions thereof. Gandhi's belief in our "oneness with others" was fundamentally based on his perception of the divinity of humanity, as he claimed that an individual is "part and parcel of the whole" and "cannot find [God] apart from the rest of humanity".<sup>3</sup> This intersubjective definition of the ground of being is the foundation of Gandhi's notion of responsibility.

But what is the meaning of being responsible, in a practical sense, in Gandhi's worldview? In Gandhi's sense, to say that a person is responsible means that he/she is capable of correctly understanding the question of what is true/right in the political and social field. This correct understanding of true/right and acting accordingly forms the relative truth. In Gandhi's worldview, it must be pointed out that only knowing the responsibility is not enough, one also has *to act* accordingly. Furthermore, any responsibility, in his framework, is based on "knowledge" and "will to act", which are to be directed towards Absolute Truth. Gandhi's writings point out that every human being holds responsibility to both himself and others or society.

Thus, in Gandhi's worldview self and other are related to each other with the notion of responsibility.

## II.

Let us examine on *what ground* Gandhi fixes the responsibility of self towards others. There are no systematic writings by Gandhi on this subject, yet we may trace some philosophical concepts in his writings that provide us with sufficient clues to reconstruct the basis of responsibility of self to others within his worldview.

In this context, one may refer to his notion of "mutual love" in his writings by which he seems to argue that every human being is responsible to others. He argues that not

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3 CWMG:63:240.

only our own social life but even nature cannot survive without mutual love. To quote him: "Though there is repulsion enough in Nature, she lives by attraction. Mutual love enables Nature to persist. Man does not live by destruction. Self-love compels regard for others. Nations cohere because there is mutual regard among individuals composing them. Someday we must extend the national law to the universe, even as we have extended the family law to form nations – a larger family."<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, in Gandhi's writings, one may observe his repeated notion that humanity is an "undividable whole". This "undividable" humanity is the philosophical basis on which Gandhi fixes individual responsibility. In order to recognise Gandhi's notion of "undividable whole", we may make use of a metaphor that Gandhi had used to describe the paradigm of "undividable whole". The metaphor is about the relation between the "drop of water and the ocean".<sup>5</sup> Another metaphor is about the "chain and the link". He mentioned: "[...] there is no distinction between individual growth (read self) and corporate growth (other), the corporate growth is therefore entirely dependent upon individual growth and hence that beautiful proverb in the English language that a chain is no stronger than the weakest link".<sup>6</sup>

Similar to the notion of undividable humanity, one may find the repeated expressions of "oneness of mankind" in Gandhi's writings. Although this notion was explained by him in different contexts, it can be interpreted in terms of why one should be responsible to others. Once he wrote: "Mankind is one, seeing that all are equally subject to the moral law. All men are equal in God's eyes. There are, of course, differences of race and status and the like, but the higher the status of a man, the greater is his responsibility."<sup>7</sup> Thus, Gandhi accepts different kinds of differences among human beings, but despite those differences, in his view, there is an underlying unity, because they all are subject to the same moral law. Furthermore, as noted previously, in his view, the higher status of men brings greater responsibility.

Similarly, he describes the idea of "kinship with all" in his writings. This "kinship with all" extends not only to human beings, but the animals too. He argues that his kinship extends to "horse and sheep, the lion and leopard, the snake and the scorpion".<sup>8</sup> The logic of "brotherhood and identity with all forms of life" and "kinship with all" is that, as Gandhi notes, "every man and woman has unilateral obligation" as "man is made in the image of God".<sup>9</sup>

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4 Gandhi, *All Men are Brothers*, 118.

5 Qtd. in Roy, *Self and Society: A study in Gandhian Thought*, 103.

6 *CWMG*:34:505.

7 Gandhi, *All Men are Brothers*, 118.

8 Prabhu, Rao, *The Mind of Mahatma*, 424.

9 *Ibid.*

His writings also mention the notion of “identification with others” which implies interdependence. Thus, he does not see that duty to self is separate from other spheres of society. He claims: “Duties [responsibility] to self, to the family, to the country and to the world are not independent of one another. One cannot do good to the country by injuring himself or his family. Similarly, one cannot serve the country injuring the world at large.”<sup>10</sup> Again in Gandhi’s writings, we perceive the “idea of self-sacrifice” by which we may deduce the basis of responsibility of self to others. This is best illustrated by his notion and practice of *satyagraha*. As a “practical idealist”, Gandhi knew that an individual can take some action, unknowingly or unwillingly, concerning others in such a way that may harm others. He also argues that if a person gets engaged in an unjust cause by mistake, he cannot escape from the responsibility. To safeguard it, Gandhi argues that one must be ready to sacrifice oneself rather than sacrifice others. In his words, “sacrifice of self is infinitely superior to sacrifice of others.”<sup>11</sup>

Gandhi’s notion of responsibility is not confined only to structural analysis and intervention, but equally offers a philosophy of self-transformation. Thus, for him, the individual’s task is to make a sincere attempt to live in compliance with the principles of truth and nonviolence. Its fundamental tenets are therefore personal and moral, but Gandhi cuts the binary of personal and public morality as well as of responsibility and offers a whole set of responsibilities that involve: resisting injustice, developing a spirit of service, selflessness, and sacrifice, emphasising one’s responsibilities rather than rights, self-discipline, simplicity of lifestyle, and attempt to maintain truthful and non-violent relations with others. Thus Gandhi’s notion of responsibilities embodies a multi-dimensional responsibility with multiple others.

An important form of responsibility in Gandhi’s worldview is responsibility for the future, both near and distant. The immediate and the near aspects of responsibility might again be noticed in his notion of *satyagraha*. On the other hand, for distant responsibility, that has to be borne out by the individual and take appropriate methods and steps, he presents the vision of *Ramrajya*, i.e. Kingdom of God. His vision of *Ramrajya* which means “perfect nonviolent society” is based on the “sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority”.<sup>12</sup>

His argument for responsibility puts a heavy burden on human beings. From his perspective, “we are not responsible for what we do but also *what we tolerate*”.<sup>13</sup> This Gandhian responsibility “implicates us in the actions of the institutions around us whether

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10 Gandhi, *All Men are Brothers*, 120.

11 Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, 54.

12 Prabhu, Rao, *The Mind of Mahatma*, 326.

13 Tercheak, *Gandhi Struggling for Autonomy*, 194.

or not we derive some benefit from them”.<sup>14</sup> From his perspective anyone who tolerates injustice nourishes and exonerates it. Moreover, he/she is running away from his/her responsibility. For Gandhi, modern complexities confound the issue of responsibility by assigning it to impersonal institutions where no one seems accountable or by masking power and domination with the imperatives of efficiency or productivity. However, the complexities, Gandhi claims, can never repeal personal responsibilities, at least if we want to continue to govern ourselves.

### III.

It might be argued: if self feels a responsibility towards others then what about individual freedom? This invites us to ponder on Gandhi’s idea of freedom and its relation to responsibility. Jahanbegloo argues: “Responsibility for Gandhi precedes freedom because it leads us towards a just treatment to others, the ideal presented by freedom should, in turn, re-inform one’s neighbourliness towards the individual other. Moreover, the process of facilitating contact between opponents and overcoming evil requires an appreciation of each other’s self – experience and experience of others.”<sup>15</sup>

Gandhi does not view freedom in an absolute way, but rather locates it in the context of others or society. He is not against individual freedom but wants to adjust it to the requirements of social progress. However, for him, to value human freedom only as the freedom to pursue one’s self-interest lacks moral and spiritual depth and creates a life devoid of meaning and truth. On the other hand, he criticised the unrestricted individualism and called it “the law of the beast of the jungle”. He wanted us to learn to strike the mean between individual freedom and social restraint. He wrote: “I value individual freedom, but you must not forget that man is essentially a social being. He has risen to his present status by learning to adjust his individualism to the requirements of social progress. Unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle. We have to learn to strike the mean between individual freedom and social restraint. Willing submission to social restraint for the sake of the well-being of the whole society enriches both the individual and the society of which one is a member.”<sup>16</sup>

In his view, such a willing submission to social restraint for the sake of the well-being of the other or society enhances both the individual and the society of which one is a member. Thus, freedom for Gandhi was not merely a right but a responsibility and duty. True freedom is not merely the freedom to do what one desires, but also the ability

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14 *Ibid.*, 195.

15 Jahanbegloo, *The Gandhian Moment*, 85.

16 Prabhu, Rao, *The Mind of Mahatma*, 312.



to ensure that what one chooses is the result of a sense of duty and self-knowledge. For him, this choice is not exercised as “freedom from restraints” but rather as “freedom through restraints”.

It is on this ground that Gandhi equates freedom with his notion of *Swaraj* or self-rule or self-constraint. In this regard, Iyer observes that “Gandhi equated freedom with self-rule because he wished to build into the concept of freedom the notion of obligation to others as well as to oneself while retaining the element of voluntariness that is the very basis of freedom. The notion of self-rule implies the voluntary internalisation of our obligation to others which will be obstructed by our placing ourselves at the mercy of our selfish desires.”<sup>17</sup> This states precisely what Gandhi intended and achieved. Gandhi deliberately disassociated *Swaraj* from the mere transfer of power and political independence in the literal sense. To him, the moral claim to *rule* was nonsensical, even reckless, without a practical demonstration of *Swaraj*. He argued that *Swaraj* could come only through acceptance of considerable personal and political responsibility that involved enormous self-sacrifice and social service. Thus for him, freedom is not only freedom from coercion and domination, it is also self-regulation through self-restraint. Thus, freedom or *Swaraj* was understood by Gandhi both in the sense of personal and political responsibility. This is the lesson more relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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17 Iyer, *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, 349.

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## Gandhijevska satjagraha kot dejanje

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### Izvleček

*Satjagraha* je Gandhijev neologizem, sestavljen iz besede *satja*, resnica, in *agraha*, trdnost, privrženost, vztrajanje. *Satjagraha* dobesedno pomeni »vztrajanje pri resnici« ali »trdnost v resnici«. Ta Resnica vzpostavlja politično zahtevo, ki pa jo je treba uveljaviti z nenasiljem. Če bi *gandhijevsko nenasilje* (*ahimsa*) kot koncept razumeli zgolj kot univerzalno načelo, katerega vsebina je odpoved vsem oblikam nasilja, bi ga postavili na raven ideje, na kateri ni še nič gandhijevskega. Gandhijevsko nenasilje ni »pasivni odpor«, ni pasivnost, ki bi bila posledica *nemoči* uporabiti nasilje. Niti ni nekakšno iracionalno verovanje v univerzalno odpoved nasilju. Ni niti preprosto vedra naklonjenost do vsega živega in ljubeča skrb.

Prvi korak h gandhijevskemu pojmu nenasilja je njegov uvid, da pri človeških bitjih in v človeški družbi grožnja ali dejanska uporaba »gole sile« oziroma fizičnega uničenja v konsekvenci meri na vzpostavitev moči, ki pa ni več fizična sila, marveč nekaj, kar vztraja: sila subjektivnega *verovanja* v moč. Moč v Simbolnem, ki je *pred* golo silo, in moč, v katero se tudi fizično uničenje *izteče* vsaj za preživele, temelji na jeziku kot *govorici*, ki je *družbena vez* (Lacan). Moč gandhijevskega nenasilja v zadnji instanci izhaja iz vzpostavljenih družbenih vezi in tudi meri na spremembo v Simbolnem. Ta moč ne temelji na naivno humanističnem verovanju, da je nasprotnika mogoče prepričati glede lastne Resnice že z argumenti. Kot Gandhi zapiše pred pričetkom ene od *satjagrah*: »Stvar ni v prepričevanju z argumenti. Sama se razreši v stvar merjenja sil.« Da bi se *diskurzivni subjekt* lahko vzpostavil v moč, to zahteva tveganje dejanja, dejanja, katerega os je »merjenje sil«. Zahteva prehod k dejanju (Dolar) – subjekt postane objekt, vendar znotraj Simbolnega, ne v obliki psihotične izključitve (*Verwerfung*) – in zato je potrebna *satjagraha*: »nenasilni« družbeni oziroma politični boj, spopad, s katerim so Gandhi in njegovi sodelavci v več kampanjah v letih od 1917 do 1922 in pozneje v Indijo uvedli dotlej neznani koncept množičnega državljanskega odpora. V *satjagrahi* nenasilje postane subjekt: *prazno mesto* subjekta vselej znova zaseda natanko gesta ločitve od nasilja. Kot da bi se posameznik vselej znova odločil, da je nenasilje sredstvo uveljavitve Resnice, to je določenega političnega cilja, za katerega si prizadeva – Gandhijev razlog je bila seveda vedno razvidna družbena krivica.

Odločitev za nenasilje je torej predvsem dejanje: je forma dejanja, v katerem se subjekt nareži za objekt ne-dialektično postavljene vsebine Resnice, brez nasilja kot opore – moč subjekta *ahimsa*, ki v procesu *satjagrade* sledi svoji resnici, je v »sledih« družbenih krivic, v razlogih za dejanje, torej v Simbolnem, o katerih pa lahko razsodi le nasprotnik, ki je na mestu Drugega. *Nenasilje kot subjekt v satjagrahi* izključi *subjektivno nasilje*, ne izključi pa, še več, prav izhaja iz *objektivnega nasilja* govornice (ideologije) in *družbenega nasilja*, ki ga producira »gladko delovanje« družbenih mehanizmov (Žižek), in politično odločanje postavi v diskurz.

**Ključne besede:** nenasilje, dejanje, subjekt, Drugi, Simbolno

*Satjagraha* je Gandhijev neologizem, sestavljen iz besede *satja*, resnica, in *agraha*, trdnost, privrženost, vztrajanje. *Satjagraha* dobesedno pomeni »vztrajanje pri resnici« ali »trdnost v resnici«. Ta Resnica vzpostavlja politično zahtevo, ki pa jo je treba uveljaviti z nenasiljem. Če bi gandhijevsko nenasilje (*ahimsa*) kot koncept razumeli zgolj kot univerzalno načelo, katerega vsebina je odpoved vsem oblikam nasilja, bi ga postavili na raven ideje, na kateri ni še nič gandhijevskega. Gandhijevsko nenasilje ni »pasivni odpor«, ni pasivnost, ki bi bila posledica nemoči uporabiti nasilje. Niti ni nekakšno iracionalno verovanje v univerzalno odpoved nasilju. Ni niti preprosto vedra naklonjenost do vsega živega in ljubeča skrb.

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Razlog za prehod v *satjagraho* je nujnost dejanja in različne izjave – njegove lastne in drugih – nam dajejo vedeti, da gandhijevsko nenasilje kot diskurz postopa skozi *ravnjanja*. Razumevanje Gandhijeve filozofije nenasilja zahteva predvsem analizo in interpretacijo njegovih ravnanj.

O Gandhijevem prepričanju v diskurzivno moč (»moč jezika«, to je govora in govorice) priča poanta iz dela *Hind svaradž*, da osvoboditve od *podrejenosti* britanski kolonialni vladavini ni mogoče doseči z nasiljem – marveč »z nenasiljem«, torej na diskurzivni

ravni – zato, ker je predvsem treba razbiti »sponse« hlapčevstva, ki jih »na sebi« ne kaže iskati v britanskem nasilju, marveč v njih (Indijcih) samih.

V eni od mnogih enigmatično preprostih metafor na primer pravi: »Nenasilje je speče stanje.« Moč gandhijevskega »nenasilja« v *satjagrahi* izhaja iz dejstva, da je človek hočeš nočeš subjekt »nenasilja«, to je priklenjenosti na »speče stanje« že danega simbolnega okvira realnosti. Osvoboditev bo prišla skozi uvid, kako je obstoječi okvir realnosti – kolonialna podrejenost – posledica »prostovoljnega pristanka« samih Indijcev. V okvirih sodobne realnosti bi lahko rekli: če želimo kaj drugega od neizogibne ekološke katastrofe, v katero vodijo obstoječi mehanizmi kapitala in produkcije dobička, se je predvsem treba osvoboditi verovanja, to je »prostovoljnega pristanka« nas vseh na neizogibnost vladavine teh mehanizmov.

Priznanje lastnega deleža v nesvobodi, priznanje »nesvobode« kot proizvedene od nas samih, kakorkoli se kaže kot brezizhodna danost, na katero nimamo vpliva, je pogoj svobode. Veriga, s katero je subjekt priklenjen na nesvobodo, kakor da je neko stanje, ni nasilje, marveč vez *nenasilja*, to je vpetost v lastni *simbolni*, diskurzivni okvir »realnosti«. S te perspektive gandhijevsko nenasilje ni nekakšno »nerealistično«, zaslepljeno verovanje v odpoved subjektivnemu nasilju. Je koncept, ki se zaveda, da moč v človeški civilizaciji temelji na polju diskurza in v razmerjih moči v Simbolnem, ki je vselej že tu – torej nujno pred dejanjem.

Svoje teorije je pretvoril v dejansko politiko in si ustvaril lastno mesto v političnem prostoru, s katerim je prišel na čelo Indijskega nacionalnega kongresa. Pri tem se je umestil na mejo med dva rivalska koncepta politike osvoboditve: povezal je »zmerne« nacionaliste, politično strujo, ki je zagovarjala »konstitucionalno« pot k neodvisnosti, in »ekstremiste«, ki so zagovarjali nasilni prevzem oblasti. Ob tem politika nenasilja zanj ni bila »začasna politika« (dokler je v pravem trenutku ne zamenja politika nasilja), niti kompromis z »žrtvovanjem« nečesa vsake od rivalskih politik, ker ne ohrani obeh principov (»nenasilja« *in* »nasilja«), niti ni politika vzdrževanja ravnovesja med njima.

Kolikor je poteza konstitucionalizma verovanje v nenasilje in je zato meja (resnica) konstitucionalizma, da ne preide v dejanje, bi bil gandhijevski očitek konstitucionalizmu, da ima ta subjekt vendarle »težave z nenasiljem«, in sama ta privrženost nenasilju je korak *umika pred dejanjem* »v nenasilje«. Konstitucionalizem je vselej brez dejanja, tako pa nikdar ni mogoče doseči osvoboditve, ker ne more biti nobenega napredovanja v dialektičnem gibanju. V razmerju do konstitucionalizma je odvrnitev od nenasilja – tj. negacija nenasilja – v ekstrem nasilja »ekstremistov« *korak k dejanju*. Toda njegova meja (resnica) je v tem, da je to nasilje napredovanje, ki ostaja znotraj istega simbolnega okvira (korak v »angleško oblast brez Angležev«), ujeta v nasprotipostavljenost opozicij s tistim, ki se mu upira, in zato ni dejanje – za dejanje, ki bi vodilo v gibanje napredovanja k osvoboditvi, je treba »v celoti« zamenjati perspektivo in premestiti sam »okvir realnosti«. Natanko to pa je intendirani diskurzivni učinek osrednjega dela *Hind svaradž*

– absolutna potujitev tiste točke vladajočega diskurza (kot družbene vezi), v kateri Indijci na oblast (angleško vladavino) niso priklenjeni »z nasiljem«, marveč »z nenasiljem« (s tem, da tudi sami še bolj neposredno od samih Angležev verjamejo v dobrobit civilizacije, ki jo prinaša angleška nadoblast: v železnice, v odvetnike, v doktorje itd., v obljubo užitka). S tem so »najbolj« nesvobodni. »Naučiti vladati se samim sebi« sledi kot posledica, a pred tem mora biti nek »korak tveganja v norost«, dejanje, ki je diskurzivne narave z obeh plati, kot diskurz in kot ravnanja.

Če se sedaj vrnemo k vprašanju izhoda iz te priklenjenosti na nenasilje: izhod ne more biti opustitev nenasilja, tj. *negacija* nenasilja (v ekstremu nasilja). Težava drugega ekstrema nasilja namreč ni v tem, da bi bilo nasilje preveč radikalno; nasprotno, problem je v tem, da prelom ni bil dovolj radikalen, saj se hoče znebiti opresorjev (zamenjati oblast), vendar ostane ujet v njegove simbolne okvire, natanko v tisto, kar hoče izbrisati iz svoje eksistence. Gandhijevska diskurzivna politika nenasilja je zato eksplicitno prešla tudi na raven vprašanja identitete. Njegova sprevernitev obeh pozicij (»konstitucionalizma« in »nasilnega ekstremizma«) je bila rezultat premisleka, da je njihova lastna identiteta priklenjena na Drugega – »negibnost«, utopljenost v ugodje obeh teh politik izhaja iz sprevida, da bi se najprej morali vprašati, kako je njuna lastna pozicija »'posredovana' z Drugim«. <sup>1</sup>

Korak izhoda iz te »priklenjenosti k nenasilju«, ki ga Gandhi zagovarja s svojim konceptom svobode in ki ga je izvajal s politiko nenasilja, je na neki način preprost: negacija te »negacije nenasilja«. Ta korak »v nenasilje« ni korak v »višjo enotnost« (»nasilja in nenasilja«), marveč je korak v ekstrem absolutnega nenasilja – torej logika negacije, ki korak naprej stori z *radikalizacijo* izhodišča, to je »nenasilja«. Gandhijevsko »verovanje v nenasilje« pa je tako skrajno zaostrena točka forme, »čistega«, ne-dialektičnega, s partikularno vsebino nepokritega subjekta.

Poanto dela *Hind svaradž* bi lahko interpretirali tudi tako: če se hočemo znebiti Angležev, moramo najprej »bistveno transformirati vsebino« lastne »pozicije«. Korak radikalizacije v absolutno nenasilje proizvede formalno, z Drugim povsem nepokrito točko subjekta, ki je že sam na sebi odprava prav verovanja (»v nenasilje«) kot strogo vzeto vsake partikularne točke, na katero je pripet subjekt, tj. Drugega. Obe predhodni poziciji subjekta (»konstitucionalizem« in »ekstremizem«) ostaneta ujeti v vladajoči diskurz, treba pa je le uvideti, da je »Padec že na sebi svoja lastna odprava« (Žižek), prepoznanje, da je težko iskani *svaradž* že na delu, kolikor že imamo obstoječo – »staro« – indijsko civilizacijo, torej prav v tisti realnosti, ki se je hočemo osvoboditi.

Diskurzivno dejanje vrnitve k »stari indijski civilizaciji« bi povsem napačno razumeli, če bi jo postavili v logiko izgube in vrnitve »h koreninam«. Z Gandhija »stara indijska civilizacija« ni cilj, marveč *sredstvo* Indijcev za osvoboditev. Tu se zopet lahko opremo na heglovsko logiko »negacije negacije«, katere matrica je »preprosto proces prehoda iz stanja

1 Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: the Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, 72.

A v stanje B: prva, neposredna 'negacija' A negira pozicijo A, medtem ko ostaja znotraj njenih simbolnih meja, tako da ji mora slediti naslednja negacija, ki potem negira natanko simbolni prostor, ki je skupen A in njeni neposredni negaciji.<sup>2</sup> Izhodišče, s katerim se mora soočiti *Hind svaradž*, ni »indijska civilizacija«, marveč »zahodna civilizacija«, ali natančneje, verovanje Indijcev v »moč in zahodno civilizacijo«, in spoznanje, da tudi neposredna negacija te vladavine (perspektiva zamenjave »oblasti Angležev«) ostaja znotraj teh simbolnih meja. Gandhijevski koncept »moderne civilizacije« je konstrukt, ki v enem mahu spodnaša tako »moč« kot »zahodno« civilizacijo kot dve temeljni simbolni oporni točki. »Stara indijska civilizacija« je druga stran istega konstrukta: kot »pozitivno obstoječa« simbolna realnost (do katere pridemo tako, da jo zgolj prepoznamo kot del že obstoječe realnosti, recimo tako, da v formalnih odnosih z Angleži pričnemo govoriti v svojem jeziku, ali da sedemo za kolovrat, namesto da tečemo po angleško blago, ali da sprejmemo v življenje družine nedotakljive itd.) je del istega projekta negacije negacije, koncepta *svaradža* kot premeščanja samega simbolnega prostora, torej ravno nasprotno, nasprotujemo lastni tradiciji, ki nam jo gospodarji dopuščajo. Gandhi ni bil podvržen naivno humanističnemu verovanju, da je nasprotnika mogoče prepričati glede lastne Resnice že z argumenti.

Kot Gandhi zapiše pred pričetkom ene od *satjagrab*: »Stvar ni v prepričevanju z argumenti. Sama se razreši v stvar merjenja sil.« Da bi se diskurzivni subjekt lahko vzpostavil v moč, to zahteva tveganje dejanja, dejanja, katerega os je »merjenje sil«. Zato *satjagrahe* ni brez manifestacij, ki jih je Gandhi znal evocirati vselej na nov način: odločitev za *pohod rudarjev* v južnoafriški *satjagrabi*, vsenacionalni *bartal* (množična stavka, s katero zamre celotno ekonomsko življenje v znamenje nesodelovanja z britansko vlado), *pohod k morju* v solni *satjagrabi*.

Dejanju predhodi moč Simbolnega, zato je to polje primarno polje svobode, v njem mora biti izveden in vanj mora biti umeščen obrat k svobodi. Seveda pa so bile vse te manifestacije možne le kot učinek predhodno delujočih krivic in družbenih neenakosti – in po drugi strani so predvsem sporočilo, naslovljeno Drugemu.

Herbert Marcuse v zvezi z gandhijevsko politiko *satjgrabe* pripominja, da se tovrstna politika nenasilja v zadnji instanci vendarle sprevrže in deluje kot *nasilje*: »Tam [v Indiji] je prišlo do pasivnega odpora v tako velikem obsegu, da je gospodarsko življenje dežele razpadlo ali bilo na tem, da razpade. [...] V takšnem obsegu pasivni odpor ni več pasiven – preneha biti nenasilje.«<sup>3</sup> Ugotovitev »preneha biti nenasilje« lahko beremo kot očitek proti gandhijevski politiki nenasilja, češ da ni več nenasilje, čeprav zatrjuje, da je. Težava te implikacije je v tem, da gandhijevsko nenasilje ni pasivnost kot rezultat, kot posledica *nemoči* uporabiti nasilje. *Satjagraha* – drugačen koncept pasivnosti – je nastala skozi teoretsko gesto, skozi uvid, da pasivnost *nemoči še ni pasivna*, ker se ne zmore

2 *Ibid.*

3 Marcuse, »Represivna toleranca«, 108.

postaviti na mesto radikalne nemoči. Gandhijevski koncept nenasilja v *satjagrahi* zato prav obratno *izbaja iz radikalizacije* pasivnosti, iz pasivnosti, prignane do absolutnega, v absolutno nemoč, do točke *desubjektivacije*, v kateri se nemoč *neposredno* spreverne v moč. *Pripravljenost* »izgubiti se« kot objekt je že moč »na sebi«.

Moč nenasilja v *dejanju* se opira na uvid (ki ga lahko pojasnjuje heglovska teorija dejanja), da je dejanje po definiciji nek korak, prehod, v katerem se subjekt »napravi za reč«. <sup>4</sup> Dejanje opredeli desubjektivacija, subjekt preide v dejanje s tem, da se kot subjekt izgubi. <sup>5</sup> Ko Gandhi v ahmedabadski *satjagrahi* od delavcev denimo zahteva, da se zaobljubijo postavljenim zahtevam, s tem nedvomno sledi cilju, da mora biti *satjagraha* dejanje, iz česar med drugim izhaja *prisega* kot forma desubjektivacije. Dejanje subjekta nenasilja pa je tako forma dejanja, v katerem se subjekt naredi za »čisti« objekt, brez nasilja kot opore – opora subjekta *ahimsa*, ki sledi svoji resnici, so zgolj »sledí«, ki jih razlogi za dejanje pustijo v Drugem.

Dejanje, katerega temelj je določena resnica, za katero si prizadevamo, vzpostavi n-sprotnika v *subjekt, ki je na mestu Drugega*, to je tistega, ki dejanje interpretira. Kar mu preostane, je bodisi *priznanje kot formalni akt* (lahko le sprejme »resnico« subjekta *ahimsa*) bodisi nek odgovor nasilja. *Satjagrahiju*, ki kot subjekt zahteva Resnico, pa preostane, da bo njegova »resnica« sprejeta, priznana, *ali* (v zadnji instanci) smrt.

Že iz njegovega lastnega opisa prvega spopada z oblastjo po principih *satjagrahe* (»južnoafriška *satjagraha*«), v katerem je do izpolnitve postavljenih zahtev nediskriminacije proti politiki južnoafriške vlade vztrajal približno osem let (od leta 1906 do leta 1914), je mogoče pokazati, da je bil politični boj za enake državljanske pravice priseljencev iz Indije *zanj* vseskozi pogojen z okvirom nekih pravil, znotraj katerih je imel – subjektivno vzeto oziroma z njegove perspektive – iniciativo. Okvire *satjagrahe* postavljajo *način* postavljanja zahtev, le »nenasilna« *sredstva* prisile, nujnost *vplivanja* na javnost, z logiko »nenasilja« povezana *vpeljava žrtvovanja*, tj. nujnost specifične pripravljenosti na žrtev in trpljenje, in za Gandhija specifična »umetnost« ustvarjanja dialektike gibanja »resnice«. Gandhijevska *satjagraha* je »znanost« in na neki način tudi le tehnika: zahteva skrbne priprave, njen subjekt vselej ravna, kakor da bi (*lahko*) vnaprej upošteval določene »strukturne« elemente (vključno z investicijo ali vpetostjo lastnega življenja v to strukturo) in njihovo medsebojno pogojenost. Moč gandhijevske *satjagrahe* je »Gandhi« kot razumno bitje in Gandhi s svojim opiranjem na »etiko«, tj. na univerzalnost subjekta, in del te moči je v tem, da naključje okoliščin zna »heglovsko« realizirati kot nujnost.

Nemara najbolj očitnega momenta te strukture se je mogoče lotiti z znamenito logiko boja na življenje in smrt ter razmerjem gospodarja in hlapca, ki ga Hegel v

4 Dolar, *Samozavedanje: Heglova Fenomenologija duha II*, 122.

5 Prim. *Ibid.*



*Fenomenologiji duha* opredeli kot »samostojnost in nesamostojnost samozavedanja; go-spodstvo in hlapčevstvo«<sup>6</sup> – to je tudi tisti moment, ki je najbolj očitno povezan s pojmom svobode kot ciljem *satjagrahe*.

V opisu trenutka v ahmedabadski *satjagrahi*, ko se je Gandhi odločil za »post do smrti«, lahko razberemo, da je bil odziv stavgajočih hipen, odločitev je izzvala burne reakcije. Za delavce je odločitev nastopila kot presenečenje, kot da je plod naključja. Na podlagi Gandhijevih lastnih interpretacij odločitve, ne nazadnje iz časovno že nekoliko odmaknjenega sklepa, da »ob danih priložnostih v bodoče ne smem omahovati pri ponovitvi ponižnega ravnanja, ki sem si ga dovolil opisati v tem pismu«, pa ne more biti dvoma, da je sam to odločitev videl postavljeno v okvire logike »etičnega« v njegovem pomenu, in odtod se je ta odločitev (ne glede na njegove lastne dvome, na omadeževanost s to odločitvijo) pokazala kot *nujnost*. Ko v gandhijevski *satjagrahi* pride do točke, da so izčrpani vsi argumenti, se ni več mogoče umikati pred tem (in za delodajalce na mestu gospodarja je bilo očitno prav to ključna točka), da zastavek resnice »ni realnost« (ni nerealnost zahtevane višine popravka plač), marveč samostojnost ali nesamostojnost, »resnica« *subjekta*, in tedaj Gandhi z odločitvijo za »post do smrti« vpelje moment subjekta, ki je subjekt, ker v dokaz gotovosti samega sebe (resnice) *mora* izbrati smrt *ali* se odpovedati resnici (samega sebe). Napredovanje v *satjagrahi* je posledica ravnanj oziroma odločitev v teh ravnanjih. Te odločitve pokažejo, da Gandhi *forme* (»etike«) ne razume teleološko: brez teh odločitev ni napredovanja, toda vsaka odločitev je tveganje. Napredovanje je »edino možno« gibanje ne zato, ker bi resnica sama od sebe kot po čudežu vselej nekako prišla na dan, marveč zaradi resnice *nemožne izbire*. Nemožna izbire v tej točki opiše Hegel, ko pojasnjuje antagonizem »boja na življenje in smrt«, in pravi, da je

[...] edinole zastavljanje življenja tisto, s čimer se potrdi svoboda, potrdi to, da samozavedanju ni bistvo ne bit, ne neposredni način, kako nastopa, ne njegova pogreznjenost v razgrnjenost življenja – temveč da na njem ni navzočega nič, kar zanj ne bi bilo izginjajoči moment, da je le čisto zasebstvo. Individuum, ki ni tvegal življenja, je pač lahko pripoznan kot oseba; resnice te pripoznanosti kot samostojnega samozavedanja pa ni dosegel.<sup>7</sup>

Nujnost momentov napredovanja gibanja kot edino možnega gibanja se v tem pogledu ne opira na vsebino zahtev niti na kontekst (Drugega), ključ do te nujnosti je gandhijevski pojem etike kot forme subjekta. Struktura subjektivnosti je »vselej že« tu in »vselej« učinkuje kot »celota«. »Nujnost« in »naključje« je na tem mestu mogoče navezati na razcep dveh »podob zavesti«, na gospodarja in na hlapca, v kateri se razreši boj na

6 Hegel, *Fenomenologija duha*, 103–109.

7 Hegel, *Fenomenologija duha*, 105.

življenje in smrt. Njun razcep je ireduktibilen: gospodarja naredi to, da je bil pripravljen življenje postaviti na kocko, in *zanj* je ta pozicija nujnost; hlapca pa naredi to, da je izbral življenje, za ceno odpovedi samostojnosti.

Moment »boja na življenje in smrt« vpelje specifično dejanje, pripravljenost žrtvovanja lastnega življenja, in to pravega heglovskega dejanja v pomenu, da dejanje premesti sam simbolni okvir realnosti – tu je premestitev v tem, da je rezultat dejanja neko razmerje, tj. simbolno vzpostavljena vez med »gospodarjem in hlapcem«, do katere pride v *prehodu* samega dejanja. Moralist Gandhi (kolikor je bila njegova pozicija vselej tudi podučevanje in moraliziranje) je zgradil moč nenasilja kot dejanja v *satjagrahi* na *formalnosti strukture* človeške subjektivnosti in na tem, da se je postavil – če lahko tako rečemo – v vlogo heterogenega objekta *a*, kolikor je prav ta heterogeni objekt »tisti kraj, na katerem se v čistost forme lahko prikrade *kontingenca materialne zgodovine*«<sup>8</sup> – kontingenca dejanj, ki naredijo »materialno zgodovino« in katerih rdeča nit je v tem, da premestijo sam simbolni okvir realnosti.

## Dejanje v južnoafriški *satjagrahi*

Leta 1913 (po sedmih letih) je *satjagraha* v Južni Afriki, gledano s stališča postavljenih političnih ciljev, dosegla najnižjo točko: indijska skupnost je – po začetnem navdušenju leta 1906 – zaradi nepopustljivosti vlade postala malodušna, razcepljena, Gandhi je imel za seboj le peščico najbolj prepričanih; kot zapiše sam, »največ 65 ali 66 in najmanj 16«,<sup>9</sup> med temi 16 so bili večinoma njegovi sorodniki in prijatelji, živeči v naselbini (»komuni«) Feniks.<sup>10</sup> Gandhijevskemu vztrajanju pri načelnih zahtevah se je zoperstavljalo načelo ugodja.

Potem je vrhovno sodišče sprejelo odločbo, s katero so postale nelegalne (nične) vse poroke, razen tiste, sklenjene po krščanskih religijskih običajih. Za večino Indijcev, ki so se poročili v skladu z običaji hindujske, muslimanske ali zoroastrske religije, je bila ta odločitev težak udarec z implikacijo izničenja njihovih simbolnih razmerij (»poročene žene [...] niso več veljale za žene in so bile degradirane na raven priležnic, medtem ko je bila njihovim naslednikom odvzeta pravica dedovanja premoženja staršev«<sup>11</sup>). To je odporu dalo nov zagon.

Nepismeni in neizobraženi rudarji so šli v politično motivirano stavko, katere cilj – odprava diskriminacije – ni imel neposredne zveze z izboljšanjem njihovega materialnega položaja. Toda ta sila je bila kljub številčnosti in emocionalnemu naboju, ki jih je spodbudil v stavko, na tem, da se sesuje v prah. Gandhi, ki je vse skupaj iniciral, se je odpravil v Newcastle takoj, ko je izvedel za stavko. Ugotovil je, da stavkajoči niso bili v položaju, da bi lahko

8 Dolar, *Samozavedanje: Heglova Fenomenologija duha II*, 47.

9 Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, 274.

10 *Ibid.*, 278.

11 *Ibid.*

kakorkoli zdržali daljšo stavko, že prehrana je postala velik problem. Kot piše, je bilo treba najti izhod iz položaja, sicer bi bilo za delavce bolje, da se »predajo« sami od sebe in čim prej gredo nazaj na delo, kot pa da bi to storili po obdobju »mučnega čakanja«. <sup>12</sup>

V tej točki pridemo do tipično gandhijevskega obrata: »Toda defetistični nasvet ni bil v moji smeri. Zato sem predlagal, da je edina možna pot rešitve za delavce ta, da zapustijo hiše svojih gospodarjev, da krenejo na pot dejansko kot popotniki.« <sup>13</sup> In naprej: »Rudarjem sem sugeriral, da bi morali privzeti stavko, kakor da bo trajala za vse čase [*for all time*] in da zapustijo prostore, ki jih zagotavljajo njihovi gospodarji.« <sup>14</sup> Kar je Gandhi »predlagal« rudarjem, je v temelju *preobrat v simbolnem*, sprevrnitev njihove »celotne perspektive«, sprevrnitev njihove tako rekoč celotne »simbolne realnosti«. V obrat, ki ga lahko razumemo kot moment heglovske *Aufhebung*, vodi neskončna sodba: »stavka« je »za večno«, ni nič drugega kot dokončni izraz nemožnosti, »misel, ki se sama ukine« in s tem zagotovi korak *napredovanja* – »edino možno gibanje« – v *satjagrahi*.

Težavnost obrata perspektive v simbolnem kajpada ni le simbolična, je v tem, da je za subjekt v tem simbolnem vendarle »košček realnega«, ki je njegova opora. Težavnost obrata je pogojena z odpovedjo prav temu »koščku realnega« – v tem primeru z žrtvovanjem dela in lastnine, vsega imetja, ki so ga (razen najnujnejših oblek, osebnih stvari in odej, ki so jih lahko odnesli na pot) rudarji morali ali prodati ali pustiti, skratka z odpovedjo »vsem materialnim stvarjem«, s pretrganjem ujetosti v eksistenco obstoječega. Če bodo delavci privzeli, da je »stavka za večno«, so *že* vse izgubili, in to na mah pretrga vez med subjektom in njegovim fantazmatskim razmerjem do realnosti. Gandhijevsko nenasilje ni pasivni odpor, ker je dejavno, a ne z dejavnostjo, kot je npr. organizacija pohoda, marveč z radikalizacijo pasivnosti v absolutno pasivnost, v odpoved in žrtev, s katero – rečeno s Heglom – mora subjekt dokazati, »da na njem ni navzočega nič, kar zanj ne bi bilo izginjajoč moment«, da bi postal subjekt.

V točki nemoči je moč subjekta gandhijevskega nenasilja v tem, da se ne umakne, marveč privzame tveganje z radikalizacijo odpovedi v žrtvovanje tistega »koščka realnega«, žrtvovanje katerega sesuje simbolni okvir obstoječega, in ta akt je akt »osvoboditve«, ki nemoč pretvori v moč. Akt *dejanske* odpovedi vezem, ki so *simbolna* realnost subjekta in s katerimi je priklenjen v suženjstvo »v realnosti«, je za gandhijevsko logiko nenasilja v *satjagrahi* temeljno dejanje.

Množično uporabljene *hartal* (začasna ustavitev ekonomskega ali drugega življenja, ki zajame praktično celotno družbo) je še najmanj zahtevno »žrtvovanje«, katerega namen je rušenje vezi »obstoječega«. V razponu možnih ravnanj je *tour de force* gandhijevskega nenasilja ravnanje z uvidom, da je ključni objekt v strukturi diskurzivnega

12 *Ibid.*

13 *Ibid.*

14 *Ibid.*, 288.

subjekta življenje, s tem pa ima tudi privzetje tveganja lastnega življenja – ko življenje postane objekt ravnanj – status posega v diskurz.

Gandhi je pozneje iz južnoafriške *satjagrahe* lahko ustvaril »mit o *satjagrahi*«, ker je pohod, ki je sledil, v kombinaciji z drugimi sočasnimi pritiski opisani prelom nemoči v moč stopnjeval v prisilo, ki je vlado prignala do točke izpolnitve leta nazaj postavljenega načelnega političnega cilja te *satjagrahe*.

Gandhijeva odločitev za *ukinitev* stavke, *odpoved* v razmerju *do objekta* in *za pohod* v južnoafriški *satjagrahi* nas opozarjajo, da se moč gandhijevske politike nenasilja ne opira preprosto na zaupanje v Drugega. Lahko bi rekli, da se opira na heglovski uvid, da subjekt – razmerje do objektivnosti – ni vezan le na Drugega, marveč v zadnji instanci na razmerje do objekta. Z drugimi besedami:

Ne gre le za to, da je razmerje do objektivnosti vselej odvisno od intersubjektivnega okvira, temveč, obratno, nazadnje za to, da je sam ta okvir v zadnji instanci odvisen od tega objektivnega momenta, brez katerega bi se sesul. Predelava zunanje in notranje narave poraja preostanek, ki subjekte sploh šele drži skupaj. Razmerje med subjekti in razmerje do Drugega se prevesi v razmerje do objekta.<sup>15</sup>

Na ta preostanek, ki ni nič, je le praznina Realnega, *interregnum* razmerja do objekta, se opira »racionalna logika« Gandhijeve politike nenasilja – v tem *interregnumu* moč postane *novο* razmerje do objektivnosti.

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15 Dolar, *Samozavedanje: Heglova Fenomenologija duha II*, 37.

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Dr. Janez Krek je redni profesor na Pedagoški fakulteti Univerze v Ljubljani. Njegovo raziskovalno delo obsega področja filozofije edukacije ter edukacijskih politik (državljska vzgoja, izobraževalne reforme, ocenjevanje kakovosti v izobraževanju). Med letoma 2008 in 2016 je bil dekan Pedagoške fakultete, pred tem, med letoma 2004 in 2008, pa predstojnik Oddelka za temeljni pedagoški študij na Pedagoški fakulteti Univerze v Ljubljani. Je urednik zbornika *Gandhi in Satyagraha*, ki je leta 2000 izšel pri znanstveni reviji *Problemi*, ki jo izdaja Društvo za teoretsko psihoanalizo Ljubljana.



## Gandhian Satyagraha as an Act

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### Abstract

*Satyagraha* is Gandhi's neologism made up of words *satya*, truth, and *agraha*, firmness, devotion, perseverance. *Satyagraha* literally means "insistence on truth" or "confidence in truth". This Truth establishes a political demand that must be enacted with nonviolence. If Gandhian nonviolence as a concept (*ahimsa*) were to be understood as a universal principle which renounces all forms of violence, it would be placed on the level of ideas that have nothing to do with Gandhi. Gandhian nonviolence is not "passive resistance," it is not a passivity that stems from the *inability* to use violence. Nor is it some kind of irrational belief in universal renunciation of violence. Not even a loving concern or cheerful affection for all living things.

The first step to Gandhian notion of nonviolence is his insight that in human beings and societies, the threat or actual use of "brute force" or physical annihilation are ultimately aimed at establishing a power which is no longer a physical force, but rather something that persists: the power of subjective *belief* in power. The power in the Symbolic, which precedes brute force, the power in which physical annihilation also culminates, at least for the survivors, is based in language *as discourse*, which is *a social bond* (Lacan). The power of Gandhian nonviolence ultimately stems from the established social bonds and also aims at a change in the Symbolic. This power is not based on the naively humanistic belief, that the opponent can be convinced of the Truth with arguments alone. As Gandhi writes before the beginning of one of the *satyagrahas*: "It is not a matter of carrying conviction by argument. The matter resolves itself into one of matching forces." In order for *a discursive subject* to come into power, it requires the risk of taking action, an act whose axis is "measuring forces". It requires a passage to the act (Dolar) – the subject becomes a pure object, but within the Symbolic, not in the form of psychotic foreclosure (*Verwerfung*) – and therefore requires *satyagraha*: a "nonviolent" social or political struggle, a conflict with which Gandhi and his collaborators introduced a hitherto unknown concept of mass civil resistance to India in several campaigns between 1917–1922 and later. In *satyagraha*, nonviolence becomes the subject: *the empty space* of the subject is repeatedly occupied by the very same gesture of separation from violence. It is as if an individual has repeatedly decided that nonviolence was a means of asserting the Truth, that is, of a particular political goal s/he is pursuing – Gandhi's reason has evidently always been the striking social injustice.

The decision for nonviolence is therefore primarily an act: it is a form of action in which the subject makes itself an object of the non-dialectically set content of Truth, without the support of violence. The power of the subject of *ahimsa*, who follows his/her truth in the process of *satyagraha*, is in the "traces" of social injustices, in the reasons for action, and thus in the Symbolic; however, these can only be judged by an opponent who is in the place of the Other. *Nonviolence as a subject in satyagraha* excludes *subjective* violence, but not only does it not exclude, it is even based on *objective* violence of discourse (ideology) and *social* violence produced by the "smooth functioning" of social mechanisms (Žižek), and places political decision-making in discourse.

**Keywords:** nonviolence, act, subject, Other, Symbolic

*Satyagraha* is a neologism coined by Gandhi consisting of the words *satya*, truth, and *agraha*, firmness, devotion, perseverance. *Satyagraha* literally means “insistence on truth” or “confidence in truth”. This Truth establishes a political demand that must be enacted by nonviolence. If Gandhian nonviolence as a concept (*ahimsa*) were to be understood as a universal principle that renounces all forms of violence, it would be placed on the level of ideas that have nothing to do with Gandhi. Gandhian nonviolence is not “passive resistance”, it is not a passivity that stems from the *powerlessness* to employ violence. Nor is it some kind of irrational belief in the universal renunciation of violence. It is not even a loving concern of cheerful affection for all living beings.

The first step towards the Gandhian notion of nonviolence is his insight that in human beings and societies, the threat or actual use of “brute force” or physical annihilation are ultimately aimed at establishing a power that is no longer a physical force, but rather something that persists: the power of subjective *belief* in power. The power in the Symbolic, which *precedes* brute force, the power in which physical annihilation also culminates, at least for the survivors, is based in language *as discourse*, which is a *social bond* (Lacan). The power of Gandhian nonviolence ultimately stems from established social bonds and aims at a change in the Symbolic. Gandhian nonviolence requires a specific passage to the act: the subject becomes an object, but within the Symbolic, not in the form of psychotic foreclosure. It therefore requires *satyagraha*: a “nonviolent” social or political struggle, a conflict with which Gandhi and his collaborators introduced a hitherto unknown concept of mass civil resistance to India in several campaigns in the years 1917–1922 and later. In *satyagraha*, nonviolence becomes the subject: the empty space of the subject is repeatedly occupied by the very same gesture of separation from violence. It is as if the individual has repeatedly decided that nonviolence is a means of asserting the Truth, that is, of the particular political goal that s/he is pursuing. Of course, Gandhi’s reason was always blatant social injustice.

The decision for nonviolence is therefore primarily an act: it is the form of an action in which the subject makes itself the object of the non-dialectically established content of Truth, without the support of violence. The power of the subject of *ahimsa*, who follows his/her truth in the process of *satyagraha*, is in the “traces” of social injustices, in the reasons for action, and thus in the Symbolic; however, these can only be judged by an opponent who is in the place of the Other. *Nonviolence as a subject* in *satyagraha* excludes *subjective violence*, but does not exclude – and is in fact based on – the *objective violence* of discourse (ideology) and the *social violence* that is produced by the “smooth functioning” of social mechanisms (Žižek) and that places political decision-making in discourse.

The reason for the passage to *satyagraha* is the necessity of the act, and various statements by Gandhi and others make it clear that Gandhian nonviolence as discourse proceeds through *actions*. Understanding Gandhi’s philosophy of nonviolence requires above all an analysis and interpretation of his actions.



Gandhi's belief in discursive power (the "power of language", that is, speech and discourse) is attested to by the view expressed in *Hind Swaraj* that liberation from *subordination* to British colonial rule cannot be achieved by violence, but rather "by nonviolence" – that is, on the discursive level – because it is above all necessary to break the "fetters" of servility. These fetters should not be sought in British violence, but rather in Indians themselves.

In one of his many enigmatically simple metaphors, Gandhi says: "Nonviolence is a sleeping state." The power of Gandhi's "nonviolence" in *satyagraha* derives from the fact that, like it or not, the individual is the subject of "nonviolence", that is, of being chained to the "sleeping state" of a given symbolic framework of reality. Liberation will come through an insight into how the existing framework of reality – colonial subordination – is the result of the "voluntary consent" of Indians themselves. In the context of contemporary reality, we could say: if we want anything other than the inevitable ecological catastrophe to which the existing mechanisms of capital and the production of profit are leading, we must first free ourselves from belief, that is, from the "voluntary consent" of all of us to the inevitability of the dominance of these mechanisms.

The recognition of our own share in non-freedom, the recognition of "non-freedom" as something we produce ourselves, however it is manifested as a hopeless fact over which we have no influence, is a condition of freedom. The chain by which the subject is shackled to non-freedom, as if it were a state, is not violence, but rather the bond of *nonviolence*, that is, an attachment to one's own *symbolic*, discursive framework of "reality". From this perspective, Gandhian nonviolence is not some kind of "unrealistic", blind faith in the renunciation of subjective violence. It is a concept that is aware of the fact that in human civilisation, power is based on the field of discourse and resides in the relationships of power in the Symbolic, which is always already present, and thus is necessarily present prior to action.

Gandhi transformed his theories into actual policy and created his own place in the political space, with which he came to the head of the Indian National Congress. In so doing, he positioned himself on the border between two rival concepts of liberation policy: he connected "moderate" nationalists, a political current that advocated a "constitutional" path to independence, and "extremists", who advocated the violent seizing of power. In adopting this position, the policy of nonviolence was not a "temporary policy" to be replaced by a policy of violence when the time was right, nor was it a compromise achieved by "sacrificing" something from each of the rival policies: it does not preserve the principles of both "nonviolence" and "violence", nor is it a policy of maintaining a balance between the two.

Insofar as a trait of constitutionalism is a belief in nonviolence, and the limit (truth) of constitutionalism is therefore not to take action, Gandhi's criticism of constitutionalism would be that this subject nevertheless has "problems with nonviolence" and that this attachment to nonviolence is itself a step of *withdrawing from an act* "to nonviolence".

Constitutionalism is always without an act, so liberation can never be achieved because there cannot be any progress in dialectical movement. In relation to constitutionalism, the departure from nonviolence – that is, the negation of nonviolence – to the extreme violence of “extremists” is *a step towards an act*. Its limit (truth), however, lies in the fact that this violence is progress that remains within the same symbolic framework (a step towards “English power without the English”), caught in the counterposition of oppositions with those who resist it, and therefore is not an act: for an act that would lead to a movement of progress towards liberation it is necessary to “completely” change perspective and shift the very “framework of reality”. This is precisely the intended discursive effect of the central part of *Hind Swaraj*: the absolute dissociating of that point of the predominant discourse (as social bonds) in which Indians are not chained to power (English rule) “by violence” but “by nonviolence” (in that they themselves, even more directly than the English, believe in the welfare of the civilisation brought by English supremacy: in railways, lawyers, doctors, etc., in the promise of pleasure). It is in this way that they are the “most” unfree. “Learning to govern oneself” follows as a consequence, but there must first be some “step into madness”, an act that is discursive in nature from both sides, as discourse and as action.

Let us get back to the question of the way out of this attachment to nonviolence: the way out cannot be the abandonment of nonviolence, that is, the *negation* of nonviolence (in favour of extreme violence). The problem with the other extreme of violence is not that violence is too radical; on the contrary, the problem is that the break is not radical enough, as it seeks to get rid of the oppressors (to change power), but remains trapped in their symbolic framework, in precisely that which it seeks to erase from its own existence. Thus, the Gandhian discursive policy of nonviolence explicitly passed over to the level of the question of identity, as well. His turning away from both positions (“constitutionalism” and “violent extremism”) was the result of reflection on the fact that the Indians’ own identity was chained to the Other: “immobility”, drowning in the comfort of both of these policies, stems from the realisation that we must first ask how their own position is “mediated’ by the Other”.<sup>1</sup>

A step on the way out of this “attachment to nonviolence”, which Gandhi advocates with his concept of freedom and which he pursued with the policy of nonviolence, follows the Hegelian logic of “negation of negation”: it is the *negation* of the extremist’s “*negation* of nonviolence”. It is not a step “to a higher unity” (of “violence and nonviolence”), but rather a step to the extreme of absolute nonviolence; thus, it is the logic of negation that takes a step forward *with the radicalisation* of the starting point, that is, “nonviolence”. The Gandhian “belief in nonviolence” is therefore an extremely sharpened point of form, of the “pure”, the non-dialectical with the particular content of the unconcealed subject.

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1 Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: the Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, 72.

The point of *Hind Swaraj* could also be interpreted as follows: if we want to get rid of the English, we must first “fundamentally transform the content” of our own “position”. The step of radicalisation towards absolute nonviolence produces a point of the subject that is formally completely unconcealed by the Other. This in itself is the abolition of the very belief (“in nonviolence”) as, strictly speaking, each particular point to which the subject is attached, that is, the Other. Both previous positions of the subject (“constitutionalism” and “extremism”) remain trapped in the prevailing discourse, but it is only necessary to realise that “The fall is already its own elimination” (Žižek), the recognition that the sought-after *swaraj* is already at work insofar as we already have the existing – “ancient” – Indian civilisation, that is, in the very reality that we want to liberate.

The discursive act of returning to the “ancient Indian civilisation” would be completely misunderstood if it were placed in the logic of loss of and return to “roots”. According to Gandhi, “ancient Indian civilisation” is not the goal, but rather a *means* of liberation for Indians. Here again, one can draw on the Hegelian logic of “negation of negation”, whose matrix is “simply the process of transition from state A to state B: the first, direct ‘negation’ of A negates position A, while remaining within its symbolic boundaries, so it must be followed by the next negation, which then negates precisely the symbolic space that is common to A and its direct negation.”<sup>2</sup> The starting point with which *Hind Swaraj* must engage is not “Indian civilisation”, but rather “Western civilisation”, or more precisely, the belief of Indians in “power and Western civilisation” and the realisation that the direct negation of this rule (the prospect of replacing “English rule”) remains within these symbolic boundaries. Gandhi’s concept of “modern civilisation” is a construct that in one fell swoop undermines both “power” and “Western” civilisation as two fundamental symbolic points of reference. “Ancient Indian civilisation” is the means in this same construct. As a “positively existing” symbolic reality, it is merely the first, direct negation towards the negation of negation, the concept of *swaraj* as the displacement of the symbolic space itself. Starting to speak in our own language in formal relations or sitting behind a spinning wheel instead of pursuing English goods, or accepting a family of the untouchables into our life (the latter obviously displacing Ancient Indian traditions), etc., are all the means to this end. In the process of *satyagraha* as *the displacement of the symbolic space itself*, the question is how to persuade an opponent who is in the place of the Other (as an interpreter, a judge). Gandhi was not subject to the naive European sixteenth-century humanistic belief that the adversary could be persuaded of his own Truth by arguments alone.

As Gandhi writes before the beginning of one of the *satyagrahas*: “It is not a matter of carrying conviction by argument. The matter resolves itself into one of matching forces.” In order for a discursive subject to be able to establish itself in power, there needs

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2 *Ibid.*

to be the risk of an act, an act whose axis is “the measuring of forces”. Therefore, there is no *satyagraha* without the manifestations that Gandhi knew how to evoke in an ever new way: the *miner’s march* in the South African *satyagraha*, the nationwide *hartal* (a mass strike that killed off all economic life as a sign of non-cooperation with the British government), and the *march to the sea* in the Salt Satyagraha.

The act is preceded by the power of the Symbolic. This field is therefore the primary field of freedom, in which the turn to freedom must be performed and located. Of course, all of these manifestations were only possible as a result of pre-existing injustices and social inequalities; on the other hand, they are above all a message addressed to the Other.

With regard to the Gandhian policy of *satyagraha*, Herbert Marcuse remarks that such a policy of nonviolence is ultimately perverted and functions as *violence*: “There [in India], passive resistance arose to such a large extent that the economic life of the country disintegrated, or was on the verge of disintegrating. [...] Such widespread passive resistance is no longer passive – it ceases to be nonviolence.”<sup>3</sup> The conclusion that passive resistance “ceases to be nonviolence” can be understood as a criticism of the Gandhian policy of nonviolence, claiming that it ceases to be nonviolence despite Gandhi’s claim to the contrary. The problem with this implication is that Gandhian nonviolence is not passivity as a result, as a consequence, of a *powerlessness* to use violence. *Satyagraha*, a different concept of passivity, arose through a theoretical gesture, through the insight that the passivity of powerlessness is *not yet passive* because it cannot establish itself in the place of radical powerlessness. The Gandhian concept of nonviolence in *satyagraha* is therefore quite the opposite: *it arises from the radicalisation of passivity*, from passivity driven to an absolute, to absolute powerlessness, to the point of *desubjectification*, in which powerlessness *directly* turns into power. The *willingness* to “lose oneself” as an *object* is already power “in itself”.

The power of nonviolence *in an act* is based on the insight (which can be explained by Hegel’s theory of action) that an act is by definition a step, a passage in which the subject “makes him/herself a thing”.<sup>4</sup> The action is defined by desubjectification, the subject passes into the act by losing him/herself as a subject (*cf. Ibid.*). In the Ahmedabad Satyagraha, for example, when Gandhi required that the workers vow to adhere to the established demands, he undoubtedly pursues the goal that *satyagraha* must be an act, from which, among other things, the *vow* emerges as a form of desubjectification. The act of the subject of nonviolence is thus the form of an act in which the subject becomes a “pure” object, without violence as a support; the support of the subject of *ahimsa*, who follows his/her own truth, is merely the “traces” that the reasons for the act leave in the Other.

3 Marcuse, “Repressivna toleranca” (“Repressive Tolerance”), 108.

4 Dolar, *Samozavedanje: Heglova Fenomenologija duha II (Self-Consciousness: Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit II)*, 122.

An act whose foundation is a particular truth for which we strive establishes the adversary in a *subject who is in the place of the Other*, that is, the one who interprets the act. What is left for him/her is either *recognition as a formal act* (he can only accept the “truth” of the subject of *ahimsa*) or some violent response. *Satyagrahi*, which as a subject demands the Truth, is left with its “truth” to be accepted and acknowledged, or (ultimately) is left with death.

Even from Gandhi’s own description of the first conflict with the authorities according to the principles of *satyagraha* (the “South African *satyagraha*”), in which he insisted on this principle against the policy of the South African government for about eight years (from 1906 to 1914) until his demands for non-discrimination were met, it can be shown that *for Gandhi*, the political struggle for the equal civil rights of immigrants from India was always conditioned by the framework of certain rules, within which he had – taken subjectively, that is, from his perspective – the initiative. The frameworks of *satyagraha* establish a *way* of making demands, exclusively “nonviolent” means of coercion, the necessity of *influencing* the public, the *introduction of sacrifice* (the necessity of a specific readiness for sacrifice and suffering) associated with the logic of “nonviolence”, and for Gandhi the specific “art” of creating dialectics of movement of the “truth”. Gandhian *satyagraha* is a “science” and, in a certain way, only a technique: it requires careful preparation, its subject always acts as if s/he had (or *could have*) taken into account certain “structural” elements (including the investment or integration of his/her own life into this structure) and their interdependence. The power of Gandhian *satyagraha* is “Gandhi” as a rational being and Gandhi with his reliance on “ethics”, that is, on the universality of the subject. Part of this power is a “Hegelian” ability to realise arbitrary circumstances as inevitable.

Perhaps the most salient moment of this structure can be approached with the renowned logic of the life-and-death struggle and the master-servant relationship, which Hegel defines in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as the “independence and dependence of self-consciousness: lordship and bondage”.<sup>5</sup> This is also the moment that is most clearly connected with the notion of freedom as the goal of *satyagraha*. In the description of the moment in the Ahmedabad Satyagraha when Gandhi opted for “fasting to death”, we can see that the response of the strikers was instantaneous, the decision provoked stormy reactions. For the workers, the decision came as a surprise, as if it were arbitrary. In Gandhi’s own interpretations of the decision, especially from a somewhat later time, he concludes that “on given occasions in the future I must not hesitate to repeat the humble conduct I have allowed myself to describe in this letter” (Gandhi). There can be no doubt that Gandhi himself viewed this decision within the framework of the logic of the “ethical” in his own sense, and hence this decision

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5 Hegel, *Fenomenologija duha (Phenomenology of Spirit)*, 103–109.

(regardless of his own doubts, of the defilement of the decision, etc.) emerged as a *necessity*. When the point is reached in Gandhian *satyagraha* that all arguments are exhausted, it is no longer possible to withdraw before the fact (and for employers in the position of master this was obviously the key point) that what is at stake in truth “is not reality” (not the unreality of the demanded amount of correction to wages), but the independence or non-independence, the “truth”, of the *subject*. Then Gandhi, by deciding to “fast until death”, introduces the moment of the subject who *is* the subject, because in order to demonstrate certainty in him/herself (truth) he/she *must* either choose death *or* renounce truth (him/herself). In *satyagraha*, progress is the result of actions or decisions in these actions. These decisions show that Gandhi does not understand *form* (“ethics”) teleologically: without these decisions there is no progress, but each decision is a risk. Progress is the “only possible” movement, not because the truth always miraculously comes to light on its own, but because of the truth of an *impossible choice*. In this regard, impossible choices are described by Hegel when he explains the antagonism of the “struggle for life and death”, stating:

And it is solely by risking life that freedom is obtained; only thus is it tried and proved that the essential nature of self-consciousness is not bare existence, is not the merely immediate form in which it at first makes its appearance, is not its mere absorption in the expanse of life. Rather it is thereby guaranteed that there is nothing present but what might be taken as a vanishing moment – that self-consciousness is merely pure self-existence, being-for-self. The individual, who has not staked his life, may, no doubt, be recognized as a Person; but he has not attained the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness.<sup>6</sup>

In this respect, the necessity of moments of progress of movement as the only possible movement is not based on the content of demands, nor on the context (of the Other); the key to this necessity is the Gandhian notion of ethics as the form of the subject. The structure of subjectivity is “always already” present and “always” acts “as a whole”. At this point, “necessity” and “coincidence” can be linked to the split between the two “images of consciousness”, between the master and the servant, in which the struggle for life and death is resolved. Their split is irreducible: it makes the master willing to stake his life, and *for him* this position is a necessity; and it makes the servant choose life, at the cost of renouncing independence.

The moment of the “struggle for life and death” introduces a specific act, the willingness to sacrifice one’s own life, a genuinely Hegelian act in the sense that the act displaces the very symbolic framework of reality: here the displacement lies in the fact that it is the result of a particular relationship, that is, the symbolically established bond

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6 Hegel, *Fenomenologija duha (Phenomenology of Spirit)*, 105.

between the “master and the servant”, which occurs in the *passage* of the act itself. Gandhi the moralist (insofar as his position was always also that of teaching and moralising) built the power of nonviolence as an act in *satyagraha* on the *formality of the structure* of human subjectivity, and on placing himself, so to speak, in the role of heterogeneous object *a*, insofar as this heterogeneous object is “the place where the *contingency of material history* can sneak up on the purity of form”<sup>7</sup>: the contingency of actions that make “material history” and whose common thread is that they shift the very symbolic framework of reality.

### The Act in the South African *Satyagraha*

In 1913, after seven years, *satyagraha* reached its lowest point in South Africa in terms of the established political aims. After their initial enthusiasm in 1906, the Indian community had become divided by the government’s intransigence. Gandhi had retained only a handful of his most devoted supporters: as he himself writes, “a maximum of 65 or 66 and a minimum of 16”<sup>8</sup>, of which 16 were mostly his relatives and friends living in the settlement (“commune”) of Phoenix.<sup>9</sup> Gandhi’s insistence on principled demands was opposed by the principle of pleasure.

Then the Supreme Court passed a decision making all marriages that were not entered into according to Christian religious customs illegal (invalid). For most Indians, who had married according to the customs of the Hindu, Muslim or Zoroastrian religions, this decision was a severe blow, with the implication of nullifying their symbolic relationships (“married women [...] were no longer considered wives and were degraded to the level of concubines, while their heirs were deprived of the right to inherit their parents’ property”<sup>10</sup>). This gave the resistance a new impetus.

Illiterate and uneducated miners embarked upon a politically motivated strike, the aim of which – the elimination of discrimination – had no direct bearing on the improvement of their material situation. However, despite the numbers and the emotional charge that prompted the workers to strike, this force was on the verge of crumbling to dust. Gandhi, who had initiated it all, set out for Newcastle, one of the major urban centres in South Africa’s northern coal mining district as soon as he learned of the strike. He found that the strikers were in no position to withstand a long strike, even feeding them had become a major problem. As he writes, it was essential to find

7 Dolar, *Samozavedanje: Heglova Fenomenologija duha II (Self-Consciousness: Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit II)*, 47.

8 Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, 274.

9 *Ibid.*, 278.

10 *Ibid.*

a way out of the situation, otherwise it would be better for the workers to “surrender” on their own and go back to work as soon as possible, rather than doing so after a period of “torturous waiting”.<sup>11</sup>

At this point, we come to a typically Gandhian turn: “However, defeatist advice was not my way. I therefore suggested that the only possible solution for the workers was to leave the houses of their masters and set out on an actual journey as travellers.”<sup>12</sup> And further: “I suggested to the miners that they should approach the strike as if it would last for all time, and that they should leave the premises provided by their masters.”<sup>13</sup> What Gandhi “suggested” to the miners is fundamentally a *shift in the symbolic*, a shift of their “entire perspective”, a shift of their entire “symbolic reality”, so to speak. This shift, which can be understood as a moment of Hegelian *Aufhebung*, is the result of an endless judgement: the “strike” is “forever”, it is nothing other than a final expression of powerlessness, “a thought that abolishes itself”, thus ensuring a step of *progress* – “the only possible movement” – in *satyagraha*.

The difficulty of a shift of perspective in the symbolic is, of course, not only symbolic, it is that for the subject in this symbolic, there is nonetheless a “fragment of the real” that is his/her support. The difficulty of the shift is conditioned precisely by the abandonment of this “fragment of the real”: in this case, by the sacrifice of work and property, of all of the possessions (except for the most essential clothes, personal belongings and blankets that the miners could take along) that the miners had to sell or abandon; in short, by renouncing “all material things”, by breaking their captivity in the existence of the existing. If the workers assume that “the strike is for all time”, they have *already* lost everything, and this severs the bond between the subject and his/her phantasmatic relationship to reality in one fell swoop. Gandhian nonviolence is not passive resistance, because it is active. Not, however, through activity such as the organisation of a march, but by the radicalisation of passivity into absolute passivity, into renunciation and sacrifice, by which, as Hegel says, the subject must demonstrate “that nothing is present in him that would not be a vanishing moment for him” in order to become a subject.

At the point of powerlessness, the power of the subject of Gandhian nonviolence lies in not withdrawing, but instead taking a risk with radical renunciation in sacrificing that “fragment of the real” whose sacrifice destroys the symbolic framework of the existing, and this act is an act of “liberation” that transforms powerlessness into power. The act of the *actual* renunciation of bonds, which are the *symbolic* reality of the subject and by which s/he is chained to slavery “in reality”, is a fundamental act for the Gandhian logic of nonviolence in *satyagraha*.

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11 *Ibid.*

12 *Ibid.*

13 *Ibid.*, 288.



The massive use of *hartal* (the temporary cessation of economic or other life, covering practically the entire society) is the least demanding “sacrifice”, the purpose of which is to break the bonds of the “existing”. In the range of possible actions, the *tour de force* of Gandhian nonviolence is action with the insight that the key object in the structure of the discursive subject is life. Thus, the acceptance of risking one’s own life – when life becomes the object of actions – also has the status of an intervention in discourse.

From the South African *satyagraha*, Gandhi was later able to create the “myth of *satyagraha*”, because the ensuing march, combined with other concomitant pressures, escalated the described break in power into coercion, pushing the government to the point of fulfilling the principled political aim of the *satyagraha* that had been established years earlier.

Gandhi’s decision to *end* the strike, to *abandon* the relationship *to the object*, and to march in the South African *satyagraha* highlights the fact that the power of the Gandhian policy of nonviolence is not simply based on trust in the Other. It could be said that it is based on the Hegelian insight that the subject – the relationship to objectivity – is not bound only to the Other, but ultimately to the relationship to the object. In other words:

It is not just that the relationship to objectivity always depends on an intersubjective framework, but, conversely, that this framework itself ultimately depends on that object moment, without which it would collapse. The processing of external and internal nature gives rise to a surplus, which is what holds subjects together at all. The relationship between subjects and the relationship to the Other translates into the relationship to the object.<sup>14</sup>

It is on this surplus – which is nothing, it *is* only the emptiness of the Real, the *interregnum* of the relationship to the object – that the “rational logic” of the Gandhian policy of nonviolence is based. It is in this *interregnum* that power becomes a *new* relationship to objectivity.

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14 Dolar, *Samozavedanje: Heglova Fenomenologija duha II (Self-Consciousness: Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit II)*, 37.

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**MAHATMA O SVOJIH EKSPERIMENTIH  
Z RESNICO**

**ODLOMKI IZ GANDHIJEVE AVTOBIOGRAFIJE**



Ko sem leta 1883 navezal tesne stike s krščanskimi prijatelji, sem bil še novic. Zelo so se trudili, da bi me Jezusovo oznanilo prepričalo in da bi ga sprejel, jaz pa sem bil ponižen in spoštljiv poslušalec odprtega duha. V tem času sem seveda kar se da zavzeto preučeval hinduizem, hkrati pa sem si prizadeval razumeti tudi druge vere.

Leta 1903 je bil položaj nekoliko drugačen. Prijatelji teozofi so me seveda nameravali pritegniti v svoje društvo, vendar z mislijo na to, da bi tudi sami pridobili nekaj od mene kot hindujca. Teozofska literatura je polna hindujskega vpliva, zato so ti prijatelji pričakovali, da jim bom glede tega v pomoč. Pojasnil sem jim, da o svojem preučevanju sanskrta nimam prav dosti povedati, da hindujskih spisov nisem prebral v izvirniku in da celo še prevode poznam le površno. Toda ker so verovali v *samskaro* (nagnjenja, ki so posledica prejšnjih rojstev) in *punardžanmo* (ponovno rojstvo), so predpostavljali, da jim bom lahko vsaj malo v pomoč. In tako sem se počutil kakor enookec med slepci. Z nekaterimi od teh prijateljev sem začel prebirati *Radžajogo* Svamija Vivekanande in z nekaterimi drugimi *Radžajogo* M. N. Dvivedija. Z nekim prijateljem sem moral brati Patandžalijeve *Joga sutre*, s kar lepim številom njih pa *Bhagavadgito*. Oblikovali smo nekakšen klub iskalcev, kjer smo redno skupaj brali. Giti sem takrat že globoko zaupal in bila mi je vir nenehnega navdiha. Zdaj sem spoznal, da se moram še bolj poglobiti vanjo. Imel sem enega ali dva prevoda, s katerima sem si skušal pomagati pri razumevanju sanskrtskega izvirnika. Sklenil sem tudi, da se bom vsak dan na pamet naučil kakšen stih ali dva. V ta namen sem uporabil čas jutranjega obrednega umivanja. To opravilo mi je vzelo petintrideset minut, petnajst minut za ščetkanje zob in dvajset za kopel. Prvo sem počel stoje, po zahodnjaški šegi. Tako sem si lahko na steno pred sabo nalepil listke, na katerih so bili zapisani stihi iz Gite, in se tu in tam ozrl po njih, da sem si osvežil spomin. Ta čas mi je, kot sem ugotovil, povsem zadostoval, da sem si zapomnil dnevni odmerek in si utrdil spomin na že naučene vrstice. Spominjam se, da sem se tako na pamet naučil trinajst poglavij. Toda učenje Gite na pamet se je moralo umakniti drugemu delu ter usvajanju in negovanju satjagrahe, ki mi je zaposlila ves prosti čas mišljenja, kar velja še dandanašnji.

Kako je učinkovalo branje Gite na moje prijatelje, lahko povedo samo oni, a zame je Gita postala nepogrešljiva vodnica. Postala je slovar vsakodnevnega življenja. Kakor sem se zatekel k angleškemu slovarju, kadar nisem razumel kakšne angleške besede, tako sem se zatekel k temu slovarju življenjskih vodil, kadar sem iskal rešitev svojih težav in prizkušenj. (4. del, V. *Kaj je prinesel pogled vase*, str. 326–327<sup>1</sup>)

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1 Vsi odlomki so citirani iz slovenskega prevoda Gandhijeve avtobiografije: Gandhi, M. *Avtobiografija. Zgodba o mojih eksperimentih z resnico*. Prev. Uroš Kalčič, sprem. beseda Andrej Ule. Ljubljana: Založba Modrijan, 2018.

Dogodki v Johannesburgu so se razvijali tako, kot da bi bilo to moje samoočiščevanje nekakšna priprava na satjagraho. Zdaj vidim, da so me vsi najpomembnejši dogodki v mojem življenju, ki so doživeli vrhunec v zaobljubi *brahmačarji*, naskrivaj pripravljali nanjo. Načelo, ki se mu pravi satjagraha, je zaživelo, še preden so ga tako poimenovali. Pravzaprav v trenutku, ko se je rodilo, še sam nisem vedel, kaj bi to bilo. Tudi v gudžaratščini ga opisujemo z angleškim izrazom »nenasilen odpor«. Ko sem na nekem srečanju z Evropejci ugotovil, da je izraz »nenasilen odpor« preozek v svojem pomenu, da naj bi bilo to nekakšno orožje šibkih, da bi ga lahko povezovali s sovraštvom in da bi se utegnil nazadnje sprevreči v nasilje, sem moral ovreči vse te pomisleke in pojasniti pravo naravo tega indijskega gibanja. Jasno mi je bilo, da moramo Indijci skovati neko novo besedo, s katero bi označevali svoj boj.

Toda novega izraza za vse na svetu nisem mogel najti, in tako sem v Indian Opinionu razpisal denarno nagrado za tistega bralca, ki bi prišel na dan z najboljšim predlogom. Posledica tega je bila, da je Maganlal Gandhi skoval besedo »sadagraha« (sad = resnica, agra = trdnost) in pobral nagrado. Da pa bi bil izraz še jasnejši, sem ga preoblikoval v »satjagraho«, ki je odtlej v gudžaratščini označevala ta način boja. (4. del, XXVI. *Rojstvo satjagrahe*, str. 391)

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Post lahko pomaga obrzdati živalsko slo samo, če se ga lotevamo kot sredstva za samoobvladovanje. Nekateri od mojih prijateljev so tako odkrili, da post celo dražilno vpliva na njihove telesne strasti in uživanje v hrani. To se pravi, post je jalov, če ga ne spremlja nenehno stremljenje po samoobvladovanju. V tej zvezi je primerno omeniti znamenite stihe iz drugega speva *Bhagavadgite*:

Čutni predmeti se odvrnejo od vzdržne duše,  
ostane le hrepenenje po njih.  
Še to hrepenenje se razgubi,  
ko spozna Najvišje.

Post in podobne discipline so torej eno izmed sredstev za doseg samobvladovanja, niso pa vse, in če telesnega posta ne spremlja tudi umski post, bo prej ali slej zašel v hinavščino in klavrno končal. (4. del, XXXI. *Post*, str. 408)

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Povsem jasno mi je bilo, da sodelovanje v vojni nikoli ne more biti skladno z *ahimso*. Vendar si človek ni vselej enako na jasnem tudi glede svojih dolžnosti. Kdor se je zaobljubil Resnici, mora tako velikokrat tipati v temi.

*Abimsa* je načelo, ki zaobsega marsikaj. Nebogljeni smrtniki smo, ujeti v razplamtevanje *himse*. Rek, da življenje živi od življenja, ima v sebi globok pomen. Človek ne more niti za hip živeti, ne da bi bil s svojim ravnanjem zavedno ali nezavedno nasilen do sveta. Že samo dejstvo, da živi – je, pije in se giblje – neizogibno povzroča nekaj *himse*, uničenja življenja, pa naj bo še tako drobno. Kdor se je zaobljubil *abimsi*, potemtakem ostaja zvest svoji veri, če je izvir vsega njegovega nehanja sočutje, če se po svojih najboljših močeh izogiba uničenju, čeravno najneznatnejšega bitja, ga skuša rešiti in si tako nenehno prizadeva, da bi se osvobodil pogubnega začaranega kroga *abimse*. Tak človek bo nenehno rasel v svoji samoodpovedi in sočutju, nikdar pa se ne bo mogel povsem otresti *himse*, ki deluje navzven.

Ker je temelj *abimse* enotnost oziroma povezanost vsega življenja, tudi zmota enega samega človeka učinkuje na vse, tako da človek nikakor ne more biti povsem prost *himse*. Dokler je družbeno bitje, pač ne more drugače, kot da bi sodeloval v *himsi*, ki je položena že v temelj obstoja družbe. Kadar se spopadeta dva naroda, je dolžnost zaobljubljenca *abimse*, da vojno ustavi. Kdor te dolžnosti ne zmore, kdor nima moči, da bi se vojni uprl, kdor ni pooblaščen, da bi se ji uprl, se lahko vojne udeleži, a hkrati vseeno skuša pred vojno rešiti tako sebe kakor svoj narod in ves svet. [...]

Kdor je predan Resnici, ne sme storiti ničesar zgolj iz popustljivosti konvencijam. Vselej mora biti do vzeten do poprave napak, in kadarkoli sprevidi, da se je v nečem zmotil, mora svojo zmoto za vsako ceno priznati in se spokoriti zanjo. (4. del, XXXIX. *Duhovna zadrega*, str. 429–431)

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V tistih dneh sem bil dovolj pri močeh, da sem se veliko potikal naokrog, in k sreči še nisem bil tako znan, da ne bi mogel hoditi po ulicah, ne da bi zbujal pozornost. Na teh potepanjih sem pri romarjih opazal več raztresenosti duha, hinavščine in nemarnosti kakor pobožnosti. Vse tiste množice sadhujev, ki so se zgrinjali tjakaj, so menda prišli na svet samo zato, da bi se naužili dobrih reči v življenju.

Tu sem videl kravo s petimi nogami! Bil sem osupel, a poznavalci so me kmalu postavili na trdna tla. Uboga petonoga krava je bila žrtev pohlepa izprijenih. Zvedel sem namreč, da peta noga ni bila nič drugega kakor noga, ki so jo odrezali drugi živi kravi in jo presadili na pleče prve! To dvojno okrutnost pa so izrabili za to, da so neuke obirali za denar. Ni bilo namreč hindujca, ki ga petonoga krava ne bi očarala in mu izmolzla miloščine.

Napočil je torej semanji dan. Zame je bil to, kot se je izkazalo, nepozaben dan. V Hardvar nisem prišel z občutjem romarja. Nikdar mi ni bilo prišlo na misel, da bi častil boga z obiskovanjem raznih romarskih krajev. Toda med tistimi milijon sedemsto tisoč ljudmi, kolikor naj bi jih bilo tam, najbrž niso bili sami svetohlinci in izletniki. Med njimi je bilo nedvomno tudi ničkoliko takih, ki so tja prišli s čistim srcem in zavoljo samoočiščenja. Težko, če že nemogoče je reči, do katere mere takšno verovanje povzdigne dušo.

Zatorej sem vso noč prebil v globokem razmisleku. Mislim sem na vse tiste pobožne duše sredi hinavščine, ki jih je obdajala. Te bodo brez krivde pred Stvarnikom. Če je bil obisk Hardvarja že sam po sebi greh, mu moram javno ugovarjati in na dan kumbhe oditi iz njega. Če pa romanje v Hardvar in na praznovanje kumbhe ni bilo grešno, si moram naložiti kako dejanje samozanikanja, da se spokorim za grešnost, ki prevladuje tam, in se očistim. To se mi je zdelo povsem samoumevno. (5. del, VII. *Kumbha mela*, str. 478)

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O Lakšman Džhuli (visečem mostu nad Gangesom), nedaleč od Hriškeša, sem bil slišal samo hvalo in mnogi prijatelji so mi zabičevali, naj nikar ne odidem iz Hardvarja, ne da bi šel do njega. Na to romanje sem si želel iti peš, tako da sem ga opravil v dveh etapah.

V Hriškešu me je obiskalo veliko *sanjasijev*.<sup>2</sup> Eden od njih je bil malone zaljubljen vame. Tam je bila tudi skupina iz Phoenixa in to je izvabilo iz svamija mnoga vprašanja. Razpravljala sva o veri in hitro mu je postalo jasno, da mi segajo verska vprašanja globoko v srce. Videl me je golega in brez srajce, ko sem se vrnil od kopanja v Gangesu. Hudo mu je bilo, ker je pogrešal *šikho*<sup>3</sup> (čopek las) na moji glavi in sveto vrvico okrog mojega vratu, in rekel je: »Kar hudo mi je, ko vas takole vidim, vernega hindujca, da hodite okrog brez svete vrvice in *sikhe*. To sta vendar dva zunanja simbola hinduizma, in vsak hindujec bi ju moral nositi.«

O tem, zakaj sem se otrešel tega dvojega, govori cela mala zgodovina. Ko sem bil desetleten mulček, sem zavidal brahmanovim fantom, ki so se šopirili s šopi ključev, privezanih na njihove svete vrvice, in si želel, da bi jih imel tudi jaz. Običaj nošnje svete vrvice takrat ni bil razširjen med *vajšnavističnimi* družinami v Kathjavadu. Pač pa se je ravno začelo gibanje za to, da bi to postalo obvezno za prve tri *varne*.<sup>4</sup> Tako je več članov Gandhijevega klana začelo nositi sveto vrvico. Brahman, ki nas je dvoje ali troje dečkov poučeval *Ram Rakšo*,<sup>5</sup> je tudi nam nataknil vrvico okrog vratu, in če prav nisem imel priložnosti, da bi imel svoj šop ključev, sem dobil vsaj vrvico in se razkazoval z njo. Pozneje, ko je vrvica odslužila svoje, se ne spominjam, da bi jo posebno pogrešal. Vem pa, da se nisem potegoval za novo.

Ko sem odrasel, sem bil tako v Indiji kot Južni Afriki deležen nekaj dobronamernih poskusov, da bi mi spet nadelo sveto vrvico, a s pičlim uspehom. Če je *šudra*<sup>6</sup> ne smejo nositi,

2 Sanjasi ali sanjasin: hinduistični redovnik ali berač oz. asket. (Op. prev.)

3 Šop las, ki ga nosijo moški pripadniki višnujske kaste oz. sekte v hinduizmu. (Op. prev.)

4 Kaste (Op. prev.)

5 V sanskrtu napisana *stotra* (hindujska hvalnica). (Op. prev.)

6 Člani kaste delavcev in kmetov. (Op. prev.)



sem utemeljeval svoje odklonilno stališče, s kakšno pravico to lahko počno druge *varne*? In prav nobenega upravičenega razloga nisem videl, da bi usvojil ta zame tako nepotreben običaj. Proti sami vrvi kot taki nisem imel nič, le razlogi za to, da bi jo nosil, so mi manjkali. [...]

Zato sem svamiju odkrito povedal o vsem skupaj in rekel: »Svete vrvice ne bom nosil, saj za to ne vidim potrebe. Nešteto hindujcev zmore brez nje, pa vendar ostajajo hindujci. Povrh tega naj bi bila sveta vrviča simbol duhovnega preroda in znamenje, da si tisti, ki jo nosi, zavestno prizadeva za višjim in čistejšim življenjem. Dvomim pa, da imajo hindujci, glede na trenutno stanje hinduizma v Indiji, pravico nositi simbol, ki je nabit s takim pomenom. To pravico bodo dobili šele, ko se bo hinduizem očistil nedotakljivosti, odpravil vsakršno razlikovanje na večvredne in manjvredne ter zavrgel še vse polno drugih nečednosti in slepil, ki so se razpasli v njem. Moj duh se potemtakem upira misli, da bi nosil sveto vrvičo.« (5. del, VIII. *Lakšman Džubla*, str. 480, 482)

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Romanje na praznovanje kumbhe je bil moj drugi obisk v Hardvarju.

Ašram satjagrahe je bil ustanovljen 25. maja 1915. Šradhanandži si je želel, da bi se naselil v Hardvarju. Nekateri moji prijatelji iz Kalkute pa so mi priporočali Vajdjanathadham. Spet drugi so me pregovarjali, naj si izberem Radžkot. Kadar je nanoslo, da sem šel skozi Ahmedabad, pa so me mnogi prijatelji prepričevali, naj ostanem tam, in ponudili so se, da bodo zbrali prostovoljne prispevke za ustanovitev ašrama pa tudi za hišo za nas.

Meni je bil še najbolj všeč Ahmedabad. Ker sem Gudžaratijec, sem menil, da bom lahko še največ koristnega naredil v svoji deželi in v materni gudžaratščini. Ahmedabad je bil poleg tega starodavno središče ročnega tkalstva in potemtakem najbolj primeren kraj za ponovno oživitev domače tkalske obrti. Povrh tega je bilo mesto prestolnica Gudžarata, zato je bilo mogoče upati, da bo tu lažje kot drugje priti do denarne pomoči bogatih meščanov.

S prijatelji v Ahmedabadu smo med drugim razpravljali kajpak tudi o vprašanju nedotakljivosti. Dal sem jim jasno vedeti, da bom ob prvi priložnosti sprejel v ašram kandidata izmed nedotakljivih, če se bo seveda tudi sicer izkazal za vrednega.

»Kje pa boš našel nedotakljivega, ki bo spolnjeval tvoj pogoj?» je samozadovoljno pripomnil neki *vajšnavistični* prijatelj. Naposled sem sklenil, da ašram ustanovim v Ahmedabadu. [...]

Najprej smo si morali izbrati ime za ašram. Posvetoval sem se s prijatelji. Med imeni, ki so jih predlagali, so bili »Sevašram« (bivališče služenja), »Tapovan« (bivališče samozanikanja) ipd. Meni je bilo všeč ime »Sevašram«, manjkalo mu je le to, da bi poudarjalo metodo služenja. Ime »Tapovan« se mi je zdelo nekam pretenciozno, saj se kljub temu, da so nam bili *tape* ljubi, nismo mogli imeti za *tapasvine* (može

samozanikanja). Naša zaobljuba je bila predanost resnici, naša naloga pa, da jo iščemo in vztrajamo pri njej. Indijo sem si želel seznaniti z metodo, ki sem jo uporabil v Južni Afriki, in preveriti, v kolikšni meri bi jo lahko uporabil tudi tu. Zatorej smo skupaj s sodelavci izbrali ime »Ašram satjagrahe«, saj je izražalo tako naš cilj kakor metodo služenja. (5. del, IX. *Ustanovitev ašrama*, str. 484, 485)

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Tako kot zunaj, je nevihta divjala tudi znotraj ašrama. Čeprav so v Južni Afriki prijatelji izmed nedotakljivih zahajali k meni, živeli in jedli z mano, pa moja žena in druge ženske niso prav rade videle, da nedotakljivi prihajajo tudi v ašram. Moje oči in ušesa so zlahka zaznale njihovo ravnodušnost, če že ne odpor do Danibehn. Denarne težave me niso skrbele, a tega notranjega vrenja nisem mogel prenašati. Danibehn je bila običajna ženska. Dudabhaj je bil sicer bolj slabo izobražen, a odprte glave. Všeč mi je bila njegova potrpežljivost. Včasih se je resda tudi razgrel, a na splošno je njegovo potrpljenje name napravilo dober vtis. Položil sem mu na srce, naj mirno požre manjše žalitve. Ne le, da se je strinjal, še svojo ženo je prepričal, da je ravnala tako.

Pripustitev te družine je bila, kot se je pokazalo, ena izmed najdragocenejših lekcij za ašram. Že takoj na začetku smo razglasili, da ne bomo prenašali nedotakljivosti. Kdor je hotel pomagati ašramu, je bil potemtakem vnaprej opozorjen, in delo ašrama je bilo v tem smislu precej poenostavljeno. Dejstvo, da so vsak dan višje stroške ašrama plačevali večinoma pravoverni hindujci, nemara jasno kaže, da je nedotakljivost omajana v temeljih. Za to je res še precej drugih dokazov, a dejstvo, da si dobri hindujci ne pomišljajo pomagati ašramu, kjer gremo tako daleč, da obedujemo z nedotakljivimi za isto mizo, je dovolj prepričljiv dokaz. (5. del, X. *Na nakovalu*, str. 488)

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Hkrati je prišlo tudi pismo od šrimati Anasujabaj o razmerah, v katerih so živeli delavci v Ahmedabadu. Mezde so bile uborne, delavci so se že dolgo potegovali za povišico, in želel sem jim pomagati, če bi bilo mogoče. Toda tako od daleč si nisem upal voditi niti te razmeroma neznatne zadeve. Zatorej sem zgrabil prvo priložnost, da sem šel v Ahmedabad. Upal sem, da bom lahko obe zadevi hitro uredil, potem pa se vrnil v Čampanan in nadzoroval delo, ki se je tamkaj začelo. [...]

Bil sem v nadvse kočljivem položaju. Primer delavcev je bil težaven. Šrimati Anasujabaj se je morala dajati za lastnim bratom, Ambalalom Sarabhajem, ki je vodil spopad na strani tovarnarjev. Moji odnosi z njimi so bili prijateljski, tako da se mi je bilo samo še težje bojevati z njimi. Posvetoval sem se z njimi in jih prosil, naj spor prepustijo presoji arbitraže, vendar niso priznavali načela arbitraže.

Zato sem moral svetovati delavcem, naj stavkajo. Preden pa sem to storil, sem z njimi in njihovimi voditelji navezal zelo tesne stike in jim pojasnil, kakšni so pogoji za uspešno stavko:

1. Nikdar se zateči k nasilju,
2. nikdar se znašati nad stavkokazi,
3. nikdar se zanašati na miloščino in
4. ostati trden, ne glede na to, kako dolgo traja stavka, in si ta čas služiti kruh s kakim drugim poštenim delom.

Vodje stavke so razumeli in sprejeli te pogoje, in delavci so se na vsesplošnem zborovanju zaobljubili, da ne bodo začeli ponovno delati, dokler ne bodo bodisi sprejeti njihovi pogoji ali pa tovarnarji ne bodo privolili, da se o sporu odloči na arbitraži. [...]

S stavkajočimi sem se vsak dan dobival v senci nekega drevesa na bregu Sabarmatija. Teh srečanj so se udeleževali v tisočih in v govorih sem jih opominjal na njihovo zaobljubo in dolžnost, da ohranijo mir in samospoštovanje. Vsak dan so v mirnem sprevedu korakali po mestnih ulicah in pri tem nosili prapor z napisom »*Ek tek*« (drž se zaobljube).

Stavka je trajala enaindvajset dni. Med njo sem se občasno posvetoval s tovarnarji in jih pregovarjal, naj dajo delavcem, kar jim pripada. »Tudi mi imamo svojo zaobljubo,« so odgovarjali. »Z delavci smo v takih odnosih kakor starši z otroki ... Kako naj se sprijaznimo z vmešavanjem tretje strani? Kje je tu prostor za arbitražo?« (5. del, XX. V *stiku z delavci*, str. 521–523)

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Ker je Čamparan odmaknjen kotiček Indije in tisk ni spremljal tamkajšnjih naših prizadevanj, ni pritegnil zunanjih obiskovalcev. Drugače pa je bilo med kampanjo v Khedi, o kateri je tisk vsakodnevno poročal.

Gudžaratijci so se močno zanimali za naš boj, saj je bil zanje nekakšna novost in eksperiment. Pripravljene so bili prispevati tudi denar, samo da bi uspel. Le stežka pa so razumeli, da satjagrahe ni mogoče izvajati zgolj z denarjem. Pravzaprav je denar tisto, kar še najmanj potrebuje. Bombajski trgovci so nam kljub mojim ugovorom poslali več denarja, kot smo ga potrebovali, tako da nam ga je po koncu kampanje še ostalo. [...]

Tudi za patidarske kmete je bil naš boj povsem nova izkušnja. Zatorej smo morali hoditi od vasi do vasi in razlagati načela satjagrahe. Poglavitno je bilo, da se kmetje znebijo strahu, in sicer tako, da sprevidijo, da državni uradniki niso gospodarji, temveč služabniki ljudstva, saj jih navsezadnje plačujejo davkoplačevalci. Skoraj nemogoče pa jih je bilo pripeljati do spoznanja, da je njihova dolžnost združiti omikanost z neustrašnostjo. Ko se bodo namreč otresli strahu pred uradniki, kdo jim bo preprečil, da jim ne bodo vrnili za njihova poniževanja? Če pa bi se zares zatekli k neomikanosti, bi s tem spridili

svojo satjagraho, kakor kapljica arzenika spridi mleko. Pozneje sem sprevidel, da so se lekcije o omikanosti naučili slabše, kot sem pričakoval. Izkušnje so me naučile, da je prav omikanost najtrši oreh pri satjagrahi. Pa z omikanostjo ne mislim zgolj na zunanjo uglajenost govorjenja, ki se je lahko priučimo, temveč na vrojeno blagost in željo, da bi tudi nasprotniku storili dobro. To dvoje naj bi se kazalo v slehernem dejanju satjagrahe. [...]

Medtem ko se je vse to dogajalo, je eden izmed zakupnikov Šankarlala Parikha plačal zemljiški davek, ki mu je bil odmerjen. To je povzročilo strašno vznemirjenje. Šankarlal Parikh je nemudoma popravil napako svojega zakupnika, in sicer tako, da je dal zemljo, za katero je bil plačan davek, v dobrodelne namene. Tako si je rešil čast in dal dober zgled drugim.

Da bi si pridobil srca prestrašenih, sem svetoval ljudem, ki so bili pod vodstvom Mohanlala Pandje, naj z nekega polja, ki je bil po mojem mnenju neupravičeno zaručljen, poberejo vso čebulo. Tega nisem imel za državljansko nepokorščino, a tudi če bi bila, sem jim rekel, je ta rubež pridelka, čeravno je morda v skladu z zakonom, moralno sporen in ni nič drugega kakor plenjenje, zato je njihova dolžnost, da rubežnemu nalogu navzlic poberejo čebulo. To je bila dobra priložnost za ljudi, da se sprijaznijo tudi z možnostjo, da bodo ogrobljeni ali celo zaprti, kar je bila neizogibna posledica takšne nepokorščine. Za Mohanlala Pandjo je bilo to kakor naročeno. Ni namreč maral, da bi se kampanja končala, ne da bi koga doletela zaporna kazen za nekaj, kar je storil v skladu z načeli satjagrahe. Zatorej se je sam javil, da pobere čebulo s polja, in pri tem se mu je pridružilo sedem ali osem prijateljev.

Vlada si ni mogla privoščiti, da bi jih pustila na svobodi. Aretacija Mohanlala in njegovih tovarišev pa je ljudi samo še podžgala v njihovi zavzetosti. [...]

»Obsojence« je v zapor pospremil cel spoved in tistega dne si je Mohanlal Pandja med ljudmi prislužil častni naziv »*dungli čor*« (čebulni tat), s katerim se ponaša še dandanašnji. (5. del, XXIV. *Čebulni tat*, str. 534–536)

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Rekel je: »Ne bom vas mogel spraviti na noge, če ne boste pili mleka. Če si boste poleg tega pustili dajati še železo in injekcije arzena, vam jamčim, da boste povsem okrevali.« »Injekcije mi lahko daste,« sem odvrnil, »mleko pa je drugo vprašanje. Zaobljubil sem se namreč, da ga ne bom užival.« »Kako je pravzaprav s to vašo zaobljubo?« je zanimalo zdravnika. [...]

Vdal sem se. Goreča želja, da bi nadaljeval satjagraho, je v meni prebujala močno željo po življenju, in tako sem se zadovoljil s tem, da sem se držal zgolj črke svoje zaobljube, njenega duha pa žrtvoval. Zakaj čeprav sem imel takrat, ko sem se zaobljubil, v mislih zgolj kravje in bivolje mleko, naj bi se zaobljuba po svoji vsebini nanašala na mleko vseh živali. Pa tudi sicer naj ne bi užival nobenega mleka, saj sem vendar menil, da

ni naravna človeška hrana. Pa vendar sem, čeprav sem vse to vedel, privolil, da zaužijem kozje mleko. Volja po življenju je bila, kot se je pokazalo, močnejša kot predanost resnici in zaobljubljenec resnice je tokrat v želji, da bi se še naprej bojeval s satjagraho, žrtvoval svoj sveti ideal. Spomin na to dejanje me še zdaj gloda v prsih in me navdaja s kesanjem, in kar naprej razmišljam, kako bi opustil kozje mleko. Vendar se še zmeraj ne morem odtrgati od te tako pritajene skušnjave, želji služiti, ki me ima še vedno v krempljih.

Moji eksperimenti s prehrano so zame dragoceni, saj so del mojih raziskav *abimse*. Sproščajo me in mi prinašajo veselje. Vendar me dejstvo, da zdaj uživam kozje mleko, ne muči toliko z vidika prehranske *abimse*, temveč bolj z vidika resnice, saj ni nič drugega kakor prelomljena zaobljuba. Zdi se mi, da bolje razumem ideal resnice kakor ideal *abimse*, in izkušnje me učijo, da nikdar ne bom mogel rešiti uganke *abimse*, če bom obrnil hrbet resnici. Ideal resnice terja od tebe, da se zaobljube, ki jo sprejmeš, držiš tako v duhu kakor v črki. Jaz sem v opisanem primeru ubil duha – dušo svoje zaobljube – s tem da sem se oprijel zgolj njene zunanje oblike, in prav to me muči. Toda čeprav vse to prav dobro vem, ne vidim jasne poti pred sabo. Z drugimi besedami, mogoče mi manjka le poguma, da bi šel naravnost naprej. Oboje pa v bistvu pomeni eno in isto, zakaj dvom je vselej posledica pomanjkanja vere oziroma njene šibkosti. »Bog, daj mi vero!« je tako molitev, ki jo molim noč in dan. (5. del, XXIX. *Rowlattovi zakonski osnutki in moja dilema*, str. 555, 556)

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Izkušnje so me vselej znova prepričevale, da ni drugega boga kakor Resnica. In če ne izpričuje sleherna stran teh poglavij, da je edini način za uresničenje Resnice *abimsa*, je bil ves trud, ki sem ga imel s pisanjem teh poglavij, zaman. In tudi če bi se ta moja prizadevanja izkazala za jalova, naj bralci vedo, da je za to kriv nosilec, ne pa to mogočno načelo. Navsezadnje, naj so bila moja prizadevanja za *abimso* še tako iskrena, so bila še vedno po svoje tudi nepopolna in neprimerna. Drobní bežni uvidi v Resnico, ki sem jih bil deležen, potemtakem le stežka izrazijo misel o nepopisnem sijaju Resnice, milijonkrat svetlejšem od sijaja sonca, ki ga vsakodnevno vidimo s svojimi očmi. Pravzaprav je to, kar sem ujel, zgolj najslabotnejši odblesek tega mogočnega žara. Z gotovostjo pa lahko rečem, in tudi moji eksperimenti to dokazujejo, da lahko popoln uvid Resnice sledi šele po popolnem uresničenju *abimse*. [...]

Poistenje z vsem, kar živi, je nemogoče brez samoočiščenja; brez samoočiščenja je uresničevanje zakona *abimse* zgolj prazna sanja; Bog se nikdar ne more uresničiti v nekom, ki nima čistega srca. Samoočiščenje potemtakem pomeni očiščenje na vseh področjih življenja. In ker je takšno očiščenje sila nalezljivo, očiščenje enega človeka neizogibno privede tudi do očiščenja njegovega okolja.

Toda pot do samoočiščenja je naporna in strma. Če naj se človek popolnoma očisti, se mora do kraja osvoboditi strasti, tako v mišljenju kakor govorjenju in dejanju; se

povzdigniti nad nasprotna si tokova ljubezni in sovraštva, navezanosti in odpora. Vem, da v meni še ni te trojne čistosti, čeprav si nenehno prizadevam zanjo. Zato me posvetna hvala ne gane, pravzaprav me pogosto celo zbode. Premagati pritajene strasti se zdi težje, kakor z orožjem osvojiti snovni svet. Vse odkar sem se vrnil v Indijo, prepoznavam speče strasti, ki so pritajene v meni. Zavest o tem me sicer ponižuje, vendar ne premaguje. Moč so mi dajali izkušnje in eksperimenti in me navdajali z največjo radostjo. Vem pa, da imam pred sabo še težko pot, ki jo je treba prehoditi. Skrčiti se moram na nič. Dokler se človek po svoji volji ne postavi na zadnje mesto med sobitja, ni rešitve zanj. *Ahimsa* je najoddaljenejša meja ponižnosti. (5. del, *Zbogom*, str. 609, 610)

ŽIVLJENJE MAHATME GANDHIJA  
SKOZI FOTOGRAFIJE

\*

THE LIFE OF MAHATMA GANDHI  
IN PHOTOGRAPHS



Slika/Photo 1: Mahatma Gandhi, 1931





Slika/Photo 2: Portret Mahatme Gandhija / Mahatma Gandhi Portrayal



Slika/Photo 3: Mahatma Gandhi



Slika/Photo 4: Gandhi kot študent prava, London, 1890 / Gandhi as a law student, London, 1890



Slika/Photo 5: Fotografija Gandhija in njegove žene Kasturbe Gandhi v mladih letih v ašramu Sebarmati. Oblečena sta v tradicionalna gudžaratska oblačila. / Young day photo of Gandhi and his wife Kasturba Gandhi at Sabarmati Ashram. They used traditional gujarati dresses.



Slika/Photo 6: Gandhijeva očala, Nacionalni Gandhijev muzej, New Delhi /  
Gandhi's glasses, National Gandhi Museum, New Delhi

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Slika/Photo 7: Gandhi se igra z otrokom / Gandhi is playing with a child





Slika/Photo 8: Mahatma Gandhi med delom v času svoje poti iz Indije v London, 1931 /  
Mahatma Gandhi at work during his voyage from India to London, 1931

Slika/Photo 9: Gandhi z Združenjem vegetarijancev na otoku Wight, Anglija, 1890 /  
Gandhi with the Vegetarian Society in the Isle of Wight, England, 1890





Slika/Photo 10: Gandhi z Združenjem vegetarijancev v Londonu, 1931 /  
Gandhi with the Vegetarian Society in London, 1931

Slika/Photo 11: Mahatma Gandhi s Charlijem Chaplinom na domu dr. Katiala v Canning Townu v Londonu,  
22. september 1931 / Mahatma Gandhi with Charlie Chaplin at Dr. Katial's residence at Canning Town,  
London, 22<sup>th</sup> September 1931





Slika/Photo 12: Gandhi z Mirabehn (Madeleine Slade) v Darwenu, Anglija, 26. september 1931 /  
Gandhi with Mirabehn (Madeleine Slade) at Darwen, England, 26<sup>th</sup> September 1931

Slika/Photo 13: Mahatma Gandhi s tekstilnimi delavkami, Darwen, Lancashire, 26. september 1931 /  
Mahatma Gandhi with women textil workers at Darwen, Lancashire, 26<sup>th</sup> September 1931







Slika/Photo 14: Gandhi ob obisku tovarne tekstila, Darwen, Lancashire, Anglija, 26. septembar 1931 / Gandhi visiting textile factory, Darwen, Lancashire, England, 26<sup>th</sup> September 1931



Slika/Photo 15: Gandhi ob svojem prihodu iz Indije v Marseille, Francija, 11. septembra 1931, ko se je udeležil Konferenčne okrogle mize. Na njegovi desni je Madeleine Rolland, sestra Romaina Rollanda, na levi pa Madeleine Slade, znana kot Mirabehn. Gandhi je s sabo iz Indije pripeljal dve kozi, s čimer si je priskrbel svoj dnevni odmerek mleka. / Gandhi at his arrival from India at Marseille, France, on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1931, going to England to attend the Round Table Conference. On his right is Madeleine Rolland, sister of Romain Rolland. On his left is Madeleine Slade, often called Mirabehn. Gandhi brought with him from India two goats to provide his daily ration of milk.

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Slika/Photo 16: Državno obeležje »Solne satjagrahe«, Dandi, Indija / National »Salt Satyagraha« Memorial, Dandi, India

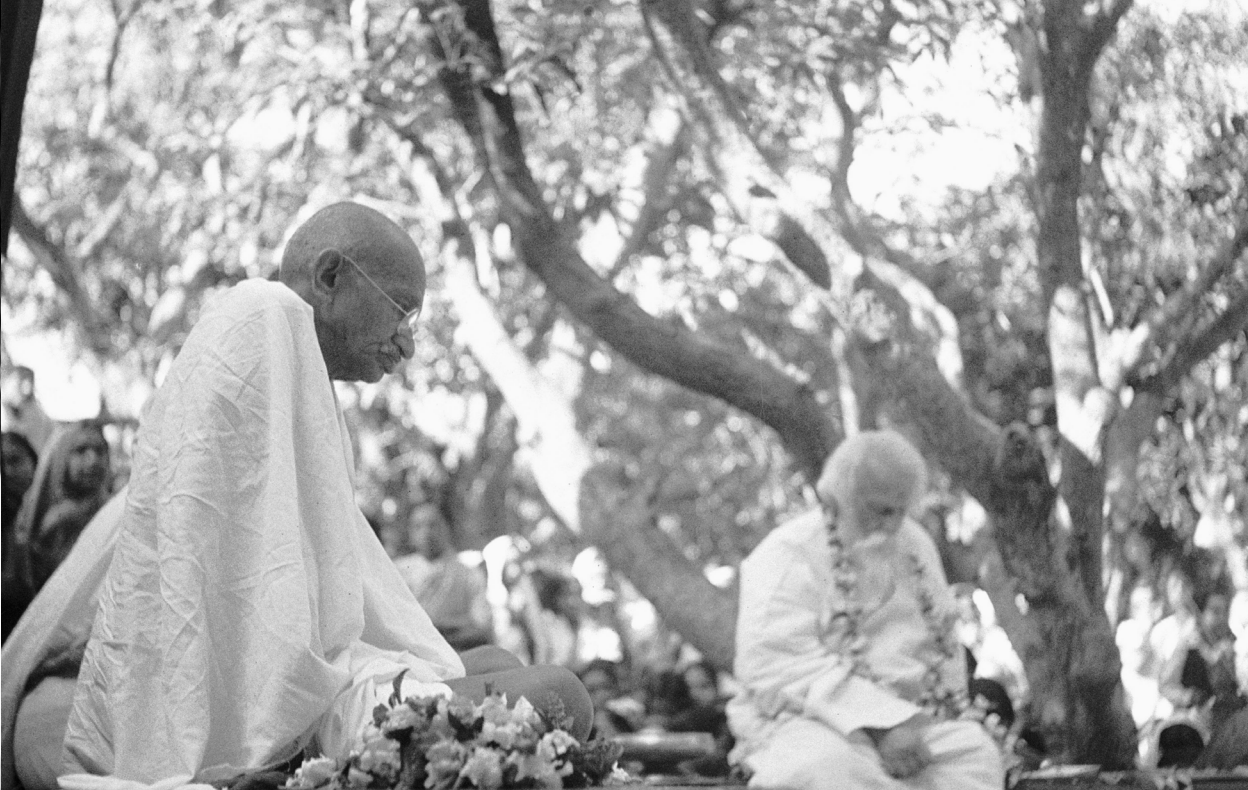




Slika/Photo 17: Gandhi v Dandiju, Južnem Gudžaratu, na obali pobira sol ob koncu solne satjagrahe »Solni pohod«, 5. april 1930. Za njim sta njegov drugi sin Manilal Gandhi in Mithuben Petit. / Gandhi at Dandi, South Gujarat, picking salt on the beach at the end of the Salt Satyagraha "Salt March", 5<sup>th</sup> April 1930. Behind him is his second son Manilal Gandhi and Mithuben Petit.



Slika/Photo 18: L. S. Chauhan, R. S. Shukla in Beohar Rajendra Sinha med raztrosom Gandhijevega pepela v sveto reko Narmado v Tilwara Ghatu ob Džabalpurju. Gandhi bi se moral leta 1939 udeležiti letnega zasedanja indijskega parlamenta v Tripuriju; ironično je, da je njegov pepel prispel tja 12. februarja 1948. / L. S. Chauhan, R. S. Shukla in Beohar Rajendra Sinha immersing Mahatma Gandhi's ashes in Tilwara Ghat near Jabalpur in the holy river Narmada. Gandhi was supposed to be in Tilwara Ghat in 1939 for the Tripuri-session of Congress but, ironically, his ashes reached here on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1948.



Slika/Photo 19: Mahatma Gandhi sedi s pesnikom Rabindranthom Tagorejem v senci dreves v soseski Šantiniketan blizu Kalkute, Zahodna Bengalija, Indija, februar 1940 / Mahatma Gandhi sitting with poet Rabindranth Tagore under shade of trees at in the neighbourhood Shantiniketan near Calcutta, West Bengal, India, February 1940

Slika/Photo 20: Vhod v sobo, v kateri je Mahatma preživel zadnje dneve svojega življenja; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi / Entrance to the room where the Mahatma spent the last days of his life; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi



गांधी जी का कमरा  
इस कमरा में गांधी जी ने अपने जीवन के अंतिम 144 दिन बिताये थे।  
GANDHI'S ROOM  
GANDHI HAS SPENT THE LAST 144 DAYS OF HIS LIFE IN THIS ROOM



Slika/Photo 21: Gandhijevo ležišče; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi /  
Gandhi's bed; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi

Slika/Photo 22: Ahimsa, načelo nenasilja, ki se ga je Gandhi predano trudil uresničevati vse svoje življenje; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi / Ahimsa, the principle of nonviolence which Gandhi was committed to implement throughout his life; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi

# अहिंसा ahimsa

*Origin: Sanskrit  
from a 'non-, without' + hiṃsā 'violence'.  
respect for all living things and avoidance  
of violence towards others.*



Sliki/Photos 23 in/and 24: Muzej v New Delhiju, posvečen Mahatmi Gandhiju, danes poznan kot Gandhi Smriti (v času Gandhijevega življenja znan tudi kot Birla House ali Birla Bhavan) / The museum in New Delhi dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi, now known as Gandhi Smriti (also known as Birla House or Birla Bhavan during Gandhi's lifetime)





Slika/Photo 25: Kip Mahatme Gandhija; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi /  
The statue of Mahatma Gandhi, Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi

Slika/Photo 26: Gandhi v senci drevesa, obkrožen z ljudmi; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi /  
Gandhi in the shade of a tree, surrounded by people; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi

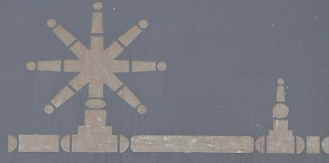






Sliki/Photos 27 in/and 28: Okrasna vezenina, ki prikazuje Gandhijeva življenjska načela; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi / Decorative embroidery depicting Gandhi's life principles; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi





## गांधी स्मृति

यह राष्ट्रीय स्मारक सत्य, अहिंसा, एकता और समानता के गुणों का गौरव गान करता है।

महात्मा गांधी के अंतिम दिनों के स्मृति पुंज समान यह पवित्र भवन अब हमारी राष्ट्रीय विरासत का एक अंग बन गया है। यहां की दीवारें 'आपसी भाईचारे' के गांधीजी के संदेश से गूंजती हैं।

गांधीजी के जीवन और उपदेशों ने मानव इतिहास को प्रभावित किया है। इस स्मारक का उद्देश्य है उनके आदर्शों का प्रसार और प्रचार। 9 सितम्बर 1947 की सुबह गांधीजी कलकत्ता से दिल्ली आए- "करो या मरो" के मंत्र को अपनाकर दिल्ली को साम्प्रदायिक हिंसा से बचाने के लिए। दंगों की भीषण आग में वे अकेले ही कूद पड़े। बेघर और बेसहाराओं की व्यथा सुनकर उनको सांत्वना देने लगे। इससे पहले भी वे कई बार इस भवन में रह चुके थे परन्तु जीवन के अंतिम 144 दिन जो उन्होंने यहां बिताये, वे राष्ट्र के इतिहास में बड़े महत्वपूर्ण हैं। यहां रहते हुए उन्होंने हमारे लिए प्रवचनों और लेखों की अनमोल विरासत छोड़ी है।

शुक्रवार, 30 जनवरी, 1948 को राष्ट्रपिता महात्मा गांधी के महान जीवन का अंत यहीं हुआ। प्रार्थना स्थल पर हत्यारे की गोली खाकर वे 'राम का नाम' लेते हुए शाम 5 बजकर 17 मिनट पर शहीद हो गए।

जीवन की तरह मौत पर भी विजय प्राप्तकर वे अमर हो गए।

## Gandhi Smriti

The national memorial honours the virtues of truth, non-violence, unity and equality.

The hallowed house, which treasures many cherished memories of the last days of Mahatma Gandhi, now forms a part of our national heritage. The walls of the building reverberate with his message, "All men are brothers".

Gandhi's life and teachings have left an indelible mark on human history and the purpose of preserving this memorial is to foster and propagate his ideals. On the morning of September 9, 1947, Gandhiji arrived in Delhi from Calcutta to purge the city of the communal virus and to "do or die". He planted himself alone, amidst the raging torrent and listened to the tales of woe of the embittered and the uprooted. He had stayed here several times in the past but the last 144 days of his life spent here are more important in the nation's history. He has left a rich legacy of speeches and writings during this period.

The epic life of the Father of the Nation ended here on Friday, January 30, 1948. He fell a martyr to the bullets of the assassin on the prayer ground with Rama's name on his lips at 5.17 pm.

He was the victorious one in death as in life.



Sliki/Photos 30 in/and 31: Muzej v New Delhiju, posvečen Mahatmi Gandhiju, danes poznan kot Gandhi Smriti /  
The museum in New Delhi dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi, now known as Gandhi Smriti





Sliki/Photos 32 in/and 33: Muzej v New Delhiju, posvečen Mahatmi Gandhiju, danes poznan kot Gandhi Smriti /  
The museum in New Delhi dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi, now known as Gandhi Smriti





Slika/Photo 34: Prizori iz Gandhijevega življenja, stenska poslikava; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi /  
Scenes from Gandhi's life, a wall painting; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi

Slika/Photo 35: Gandhijev molitveni prostor; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi /  
Gandhi's prayer room; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi



“यदि मेरी हत्या भी हो जाती है तब भी मैं राम और रहीम के नाम दोहराना नहीं छोड़ूंगा, जो मेरे  
लिये एक ही ईश्वर है। अपने हठों पर इन नामों के साथ मैं प्रसन्नता से मृत्यु को अपनाऊंगा”  
मो. क. गांधी, 20.04.1947

“Even if I am killed, I will not give up repeating the names of Rama and Rahim, which  
mean to me the same God. With these names on my lips, I will die cheerfully”  
M.K. Gandhi, Harijan 20.04.1947

THE MAHATMA'S PRAYER SPOT



Slika/Photo 36: Gandhijeva poslednja pot k poslednji molitvi; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi /  
Gandhi's final way to address his last prayer; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi



Slika/Photo 37: Gandhijeva podoba v drevesni skorji, Vič-Brdo, Ljubljana, Slovenija /  
Gandhi's figure in a tree bark, Vič-Brdo district, Ljubljana, Slovenia



Slika/Photo 38: Kip Mahatme Gandhija v Slovenj Gradcu, mestu Glasnik miru, Slovenija /  
Mahatma Gandhi's Statue in Slovenj Gradec, United Nations Peace Messenger City, Slovenia

Slika/Photo 39: 150. obletnica rojstva Mahatme Gandhija; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi /  
The 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi





**THE MAHATMA ON HIS EXPERIMENTS  
WITH TRUTH**

**EXCERPTS FROM GANDHI'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY**



When, in 1893, I came in close contact with Christian friends, I was a mere novice. They tried hard to bring home to me, and make me accept, the message of Jesus, and I was a humble and respectful listener with an open mind. At that time I naturally studied Hinduism to the best of my ability and endeavoured to understand other religions.

In 1903 the position was somewhat changed. Theosophist friends certainly intended to draw me into their society, but that was with a view to getting something from me as a Hindu. Theosophical literature is replete with Hindu influence, and so these friends expected that I should be helpful to them. I explained that my Sanskrit study was not much to speak of, that I had not read the Hindu scriptures in the original, and that even my acquaintance with the translations was of the slightest. But being believers in *sanskara* (tendencies caused by previous births) and *punarjanma* (rebirth), they assumed that I should be able to render at least some help. And so I felt like a Triton among the minnows. I started reading Swami Vivekananda's *Rajayoga* with some of these friends and M. N. Dvivedi's *Rajayoga* with others. I had to read Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* with one friend and the *Bhagavad-Gita* with quite a number. We formed a sort of Seeker's Club where we had regular readings. I already had faith in the *Gita*, which had a fascination for me. Now I realized the necessity of diving deeper into it. I had one or two translations, by means of which I tried to understand the original Sanskrit. I decided also to get by heart one or two verses every day. For this purpose I employed the time of my morning ablutions. The operation took me thirty-five minutes, fifteen minutes for the tooth brush and twenty for the bath. The first I used to do standing in western fashion. So on the wall opposite I stuck slips of paper on which were written the *Gita* verses and referred to them now and then to help my memory. This time was found sufficient for memorizing the daily portion and recalling the verses already learnt. I remember having thus committed to memory thirteen chapters. But the memorizing of the *Gita* had to give way to other work and the creation and nature of *Satyagraha*, which absorbed all my thinking time, as the latter may be said to be doing even now.

What effect this reading of the *Gita* had on my friends only they can say, but to me the *Gita* became an infallible guide of conduct. It became my dictionary of daily reference. Just as I turned to the English dictionary for the meanings of English words that I did not understand, I turned to this dictionary of conduct for a ready solution of all my troubles and trials. (Part 4, V. *Result of Introspection*, p. 647–649)<sup>1</sup>

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1 All excerpts are quoted from the English translation of Gandhi's autobiography: Gandhi, M. *An Autobiography. The Story of My Experiments With Truth*. Transl. Mahadev Desai. Introd. Sunil Khilnani. Penguin Books, E-book edition, 2001.

Events were so shaping themselves in Johannesburg as to make this self-purification on my part a preliminary as it were to Satyagraha. I can now see that all the principal events of my life, culminating in the vow of brahmacharya, were secretly preparing me for it. The principle called Satyagraha came into being before that name was invented. Indeed when it was born, I myself could not say what it was. In Gujarati also we used the English phrase 'passive resistance' to describe it. When in a meeting of Europeans I found that the term 'passive resistance' was too narrowly construed, that it was supposed to be a weapon of the weak, that it could be characterized by hatred, and that it could finally manifest itself as violence, I had to demur to all these statements and explain the real nature of the Indian movement. It was clear that a new word must be coined by the Indians to designate their struggle.

But I could not for the life of me find out a new name, and therefore offered a nominal prize through Indian Opinion to the reader who made the best suggestion on the subject. As a result Maganlal Gandhi coined the word 'Sadagraha' (Sat = truth, Agra = firmness) and won the prize. But in order to make it clearer I changed the word to 'Satyagraha' which has since become current in Gujarati as a designation for the struggle. (Part 4, XXVI. *The Birth of Satyagraha*, p. 780, 781)

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Fasting can help to curb animal passion, only if it is undertaken with a view to self-restraint. Some of my friends have actually found their animal passion and palate stimulated as an after-effect of fasts. That is to say, fasting is futile unless it is accompanied by an incessant longing for self-restraint. The famous verse from the second chapter of the Bhagavad-Gita is worth noting in this connection:

For a man who is fasting his senses  
Outwardly, the sense-objects disappear,  
Leaving the yearning behind; but when  
He has seen the Highest, Even the yearning disappears.

Fasting and similar discipline is, therefore, one of the means to the end of self-restraint, but it is not all, and if physical fasting is not accompanied by mental fasting, it is bound to end in hypocrisy and disaster. (Part 4, XXXI. *Fasting*, p. 631, 632)

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It was quite clear to me that participation in war could never be consistent with *ahimsa*. But it is not always given to one to be equally clear about one's duty. A votary of truth is often obliged to grope in the dark.

*Abimsa* is a comprehensive principle. We are helpless mortals caught in the conflagration of himsa. The saying that life lives on life has a deep meaning in it. Man cannot for a moment live without consciously or unconsciously committing outward himsa. The very fact of his living – eating, drinking and moving about – necessarily involves some himsa, destruction of life, be it ever so minute. A votary of *abimsa* therefore remains true to his faith if the spring of all his actions is compassion, if he shuns to the best of his ability the destruction of the tiniest creature, tries to save it, and thus incessantly strives to be free from the deadly coil of himsa. He will be constantly growing in self-restraint and compassion, but he can never become entirely free from outward himsa.

Then again, because underlying *abimsa* is the unity of all life, the error of one cannot but affect all, and hence man cannot be wholly free from himsa. So long as he continues to be a social being, he cannot but participate in the himsa that the very existence of society involves. When two nations are fighting, the duty of a votary of *abimsa* is to stop the war. He who is not equal to that duty, he who has no power of resisting war, he who is not qualified to resist war, may take part in war, and yet whole-heartedly try to free himself, his nation and the world from war. [...]

A devotee of Truth may not do anything in deference to convention. He must always hold himself open to correction, and whenever he discovers himself to be wrong he must confess it at all cost and atone for it. (Part 4, XXXIX. *A Spiritual Dilemma*, p. 855, 856, 859)

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I was in those days strong enough to roam about a lot, and was fortunately not so known as not to be able to go in the streets without creating much fuss. During these roamings I came to observe more of the pilgrims' absent-mindedness, hypocrisy and slovenliness, than of their piety. The swarm of sadhus, who had descended there, seemed to have been born but to enjoy the good things of life.

Here I saw a cow with five feet! I was astonished, but knowing men soon disillusioned me. The poor five-footed cow was a sacrifice to the greed of the wicked. I learnt that the fifth foot was nothing else but a foot cut off from a live calf and grafted upon the shoulder of the cow! The result of this double cruelty was exploited to fleece the ignorant of their money. There was no Hindu but would be attracted by a five-footed cow, and no Hindu but would lavish his charity on such a miraculous cow.

The day of the fair was now upon us. It proved a red-letter day for me. I had not gone to Hardvar with the sentiments of a pilgrim. I have never thought of frequenting places of pilgrimage in search of piety. But the seventeen lakhs of men that were reported to be there could not all be hypocrites or mere sightseers. I had no doubt that countless people amongst them had gone there to earn merit and for self-purification. It is difficult, if not impossible, to say to what extent this kind of faith uplifts the soul.

I therefore passed the whole night immersed in deep thought. There were those pious souls in the midst of the hypocrisy that surrounded them. They would be free of guilt before their Maker. If the visit to Hardvar was in itself a sin, I must publicly protest against it, and leave Hardvar on the day of Kumbha. If the pilgrimage to Hardvar and to the Kumbha fair was not sinful, I must impose some act of self-denial on myself in atonement for the iniquity prevailing there and purify myself. This was quite natural for me. (Part 5, VII. *Kumbha Mela*, p. 946–948)

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I had heard much in praise of the Lakshman Jhula (a hanging bridge over the Ganges) some distance from Hrishikesh, and many friends pressed me not to leave Hardvar without having gone as far as the bridge. I wanted to do this pilgrimage on foot and so I did it in two stages.

Many sannyasis called on me at Hrishikesh. One of them was particularly attracted towards me. The Phoenix party was there and their presence drew from the Swami many questions. We had discussions about religion and he realized that I felt deeply about matters of religion. He saw me bare-headed and shirtless as I had returned from my bath in the Ganges. He was pained to miss the shikha (tuft of hair) on my head and the sacred thread about my neck and said: 'It pains me to see you, a believing Hindu, going without a sacred thread and the shikha. These are the two external symbols of Hinduism and every Hindu ought to wear them.'

Now there is a history as to how I came to dispense with both. When I was an urchin of ten, I envied the Brahman lads sporting bunches of keys tied to their sacred threads, and I wished I could do likewise. The practice of wearing the sacred thread was not then common among the Vaishya families in Kathiawad. But a movement had just been started for making it obligatory for the first three varnas. As a result several members of the Gandhi clan adopted the sacred thread. The Brahman who was teaching two or three of us boys Ramraksha invested us with the thread, and although I had no occasion to possess a bunch of keys, I got one and began to sport it. Later, when the thread gave way, I do not remember whether I missed it very much. But I know that I did not go in for a fresh one.

As I grew up several well-meaning attempts were made both in India and South Africa to re-invest me with the sacred thread, but with little success. If the shudras may not wear it, I argued, what right have the other varnas to do so? And I saw no adequate reason for adopting what was to me an unnecessary custom. I had no objection to the thread as such, but the reasons for wearing it were lacking. [...]

I therefore made a clean breast of the whole matter to the Swami and said: 'I will not wear the sacred thread, for I see no necessity for it, when countless Hindus can go

without it and yet remain Hindus. Moreover, the sacred thread should be a symbol of spiritual regeneration, presupposing a deliberate attempt on the part of the wearer at a higher and purer life. I doubt whether in the present state of Hinduism and of India, Hindus can vindicate the right to wear a symbol charged with such a meaning. That right can come only after Hinduism has purged itself of untouchability, has removed all distinctions of superiority and inferiority, and shed a host of other evils and shams that have become rampant in it. My mind therefore rebels against the idea of wearing the sacred thread. (Part 5, VIII. *Lakshman Jhula*, p. 952–956)

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The pilgrimage to the Kumbha fair was my second visit to Hardvar.

The Satyagraha Ashram was founded on 25 May 1915. Shrad-dhanandji wanted me to settle in Hardvar. Some of my Calcutta friends recommended Vaidyanathadham. Others strongly urged me to choose Rajkot. But when I happened to pass through Ahmedabad, many friends pressed me to settle down there, and they volunteered to find the expenses of the Ashram, as well as a house for us to live in.

I had a predilection for Ahmedabad. Being a Gujarati I thought I should be able to render the greatest service to the country through the Gujarati language. And then, as Ahmedabad was an ancient centre of handloom weaving, it was likely to be the most favourable field for the revival of the cottage industry of hand-spinning. There was also the hope that, the city being the capital of Gujarat, monetary help from its wealthy citizens would be more available here than elsewhere.

The question of untouchability was naturally among the subjects discussed with the Ahmedabad friends. I made it clear to them that I should take the first opportunity of admitting an untouchable candidate to the Ashram if he was otherwise worthy.

,Where is the untouchable who will satisfy your condition?' said a vaishnava friend self-complacently. I finally decided to found the Ashram at Ahmedabad. [...]

The first thing we had to settle was the name of the Ashram. I consulted friends. Amongst the names suggested were 'Sevashram' (the abode of service), 'Tapovan' (the abode of austerities), etc. I liked the name 'Sevashram' but for the absence of emphasis on the methods of service. 'Tapovan' seemed to be a pretentious title, because though tapas was dear to us we could not presume to be tapasvins (men of austerity). Our creed was devotion to truth, and our business was the search for and insistence on truth. I wanted to acquaint India with the method I had tried in South Africa, and I desired to test in India the extent to which its application might be possible. So my companions and I selected the name 'Satyagraha Ashram', as conveying both our goal and our method of service. (Part V, *Founding of the Ashram*, p. 961–963)

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Just as there was a storm outside, so was there a storm in the Ashram itself. Though in South Africa untouchable friends used to come to my place and live and feed with me, my wife and other women did not seem quite to relish the admission into the Ashram of the untouchable friends. My eyes and ears easily detected their indifference, if not their dislike, towards Danibehn. The monetary difficulty had caused me no anxiety, but this internal storm was more than I could bear. Danibehn was an ordinary woman. Dudabhai was a man with slight education but of good understanding. I liked his patience. Sometimes he did flare up, but on the whole I was well impressed with his forbearance. I pleaded with him to swallow minor insults. He not only agreed, but prevailed upon his wife to do likewise.

The admission of this family proved a valuable lesson to the Ashram. In the very beginning we proclaimed to the world that the Ashram would not countenance untouchability. Those who wanted to help the Ashram were thus put on their guard, and the work of the Ashram in this direction was considerably simplified. The fact that it is mostly the real orthodox Hindus who have met the daily growing expenses of the Ashram is perhaps a clear indication that untouchability is shaken to its foundation. There are indeed many other proofs of this, but the fact that good Hindus do not scruple to help an Ashram where we go to the length of dining with the untouchables is no small proof. (Part 5, X. *On the Anvil*, p. 970–972)

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At the same time there came a letter from Shrimati Anasuyabai about the condition of labour in Ahmedabad. Wages were low, the labourers had long been agitating for an increment, and I had a desire to guide them if I could. But I had not the confidence to direct even this comparatively small affair from that long distance. So I seized the first opportunity to go to Ahmedabad. I had hoped that I should be able to finish both these matters quickly and get back to Champaran to supervise the constructive work that had been inaugurated there. [...]

I was in a most delicate situation. The mill-hands' case was strong. Shrimati Anasuyabai had to battle against her own brother, Sjt Ambalal Sarabhai, who led the fray on behalf of the mill-owners. My relations with them were friendly, and that made fighting with them the more difficult. I had consultations with them, and requested them to refer the dispute to arbitration, but they refused to recognize the principle of arbitration.

I had therefore to advise the labourers to go on strike. Before I did so, I came in very close contact with them and their leaders, and explained to them the conditions of a successful strike:

1. never to resort to violence,



2. never to molest blacklegs,
3. never to depend upon alms, and
4. to remain firm, no matter how long the strike continued, and to earn bread, during the strike, by any other honest labour.

The leaders of the strike understood and accepted the conditions, and the labourers pledged themselves at a general meeting not to resume work until either their terms were accepted or the mill-owners agreed to refer the dispute to arbitration. [...]

We had daily meetings of the strikers under the shade of a tree on the bank of the Sabarmati. They attended the meeting in their thousands and I reminded them in my speeches of their pledge and of the duty to maintain peace and self-respect. They daily paraded the streets of the city in peaceful procession, carrying their banner bearing the inscription 'Ek Tek' (keep the pledge).

The strike went on for twenty-one days. During the continuance of the strike I consulted the mill-owners from time to time and entreated them to do justice to the labourers. 'We have our pledge too,' they used to say. 'Our relations with the labourers are those of parents and children ... How can we brook the interference of a third party? Where is the room for arbitration?' (Part 5, XX. *In Touch with Labour*, p. 1036, 1038–1040)

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Champanan being in a far away corner of India, and the press having been kept out of the campaign, it did not attract visitors from outside. Not so with the Kheda campaign, of which the happenings were reported in the press from day to day.

The Gujaratis were deeply interested in the fight, which was to them a novel experiment. They were ready to pour forth their riches for the success of the cause. It was not easy for them to see that Satyagraha could not be conducted simply by means of money. Money is the thing that it least needs. In spite of my remonstrance, the Bombay merchants sent us more money than necessary, so that we had some balance left at the end of the campaign. [...]

For the Patidar farmers, too, the fight was quite a new thing. We had, therefore, to go about from village to village explaining the principles of Satyagraha. The main thing was to rid the agriculturists of their fear by making them realize that the officials were not the masters but the servants of the people, inasmuch as they received their salaries from the tax-payer. And then it seemed well nigh impossible to make them realize the duty of combining civility with fearlessness. Once they had shed the fear of the officials, how could they be stopped from returning their insults? And yet if they resorted to incivility it would spoil their Satyagraha, like a drop of arsenic in milk. I realized later that they had less fully learnt the lesson of civility than I had expected. Experience has

taught me that civility is the most difficult part of Satyagraha. Civility does not here mean the mere outward gentleness of speech cultivated for the occasion, but an inborn gentleness and desire to do the opponent good. These should show themselves in every act of a Satyagrahi. [...]

While these things were going on, one of Sjt Shankarlal Parikh's tenants paid up the assessment in respect of his land. This created a sensation. Sjt Shankarlal Parikh immediately made amends for his tenant's mistake by giving away for charitable purposes the land for which the assessment had been paid. He thus saved his honour and set a good example to others.

With a view to steeling the hearts of those who were frightened, I advised the people, under the leadership of Sjt Mohanlal Pandya, to remove the crop of onion from a field which had been, in my opinion, wrongly attached. I did not regard this as civil disobedience, but even if it was, I suggested that this attachment of standing crops, though it might be in accordance with law, was morally wrong, and was nothing short of looting, and that therefore it was the people's duty to remove the onion in spite of the order of attachment. This was a good opportunity for the people to learn a lesson in courting fines or imprisonment, which was the necessary consequence of such disobedience. For Sjt Mohanlal Pandya it was a thing after his heart. He did not like the campaign to end without someone undergoing suffering in the shape of imprisonment for something done consistently with the principles of Satyagraha. So he volunteered to remove the onion crop from the field, and in this seven or eight friends joined him.

It was impossible for the Government to leave them free. The arrest of Sjt Mohanlal and his companions added to the people's enthusiasm. [...]

A procession escorted the 'convicts' to jail, and on that day Sjt Mohanlal Pandya earned from the people the honoured title of 'dungli chor' (onion thief) which he enjoys to this day. (Part 5, XXIV. *The Onion Thief*, p. 1062–1064)

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He said: 'I cannot rebuild your body unless you take milk. If in addition you would take iron and arsenic injections, I would guarantee fully to renovate your constitution.' 'You can give me the injections,' I replied, 'but milk is a different question; I have a vow against it.' 'What exactly is the nature of your vow?' the doctor inquired. [...]

I succumbed. My intense eagerness to take up the Satyagraha fight had created in me a strong desire to live, and so I contented myself with adhering to the letter of my vow only, and sacrificed the spirit. For although I had only the milk of the cow and the she-buffalo in mind when I took the vow, by natural implication it covered the milk of all animals. Nor could it be right for me to use milk at all, so long as I held that milk is not the natural diet of man. Yet knowing all this I agreed to take goat's milk. The will to

live proved stronger than the devotion to truth, and for once the votary of truth compromised his sacred ideal by his eagerness to take up the Satyagraha fight. The memory of this action even now rankles in my breast and fills me with remorse, and I am constantly thinking how to give up goat's milk. But I cannot yet free myself from that subtlest of temptations, the desire to serve, which still holds me.

My experiments in dietetics are dear to me as a part of my researches in *Abimsa*. They give me recreation and joy. But my use of goat's milk today troubles me not from the view-point of dietetic *Abimsa* so much as from that of truth, being no less than a breach of pledge. It seems to me that I understand the ideal of truth better than that of *Abimsa*, and my experience tells me that, if I let go my hold of truth, I shall never be able to solve the riddle of *Abimsa*. The ideal of truth requires that vows taken should be fulfilled in the spirit as well as in the letter. In the present case I killed the spirit – the soul of my vow – by adhering to its outer form only, and that is what galls me. But in spite of this clear knowledge I cannot see my way straight before me. In other words, perhaps, I have not the courage to follow the straight course. Both at bottom mean one and the same thing, for doubt is invariably the result of want or weakness of faith. 'Lord, give me faith' is, therefore, my prayer day and night. (Part 5, XXIX. *The Rowlatt Bills and My Dilemma*, p. 1102–1105)

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My uniform experience has convinced me that there is no other God than Truth. And if every page of these chapters does not proclaim to the reader that the only means for the realization of Truth is *Abimsa*, I shall deem all my labour in writing these chapters to have been in vain. And, even though my efforts in this behalf may prove fruitless, let the readers know that the vehicle, not the great principle, is at fault. After all, however sincere my strivings after *Abimsa* may have been, they have still been imperfect and inadequate. The little fleeting glimpses, therefore, that I have been able to have of Truth can hardly convey an idea of the indescribable lustre of Truth, a million times more intense than that of the sun we daily see with our eyes. In fact what I have caught is only the faintest glimmer of that mighty effulgence. But this much I can say with assurance, as a result of all my experiments, that a perfect vision of Truth can only follow a complete realization of *Abimsa*. [...]

Identification with everything that lives is impossible without self-purification; without self-purification the observance of the law of *Abimsa* must remain an empty dream; God can never be realized by one who is not pure of heart. Self-purification therefore must mean purification in all the walks of life. And purification being highly infectious, purification of oneself necessarily leads to the purification of one's surroundings.

But the path of self-purification is hard and steep. To attain to perfect purity one has to become absolutely passion-free in thought, speech and action; to rise above the opposing currents of love and hatred, attachment and repulsion. I know that I have not in me as yet that triple purity, in spite of constant ceaseless striving for it. That is why the world's praise fails to move me, indeed it very often stings me. To conquer the subtle passions seems to me to be harder far than the physical conquest of the world by the force of arms. Ever since my return to India I have had experiences of the dormant passions lying hidden within me. "The knowledge of them has made me feel humiliated though not defeated. The experiences and experiments have sustained me and given me great joy. But I know that I have still before me a difficult path to traverse. I must reduce myself to zero. So long as a man does not of his own free will put himself last among his fellow creatures, there is no salvation for him. *Ahimsa* is the farthest limit of humility. (Part 5, *Farewell*, p. 1217–1220)

## Duhovni temelji Gandhijeve *satjagrahe*

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### Izvleček

V prispevku predstavim poglobljene Gandhijeve ideje o *satjagrahi*, tj. zavezanost resnici, ki je osrednje etično in duhovno vodilo Mahatme. Okrog *satjagrahe* krožijo vsi drugi pomembni Gandhijevi koncepti oziroma ideje, predvsem *ahimsa* (nenasilje). Nenasilje mu predstavlja brezpogojno vrednoto, ki izhaja iz zavezanosti absolutni Resnici v nas. Ta zavezanost zajema in prežema vse druge opredelitve in naravnosti ljudi, ne le za neko partikularno etično odločitev, eno poleg drugih. Gandhi je zato izenačeval pojem Boga in pojem (absolutne) Resnice. Upoštevanje *ahimsa* povzroči, da resnica za nas postane božanska. Gandhijeva *satjagraha* zahteva temeljno etično in duhovno naravnost posameznic in posameznikov na neko brezpogojnost (absolutnost), ki se kaže v vsakdanjem življenju in delovanju ljudi, ne pa kak poseben sklop idej, prepričanj, verovanj. Sam ji pravim »radikalna humanost (človečnost)«. Menim namreč, da je prav od takšne etične in duhovne naravnosti ljudi kot posameznic in posameznikov, zlasti tistih, ki imajo možnost in moč, da vodijo druge ljudi, odvisno, ali bo sedanji svet preživel in prerasel sedanjo krizo in vse prihodnje, ali pa bo zablodil v brezizhodno barbarstvo in samouničenje. Človečnost kot etična in duhovna naravnost je eksistencialni ali duhovni izraz človeške univerzalne odnosnosti, tj. sposobnosti, da v vsem, s čimer je v odnosu, najde sebe in v sebi najde vse.

**Ključne besede:** *satjagraha*, nenasilje, Bog, absolutna resnica, radikalna humanost

Mohandas K. Gandhi je nedvomno velikan 20. stoletja. Je eden tistih redkih velikih ljudi, ki nam vračajo vero v človeka in človeštvo, navkljub vsemu zlu, hudobijam in norostim vseh vrst, ki so grabile duše in telesa premnogih ljudi v tem žalostnem stoletju. Bil je tudi živ dokaz dejstva, da v boju dobrega z zlim kvaliteta premaguje kvantiteto, modrost surovo moč, resnica laž in ljubezen sovraštvo. To je dosegel predvsem s svojim življenjem in delom, s katerima je utemeljeval svoje ideje in vizije, ki so postale zanimive in pomembne za nas. Podobno je z zgodovinskim učinkom njegovega delovanja. Ta je nedvomno velik, nenasilna osamosvojitve Indije izpod britanskega kolonializma je le en, morda najbolj opazen, a ne nujno tudi najpomembnejši zgodovinski učinek. Pa vendar Gandhi velikan ni zaradi tega, temveč zato, ker je osamosvajanje Indije od začetka do konca povezal z lastnim življenjem, natančneje s posvetitvijo svojega življenja resnici in nenasilju. To je ravno obratno, kot se običajno dogaja s slavnimi ljudmi, katerim so pomembne predvsem njihove ideje, vizije in zunanji dogodki, ki so povezani z njihovim delovanjem, šele sekundarno pa njihovo življenje oziroma obseg in raven uresničevanja

svojih idej v življenju. Kakorkoli že, uresničevanje radikalne človečnosti onkraj vseh »humanističnih« ideologij zahteva medsebojno integriranje etičnih vrlin, spoštovanja svobode in dostojanstva vseh ljudi ter duhovne radosti, ki izhaja iz ozaveščene absolutne dimenzije človeškega bivanja. To je naloga, ki gotovo presega vsako partikularno, pa čeprav še tako pomembno človeško dejavnost, in vsako posebno obliko zavedanja. Vsak človek more in mora najti svojo pot do radikalne človečnosti. Ni tako pomembno to, kako daleč seže v tem uresničevanju, kot to, ali se giblje v pravi smeri.

Gandhi v svoji avtobiografiji piše, da svoje življenje razume kot eno samo zbirko eksperimentov z resnico. Ti eksperimenti so potekali predvsem na duhovnem oziroma moralnem področju, a njihove konsekvence so ga privedle do številnih in daljnosežnih odločitev in dejavnosti, ki so povezale njegovo življenje z drugimi ljudmi, predvsem z njegovimi rojaki tako v Indiji kot zunaj nje. Gandhi v *Uvodu* v avtobiografijo izrecno poudarja, da svojih eksperimentov z resnico ni izvajal za zaprtimi vrati, temveč med ljudmi, čeprav imajo gotovo tudi svoje povsem osebne plati.

Za Gandhija je značilna prav ta mešanica modernosti in tradicionalnosti. Res je, da v tem ni bil edini; Mahatma je v tej težnji po povezavi modernosti in tradicije sledil celi vrsti indijskih reformatorjev, ki so nastopali od začetka 19. stoletja dalje. Eden največjih, in Gandhiju v marsičem komplementaren duh, ki je prav tako izvirno spajal indijsko težnjo po modernizaciji z najglobljimi plastmi indijske duhovne tradicije, je bil njegov sodobnik Rabindranath Tagore. Vendar je Gandhi edini uspel za seboj potegniti množice, ljudi različnih religij, družbenih slojev, političnih usmeritev, tako intelektualce kot preproste ljudi, ljudi iz mest in iz vasi. Kaj je tisti čar, ki je pritegnil vse te množice in še danes vzbuja zanimanje in občudovanje tako v Indiji kot zunaj nje?

Mislím, da sta bili to predvsem njegova izjemna poštenost in odkritost tako v odnosu do drugih kot do samega sebe ter obenem sprejemanje vseh, predvsem pa dejstvo, da je za svojimi besedami vedno stal in jih spreminjal v dejanja. Ljudje so tako v njem videli redek primer modrosti, dejavne ljubezni do drugih in osebo, ki ji lahko zaupajo in sledijo. Vse to je, skupaj z njegovo osebno zgodovino, med indijskimi ljudmi ustvarjalo izjemno karizmo in voditeljsko moč, ki je Gandhi nikoli ni skušal izrabiti za kakršnekoli osebne ali partikularne cilje. Gandhijeva karizma se je z indijskega podkontinenta hitro razširila na ves svet in tako predstavlja enega prvih in izjemnih »državljanov sveta« ali »človeka za vse čase«.

Gandhijeva misel in delovanje sta slonela na nekaj osnovnih načelih, ki jih je izoblikoval že zgodaj, delno že v času svojega študija v Londonu (na primer zavezanost resnici, vegetarijanstvo, religiozna toleranca ob sočasni navezanosti na temelje hinduizma), predvsem pa v času bivanja v Južni Afriki (strategija nenasilja, državljanska neposlušnost v boju zoper nasilne in krivične ukrepe oblasti, zagovarjanje bazične demokracije in zavračanje kastnega sistema, svojjski asketizem). Med temi sta najpomembnejši dve

načeli, brezpogojna zavezanost resnici in nenasilju, ki sta bili podlaga vsem drugim Gandhijevim naukom in praksam kot tudi njegovemu boju za osamosvojitve Indije izpod britanske kolonialne oblasti.

Gandhi je razumel zavezanost resnici kot moralno in spiritualno dolžnost. Verjel je v obstoj absolutne resnice (ki jo pogosto piše z veliko začetnico »Resnica«), celostne in vsobsegajoče. Izenačeval jo je s tem, kar dejansko in po sebi obstaja, kar pa je po njegovem enako Bogu. Sanskrtška beseda za resnico je *satja*, ki pomeni tako resnico kot to, kar resnično biva. Gandhi je izenačevanje resnice in Boga pozneje še poglobil oziroma radikaliziral, tako da zanj velja enačba Resnica = Bog. Gandhi zato to svojo temeljno etično in duhovno naravnost imenuje *satjagraha* (tj. izraz, ki ga je sprva »izumil« neki Gandhijev pristaš v Južni Afriki), oklepanje resnice, vztrajanje pri resnici ali tudi sledenje resnici.

Gandhijeva ideja *satjagrahe* kot dejavnega nenasilnega boja za pravičnost in človečnost se je začela prav v Južni Afriki, že precej preden je nastal sam izraz zanj. Kot piše v svoji avtobiografiji, je bilo nemara ključno obdobje dogajanje okrog izbruha epidemije kuge leta 1904 v Južni Afriki, predvsem v njenem največjem mestu Johannesburgu. Gandhi je že pred izbruhom krize v svojih pisemskih oblastem in tamkajšnjim medijem kritiziral katastrofalne bivalne in zdravstvene razmere v četrtih, kjer so živeli Indijci (pa tudi črnci) in opozarjal na realno možnost izbruha nevarnih bolezni, npr. kuge, ki bi ogrozile celotno mesto. In prav to se je tudi zgodilo. Kuga je najprej izbruhnila med indijskimi rudarji in se naglo širila po indijski četrti. Kmalu je bilo veliko obolelih in mrtvih. Mestne oblasti so sicer ukazale ostro karanteno celotne četrti, zatem hitro preselitev celotne soseske na bolj varno in izolirano zemljišče zunaj mesta, dotedanjo indijsko četrt pa so do tal sežgali. Vendar vse to ne bi dosti pomagalo, če ne bi prav Gandhi s svojim pogumom, zavzetostjo in svojimi pomočniki hitro organiziral vsaj minimalno zdravstveno oskrbo obolelih; na svoje stroške in stroške svojih nekoliko premožnejših prijateljev je postavil celo zasilno bolnišnico, kjer so delali prostovoljci, Gandhi je bil med najbolj dejavnimi. S svojo posebno metodo je celo zdravil nekaj pacientov, namreč z oblaganjem z zemeljskimi obkladki, in dejansko je nekaj sicer na smrt bolanih ozdravelo.

Gandhi je vseskozi pozival svoje rojake, naj kljub vsem tegobam, boleznim, krivicam in nasilju oblasti ohranijo individualno in skupinsko poslušnost do mestnih oblasti, kajti le tako bodo hitro in skupno premagali smrtonosno bolezen. Prav v času kuge se je Gandhi odločno zavezal tudi strogemu vegetarijanstvu in tudi sicer h kar se da skromni in naravni prehrani. Po njegovem mnenju ga je tudi takšna prehrana obvarovala pred okužbo z nevarno boleznijo. Dogodki med kugo so močno povečali Gandhijev ugled, ne le med Indijci, temveč tudi med Evropejci. Neposredno po koncu epidemije se je Gandhi seznanil še z Ruskinovo knjigo *Tudi poslednjemu*, v kateri je Ruskin kritiziral moderno kapitalistično družbo, brezobzirno izkoriščanje ljudi in narave ter zavračal sleherno nasilje med ljudmi kot tudi nasilje ljudi do drugih živih bitij.

Ta knjiga je, vsaj po Gandhijevih besedah, pomenila ključno intelektualno in moralno spodbudo za razvoj njegove lastne ideje o notranji povezavi nenasilja in brezpogojnega iskanja Resnice. Spoznal je, da je tisto, kar je bolj ali manj nezavedno počel do tedaj, ko se je kot mlad advokat boril zoper rasno diskriminacijo indijske manjšine v tedanji Južni Afriki, in to, kar je počel med epidemijo kuge, pravzaprav enako temeljnim Ruskinovim idejam.

Kot je pisal v svoji avtobiografiji, je iz Ruskinove knjige izpeljal tri poglavitne nauke:

1. posameznikovo dobro je vsebovano v dobrem vseh;
2. odvetnikovo delo je enako vredno kot brivčevo, saj imajo vsi ljudje enako pravico preživljati se s svojim delom;
3. življenje ročnega delavca, tj. življenje obdelovalca zemlje ali rokodelca, je življenje, ki je vredno življenja.<sup>1</sup>

Po Gandhijevem mnenju sta drugi in tretji nauk pravzaprav vsebovana v prvem, pri čemer je pod »dobrim, ki je vsebovano v dobrem vseh«, razumel božansko notranje jedro človeka (in sploh vseh živih bitij). Sklenil je, da bo od tedaj dalje ta načela uresničeval v vsakodnevnem življenju. Tako je bil podan temelj Gandhijeve *satjabrahe* pa tudi drugih z njo povezanih pojmov: *ahimsa* (nenasilje), *sarvodaja* (napredek za vse), *svaradž* (samoupravljanje) in *svadeši* (politična in ekonomska neodvisnost Indije). Vsekakor je lahko tudi za naš čas, ki se, podobno kot obdobje južnoafriške kuge, bori z nevarno boleznijo, koristno, če upoštevamo Gandhijeve jedrne izkušnje in spoznanja, pridobljena iz boja s kugo. Predvsem se mi zdi pomembno, da se zavemo globlje povezanosti in enakega spoštovanja vseh ljudi, od koder izhajata čut solidarnosti in nudenje neomejene medsebojne pomoči v času skupnih stisk, še posebno tistim, ki so nemočni in odrinjeni na socialni rob.

Če želimo razumeti Gandhija, moramo predvsem razumeti notranjo zvezo med njegovima osrednjima etično-političnima pojmomoma, *satjagraho* in *ahimso*. *Satjagraha* mu je pomenila takšno oklepanje resnice in zaupanje resnici kot naši najvišji moči, ki že sama po sebi izključuje uporabo nasilja. V starodavni indijski tradiciji *ahimsa* ne pomeni le nepoškodovanja kateregakoli živega bitja, temveč tudi odsotnost sleherne zle misli, laži, sovraštva, želje, da bi kogarkoli ranili ipd. Gre torej za radikalno in vseobsežno etično in življenjsko načelo, ki se potrjuje v vsakdanjem življenju posameznika ali družbenih skupin in meri na absolutnost. Nenasilje oziroma *ahimso* so zlasti strogo spoštovali pripadniki džainizma, skrajno asketske nehindujske religije, ki se je začela že v času Buddhe in je nekaj časa konkurirala budizmu. A tudi druge pomembne indijske religije in sekte so zagovarjale razne oblike nenasilja. Gre za nenasilje kot brezpogojno vrednoto, kot zavezanost nečemu absolutnemu v nas, ki zajema in prežema vse druge opredelitve in naravnosti ljudi, ne le za neko partikularno etično odločitev, eno poleg drugih.

1 Gandhi, *Avtobiografija. Zgodba o mojih eksperimentih z resnico*, 368.



Gandhi je nenehno poudarjal ta »absolutni« vidik nenasilja in ga v prvi vrsti povezoval s svojo zavezanostjo resnici. Prišel je do sklepa, da resnice ne more najti nihče, ki ni dosegel velikega čustva skromnosti. Včasih se mu je zdelo, da je izpopolnjen s prisotnostjo te resnice. Takrat v njem ni mogla nastati nobena sovražna misel do kogarkoli in ta naravnost je včasih vplivala tudi na njegove nasprotnike, da so postali njegovi prijatelji. Gandhi se je zavedal, da je bil v teh svojih prizadevanjih le deloma uspešen, a trdno je verjel, da v človeku, ki je napolnjen z božjim mirom, preneha sleherno sovraštvo.

Ne le da po Gandhiju ni pravega nenasilja brez zvestobe resnici, temveč brez nenasilja tudi ni mogoče iskati ali najti resnice, kajti zatekanje k nasilju nas prisili, da v drugih ljudeh (ali živih bitjih) vidimo le določen zožen vidik, največkrat tisti, ki ga določajo naši medsebojni spori in konfliktni interesi, zapremo pa se pred drugimi vidiki ali dimenzijami ljudi (ali živih bitij nasploh), ki nam prihajajo naproti. Za Gandhija sta bila dejavno nenasilje in zvestoba resnici dve strani istega kovanca. Upoštevanje *ahimse* povzroči, da resnica postane za nas božanska.

Gandhi je svoj koncept nenasilnega političnega boja razvijal postopoma, pri tem je hindujski pojem *ahimse* navezal na Tolstojeve, Ruskinove, Emersonove in Thoreaujeve ideje nenasilja, državljsanske nepokorščine in pasivnega odpora, vendar sta bili njegova zamisel in praksa nenasilja zelo izvirni ter predvsem bolj praktično-etični in politično usmerjeni. Predvsem pa je idejo nenasilnega političnega boja osvobodil od implicitnih predstav, da je to le »sredstvo« ali »orožje« šibkih, torej tistih, ki si ne morejo privoščiti nasilnega ali oboroženega odpora zoper krivice ali nasilje oblasti. Nenasilje je bilo za Gandhija univerzalno načelo individualnega in družbenega delovanja, ki izhaja iz odločne zavezanosti posameznikov k skupni resnici in človečnosti (ljubezni), ne pa nekakšen izhod v sili za tiste, ki se hočejo upreti nasilju in diskriminaciji, a nimajo dovolj moči ali orožja za odkrit boj. Gandhi se je zato tudi izogibal izrazu »pasivni odpor« in poudarjal, da gre za aktivni odpor pogumnih in močnih, toda močnih zato, ker sta njihovi orožji resnica in človečnost (ljubezen).

Zatrdimo lahko še to, da je imel Gandhi v svojem političnem delovanju precejšnjo »srečo«, da se je nekajkrat soočal s takšnimi nasprotniki, ki so bili dovolj občutljivi in dojemljivi za implicitne težnje *satjagrahe* po »spreobračanju« od nasilja k mirnemu reševanju sporov. Verjetno sta k temu precej prispevala angleška demokratična kultura in angleško javno mnenje, ki je bilo Gandhiju nasploh zelo naklonjeno. Gandhi je od vsega začetka poudarjal, da nenasilnega odpora zoper krivice in nasilje ne smemo zamenjati s popuščanjem krivicam in nasilju, kajti to je strahopetnost, ki je hujše zlo od uporabe sile. Zato je poudarjal, da če bi imel na izbiri strahopetnost in nasilje, bi še vedno raje izbral nasilje. Tako je po njegovem tudi za Indijo bolje, da poprime za orožje, če bi hotela obraniti svojo čast, kot pa da bi na strahopetni način postala ali ostala nemočna priča v svojem onečaščenju.<sup>2</sup>

2 Gandhi, *Young India*, 11. avgust 1920; v: Prabhu, R. K., U. R. Rao, ur. *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, 187.

Gandhi je idejo *satjagrahe* in boj za osamosvajanje Indije vedno povezoval s svojsko socialno in ekonomsko revolucijo. Sicer ni bil socialist ali komunist, vendar je sprejemal nekatere ideje obeh gibanj. Lahko bi dejali, da je bil neke vrste nenasilni religiozni anarhist. V prvi vrsti je nasprotoval vseobsežni moči moderne države in slepi industrializaciji. Država po njegovem predstavlja nasilje v koncentrirani in organizirani obliki, predvsem pa je brezdušen stroj, ki nikoli ne odstopi od nasilja in mu dolguje ves svoj obstoj. Celotna država, ki se trudi služiti ljudstvu, na primer tako, da zmanjšuje izkoriščanje, je škodljiva. Zato je Gandhi nasprotoval tudi socialistični ideji državne lastnine nad proizvodnimi sredstvi, ker to prinaša le nove krivice in novo nasilje. Po njegovem pravi socializem lahko sloni le na etičnem spreobrnjenju posameznikov v resnicoljubne in nenasilne ljudi.

Po Gandhiju zato indijska demokracija ne bi smela postati le posnetek zahodnih parlamentarnih demokracij, saj so tudi parlamenti le nekoliko olepšani emblemi suženjstva. Sprejemal je le Lincolnov definicijo demokracije kot »vladavine ljudi po ljudeh za ljudi«. Zavračal je tudi demokracijo na podlagi odločanja večine, kajti glas večine ne sme vezati manjšine. Zato je po njegovem edina možnost za resnično demokracijo (*svaradž*) nedržavna in decentralizirana družbena ureditev, ki temelji na mnogih samoupravnih enotah, na primer na vaških skupnostih in vaških svetih (*pančajatih*). Vasi naj bi se združevale v različne kroge, ki bi se nenehno širili, a nikoli vzpenjali. Tako bi dobili družbo, ki ne bo urejena piramidalno, hierarhično, temveč kot »oceanski krog, katerega središče bo posameznik, vselej pripravljen, da se žrtvuje za vas, in vas, pripravljena, da se žrtvuje za krog vasi, dokler naposled ne bo vse postalo eno življenje, sestavljeno iz posameznikov, nikoli agresivnih v svoji nevednosti, temveč vselej ponižnih, deleč si veličastnost oceanskega kroga, katerega integralni del bodo sami.«<sup>3</sup> Na prvi pogled se zdijo te Gandhijeve ideje izraz brezupne konservativnosti in »nesposobnosti«, da bi uvidel nujnost tehničnega in ekonomskega napredka. Dejansko pa lahko v njih prepoznamo izraz Gandhijeve zaskrbljenosti za usodo Indije, če bo slepo sledila poti zahodnih (in vzhodnih) industrijskih družb. Skrbelo ga je, da bi hiter prodor velikih industrij in množične proizvodnje na hitro deagrariziral Indijo in pahnil veliko indijskega kmečkega prebivalstva v še večjo revščino, kot so jo doživljale do tedaj, predvsem pa bi ukinil samooskrbnost indijskih vasi in malih kmetov, ki je bila že dolgo časa značilnost indijskega podeželja.

Gandhijeve ideje nenasilne družbene preobrazbe in decentralizirane in neindustrializirane družbe so se v njegovem času mnogim »naprednim« duhovom morda zdele naivne in brezupno konservativne, danes pa lahko v njih prepoznavamo zasnutke neke druge modernizacije, primerne bolj za postindustrijsko moderno kot za začetke (industrijske) moderne v Indiji v njegovem času. Vendar pa so te zamisli ostale le v osnutkih,

3 Gandhi, »Democracy and Non-Violence«, 149.

ker Gandhi žal ni mogel spremljati razvoja samostojne Indije, ki je vsaj na videz krenila v prav nasprotno smer, kot je pričakoval. Danes je Indija ena od ekonomskih (in tudi vojaških) velesil, do zob oborožena in pripravljena na bitke za novo »delitev sveta«, ki se pravkar začenjajo. Bojim se, da bo ta pot vodila v indijsko kot tudi svetovno katastrofo. Mislim, da se morata tako Indija kot tudi preostali svet resno soočiti z Gandhijem; ne z neko domnevno svetniško ikono, temveč s tem, kar Mahatma s svojo kritiko modernega sveta dejansko predstavlja.

Gandhijeva *satjagraha* zahteva temeljno etično in duhovno naravnost posameznic in posameznikov na neko brezpogojnost (absolutnost), ki se kaže v vsakdanjem življenju in delovanju ljudi, ne pa kak poseben sklop idej, prepričanj, verovanj. Sam ji pravim »radikalna humanost (človečnost)«. Menim namreč, da je prav od takšne etične in duhovne naravnosti ljudi kot posameznic in posameznikov, zlasti tistih, ki imajo možnost in moč, da vladajo ljudem in jih nadzorujejo, odvisno, ali bo sedanji svet preživel ter prerasel sedanjo krizo in prihodnje, ali pa bo zablodil v brezizhodno barbarstvo in samouničenje. Človečnost kot etična in duhovna naravnost je eksistencialni ali duhovni izraz človeške univerzalne odnosnosti, tj. sposobnosti, da v vsem, s čimer je v odnosu, najde sebe in v sebi najde vse. Tej dimenziji človeške biti lahko rečemo »absolutna«, saj daje mero vsemu in je sama neizmerljiva. Če rečem »absolutna dimenzija«, ne predpostavljam ali zahtevam odnosa do kakega določnega absoluta, naj si bo osebni ali brezosebni bog, čeprav takšno pojmovanje absolutne dimenzije seveda dopuščam. Poznamo namreč precej izvrstnih duhovnih tradicij, ki kultivirajo ozaveščanje absolutne dimenzije, vendar brez predstave o kakem definitivnem absolutu. Takšne tradicije so na primer budizem, daoizem, zametke teh idej pa najdemo tudi v nekaterih sodobnih zahodnih filozofskih smereh, na primer v eksistencializmu, humanističnem marksizmu, postmodernizmu in v Wittgensteinovi filozofiji.

Gandhi je absolutni dimenziji bivanja pogosto pripisoval religiozne pomene, vendar je nikoli ni vezal le na eno religijo, tudi na njemu sicer ljubi hinduizem ne. Videli smo, da je bila zanj le Resnica nekaj absolutnega, božanskega, z Resnico pa v mislih ni imel kakšne abstraktne metafizične biti, temveč temeljni in neukinljivi okvir našega in slehernega življenja, ki mu daje smer in nam v vsakem trenutku nasproti postavlja ogledalo, v katerem lahko ugledamo in nepodkupljivo presojava sami sebe ter svoje početje.

Kakorkoli že, uresničevanje radikalne človečnosti onkraj vseh »humanističnih« ideologij zahteva medsebojno integriranje etičnih vrlin, spoštovanje svobode in dostojanstva vseh ljudi in duhovne radosti, ki izhaja iz ozaveščene absolutne dimenzije človeškega bivanja. To je naloga, ki gotovo presega sleherni partikularno, pa čeprav še tako pomembno človeško dejavnost, in vsako posebno obliko zavedanja. Vsak človek zmora in mora najti svojo pot do radikalne človečnosti. Ni tako pomembno to, kako daleč seže v tem uresničevanju, kot to, ali se giblje v pravi smeri.

Zaključimo ta prispevek z Gandhijevimi besedami, ki podpirajo mojo misel:

Popolnoma resnično je, to moram priznati v vsej ponižnosti, moje prizadevanje, da predstavljam ljubezen v vsaki niti mojega bitja. Nepotrpežljiv sem glede spoznanja prisotnosti mojega Stvarnika, ki zame uteleša Resnico. Na začetku svoje kariere sem odkril, da če želim uresničiti Resnico, moram spoštovati zakon ljubezni, tudi za ceno svojega življenja [...] Ne nameravam vam opisovati različnih obdobij, skozi katere je šlo moje viharo življenje, vendar lahko, v resnici in popolni ponižnosti, pričam za dejstvo, da sem mnoge od svojih prijateljev zbegal, ko so v meni zaznali mir, ki so mi ga zavidali, kolikor sem v misli, besedi in dejanju uresničil »mir, ki presega razumevanje«. Spraševali so me za vzrok te neprecenljive posesti. Nisem jim bil sposoben pojasniti vzroka, ko se jim dejal, da ko so prijatelji našli ta mir v meni, je bilo to posledica prizadevanja za spoštovanje največjega zakona bivanja.<sup>4</sup>

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Prof. Andrej Ule je diplomiral iz tehnične matematike na Fakulteti za naravoslovje in tehnologijo Univerze v Ljubljani. Med študijem matematike je vpisal tudi študij filozofije. Leta 1982 je bil imenovan za docenta in leta 1987 za izrednega profesorja za področje logike in teorije znanosti. Leta 1991 je postal redni profesor za analitično filozofijo in filozofijo znanosti. Kot Humboldtov štipendist je gostoval pri Inštitutu za logiko, teorijo znanosti in statistiko na Univerzi v Münchnu, kjer je preučeval strukturalno teorijo znanosti in filozofijo Ludwiga Wittgensteina. Septembra in oktobra 1995 je gostoval na Augsburg College v Minneapolisu v ZDA, sicer pa plodno sodeluje s številnimi filozofskimi strokovnjaki in institucijami v Sloveniji in tujini. Raziskovalno se ukvarja tudi z indijskimi in kitajskimi filozofijami in religijami. Je avtor spremne besede h Gandhijevi avtobiografiji v slovenščini z naslovom *Avtobiografija. Zgodba o mojih eksperimentih z resnico*, ki je izšla leta 2018.

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4 Gandhi, *Young India*, 19. november 1931; v: Prabhu, R. K., Rao, U. R., ur. *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, 404.

## The Spiritual Foundations of Gandhi's *Satyagraha*

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### Abstract

I present Gandhi's main ideas about *satyagraha*, viz. commitment to truth. This is Gandhi's central ethical and spiritual guide. All other relevant concepts or ideas of Gandhi revolve around *satyagraha*, particularly *ahimsa* (nonviolence). According to him, nonviolence represents unconditional value that stems from a commitment to the absolute truth within us. This commitment encompasses and pervades all other definitions and attitudes of people, not just due to some particular ethical decision. Gandhi therefore equated the notion of God with the notion of (absolute) truth. Observing *ahimsa* makes the Truth become divine for us. Gandhi's *satyagraha* requires a fundamental ethical and spiritual attitude of individuals towards a certain unconditionality (absoluteness), which is reflected in the everyday life and work of people, and not some special set of ideas or beliefs. I call it "radical humanity (Humanicity)". Namely, I believe that it is from such an ethical and spiritual attitude of people as individuals, particularly those who have the ability and power to govern other people, that the current world will either survive and overcome the current and future crises or will be misled into hopeless barbarism and self-destruction. Humanity as an ethical and spiritual attitude is an existential or spiritual expression of human universal relationality, i.e. the ability to find oneself in everything one is in a relationship with and to find everything in oneself.

**Keywords:** *satyagraha*, nonviolence, God, absolute truth, radical humanity

Beyond a doubt, Mohandas K. Gandhi is a giant of the twentieth century. He is one of those few great people who restore our faith in man and humanity, in spite of all the evils and insanities of all kinds that have snatched the souls and bodies of too many people in this sad century. He was also a living proof of the fact that in the struggle between good and evil quality conquers quantity, wisdom overcomes raw power, truth conquers lies and love conquers hate. He achieved this primarily throughout his life and work. It is only because he was a witness of his ideas and visions through his life and work that they have become interesting and important to us. It is similar with the historical effect of his activity. Without a shred of doubt, it is major, and India's nonviolent independence from British colonialism is only one, perhaps the most notable, but not necessarily the most important historical effect. Yet this is not what makes Gandhi a giant; he is a giant because he associated India's independence from beginning to end with his own life, more particularly, by dedicating his life to truth and nonviolence. This is exactly the

opposite of what usually happens with famous people; their ideas and visions and external events that are related to their work are important, and their lives or the extent and level of realisation of their ideas in their lives only come second. However, the realisation of radical humanity beyond all “humanistic” ideologies requires mutual integration of ethical virtues, respect for freedom and dignity of all people, and the spiritual joy that emanates from the conscious absolute dimension of human existence. This is a task that certainly goes beyond any, however important human activity and any particular form of consciousness. Every man can and must find his way to radical humanity. It is not so much about how far he reaches in his realisation, but rather whether he moves in the right direction.

Gandhi writes in his autobiography that he considers his whole life a single collection of experiments with truth. These experiments took place mainly in the spiritual or moral field, but their consequences led him to many and far-reaching decisions and activities that associated his life with other people; in particular, with his countrymen both in India and abroad. In the *Introduction* to his autobiography, Gandhi explicitly points out that he did not conduct his experiments with truth behind closed doors, but among people, although they certainly had their own completely personal sides as well.

It is the very mixture of modernity and traditionalism that is characteristic of Gandhi. It is true that he was not the only one in this. In his pursuit to combine modernity and tradition, Gandhi followed a whole series of Indian reformers who had appeared since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One of the greatest, and in many ways complementary spirit, who also originally combined the Indian tendency to modernise with the deepest layers of the Indian spiritual tradition was Gandhi’s contemporary Rabindranath Tagore. However, Gandhi was the only one who managed to attract crowds, people of different religions, social classes, political orientations, both intellectuals and ordinary people, people from the cities and villages. What is it about that charm that attracted all these people and still arouses interest and admiration, both in India and abroad?

I think that it was mainly his exceptional honesty and openness in relation to others and to himself and at the same time the acceptance of all, but above all the fact that he always stood by his words and turned them into actions. People thus saw in him a rare example of wisdom, active love for others and a man that they could trust and follow. All of this, along with his personal history, created an extraordinary charisma and leadership power among the Indian people that Gandhi never tried to exploit for any personal or particular goals. Gandhi’s charisma quickly spread from the Indian subcontinent to the entire world, making him one of the first and most remarkable “citizens of the world” or “men of all time”.

Gandhi’s thought and action were based on some basic principles he had developed early, in part during his studies in London (for instance, commitment to truth,

vegetarianism, religious tolerance while simultaneously attached to the foundations of Hinduism), in particular, during his stay in South Africa (strategy of nonviolence, civil disobedience in the fight against violent and unjust actions of the authorities, advocacy of basic democracy and rejection of the caste system, inherent asceticism). Among these, two are the most relevant: his unconditional commitment to truth and nonviolence. These two principles were the basis of all other Gandhi teachings and practices as well as the basis of his struggle for the independence of India from British colonial rule.

Gandhi understood commitment to truth as a moral and spiritual duty. He believed in the existence of an absolute truth (often written with a capital letter "Truth"), holistic and all-encompassing. He equated it with what actually and intrinsically exists, which, for him, is equivalent to God. The Sanskrit word for truth is *satya*, which means both truth and what truly resides. Later, Gandhi deepened or radicalised the equation of Truth and God, so that for him the equation Truth = God applies. That is why Gandhi calls this fundamental ethical and spiritual orientation *satyagraha* (a term originally "invented" by Gandhi's supporter in South Africa), clinging to the truth, persevering or even following the truth.

In fact, Gandhi's idea of *satyagraha* as an active nonviolent struggle for justice and humanity began in South Africa long before the very term for it was coined. As he writes in his autobiography, perhaps the key period were the events surrounding the outbreak of the plague in 1904 in South Africa, particularly in its largest city Johannesburg. Even before the outbreak of the crisis, Gandhi, with his letters to the authorities and the local media, criticised the catastrophic living and health conditions in the neighbourhoods where the Indians (as well as black people) lived, and warned of the real possibility of an outbreak of dangerous infectious diseases, e.g. plagues that would threaten the entire city. And that is exactly what happened. The plague broke out first among the Indian miners and spread rapidly throughout the Indian Quarter. Soon there were many sick and dead. The city authorities ordered a strict quarantine of the entire district, then a rapid relocation of the entire neighbourhood to safer and more isolated land outside the city, and the former Indian quarter was burned to the ground. However, all this would not have helped much if Gandhi, with his courage, dedication and his assistants, had not quickly organised at least minimal medical care for the sick, and set up an emergency hospital where volunteers worked, at his own expense and at the expense of his slightly wealthier friends. Gandhi was among the most active.

Gandhi even treated some patients with his special method, i.e. by applying earth compresses, and indeed some of the terminally ill were cured. Gandhi always called on his compatriots to maintain individual and group obedience to the city authorities, in spite of all the distress, illnesses, injustices and violence of the authorities, because only in this way could they quickly and collectively overcome the deadly disease. It was during the plague that Gandhi firmly committed to strict vegetarianism and to a modest

and natural diet. According to him, such a diet also protected him from infection with a dangerous disease. The events during the plague greatly increased Gandhi's reputation, not only among the Indians but also among the Europeans.

Immediately after the end of the epidemic, Gandhi became acquainted with Ruskin's book *Unto This Last*, where Ruskin criticised modern capitalist society, the ruthless exploitation of people and nature, and rejected all violence between people as well as human violence against other living beings. This book, at least according to Gandhi, provided a key intellectual and moral impetus for the development of his own idea of the inner connection between nonviolence and the unconditional quest for Truth. Gandhi realised that what he had been doing more or less unconsciously until then, as a young lawyer fighting against racial discrimination against the Indian minority in what was then South Africa and what he had been doing during the plague epidemic, was in fact the same as Ruskin's fundamental ideas.

As he wrote in his *Autobiography*, he drew three main teachings from Ruskin's book:

1. that the good of the individual is contained in the good of all;
2. that a lawyer's work has the same value as a barber's, in as much as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work;
3. that a life of labour, i.e., the life of the tiller of the soil and the craftsman, is the life worth living.<sup>1</sup>

According to Gandhi, the second and third teachings are in fact contained in the first, and by "the good contained in the good of all" he understood the divine inner core of man (and of all living beings, in general). He decided that from then on he would implement these principles in his daily life. Thus, the foundation of Gandhi's *satyagraha*, as well as of other related concepts, was laid: *ahimsa* (nonviolence), *sarvodaya* (progress for all), *swaraj* (self-government), and *swadeshi* (political and economic independence of India). Certainly, for our own time, which, like the South African plague period, is struggling with a dangerous disease, it can also be useful to take into account Gandhi's core experience and lessons from his struggle against the plague. Above all, I think it is important to be aware of the deeper connection and equal respect of all people, from which comes a sense of solidarity and of the provision of unreserved mutual assistance in times of common distress, especially to those who are powerless and marginalised.

If we aim to understand Gandhi, we must first of all understand the inner connection between Gandhi's central ethical-political notions, *satyagraha* and *ahimsa*. For him, *satyagraha* meant such an embrace of truth and trust in truth as our highest power, which in itself precludes the use of violence. In the original Indian tradition already, *ahimsa* means not only non-harm of any living being, but also the absence of any evil thoughts, lies, hatred, desire to hurt anyone, etc. It is therefore a radical and comprehensive ethical and

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1 Gandhi, *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments With Truth*, 336.



life principle that is affirmed in the daily life of the individual or social groups and aims towards certain absoluteness. Nonviolence or *ahimsa* was strictly observed in particular by members of Jainism, an extremely ascetic non-Hindu religion that began as early as the time of the Buddha and even competed with Buddhism for a while. However, other important Indian religions and sects also advocated for various forms of nonviolence. It is about nonviolence in terms of unconditional value, as a commitment to something absolute within us that encompasses and permeates all other definitions and attitudes of human beings, not just a particular ethical decision, as one alongside the other.

Gandhi constantly stressed this “absolute” aspect of nonviolence and associated it primarily with his commitment to truth. Gandhi concluded that the truth could not be found by anyone who had not attained a great sense of modesty. Sometimes, he felt fulfilled with the presence of this truth. At that time, no hostile thought could arise in him towards anyone, and this attitude sometimes affected his opponents to become his friends. Gandhi was aware that he was only partially successful in these endeavours, but he firmly believed that in a man who is filled with the peace of God, all hatred ceases.

According to Gandhi, not only is there no real nonviolence without loyalty to truth, but without nonviolence it is not possible to seek or find the truth, because resorting to violence forces us to see in other people (or living beings) only a certain narrow aspect, most often the one determined by our mutual conflicts and conflicting interests, and we close ourselves off to other aspects or dimensions of people (or living beings, in general) coming towards us. For Gandhi, active nonviolence and loyalty to truth were two sides of the same coin. Observing *ahimsa* makes the truth become divine for us.

Gandhi developed his concept of nonviolent political struggle gradually by associating the Hindu notion of *ahimsa* to Tolstoy's, Ruskin's, Emerson's, and Thoreau's ideas of nonviolence, civil disobedience, and passive resistance; however, his idea and practice of nonviolence were very original and, above all, more practical, ethical and politically oriented. He freed the idea of nonviolent political struggle from the implicit notion that it was only a “means” or a “weapon” of the weak, that is, of those who could not afford violent or armed resistance against injustices or violence as they were committed by the authorities. For Gandhi, nonviolence was a universal principle of individual and social action, rooted in the resolute commitment of individuals and in common truth and humanity (love), not a fallback for those who wanted to resist violence and discrimination but did not have the strength or the weapons to fight openly. Therefore, Gandhi also avoided the term “passive resistance” stressing that it is the active resistance of the brave and strong, who are strong because their weapons are truth and humanity (love).

It can also be said that Gandhi was quite “fortunate” in his political activities to have faced such opponents on several occasions, who were sensitive to and receptive enough for the implicit tendencies of *satyagraha* to “convert” from violence to peaceful

resolution of disputes. English democratic culture and English public opinion, which was generally very favourable to Gandhi, probably contributed a lot to this. From the very beginning, Gandhi stressed that nonviolent resistance to injustice and violence should not be confused with indulgence in injustice and violence, for this is cowardice, which is a worse evil than the use of force. Therefore, he stressed – if he had cowardice and violence to choose from, he would still choose violence. Thus, he also thought it better for India to take up arms if it wants to defend its honour, than to become or remain a coward and helpless witness in its own dishonouring.<sup>2</sup>

Gandhi always associated the idea of *satyagraha* and the struggle for India's independence with his own social and economic revolution. He was not a socialist or a communist, but he accepted some of the ideas of both movements. It could be said that he was a nonviolent religious anarchist. In the first place, he opposed the all-encompassing power of the modern state and blind industrialisation. According to him, the state represents violence in a concentrated and organised form. Above all, it is a soulless machine that never gives up violence and its entire existence relies on it. Even a state that seeks to serve people, for instance by reducing exploitation, is harmful. Therefore, Gandhi also opposed the socialist idea of state ownership of the means of production, because this merely brings new injustices and new violence. According to him, true socialism can only be based on the ethical conversion of individuals into truth-loving and nonviolent people.

For Gandhi, therefore, Indian democracy should not become a mere imitation of Western parliamentary democracies, because, according to him, the parliaments too are only slightly embellished emblems of slavery. He accepted only Lincoln's definition of democracy as "the government of the people, by the people, for the people." He also rejected democracy based on majority rule, because the majority vote must not bind the minority. Therefore, according to him, the only option for true democracy (*swaraj*) is a non-state and decentralised social order based on many self-governing units, such as village communities and village councils (*panchayats*). The villages were to unite in various circles, constantly expanding but never ascending. In this way, there would be a society that is not a pyramid and hierarchically organised, but rather "an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance, but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units".<sup>3</sup>

At first sight, Gandhi's ideas seem to be an expression of hopeless conservatism and an "inability" to see the necessity of technical and economic progress. In fact, they are

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2 Gandhi, *Young India*, August 11<sup>th</sup> 1920; in: Prabhu, R. K., U. R. Rao, ed. *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, 187.

3 Gandhi, "Democracy and Non-Violence", 149.

an expression of Gandhi's concern for the fate of India if it blindly follows the path of Western (and Eastern) industrial societies. He was concerned that the rapid penetration of large-scale industries and mass production would rapidly deagrarianise India, plunging large sections of the Indian peasant population into even greater poverty than they had hitherto experienced, and above all abolish the self-sufficiency of Indian villages and small farmers that had long been a feature of rural India.

Gandhi's ideas of nonviolent social transformation and decentralised and non-industrialised society may have seemed naive and hopelessly conservative to many "progressive" minds in his time, but today we can discern in them the outlines of another modernisation, one that is more suitable for post-industrial modernity than for the beginnings of (industrial) modernity in India in his time. However, these ideas remained only in drafts because Gandhi, unfortunately, could not follow the development of an independent India, which at least on the face of it, was moving in exactly the opposite direction to what he had expected. Today, India is one of the economic (and military) superpowers, armed to the teeth and ready for the battles for a new "division of the world" that are about to begin. I fear that this path will lead to an Indian as well as a global catastrophe. I think both India and the rest of the world need to take Gandhi seriously; not as some supposedly saintly icon, but with what he actually represents with his critique of the modern world.

Gandhi's *satyagraha* requires a fundamental ethical and spiritual orientation of individuals to a certain unconditionality (absoluteness), which is reflected in the everyday life and actions of people, and not a particular set of ideas and beliefs. I call it "radical humanity", for I believe it is precisely on such ethical and spiritual attitudes of human beings as individuals, especially those who have the ability and power to govern other human beings, that the present world could survive and outgrow the current and future crises, or it might degenerate into barbarism and self-destruction. Humanity as an ethical and spiritual attitude is the existential or spiritual expression of human universal relationality, i.e. the ability to find oneself in everything one is in relation with and to find everything in oneself. This dimension of human being can be called "absolute" as it gives measure to everything and is itself immeasurable. When I say "absolute dimension", I am not presupposing or demanding a relationship to any particular absolute, be it a personal or impersonal god, although I do of course allow for such a notion of the absolute dimension. In fact, we know of quite a few excellent spiritual traditions that cultivate an awareness of the absolute dimension, but without any notion of the definite absolute. Such traditions are, for instance, Buddhism and Daoism, and the beginnings of this orientation can also be found in some modern Western philosophical streams, such as existentialism, humanist Marxism, postmodernism, and Wittgenstein's philosophy.

Gandhi often gave religious meanings to the absolute dimension of existence, but he never tied it to only one religion, not even to his beloved Hinduism. We have seen that for

him only Truth was something absolute, something divine. By Truth he did not have in mind some abstract metaphysical entity, but the fundamental and unbreakable framework of our life and of every life, which gives it direction and holds up to us at every moment a mirror, in which we can see and incorruptibly judge ourselves and our actions.

However, the realisation of a radical humanity beyond all “humanist” ideologies requires the mutual integration of ethical virtues, respect for the freedom and dignity of all people, and the spiritual joy that emanates from an awareness of the absolute dimension of human existence. This is a task that certainly goes beyond any, however important, human activity and any particular form of consciousness. Every man can and must find his way to radical humanity. It is not so much about how far he reaches in this realisation, but rather whether he moves in the right direction.

Let us conclude this foreword with Gandhi’s words supporting my thought:

It is perfectly true, I must admit it in all humility, that however indifferently it may be, I endeavour to represent love in every fibre of my being. I am impatient to realize the presence of my Maker, who to me embodies Truth, and, in the early part of my career, I discovered that, if I was to realize Truth, I must obey, even at the cost of my life, the law of love. I do not propose to describe to you the several phases through which this stormy life of mine has passed; but I can only, in truth and in perfect humility, bear witness to the fact that to the extent that I have represented Love in my life, in thought, word, and deed, I have realized the ‘Peace that passed understanding’ I have baffled many of my friends when they have noticed in me peace that they have envied, and they have asked me for the cause of that priceless possession. I have not been able to explain the cause save by saying that, if my friends found that peace in me, it was due to an attempt to obey this, the greatest law of our being.<sup>4</sup>

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4 Gandhi, *Young India*, 19<sup>th</sup> November 1931; in: Prabhu, R. K., U. R. Rao, ed. *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, 404.

## **Andrej Ule, PhD**

Prof. Andrej Ule graduated in Technical mathematics at the Faculty of Sciences and Technology at the University of Ljubljana. In addition, he enrolled in the studies of philosophy during his study of mathematics. In 1982, he was appointed Assistant Professor for analytic philosophy and philosophy of science. He was granted the Humboldt scholarship at the Institute for Logic, Theory of Science and Statistics in Munich, where he studied the structural theory of science and the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein. In September and October 1995, he was a guest lecturer at the Augsburg College in Minneapolis in USA. He cooperates with many philosophers and philosophical institutions in Slovenia and abroad. Often, his research was inspired by Indian as well as Chinese philosophies and religions. He is also deeply inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, he is the author of a preface to Gandhi's autobiography in Slovene, published in 2018, titled *Avtobiografija. Zgodba o mojih eksperimentih z resnico* (*Autobiography. The Story of My Experiments with Truth*).



## Vpliv Teozofskega društva na družbeno in politično življenje Indije ter na življenje in delo Mohandasa Karamčanda Gandhija

Anton Rozman

*Teozofsko društvo, Slovenija*

### Izvleček

O vplivu članov Teozofskega društva na družbeno in politično življenje Indije ter na življenje in delo M. K. Gandhija obstajajo obsežna literatura in številna znanstvena dela, zato pričujoči sestavek predstavlja zgolj skromen pregled tega pomembnega vpliva.

Teozofsko društvo je bilo ustanovljeno v New Yorku septembra 1875 s strani skupine uglednih spiritualistov pod vodstvom H. S. Olcotta in H. P. Blavatsky, z namenom »zbirati in razširjati znanje o zakonih, ki urejajo vesolje«, in »vzpostaviti jasno filozofijo za spiritualistično gibanje«. V svojem prvem pomembnejšem delu *Odstre Izida* je Blavatsky predstavila idejo o »Indiji: (kot) zibelki rase« in nakažala obstoj večne »tradicije modrosti« in »varuhov« tega znanja, tj. Mahatem, s katerimi je bila v stiku.

Po objavi *Odstre Izide* sta Olcott in Blavatsky vzpostavila stik z Dayanando Saraswatijem, vodjo indijskega reformističnega gibanja Arya Samaj, za kratek čas združila društvo s tem gibanjem in se za vedno preselila v Indijo. V svojem prvem javnem predavanju na indijskih tleh je Olcott pozval občinstvo, naj se pridruži Društvu pri duhovni, kulturni in gospodarski obnovi svoje dežele, medtem ko sta A. P. Sinnett, urednik anglo-indijskega časopisa *Pioneer*, in A. O. Hume, upokojeni javni uslužbenec, začela korespondenco z Mahatmami s posredovanjem Blavatsky, katere rezultat je bila objava Sinnettove knjige *Ezoterični budizem*, ki je prva predstavitev »teozofske filozofije« na eni strani ter vzpostavitev Indijskega nacionalnega kongresa s strani Huma na drugi.

Gandhi se je s teozofijo srečal kot mlad študent prava v Londonu, a se je zanimal tudi za hinduizem in krščanstvo ter še posebej za vegetarijanstvo. Toda šele v Južni Afriki je pridobil globlji vpogled v različne religije ter se navdušil predvsem za teozofsko idejo o bratstvu in za ezoterično krščanstvo prek del Ane Kingsford in Leva Tolstoja, in spoznal, da pot do Boga (Resnice) vodi po poti služenja in nenasilja, na podlagi katere je razvil svojo metodo političnega boja, *satjagraho* ali pasivni upor.

Prav med Gandhijevim bivanjem v Južni Afriki je Teozofsko društvo najbolj pomembno vplivalo na indijsko družbeno in politično življenje prek svoje druge predsednice, Annie Besant. Pridružila se je Indijskemu nacionalnemu kongresu, ustanovila India Home Rule, vzpostavila časopis *New India* in promovirala številne izobraževalne (Central Hindu College) in druge civilne pobude. Vendar pa je ob vrnitvi Gandhija v Indijo zavračala njegov pasivni odpor, medtem ko on, ki se je imel za teozofa in demokrata, ni simpatiziral s tajnostjo, ki jo je Društvo negovalo v okviru svoje »notranje šole«, in trdil, da je zaradi razvijanja okultnih moči Društvo »izgubilo z vida svojo osrednjo idejo – bratstvo in moralno rast človeka«.

**Ključne besede:** Teozofsko društvo, *satjagraha*, Resnica

Teozofsko društvo je organizacija, ki je bila ustanovljena z namenom, da bi »zbirala in širila znanje o zakonih, ki vladajo vesolju«. <sup>1</sup> Septembra 1875 ga je v New Yorku, ZDA, ustanovila skupina vidnih predstavnikov svetovno razširjenega spirit(ual)ističnega gibanja. To gibanje se je začelo sredi 19. stoletja, pritegnilo je vse sloje družbe in imelo izjemno pomemben vpliv na intelektualno in versko življenje ljudi po vsem svetu. Ta vpliv je privedel do dejanskih družbenih sprememb, zato je bil spirit(ual)izem opisan kot demokratično gibanje, tesno povezano z vegetarijanstvom, z gibanji proti vivisekciji in cepljenju, proti suženjstvu, za pravice žensk in drugimi podobnimi gibanji. Ker spirit(ual)isti niso imeli nekega jasnega nauka, je bil namen glavnih ustanoviteljev Teozofskega Društva, H. P. Blavatsky in H. S. Olcott, »vzpostaviti jasno filozofijo za spirit(ual)istično gibanje«. <sup>2</sup>

Čeprav je bil začetek Teozofskega društva obetaven, pa so javne dejavnosti društva kmalu ugasnile, vstopne pristojbine se ni več zaračunavalo in pravila društva so postala brezpredmetna, in tako je usoda društva postala odvisna izključno od H. P. Blavatsky in H. S. Olcott. Slednja sta se zato posvetila predvsem literarnemu delu, dopisovanju z zainteresirano javnostjo prek spirit(ual)ističnih revij in dnevnih časopisov ter pripravi objave prvega večjega dela H. P. Blavatsky *Odstrta Izida*.

V *Odstrti Izidi* je Blavatsky predstavila idejo o »Indiji: (kot) zibelki rase« ter spregovorila o obstoju starodavne »tradicije modrosti« in »varuhih« tega znanja, Mahatmah, s katerimi je bila v stiku. Zapisala je: »Nobeno ljudstvo na svetu še nikoli ni doseglo takšne veličine mišljenja v idealnih predstavah o božanstvu in njegovem potomcu, človeku, kot so ga dosegli sanskrtski metafiziki in teologi. [...] Življenje več generacij bi komajda zadoščalo samó za branje del, ki nam jih je Indija pustila o zgodovini, etiki (moralni), poeziji, filozofiji, religiji, različnih znanostih in medicini. [...] Vsi drugi véliki narodi sveta dolgujejo Indiji, ki je najmanj raziskana in manj znana dežela kot katerakoli druga, svoje jezike, umetnost, zakonodajo in civilizacijo.« <sup>3</sup>

Po objavi *Odstrte Izide* so bile sanje H. P. Blavatsky in H. S. Olcott, da bi se podala v Indijo, saj sta bila prepričana, da bo društvo tam našlo nov zagon. Izkoristila sta vsako priložnost, da vzpostavita povezavo z indijskimi ljudmi, na ta način pa sta stopila v stik tudi s hindujskim panditom in reformatorjem Swamijem Dayanando Saraswatijem, vodjo gibanja Arya Samaj, ki je bilo posvečeno oživljanju starodavne vedske tradicije. Prek te povezave sta si pripravila teren za odhod v Indijo in ustanovila prvo indijsko vejo društva v Mumbaju. Kmalu zatem, v začetku leta 1879, sta v Indijo tudi odpotovala. H. P. Blavatsky je takrat zapisala: »Naše društvo je bilo ustanovljeno na osnovi neposrednega namiga indijskih in tibetanskih adeptov. S prihodom v to deželo zgolj upoštevamo njihove želje«. <sup>4</sup>

1 Ransom, *Short History of the Theosophical Movement*, 76.

2 Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society – The History of a Spiritualist Movement*, 14.

3 Gandhi, v: Gomes, *Isis Unveiled – A New Abridgement for Today*, 125.

4 V: Ransom, *Short History of the Theosophical Movement*, 123–125.



Mesec dni po prihodu v Indijo, marca 1979, je imel H. S. Olcott svoje prvo javno predavanje z naslovom »Teozofsko društvo in njegovi cilji«, v njem pa je dejal: »Očitno je [...], da v našem društvu obstaja prostor za *arje, brahme, prarthane* in vse druge manjše *samadže* (organizacije), ki predstavljajo napredni um Mlade Indije. Razdeljene so razmeroma nemočne, da bi kaj dosti naredile, združene bi predstavljale moč, ki bi jo bilo čutiti [...] Če naj bi se Indija prenovila, morajo biti Hindujski tisti, ki se bodo dvignili nad svoje kaste in vse druge reakcionarne vplive ter dajali dober zgled in tudi dobre nasvete. [...] Želimo si prepričati najbolj učene med domačimi učenjaki [...], da bi v angleščino prevedli najbolj dragocena dela svoje religijske in znanstvene književnosti, da bi jim lahko pomagali pri njihovi promociji v zahodnih državah. Hkrati si po najboljših močeh želimo prispevati k širjenju nesektaškega izobraževanja za domača dekleta in poročene ženske, ki jih vidimo kot temeljni kamen narodove veličine, in k uvajanju preprostih in poceni strojev, ki jih je mogoče upravljati z ročno delovno silo in ki bi povečali dohodek in blaginjo te naše posvojene države. To deželo smo si izbrali za svoj dom in čutimo željo, da bi pomagali njej in njenim ljudem na kakršenkoli možen način [...]. Tu obstaja mogočen narod, kot omrtvičen velikan, in nikogar ni, ki bi prebudil njegove speče energije. Tu razkošna narava zagotavlja neizčrpne vire, ki bi jih povezava talenta in uporabnega znanja spremenila v čudovito nacionalno bogastvo. [...] Zaman so prizadevanja državotvornosti za širjenje blagoslova izobraževanja in spodbujanja industrijskih obrti, če jim ob strani ne bodo stala domoljubna prizadevanja razsvetljene Mlade Indije. [...] Velika in vpijoča potreba sodobne Indije je znanstvena šola, ki bi bila pridružena vsakemu kolidžu in kakršne imamo v Ameriki, in bi bila v vsakem velikem centru prebivalstva, šola za tehnologijo z ustreznimi aparaturami, kjer bi najbolj inteligentne fante učili izboljšanih metod glavnih rokodelskih spretnosti. [...] Duša Arjavarte ostaja budna v spečem telesu. Njen sijaj bo spet zasijal. Njena blaginja se bo povrnila. Njeno prvotno filozofijo se bo znova raztolmačilo, tako da bosta njena religija in znanost znova učili željni svet. [...] Indijska mladina se bo otrsela svoje omrtvičenosti in postala vredna svojih vidcev. Iz vsakega porušenega templja, iz vsakega kipov polnega hodnika, vrezanega v osrčje gora, iz vsakega skrivnega samostana, v katerem varuhi Svete znanosti ohranjajo živo baklo prvotne modrosti, prihaja šepetajoči glas, ki pravi: 'Otroci, vaša mati ni mrtva, ampak le spi!'«<sup>5</sup> To predavanje je bil velik uspeh in dvorana Framji Cowasji Hall v Mumbaju je bila prenapolnjena. Naredilo je velik vtis na poslušalce, tisk pa je Olcottovemu govoru nudil široko publiciteto, ki je društvu prinesla veliko priljubljenost in priliv novih indijskih članov, kar se je kazalo tudi v odpiranju številnih novih vej društva v naslednjih letih.

Človek, ki je veliko prispeval k temu začetnemu uspehu Teozofskega društva na indijskih tleh, je bil Alfred Percy Sinnett, urednik najvplivnejšega indijskega časopisa

5 Glej Olcott, H. S. *A Collection of Lectures on Theosophy and Archaic Traditions*. Madras: The Theosophical Society and its Aims, 1883.

*Pioneer*, ki se je ponudil, da bo javnost obveščal o poslanstvu društva. To je privedlo do tesnega prijateljstva s H. P. Blavatsky in H. S. Olcottom, ki se je razvilo zlasti med njunim obiskom v Simli, v osrčju močne anglo-indijske skupnosti poleti 1880, kjer sta jih gostila A. P. Sinnett in njegov tesen prijatelj A. O. Hume, upokojeni javni uslužbenec. Rezultat tega obiska je bila vzpostavitev korespondence med Sinnettom in Humom z enim od teozofskih adeptov, mojstrom KH. Korespondenca s Sinnettom se je začela oktobra 1880 in je trajala približno štiri leta, dokler Hume ni pridobil zadostnega znanja, ki mu je omogočilo, da predstavi filozofijo, ki je sledila starodavnim naukom, in sicer v dveh knjigah, *Okultni svet* in *Ezoterični budizem*.

Po drugi strani je Hume prek tega dopisovanja pridobil globlji vpogled v okoliščine indijske družbe, nevarnosti, s katerimi se je spopadala, in v potrebo po določenem političnem delu, s katerim bi se moral spoprijeti. Posledično je poskušal vplivati na politiko na dva načina. Prvič, poskušal je prepričati britanske oblasti, naj preoblikujejo indijsko administracijo, da bi postala bolj odzivna na potrebe indijskih ljudi, in drugič, poskušal je promovirati vseindijsko organizacijo, ki bi odlikavala potrebe in težnje samih Indijcev.<sup>6</sup> Teozofsko društvo je bilo več kot primerno okolje za to drugo področje Humovega političnega dela, saj so praktično vsi Indijci, ki so se pridružili društvu, izhajali iz zahodno izobražene elite in s celotnega podkontinenta, vključno s parsi, kristjani, sikhi, nekaterimi muslimani pa seveda tudi hindujci. Ko je Teozofsko društvo decembra 1881 začelo prirejati svoje letne konvencije, so ta srečanja članom ponudila priložnost za razpravo o preteklosti, sedanjosti in prihodnosti Indije.<sup>7</sup> Tako je Hume v začetku leta 1885 pomagal pri oblikovanju Bombay Presidency Association in to skupino nemudoma uporabil kot odskočno desko, na kateri bo lahko gradil svojo idejo o indijskem nacionalnem združenju. Decembra 1885 se je Indijska nacionalna unija (Indian National Union), ki je bila sklicana v Mumbaju, takoj preimenovala v Indijski nacionalni kongres,<sup>8</sup> ki je postal največja in najvidnejša indijska javna organizacija, ki je odločilno vplivala na indijsko gibanje za neodvisnost.

V letu ustanovitve Indijskega nacionalnega kongresa je bil Mohandas Karamčand Gandhi 16 let star fant, ki je obiskoval srednjo šolo in bil v skladu z običaji že poročen. Leta 1887 je končal srednjo šolo in družinski prijatelj, brahmanski duhovnik, ga je kmalu spodbudil k razmišljanju o študiju prava v Londonu. Navdušen nad to možnostjo je moral obljubiti svoji mami in ženi, da se bo med študijem v Londonu vzdržal mesa, alkohola in žensk, saj je le na ta način dosegel njuno soglasje. Avgusta 1888 je zapustil Indijo in postal študent na Univerzitetnem kolidžu (University College) v Londonu. Ko je prišel v London, brez znanja angleškega jezika in poznavanja

6 Bevir, *Theosophy and the Origins of the Indian National Congress*, 16–17.

7 *Ibid.*, 7.

8 *Ibid.*, 16.

tamkajšnjega življenjskega sloga, je iskal vegetarijansko restavracijo, pri čemer je imel srečo in jo je kmalu našel, na njenih mizah pa pamflet z naslovom »A Plea for Vegetarianism« (»Zagovor vegetarijanstva«) Henryja Salta. Ta pamflet ga je vodil do pridružitve londonskemu vegetarijanskemu društvu, kjer je spoznal številne vegetarijanske reformatorje, kot so bili avtor pamfleta, Anna Kingsford in Edward Maitland. Prek njih je spoznal tudi ugledne teozofe, kot so bili H. P. Blavatsky, H. S. Olcott, Annie Besant, Edwin Arnold ter Keightley Bertram in Archibald, ki sta preučevala *Bhagavadgito* in jo tudi predstavila Gandhiju, knjigo, ki je pozneje postala njegova vsakdanja spremljevalka v življenju.<sup>9</sup> Takrat je ideja o »univerzalnem bratstvu« že postala osrednji cilj Teozofskega društva in njegov moto »Ni religije, višje od Resnice«. Toda Gandhi je prišel v stik tudi s krščansko tradicijo, pri čemer ga je še posebej ganila *Pridiga na gori*. Zapisal je: »Moj mladi um je poskušal združiti učenje *Gite*, *Luči Azije* in *Pridige na gori*. In samoodpovedovanje je bila najvišja oblika religije, ki najbolj odzvanja v meni.«<sup>10</sup> Londonsko obdobje je tako predstavljalo tudi njegovo uvajanje v študij religij, ki je dobil bolj otipljiv in izpopolnjen izraz med njegovim bivanjem v Južni Afriki.

Po zaključenem študiju prava leta 1891 je Gandhi zapustil London in se vrnil v Indijo ter poskusil odpreti odvetniško prakso v Mumbaju, vendar pri tem ni bil uspešen, zato se je vrnil v Radžkot, da bi se predal bolj skromnemu življenju. Leta 1893 mu je muslimanski trgovec Dada Abdullah, ki je imel veliko ladjarsko podjetje v Južni Afriki, predlagal, da postane odvetnik njegovega bratranca. Gandhi je sprejel ponudbo in z ladjo odpotoval v Južno Afriko, da bi tam ostal naslednjih enaindvajset let; tam je razvil svoje politične in verske poglede in etiko.

V začetnem obdobju bivanja v Južni Afriki je bilo zopet krščanstvo tisto, ki je »v njem ohranjalo religiozni čut«, <sup>11</sup> zlasti prek dopisovanja z Edwardom Maitlandom in prek študija *The Perfect Way or Finding the Christ (Popolna pot ali odkrivanje Kristusa)*, knjige o ezoteričnem krščanstvu, ki jo je Maitland napisal skupaj z Anno Kingsford. Še bolj pa ga je navdušila knjiga Leva Tolstoja *The Kingdom of God is Within You (Božje kraljestvo je v vas)* in njeno neodvisno razmišljanje, globoka morala in resnicoljubnost.<sup>12</sup> Vendar pa je tudi teozofski vpliv ostal močan, saj je bil vsak dan v tesnih stikih z južnoafriškimi teozofi in z njimi razpravljal o verskih zadevah, predvsem o ideji bratstva, ter »kritiziral člane, če se je zdelo, da njihovo ravnanje [...] ne odseva njihovega ideala«.<sup>13</sup> Nadaljeval je tudi s študijem hinduizma.

9 Gandhi, *An Autobiography. The Story of My Experiments With Truth*, 296.

10 *Ibid.*, 92.

11 *Ibid.*, 296.

12 *Ibid.*, 161.

13 *Ibid.*, 296.

Raziskovanje religij ga je vodilo do »samoizpraševanja in vzbudilo v meni navado, da poskušam v praksi uporabiti to, kar mi je bilo pri srcu«. <sup>14</sup> Prišel je do sklepa, da »je teozofija v teoriji hinduizem in da je hinduizem v praksi teozofija«. <sup>15</sup> Na tej osnovi ga je želja po samouresničitvi privedla do tega, da je sprejel služenje skupnosti kot svojo lastno religijo. Čutil je, da je Boga mogoče doseči samo prek služenja. <sup>16</sup> Prišel je do prepričanja, da ni drugega Boga od Resnice in da je »iskanje Resnice *summum bonum* življenja«, <sup>17</sup> pri čemer je osnova za iskanje te Resnice *ahimsa* (nenasilje), <sup>18</sup> njeno vodilno pravilo pa: »Sovraži greh in ne grešnika!«

Gandhi je zapisal: »Če želi človek videti univerzalnega in vseobsegajočega Duha Resnice iz oči v oči, mora biti sposoben ljubiti najslabše stvarjenje kot sebe samega. In človek, ki si prizadeva za to, si ne more privoščiti, da bi se izognil kateremukoli področju življenja. Zato me je moja predanost Resnici pritegnila na polje politike; in z vso ponižnostjo lahko rečem, da tisti, ki pravijo, da religija nima nobene zveze s politiko, ne vedo, kaj pomeni religija«. <sup>19</sup> Tako se je rodil njegov edinstveni način političnega boja, imenovan *satjagraha* (*sat* = resnica in *agraha* = trdnost) ali »predanost resnici«.

Med Gandhijevim bivanjem v Južni Afriki je Teozofsko društvo najbolj močno vplivalo na indijsko družbeno in politično življenje prek svoje druge predsednice Annie Besant. Slednja se je Teozofskemu društvu pridružila leta 1889 kot znana družbena in politična aktivistka in se leta 1893 odpravila v Indijo. Skupaj s H. S. Olcottom se je odpravila na predavateljsko turnejo po državi, na kateri je predstavljala indijsko filozofijo in izražala svojo osebno naklonjenost indijski duhovni dediščini ter s tem pridobila nadaljnjo podporo indijskih ljudi v svojem prizadevanju za prenovo države. Leta 1898 je v Benaresu (danes Varanasi) ustanovila Centralno hindujsko šolo (Central Hindu School) in kolidž, ki je pozneje postal jedro Hindujske univerze (Banaras Hindu University), nekaj let pozneje pa tudi Centralno hindujsko šolo za dekleta (Central Hindu Girls School). Obe šoli sta bili ustanovljeni po teozofskih načelih in mnogi ugledni indijski teozofi so se vključili v osebje, pri čemer je bil njihov cilj izobraziti novo vodstveno strukturo za Indijo.

Leta 1906 je Annie Besant objavila pamflet *England and India*, v katerem je predlagala določene ideje o odnosu Anglije do Indije in podrobno predstavila svoje poglede v okviru religije, izobraževanja in političnih odnosov. <sup>20</sup> Imela je namreč enake poglede kot Mahatma Gandhi na to, da mora religiozna prenova privedi do političnih učinkov in da

14 *Ibid.*, 186.

15 *Ibid.*, 282.

16 *Ibid.*, 184.

17 *Ibid.*, 282.

18 *Ibid.*, 553.

19 *Ibid.*, 554.

20 Glej Besant, A. *England and India*. Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1906.

bi morala »povezati svoje religiozno in socialno delo z bolj očitnim političnim delom«. <sup>21</sup> Vendar pa se je njun pristop bistveno razlikoval, kar je mogoče opaziti v zvezi z Ezoterično sekcijo (šolo) Teozofskega društva. To organizacijo v okviru Teozofskega društva je oblikovala že H. P. Blavatsky z namenom, da bi v njenem okviru zbrala več predanih članov za preučevanje t. i. Secret doctrine (Tajnega nauka). Po smrti H. P. Blavatsky je vodja te organizacije postala Annie Besant. Svoje poglede nanjo je predstavila leta 1906 v avgustovski številki revije *Theosophy in India* (*Teozofija v Indiji*) pod naslovom »The Blending of the Temporal and Spiritual Functions« (»Zlitje prehodnih in duhovnih funkcij«), kjer je javnosti odkrito in jasno predstavila svoje ideje v zvezi s T. D. in E. S. T. Zapisala je: »V T. D. imamo nenavadno mešanico. Ekzoterično (zunanje) društvo je povsem demokratično – pošteno je, da to v celoti priznamo. Na drugi strani imamo ezoterično telo, ki je po svoji zasnovi praktično avtokratsko [...] Obstoj tajnega organa, ki vlada zunanjemu Društvu, je spremenil pravila T. D. v farso, saj je slednje prepuščeno na milost in nemilost notranjemu [...]. Največja moč bo vedno v rokah E. S. in ne v rokah vodstva društva [...]. Vem, da je v mojih rokah precej neupravičene moči. To je tisto, zaradi česar nekateri pravijo, da E. S. T. ne bi smela obstajati [...]. Nevarnost moramo prepoznati in jo poskušati nevtralizirati.« V nadaljevanju je izpostavila, da bi se trenju med dvema vodstvoma lahko izognili z združitvijo obeh vodstev v eni osebi. <sup>22</sup>

Glede E. S. T. je Gandhi v intervjuju sicer dejal naslednje: »Jaz sem še vedno teozof, vendar nisem v soglasju z Gibanjem. Nisem naklonjen nobeni instituciji, ki neguje tajnost. Vsako tajno urjenje ali disciplina, kot se prakticira v notranji šoli teozofije, žali moja demokratična prepričanja. Želim, da je vse odprto in prosto dostopno vsem. Vedno sem trdno zagovarjal odstranjevanje vseh ovir med ljudstvi in razredi.« <sup>23</sup>

Annie Besant je v indijski politiki začela aktivno delovati oktobra in novembra 1913, ko je v Madrasu opravila niz osmih predavanj z naslovom »Wake Up, India: A Plea for Social Reform« (»Zbudi se, Indija: zagovarjanje socialne reforme«), ki so se nanašala na izobraževanje, žensko delo, industrijo ter socialna in politična vprašanja. Leto pozneje je v *Herald of the Star* (letn. 3, št. 1, 1914, str. 38) objavila članek »Social Reform in India« (»Socialna reforma v Indiji«), v katerem je zapisala, da je »na sestanku članov 'E. S.', ki je potekal v Adjarju prejšnji mesec, prišlo do odločitve, da se opravi napad na najhujše ovire, ki Indiji preprečujejo napredovanje po poti napredka, in nekateri naši bratje so se junaško odločili žrtvovati v ta namen. Sprejeli so naslednje obljube: 'Prepričani, da se najboljši interesi Indije nahajajo v njenem dvigu v urejeno svobodo pod britansko krono, v zavračanju vsakega običaja, ki preprečuje združitev vseh, ki prebivajo znotraj njenih meja, in obnovi hinduizma socialne prožnosti in bratskega čutenja, obljubljam: [...] (7)

21 V: Bevir, »History of Political Thought«, 19.

22 Glej »Some Reflections regarding the Theosophical Movement«; v: *The Theosophist*, oktober 1907, 83–84.

23 Gandhi, v: Wardall, »A Visit to Gandhi«, 1–3.

Spodbujevanje združevanje med delavci na polju duhovnega, izobraževalnega, socialnega in političnega napredka pod vodstvom Indijskega nacionalnega kongresa. Klavzula 7 je seveda odvisna od pripravljenosti Indijskega nacionalnega kongresa, da prevzame vodstvo gibanja, ki povezuje religijsko, izobraževalno in socialno reformo s politično. Če tega ne bo želel storiti, potem bo treba najti nekega človeka ali drugo organizacijo, ki bo prevzela vodilno vlogo.« Tako je pisala in prosila ugledne voditelje Indijskega nacionalnega kongresa, da bi prevzeli vodstvo v četverni kampanji za religijsko, izobraževalno, socialno in politično reformo. Toda voditelji so to zavrnilo z obrazložitvijo, da mora Kongres ostati izključno politična organizacija.<sup>24</sup> Zato je ustanovila gibanje *All-India Home Rule League* in *New India*, dnevnik, ki je bil petnajst let močan instrument za spodbujanje Home Rule in preobrazbe indijskega novinarstva. Home Rule je bila prva politična stranka v Indiji, katere glavni cilj je bila sprememba režima. Zaradi tega je bila Annie Besant junija 1917 aretirana, kar je privedlo do splošnih protestov, ki jih je Gandhi močno podprl. Britanska vlada je bila prisiljena sprejeti pomembna popuščanja in napovedala, da je končni cilj britanske vladavine indijska samouprava. Annie Besant je bila septembra osvobojena in bila za eno leto izvoljena za predsednico Indijskega nacionalnega kongresa.

Vendar pa je Annie Besant nasprotovala Gandhijevemu načrtu nesodelovanja in državljanske neposlušnosti, saj je zagovarjala ustavne metode za doseg politične reforme<sup>25</sup> s pomočjo »lojalnih izobraženih razredov«.<sup>26</sup> Ker je Indijski nacionalni kongres podprl Gandhijevo politiko, je Annie Besant postala nepriljubljena in izgubila položaj politične voditeljice,<sup>27</sup> kljub temu pa je do konca življenja nadaljevala s kampanjo za neodvisnost Indije.<sup>28</sup> Ni pa dvoma, da so organizacijske in propagandne tehnike Annie Besant preobrazile indijsko nacionalistično politiko in da je sčasoma prevladala njena vizija neodvisne Indije znotraj Commonwealtha.<sup>29</sup>

Gandhi je po drugi strani priznaval potrebo po navdihnjenem vodstvu v političnem in družbenem delovanju ter vlogi majhnih skupin kot pionirjev in usmerjevalcev poti, vendar pa je tudi on ostro zavračal razlikovanje med izvoljenimi predstavniki in množicami.<sup>30</sup> »V dobro urejenih organizacijah so voditelji izvoljeni zaradi praktičnega dela in ne zaradi izjemnih zaslug. Voditelj je zgolj prvi med enakimi. Nekdo je lahko postavljen

24 Bevir, »History of Political Thought«, 45.

25 Shewan, *Annie Besant*, 16.

26 *Ibid.*, 50.

27 *Ibid.*, 17.

28 *Ibid.*, 18.

29 Leonards, »Annie Besant: The Brilliant Outsider«, 57.

30 Iyer, *The Moral and the Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, 139.

na prvo mesto, vendar pa ni močnejši od najšibkejšega člana v verigi.<sup>31</sup> Menil je, da množice nikakor niso tako neumne ali neinteligentne, kot si včasih predstavljamo.<sup>32</sup> »Pogosto dojamemo stvari s svojo intuicijo, ki jih mi ne uspemo videti z našim razumom. Medtem ko množice vedo, kaj hočejo, pa pogosto ne vedo, kako izraziti svoje želje, in še manj pogosto, kako doseči, kar hočejo. Takrat pride na vrsto vodenje.«<sup>33</sup> Gandhi je koncept svobode utemeljil na sami naravi človeka kot avtonomnega moralnega dejavnika in hkrati trdil, da je preživetje družbe, nadaljevanje skupnosti, odvisno od dejanske svobode posameznika.<sup>34</sup> »Edino individualna svoboda je tista, ki človeku omogoči, da se do popolnosti prostovoljno preda služenju družbi. Če mu je odvzeta, postane avtomat in družba propade. Nobene družbe ni mogoče graditi na zanikanju svobode posameznika. To je v nasprotju z naravo človeka.«<sup>35</sup> Zaradi tega je nasprotoval obstoju avtokratske »notranje šole« v Teozofskem društvu, namreč njegega političnega pristopa in zavoljo katere se po njegovem »daje prevelik poudarek [...] intelektualnemu študiju in razvoju okultnih moči, zaradi česar je Društvo izgubilo z vida osrednjo idejo teozofije, bratstvo človeštva in moralno rast človeka«.<sup>36</sup>

Vendar pa je Gandhi dejal tudi: »Veliko dolgujem teozofskim prijateljem, ki jih imam veliko. Karkoli lahko kritiki govorijo proti gospe Blavatsky, polkovniku Olcottu ali dr. Besant, bo njihov prispevek k človeštvu vedno visoko cenjen.«<sup>37</sup> Zatorej lahko upravičeno rečemo, da je zelo spoštoval prispevek članov Teozofskega društva k družbenemu in političnemu življenju Indije.

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31 Gandhi, *Young India*, december 1921.

32 Iyer, *The Moral and the Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, 143.

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34 Iyer, *The Moral and the Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, 351.

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## **Anton Rozman**

Anton Rozman je samostojni raziskovalec ezoteričnih tokov, zlasti teozofskega gibanja, v Sloveniji in v svetu. Je član Teozofskega društva od leta 1992, član Centra teozofskih študij v Cervignanu v Italiji in urednik teozofske spletne strani »Teozofija v Sloveniji«. Je prevajalec številnih teozofskih knjig in člankov. Med letoma 2009 in 2014 je bil sourednik teozofske spletne revije *Theosophy Forward*, odgovoren za elektronske publikacije. V letu 2014 je uredil arhivsko dokumentacijo, povezano z zgodovino Teozofskega gibanja v Jugoslaviji in Sloveniji, in jo predal Pokrajinskemu arhivu v Kopru, nahaja pa se v fondu SI PAK KP 916 – tudi v elektronski obliki – in je dostopna zainteresiranim raziskovalcem. V zadnjih letih se kot član raziskovalne skupine ukvarja predvsem s preučevanjem življenja in dela Adelme von Vay, svetovno znane spiritistke, ki je živel v Slovenskih Konjicah med letoma 1870 in 1925.



## The Impact of Theosophical Society on India's Social and Political Life and the Life and Work of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

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### Abstract

There is a vast literature available and many scholarly works on the impact that the members of the Theosophical Society had on the social and political life of India and the life and work of M. K. Gandhi, therefore the present paper is only a humble overview of this relevant subject matter.

The Theosophical Society was founded in New York in September 1875 by a group of prominent spiritualists under the leadership of H. S. Olcott and H. P. Blavatsky in order "to collect and diffuse a knowledge of the laws which governs the universe" and "to establish clear philosophy for the spiritualist movement". In her first major work, *Isis Unveiled*, Blavatsky presented the idea of "India: (as) the cradle of the Race" and suggested the existence of ages long "wisdom tradition" and existence of "curators" of this knowledge, the Mahatmas, that she was in contact with.

After the publication of *Isis Unveiled*, Olcott and Blavatsky established contact with Dayananda Saraswati, the leader of the Indian reformist movement Arya Samaj, merged the Society for a short period with this movement, and permanently moved to India. In his first public lecture on Indian soil, H. S. Olcott made an appeal to the audience to join the Theosophical Society in order to spiritually, culturally and economically renew their country, while A. P. Sinnett, the editor of the Anglo-Indian newspaper *Pioneer*, and A. O. Hume, a retired civil servant, established correspondence with Mahatmas through Blavatsky resulting in Sinnett's publication of *Esoteric Buddhism*, the first presentation of "theosophical philosophy", on the one hand, and in the establishment of Indian National Congress by Hume, on the other.

Gandhi got in touch with theosophy as a young law student in London and became interested also in Hinduism and Christianity and above all in vegetarianism. But it was in South Africa where he got a deeper insight into various religions and was impressed by the theosophical idea of brotherhood and esoteric Christianity through the works of Anna Kingsford and Leo Tolstoy, realising that the path to God (Truth) leads through service and nonviolence, and out of which he developed his method of political struggle, *satyagraha* or passive resistance.

It was during Gandhi's stay in South Africa that the Theosophical Society made a major impact on India's social and political life through its second president Annie Besant. She joined the Indian National Congress, launched the India Home Rule, founded the *New India* newspaper and promoted a number of educational (Central Hindu College) and other civic initiatives. However, she opposed to Gandhi's passive resistance movement on his return to India, while he, considering himself a theosophist and democrat, did not sympathise with the secrecy practiced in the Society's "inner school", and maintained that due to the development of occult powers the Society "lost sight of its central idea – the brotherhood and moral growth of man".

**Keywords:** Theosophical Society, *satyagraha*, Truth

The Theosophical Society is an organisation which was established with the aim “to collect and diffuse a knowledge of the laws which govern the universe”.<sup>1</sup> It was founded in September 1875, in New York, USA, by a group of prominent representatives of worldwide spiritualist movement. This movement started in the middle of the nineteenth century, attracted all layers of human society and had an extremely important impact on the intellectual and religious life of people all over the world. This impact led to genuine social changes, and that was the reason why spiritualism was described as a democratic movement closely related to vegetarianism, anti-vivisection, anti-vaccination, anti-slavery, women rights and similar. But as among spiritualists there was an absence of any clear doctrine, the aim of the main founders of the Theosophical Society, H. P. Blavatsky and H. S. Olcott, was “to establish clear philosophy for the spiritualist movement”.<sup>2</sup>

The beginning of the Theosophical Society was promising; however, the public activities soon ceased, the entrance fees were no longer collected and the Bye-laws became inoperative, so the fate of the Society depended entirely on H. P. Blavatsky and H. S. Olcott. Hence, the two of them therefore committed mainly to literary work, corresponding with the interested public through spiritualists’ magazines and daily newspapers while preparing the publication of HPB’s first major work *Isis Unveiled*.

In *Isis Unveiled*, Blavatsky presented the idea of “India: (as) the Cradle of the Race” and discussed the existence of the ancient “wisdom tradition” and the existence of “curators” of this knowledge, the Mahatmas, she was in contact with. She wrote: “No people in the world have ever attained to such a grandeur of thought in ideal conceptions of the Deity and its offspring, man, as the Sanskrit metaphysicians and theologians. [...] The life of several generations would scarce suffice merely to read the works that ancient India has left us on history, ethics (morale), poetry, philosophy, religion, different sciences, and medicine. [...] It is to India, the country less explored and less known than any other, that all the other great nations of the world are indebted for their languages, arts, legislature, and civilization.”<sup>3</sup>

Following the publication of *Isis Unveiled* the dream of H. P. Blavatsky and H. S. Olcott was to go to India, as they were convinced that the Society would find a fresh impetus there, so they made use of every opportunity to establish connections with the Indian people. This is how they got in touch with the Hindu pandit and reformer Swami Dayananda Saraswati, leader of Arya Samaj movement, dedicated to the revival of pure Vedic tradition. With this connection, they paved the way for their departure to India and established the first Indian branch of the Society in Bombay. Shortly after, at the

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1 Ransom, *Short History of the Theosophical Movement*, 76.

2 Lavoie, *The Theosophical Society – The History of a Spiritualist Movement*, 14.

3 Gandhi, in: Gomes, *Isis Unveiled – A New Abridgement for Today*, 125.

beginning of the year 1879, they travelled to India. At the time H. P. Blavatsky wrote: "Our Society was founded at the direct suggestion of Indian and Tibetan Adepts, and in coming to this country, we but obeyed Their wishes."<sup>4</sup>

A month after their arrival in India, in March 1879, H. S. Olcott delivered his first public lecture titled "The Theosophical Society and its Aims", saying: "It is evident [...] that there is room in our Society for the Arya, Brahmo, Prarthana, and all the other minor Samayas which represent the progressive mind of *Young India*. Divided, they are comparatively powerless, to do much; united they would make a strength to be felt [...]. If India is to be regenerated, it must be by Hindoos, who can rise above their castes and every other reactionary influence; and give good example as well as good advice. [...] We want to persuade the most learned native scholars [...] to translate into English the most valuable portions of their respective religious and scientific literatures, so that we may help to circulate them in Western countries. At the same time we wish to aid, as best we can, in the extension of non-sectarian education for native girls and married women, which we regard as the corner-stone of national greatness, and in the introduction of cheap and simple machines that can be worked by hand labour and that will increase the comfort and prosperity of our adopted country. We have chosen this land for our home, and feel a desire to help it and its people in any way practicable [...]. Here lies a mighty nation like a giant benumbed with sloth and no one to arouse its potential energies. Here lavish nature has provided exhaustless resources, that combined talent and applied knowledge would turn into fabulous national wealth. [...] In vain the efforts of statesmanship to spread the blessings of education and promote the industrial arts, if they are not seconded by the patriotic endeavours of enlightened Young India. [...] The great and crying want of modern India to-day is a scientific school attached to every College, such as we have in America, and, in each great centre of population, a school of Technology with appropriate machinery where the most improved methods of the principal handicrafts could be taught to intelligent lads. [...] The soul of Aryavarta keeps vigil within the dormant body. Again will her splendour shine. Her prosperity will be restored. Her primitive philosophy will once more be interpreted, and it will teach both religion and science to an eager world. [...] The youth of India will shake off their sloth, and be worthy of their sires. From every ruined temple; from every sculptured corridor cut in the heart of the mountains; from every secret vihar where the custodians of the Sacred Science keep alive the torch of primitive wisdom, comes a whispering voice saying 'Children, your Mother is not dead but only sleepeth!'"<sup>5</sup> This lecture was a huge success, the Framji Cowasji Hall in Mumbai was crowded. The lecture left a deep

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4 Ransom, *Short History of the Theosophical Movement*, 123–125.

5 See Olcott, H. S. *A Collection of Lectures on Theosophy and Archaic Traditions*. Madras: The Theosophical Society and its Aims, 1883.

impression and the Press gave Olcott's speech wide publicity that gained the Society vast popularity and provided the influx of new Indian members which resulted in the formation of several new branches in the years to follow.

The man who contributed a lot to this initial success of the Theosophical Society on the Indian soil was Alfred Percy Sinnett, the editor of *The Pioneer*, India's most influential newspaper, who offered to inform the public on the Society's mission. This led to a close friendship with H. P. Blavatsky and H. S. Olcott which blossomed particularly during their visit to Simla, the heart of the powerful Anglo-Indian community, in the summer of 1880, where they were hosted by A. P. Sinnett and his close friend A. O. Hume, a retired civil servant. As a result of this visit, Mr. Sinnett and Mr. Hume began to communicate with one of the theosophical adepts, Master K. H. The correspondence with Mr. Sinnett began in October 1880 and lasted around four years until he gained sufficient knowledge to be able to outline a philosophy that followed the ancient teachings and came to fruition in the publication of two books titled *The Occult World* and *Esoteric Buddhism*.

Besides, Mr. Hume gained through this correspondence a deeper insight into the circumstances of Indian society, the dangers it was facing and the need for certain political work he had to get involved with. Consequently, he attempted to influence politics in two ways. Firstly, he tried to convince the British authorities to reform the administration of India so as to make it more responsive to the needs of Indian people, and secondly, he tried to promote an all-India organisation so as to give voice to the concerns and aspirations of Indians themselves.<sup>6</sup> The Theosophical Society was more than just a suitable environment for this second area of Hume's political work, since basically all the Indians who joined the Society had come from western-educated elite and from all over the sub-continent, including Parsees, Christians, Sikhs, some Muslims, as well as Hindus. And as the Theosophical Society began to hold its annual conventions in December 1881, these gatherings provided the opportunities to the members to discuss the past, present, and future of India.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, early in 1885, Hume helped to form the Bombay Presidency Association, and immediately used this group as a springboard to advance his idea of the Indian National Union. In December 1885, the Indian National Union was organised in Bombay and the attendees immediately renamed themselves into the Indian National Congress,<sup>8</sup> which became the largest and most prominent Indian public organisation that exercised a decisive influence on the Indian Independence Movement.

In the year of the foundation of the Indian National Congress, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was a 16-year old boy attending high school and already married,

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6 Bevir, *Theosophy and the Origins of the Indian National Congress*, 16–17.

7 *Ibid.*, 7.

8 *Ibid.*, 16.

according to the customs of the region. In 1887, he graduated from high school and was soon encouraged by a family friend, a Brahman priest, to consider law studies in London. Enthusiastic about this possibility, he had to promise his mother and his wife that he would abstain from meat, alcohol and women during his studies in London and thus won their approval. In August 1888, he left India to become a student at the University College London. Arriving in London, with no knowledge of the English language and lifestyle whatsoever, he struggled to find a vegetarian restaurant, but was fortunate enough to find it, and on its tables a copy of a pamphlet titled "A Plea for Vegetarianism" by Henry Salt. This led him to join the London Vegetarian Society where he met many vegetarian reformers like Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland, the authors of the pamphlet. Through them he also became acquainted with the prominent theosophists, such as H. P. Blavatsky, H. S. Olcott, Annie Besant, Edwin Arnold and Keightley Bertram and Archibald, who were studying the *Bhagavad-Gita* and introduced it to Gandhi. This book would become his everyday companion.<sup>9</sup> At that time the idea of "universal brotherhood" had already become the central object of the Theosophical Society, and its slogan: "There is no Religion higher than Truth". But Gandhi got in touch with the Christian tradition as well and was particularly moved by *Sermon on the Mount*. He wrote: "My young mind tried to unify the teachings of *Gita*, the *Light of Asia* and the *Sermon on the Mount*. That renunciation was the highest form of religion which appealed to me greatly."<sup>10</sup> The London period therefore represented also his introduction into religious studies, which found a more tangible and elaborated expression during his stay in South Africa.

After having completed his studies in law in 1891, Gandhi left London for India and tried to establish a law practice in Bombay but failed and returned to Rajkot to live a modest life. Nevertheless, in 1893 a Muslim merchant Dada Abdullah, who owned a large shipping business in South Africa, suggested him to become a lawyer for his cousin. Gandhi accepted the offer and sailed there to remain in South Africa for the following twenty-one years. There he would later develop his political and religious views and ethics.

At the beginning of his stay in South Africa it was Christianity again, which "kept alive in him the religious sense",<sup>11</sup> especially through correspondence with Edward Maitland and the study of *The Perfect Way or Finding the Christ*, a book on esoteric Christianity that Maitland co-authored with Anna Kingsford. He was even more impressed by Leo Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You* and its display of independent thinking, profound morality and truthfulness.<sup>12</sup> However, the theosophical influence

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9 Gandhi, *An Autobiography. The Story of My Experiments With Truth*, 296.

10 *Ibid.*, 92.

11 *Ibid.*, 296.

12 *Ibid.*, 161.

remained strong as he was in close, day-to-day contacts with South African theosophists, discussing religious matters, particularly the idea of brotherhood. He “criticized the members where their conduct did not appear to [...] square with their ideal”.<sup>13</sup> However, he continued his studies of Hinduism as well.

The study of religions stimulated his “self-introspection and fostered in me the habit of putting into practice whatever appealed to me”.<sup>14</sup> He came to a conclusion that “the Theosophy is Hinduism in theory, and that Hinduism is Theosophy in practice”.<sup>15</sup> As a result, his desire for self-realisation led him to accept community service as religion of his own. He felt that God could be realised only through service.<sup>16</sup> He became convinced that there was no other God than Truth, and that the “quest for that Truth is the *summum bonum* of life”,<sup>17</sup> while the basis for the quest and realisation of that Truth was *Ahimsa* (nonviolence)<sup>18</sup> and its guiding rule: “Hate the sin and not the sinner!”

Gandhi wrote: “To see the universal and all-pervading Spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. And a man who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life. That is why my devotion to Truth has drawn me into the field of politics; and I can say without the slightest hesitation, and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means”.<sup>19</sup> That gave rise to his unique way of political struggle “Satyagraha” (*sat* = truth, and *agraha* = firmness) or “devotion to truth”.

At the time of Gandhi’s stay in South Africa, the Theosophical Society had a major impact on India’s social and political life due to its second president Annie Besant. As a prominent social and political activist, she joined the Theosophical Society in 1889 and went to India in 1893. Along with H. S. Olcott she made a tour of the country giving lectures on Indian philosophy and showing her personal preference for the Indian spiritual heritage. Thus she managed to gain further support of the Indian people in her efforts to rebuild the country. In 1898 she founded the Central Hindu School and College in Benares (now Varanasi), which later became the central nucleus of the Banaras Hindu University, and a few years later the Central Hindu Girls School. Both schools were formed on theosophical principles and many prominent Indian theosophists were part of the staff, their aim being to build new leadership for India.

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13 *Ibid.*, 296.

14 *Ibid.*, 186.

15 *Ibid.*, 282.

16 *Ibid.*, 184.

17 *Ibid.*, 282.

18 *Ibid.*, 553.

19 *Ibid.*, 554.

In 1906, Annie Besant published a pamphlet *England and India* in which she put forward some ideas associated with the English relations with India and elaborated on her views in terms of religion, education and political relations.<sup>20</sup> Namely, Annie Besant shared Mohandas Gandhi's views on religious renaissance that should bring about the political effects and "combine religious and social work with more overtly political work".<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, their approach differed significantly in relation to the Esoteric Section (School) of the Theosophical Society. This organisation within the Theosophical Society was formed already by H. P. Blavatsky with the aim to gather more dedicated members for the study of the Secret Doctrine. After HPB's death, Annie Besant became the Head of the organisation. She shared her views in the August number of *Theosophy in India*, under the heading, "The blending of the temporal and spiritual functions," where she frankly and clearly made her ideas regarding the T. S. and the E. S. T public. She wrote: "In the T. S. we have a curious mixture. The Exoteric Society is purely democratic – it is only fair to admit this fully. On the other side we have an Esoteric body which is practically autocratic in its constitution [...] The existence of a secret body to rule the outer Society made the constitution of the T. S. a mere farce, for it was at the mercy of the inner [...] The greatest power will always be in the hands of the E. S., and not in the head of the Society [...] I know that I exercise a quite unwarrantable power. This is what makes some people say there should not be an E. S. T. [...] We must recognize the danger and try to neutralize it." Afterwards she went on to state that the friction between the two heads could be avoided by combining both offices in one person.<sup>22</sup>

As far as E. S. T. is concerned, Gandhi said the following in an interview: "I am still a Theosophist but I am not in sympathy with the Movement. I am not in favor of any institution which fosters secrecy. Any secret training or discipline like that practiced in the Inner School of Theosophy offends my democratic sympathies. I want everything open and free to all. I have steadily advocated the leveling of all barriers between peoples of all classes."<sup>23</sup>

Annie Besant became active in Indian politics in October and November 1913 when she delivered in Madras a series of eight lectures titled "Wake Up, India: A Plea for Social Reform" addressing education, women's work, industries and social and political issues. A year later, in *Herald of the Star* (Vol. 3, No. 1, 1914, p. 38), she published the article "Social Reform in India", where she announced: "At a meeting of 'E. S.' members, held at Adyar last month, it was resolved to make an attack on the

20 See Besant, Annie. *England and India*. Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1906.

21 In: Bevir, "History of Political Thought", 19.

22 See "Some Reflections regarding the Theosophical Movement"; in: *The Theosophist*, October 1907, 83–84.

23 Gandhi, in: Wardall, "A Visit to Gandhi", 1–3.

worst of the barriers which check the advance of India along the road of progress, and some of our brethren heroically resolved to sacrifice themselves to this end. They have taken the following promises: 'Believing that the best interests of India lie in her rising into ordered freedom under the British Crown, in the casting away of every custom which prevents union among all who dwell within her borders, and in the restoration to Hinduism of social flexibility and brotherly feeling, I promise: [...] (7) To promote union among the workers in the fields of spiritual, educational, social, and political progress, under the headship and direction of the Indian National Congress.' Clause 7 depends, of course, on the willingness of the Indian National Congress to assume the headship of a movement which combines religious, educational, and social reform with political. If it be unwilling to do so, then some man or other organization must be found to take the lead." Thus, she wrote to ask the prominent leaders of the Indian National Congress to head a fourfold campaign for religious, educational, social, and political reform. But the leaders declined her stating that the Congress should be a purely political organisation.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, she formed the All-India Home Rule League and founded *New India*, a daily newspaper, which was a powerful instrument for fifteen years promoting Home Rule that revolutionised the Indian journalism. Home Rule was the first political party in India, its main objective was the change of the regime. This was the reason why Annie Besant was arrested in June 1917, and that led to mass protests strongly supported by Gandhi. The British government was forced to make significant concessions, announcing that the ultimate goal of the British rule was Indian self-government. Annie Besant was released in September and was elected President of the Indian National Congress for a year.

However, Annie Besant opposed to Gandhi's plan of non-cooperation and civil disobedience as she stood by constitutional methods for achieving political reform<sup>25</sup> through "loyal educated classes" of India.<sup>26</sup> As the Indian National Congress supported Gandhi's policy, Annie Besant became unpopular and lost her position as political Leader.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, she continued to campaign for India's independence to the end of her life.<sup>28</sup> There is no question that Besant's organisational and propaganda techniques transformed the Indian nationalist politics and that her vision of an independent India within the Commonwealth eventually prevailed.<sup>29</sup>

Gandhi, on the other hand, recognised the need for inspired leadership in

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24 Bevir, "History of Political Thought", 45.

25 Shewan, *Annie Besant*, 16.

26 *Ibid.*, 50.

27 *Ibid.*, 17.

28 *Ibid.*, 18.

29 Leonards, "Annie Besant: The Brilliant Outsider", 57.



political and social activity and the role of small groups as pioneers and pathfinders, but also refused to make a distinction between the elect and the masses.<sup>30</sup> "In well-ordered organizations, leaders are elected, he said, for convenience of work, not for extraordinary merit. A leader is only first among equals. Someone may be put first, but he is no stronger than the weakest link in the chain."<sup>31</sup> He felt that the masses are by no means so foolish or unintelligent as we sometimes imagine.<sup>32</sup> "They often perceive things with their intuition, which we ourselves fail to see with our intellect. But whilst the masses know what they want, they often do not know how to express their wants and, less often, how to get what they want. Herein comes the use of leadership."<sup>33</sup> Gandhi based the concept of freedom on the very nature of man as an autonomous moral agent and at the same time argued that the survival of society, the continuance of a community, was contingent upon the effective freedom of the individual.<sup>34</sup> "Individual freedom alone can make a man voluntarily surrender himself completely to the service of society. If it is wrested from him, he becomes an automaton and society is ruined. No society can possibly be built on a denial of individual freedom. It is contrary to the very nature of man."<sup>35</sup> This was the reason that he opposed to the existence of autocratic 'inner school' in the Theosophical Society which reflected in the political approach and in which, according to him, "too much stress has been laid upon [...] intellectual studies, upon the development of occult powers, and that the central idea of Theosophy, the brotherhood of man and the moral growth of man, has been lost sight of."<sup>36</sup>

But Gandhi also said: "I owe much to the Theosophical friends among whom I have many. Whatever critics may say against Madame Blavatsky, or Col. Olcott or Dr. Besant, their contribution to humanity will always rank high."<sup>37</sup> Therefore, it can be rightly said that he highly esteemed the contribution of the members of the Theosophical Society made to the social and political life of India.

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30 Iyer, *The Moral and the Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, 139.

31 Gandhi, *Young India*, December 1921.

32 Iyer, *The Moral and the Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, 143.

33 Gandhi, *Harijan*, March 1939.

34 Iyer, *The Moral and the Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, 351.

35 Gandhi, *Harijan*, June 1942.

36 Gandhi, *Harijan*, January 1948.

37 Prabhu, *This Was Bapu*, 13.

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## Anton Rozman

Anton Rozman is independent researcher of esoteric currents, particularly the theosophical movement, in Slovenia and worldwide. He has been a member of the “Theosophical Society” since 1992, a member of the Center for Theosophical Studies in Cervignano, Italy, the editor of the Theosophical website Theosophy in Slovenia and translator of numerous theosophical books and articles. Between 2009 and 2014, he was co-editor of the theosophical online

magazine *Theosophy Forward*, responsible for electronic editions. In 2014, he edited and handed over to the Regional Archives in Koper the archival documentation related to the history of the Theosophical Movement in Yugoslavia and Slovenia, which is now available to researchers of interest as SI PAK KP 916 fond – also in electronic form. In recent years as a member of the research group he mainly conducts research in the life and work of Adelma von Vay, a world-famous spiritualist who lived in Slovenske Konjice between 1870 and 1925.



## Gandhijeva filozofija kot izkustvena živeta resnica

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### Izvleček

Prispevek se osredotoča na obravnavo nekaterih segmentov filozofske poti Mahatme Gandhija. Na začetku osvetli vprašanje o tem, kaj sintagma Gandhijeva filozofija sploh označuje; Mahatma namreč ni bil filozof v klasičnem pomenu besede, je pa v svojem iskateljstvu in prizadevanju za notranjo in zunanjo izpolnitev na poti usvajanja Resnice osnoval unikaten filozofski nazor kot mnogovrsten preplet številnih idej in naukov, ki jih je črpal iz bogate filozofsko-religijske tradicije Indije, pri čemer pa se je nemalokrat posluževal tudi dialoga z zahodno filozofsko mislijo. Zato je Gandhijevo misel nemogoče enoznačno zamejiti na sistem vselej koherentnih in konsistentnih naukov, kar pa ni šibkost njegovega filozofiranja, ampak izsledek nazora, ki je med drugim temeljil tudi na džainističnih doktrinah *anekantavada* (nauk o mnogovrstnem značaju sveta) in *sjedvada* (nauk o relativni naravi stališč), po katerih entitete v svetu in stališča niso utemeljeni v ontično in epistemsko privilegiranim smislu. Iz slednjega izhajajo njegov poskus razumeti vse mnogovrstne vidike realnosti ter nazori o Resnici in nenasilju. A skozi nekonsistentnost v njegovi misli, kot je poudaril tudi Mahatma sam, teče ubrana skladnost – prav tako kot se skozi neskončno mnogovrstnost sveta pretaka unija –, kar njegovi filozofiji daje posebno vitalnost in notranjo dinamiko. V nadaljevanju prispevka je prikazano Gandhijevo razumevanje Resnice, Boga in nenasilja, ki izhaja iz svojevrstnega spoja idej, ki so predstavljale navdih in povod tako za njegovo notranjo kot tudi zunanjo, družbeno preobrazbo, hkrati pa tudi umestitev teh idej na nepredvidljivi teren vselejšnjega preizkusa v praksi, kjer Gandhijeva filozofija privzame svoj najbolj avtentičen izraz. Način vedenja in delovanja v svetu, ki ju je podprl z naukom o *karmajogi* iz *Bhagavadgite*, je prvenstveno izkušnja, onstran robov diskurzivnega, ki je Mahatmo povedla na pot intimne, notranje revolucije, drugotno pa aplikacija tega izkustva na zunanost, tj. kompleksno družbeno dejanskost.

Čeravno Gandhijeva filozofija ni statična, ampak evolutivna, dinamična, kreativna, izkustvena, eksperimentalna in živeta, ima značaj univerzalnosti, nadčasnosti in vselejšnje aktualnosti tudi onkraj meja same Indije.

**Ključne besede:** Gandhijeva filozofija, Resnica, izkušnja, notranja-zunanja revolucija

### Uvod: Gandhi, filozof »brez listnice«

Sintagmi Gandhijeva filozofija bi oporekali številni, saj ni bil akademsko izobražen filozof in ni ustvaril koherentnega filozofskega sistema, ampak je gradil dinamično, večplastno misel, trdno ukoreninjeno v praksi, etiketiranje sebe kot filozofa pa je često izpodbijal tudi Mahatma sam:

Vsa moja filozofija, če jo lahko poimenujem s tem visokoletečim izrazom, je vsebovana v tem, kar sem povedal. Vendar ji ne boste rekli »gandhizem«; v njej ni nobenega »-izma«. Ne potrebuje nobene zapletene literature ali propagande. Mojemu pogledu so kljubovali z navajanjem svetih spisov, vendar sem se močneje kot kdajkoli oklenil stališča, da resnice za nič ne smemo žrtvovati. Tisti, ki verjamejo v preproste resnice, ki sem jih opredelil, jih lahko širijo le tako, da jih živijo. [...] To lahko pokaže zgolj moje življenje.<sup>1</sup>

Svoje življenje je opredelil kot »eksperiment z resnico«, kar bi lahko zatrdili tudi za njegovo filozofsko pot, tlakovano denimo z elementi hinduizma, budizma, džainizma, pri čemer pa se ni ugnedil le na otočju mnogovrstnih izrazov svoje lastne kulture, ampak je iz njenih nedrij motril vse druge tradicije, hkrati pa se je njegova misel napajala tudi iz idej številnih zahodnih mislecev. Vsakokratna preiskava raznolikih naukov v spremi-njajočih se okoliščinah določa temeljni značaj njegove filozofije kot neprestanega odkrivanja, kar pa je zahtevalo osvoboditev od vseh dogem, ideologij in avtoritet. »Ocean Resnice« je namreč karakteriziran z nenehnim postajanjem, je onkraj strategij razuma, saj zajema totaliteto bivajočega in njeno neskončno mnogovrstnost, ki je ni mogoče ujeti v nobeno rigidno propozicijo. Gandhi je tako izpostavljal manko izpiljenih in dovršenih argumentativnih pristopov, ker duhovnih izkušenj, ki so uokvirjale njegovo družbeno-politično delovanje, ni moč ujeti v nobeno formo in zamejiti z nobenim naukom. Zunaj teoretičnih filozofskih spekulacij je življenje, ki se v konstantnem spreminjanju izmika dokončnim zaključkom, zavoljo tega pa Mahatma nobenega nauka ni razglasil za absolutno veljavnega, ampak je menil, da nihče ne more prispeti do absolutne gotovosti.

Svoje dinamično, prožno filozofiranje, karakterizirano s spremembno, postajanjem in odprtostjo za spoznavanje nepoznanega, ki ga je v teku svojega življenja nadgrajeval z novimi izkustvi, pridobljenimi iz prakse, je začel snovati z notrajno »revolucijo«, tj. duhovnimi prizadevanji, preiskavo sebe, brez česar, kot je zatrjeval sam, ni vredno živeti. Pri odkrivanju Resnice, procesu nenehnega samopreiskovanja in neprestanega samoočiščevanja, se je Mahatma neposredno soočil tudi z vsemi svojimi napakami in strahovi, pri čemer pa je bil z vsakim spodletelim poskusom bližje svojem cilju, tistemu, kar je tako neutrudno iskal – Resnici. Pri tem pa velja poudariti, da cilja ni razumel kot končne točke, ampak kot pot samo, skovano iz raznolikih metod, prek katerih se cilju sicer približujemo, a ga nikoli zares ne moremo doseči. Cilj, tj. Resnica, je namreč onkraj nas, a sam napor približevanja je po Gandhiju tisto, kar je uresničevanja cilja samega – oziroma je cilj sam po sebi.

Prek drugačnega pojmovanja univerzalnih filozofskih konceptov, ki jih je v njihovi večplastnosti nemogoče povsem doumeti v teoriji, ampak zgolj prek implementacije v prakso, je pretresal trdno zakoličene družbene strukture in politične ideologije, s tem pa med drugim velja za prvega nezahodnega misleca moderne dobe, ki je svojo politično

1 *Mahatma, Vol. IV, Meeting of the Gandhi Seva Sangh*, 29. februar–6. marec, 1936; v: Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers*, 120, 121.

teorijo osnoval na življenjski izkušnji. Pri tem je neprestano postavljajl vprašanja sebi, družbi, politiki, le-ta pa še danes odmevajo ne le na parketu lastne dežele, ampak kompleksnem prizorišču celotnega sveta. Zavaljo vselejšnje aktualnosti svojih uvidov, ki izhajajo iz njegovega dinamičnega, praktičnega procesa filozofiranja, uporniškega mišljenja, ki se izmika sleherni gotovosti in konformizmu, pa Gandhi še danes ostaja nezamenljivi zgled dobrega in človečnosti.

## Dinamični značaj Gandhijeve filozofije

*Čemu potreba po knjigah?*  
Mahatma Gandhi<sup>2</sup>

Četudi *Zbrana dela Mahatme Gandhija* (*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*), ki sestojijo iz na tisoče strani razprav, tudi o številnih filozofskih tematikah, denimo metafiziki in etiki, napeljujejo na idejo o njegovem plodnem ustvarjanju raznolikih besedil, pa na prvi pogled sila provokativna misel Mahatme, zapisana na začetku pričujočega razdelka, med drugim zlasti z ozirom na izjemno bogato in mnogovrstno filozofsko-religijsko ter nasploh literarno dediščino Indije, ki sega že v vedsko obdobje 1500 pr. n. št., odlikava naravo njegove resnične življenjske, filozofske in družbenopolitične drže. Gandhi se je namreč proglašil za praktičnega misleca, ki mu je primanjkovalo časa, da bi napisal kakšno obsežnejše in koherentno filozofsko delo, o čemer denimo zgovorno priča v indijskih in širših akademskih filozofskih krogih cenjeno delo *Sodobna indijska filozofija* (*Contemporary Indian Philosophy*; ur. Radhakrishnan in Muirhead, 1936), za katerega je zbir uglednih indijskih mislecev spisal prispevek na zajetnih dvajsetih do tridesetih straneh, medtem ko je Mahatma prispeval – manj kot eno stran. Resnični Gandhi je v prvi vrsti torej dinamični praktični mislec, ki je ideje iz raznolikih filozofskih tokov, tako iz svoje lastne kot tudi zahodne tradicije, sicer preinterpretiral v skladu s svojimi nazori in jih v obliki krajših esejev ovekovečil na papirju, a jih je, kar je tudi srž njegove drže, uspešno iztrgal iz primeža knjižnih platnic ter jih umestil na nepredvidljivi teren burnih okoliščin svojega življenja in širše družbene dejanskosti. Tako Gandhijevo pot spletata dve dimenziji filozofije, tekstualna in izkustvena, pri čemer pa je bila slednja bistvena za njegov osebni in širši družbeni napredek. Gandhijeva filozofija je bila namreč v prvi vrsti njegova intimna bitka, ki pa zanj ni pomenila spopadanja s težavnim filozofskim besedilom v udobnem naslanjaču, ampak jo je prek svojih osebnih, notranjih prizadevanj preobražal v konkretno bitko v območju družbenopolitičnega dogajanja. Če filozofiji umanjka dimenzija navora praktičnega preizkusa, ni resnična filozofija, ampak, čemur so pritrjevali tudi številni drugi indijski misleci, milo rečeno, hinavščina.

2 CWMG:62:225.

Pri tem velja poudariti, da Gandhi ni zanimal velikanske vrednosti in relevantnosti del, ki so nastajala v različnih duhovnih in kulturnih okoljih, ampak je ostro kritiziral zgolj teoretično razpravljanje o filozofskih idejah, brez preverbe, kako se le-te manifestirajo v nepredvidljivih okoliščinah vsakodnevnega življenja človeka in širše družbene dejanskosti. V Gandhijevi uvodni misli pravzaprav tiči posredni poziv k aplikaciji kompleksnih filozofskih naukov v prakso, česar se je dobršen del svojega življenja posluževal tudi sam, slednje pa daje njegovi misli posebno notranjo dinamiko in vselejšnjo aktualnost; številni segmenti njegovih idej namreč še danes predstavljajo nepogrešljivi navdih in zgled pri reševanju perečih problemov človeštva, vpetih v niz peripetij sodobnega sveta.

Tisto, kar bistveno zaznamuje Gandhijev sistem mišljenja in delovanja, pa je ideja o nenehnem postajanju kot temeljnem značaju realnosti, slednje pa se ne izteče v gotovost in se ne dovrši v otrpli in dokočni propozicionalni resnici, ampak se onstran nedotakljivosti in zakoreninjenosti posameznih konceptov brez prestanka in postanka preobraža, preizprašuje uveljavljena idejna obzorja in pogleduje za novimi rešitvami. S svojim pristopom je tako zamajal stare zakoličene strukture in spodmaknil leste, ki vodi do nedotakljivega Enega ali Boga, in to Vrhovno preizpraševal v redu imanence in nenehnega postajanja. Gandhijev sistem namreč ni metafizičen, ampak hipofizičen, v določenih segmentih soroden Bergsonovemu *élan vitalu*,<sup>3</sup> je sistem, ki ga zaznamuje hitrost<sup>4</sup> kot elementarna lastnost nebrzdane spremembe, ki sleherno trdno postavljeno vednost umešča v nenehno gibanje ter preči, ruši in na novo postavlja njene raznolike segmente. Resnična vednost se namreč oblikuje šele na ravni imanence, uokvirjene s horizontom dogodkov vsake partikularne družbenozgodovinske situacije. Ideje o hitrosti, spremembi in misli, ki svojo resnično podobo dobiva šele v redu nenehnega postajanja, so postale aktualne tudi v sodobni zahodni filozofiji, denimo Deleuzovi in Guattarijevi filozofiji imanence. Imanenca kot ravnina, kjer ideje na novo postajajo vedno znova in pri vsakomur drugače, kraj, ki je presečišče dogodkov in stališč v vsaki posamični situaciji, šele omogoči konkretno uporabo misli in človeka postavlja pred izziv, da se znade v svojem mišljenju ter svojo lastno vednost preizkuša na terenu neogibnega, konstantnega spreminjanja. V svetu postajanja, kot je mnogokrat izkusil tudi Gandhi, pa nobena rešitev ni dokončna – ko je bil v številnih trenutkih prepričan, da je dosegel do rešitve, pa se je pred njim nenadoma razprl nov, nepoznani, poprej še neopaženi horizont, »nova krivulja ravnine, ki [...] na novo sproži celoto in zastavi nove probleme, nov vlak problemov, ki operirajo z zaporednimi sunki in izzivajo pojme, ki morajo šele priti oziroma jih je treba šele ustvariti.«<sup>5</sup> Tovrsten Gandhijev uvid pa je najusodnejše botroval k neizmerni prožnosti njegovega sistema, slednje pa je tudi razlog, da se

3 Mohan, Dwivedi, *Gandhi and Philosophy*, 3.

4 *Ibid.*

5 Deleuze, Guattari, *Kaj je filozofija?*, 86. Tudi Deleuze in Guattari sta na osnovi pojmovanja imanence utemeljevala svojo idejo političnega aktivizma, ki mora biti osnovan na postajanju, upoštevanju multiplicitet onkraj trdno zakoličenih konceptov in vnaprej postavljene vednosti.



ni dosti obremenjeval s teorijo in izpiljeno argumentacijo, še manj pa z aporijami v lastnem mišljenju in nekonsistentnostjo idej, kar so mu številni, predvsem akademsko izobraženi filozofi, mnogokrat očitali. Preslikava filozofskih idej v nepredvidljivi svet postajanja sicer vselej zahteva vsaj delno »žrtvovanje« zakonitosti koherentnega filozofskega diskurza, leta pa, kot je s svojim vitalnim, dinamičnim filozofiranjem dokazal Gandhi, predstavlja vrhovni izziv sleherne filozofije. Nekonsistentnost idej pravzaprav ni posledica mankov v njegovem pristopu, ampak so ambivalence v teoriji neobhodni in pravzaprav edini možni izsedeek aplikacije kompleksnih konceptov na še veliko bolj kompleksno dejanskost, kar je temeljni značaj procesa praktičnega filozofiranja. Gandhi je svoje prizadevanje, namreč umestitev univerzalnih konceptov v plasti spreminjajočega se sveta in dinamični kontekst živečega hinduizma, prežetega z brezmejno raznovrstnostjo, razumel kot nikoli dokončen proces, kot neprestano približevanje resnici, nenehno ustvarjanje boljše prihodnosti in s tem nove zgodovine, pri čemer pa je skušal premostiti ponavljanje stare: »Nikoli nisem bil slepo zaverovan v doslednost. Častim Resnico in moram povedati, kaj mislim in čutim o danem vprašanju, ne glede na vse, kar sem o njem morda že povedal. [...] Ker je moj pogled čedalje jasnejši, morajo z vsakodneвно prakso postati jasnejša tudi moja stališča.«<sup>6</sup> Glede svoje metode nenehnega približevanja, ki je pravzaprav metoda onkraj sleherne dokončno izdelane, nepredušne metode, je često poudarjal, da sam ni avtor kakšnega novega koncepta, ampak je večne resnice le poskušal aplicirati na vsakdanje življenje, v tem smislu pa Gandhijeva vednost nima pravega avtorstva, saj jo je kot tako zaradi samega načina raziskovanja nemogoče opredeliti. Njegova vednost je znanje, ki je v nenehnem gibanju, se ves čas odpira in upira ter spodmika tla samemu sebi. Na svoji poti se je namreč nenehno učil in svoja pretekla stališča prepoznavaal za zmotna: »Moj cilj ni biti usklajen z mojimi prejšnjimi izjavami o danem vprašanju, temveč biti usklajen z resnico, kot se mi lahko pokaže v slehernem trenutku. Posledica tega pa je, da iz resnice v resnico rastem.«<sup>7</sup>

## Raznoliki obrazi Resnice

Pri razumevanju Resnice je Gandhi izhajal iz ideje o Vrhovnem Enem, *Brahmanu*, ki tvori večinski delež razprav vedskih filozofskih spisov *upanišad* in predstavlja središčno polje zanimanja hindujske šole *advajta vedanta*. Pod vplivom omenjenih miselnih sistemov je Resnico izenačil s konceptom Enega oziroma Boga, pri čemer je v svojih delih podal dve znameniti formulaciji, namreč »Resnica je Bog« in »Bog je Resnica«.<sup>8</sup> Glede zadnje trditve je izpostavil, da Resnica ni atribut Boga, ampak moramo glagol

6 *Harijan*, 28. 9. 1934; v: Gandhi, *All Men are Brothers*, 398.

7 *Mabatma*, V, 25. september 1939; v: Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers*, 399.

8 *Mabatma*, III, *Speech*, 1931; v: Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers*, 174.

je razumeti kot absolutno identiteto, namreč: »Samo Bog je, ničesar drugega ni. Sanskrtska beseda za resnico je pravzaprav beseda, ki dobesedno pomeni *to, kar biva, sat.*«<sup>9</sup> Identiteto, vzpostavljeno na ravni teoretičnega diskurza, pa je v svojem slogu oplemenitil s konkretnim vidikom, namreč »če želite najti Resnico kot Boga, je edino neizogibno sredstvo ljubezen, to je nenasilje«. <sup>10</sup> Resnico oziroma Boga, ki se manifestirata kot ljubezen in nenasilje, je torej razumel kot vsezajemajočo silo, ki hkrati prežema vse ustvarjeno. Na ravni jezikovnega izraza se je večinoma posluževal neosebni poimenovanj Vrhovnega, kar kaže na vpliv *advajta vedante*, a kljub naklonjenosti tej šoli se je v posameznih segmentih korenito oddaljil od njenega monističnega idealizma. Gandhi namreč Enega, združevalne Unije ni pojmoval kot nečesa v sebi dovršenega, brez sledu partikularnosti, ampak kot skupek multiplicitet, ki se v Enem ne razblini, ampak ga bistveno konstituira. Reduciranje bivajoče mnogovrstnosti na samozadostno Eno in hkrati opredelitev te mnogoterosti kot iluzije, *maje*, kar je ena od temeljnih idej sistema *advajta vedante*, po Gandhiju izničuje srž Resnice in s tem bivanje samo. Resnica ni otrpla, statična dejanskost, ampak dinamična celota številnih partikularnosti, s to idejo pa je Mahatma monistično polje *advajta vedante* preobrazil v kraj izrekanja vseh možnih in vselej spreminjajočih se segmentov življenja. Številni so opozarjali na Gandhijeve nekonsistentnosti, češ da na eni strani zagovarja pluralizem, na drugi pa idejo o brezobličnem Enem. Te nekonsistentnosti, ki izhajajo iz Gandhijeve »rehabilitacije« razlike, pa so zgolj navidezne; premostil jih je namreč z idejo o ubrani usklajenosti, Uniji, neznanski sili, ki je svetu imanentna, se pretaka skozi njegovo neskončno raznovrstnost in ga hkrati zaobjema v vsej njegovi totalnosti. Tako spoj Enega in Mnoštva za Gandhija predstavlja vrhovno koherentnost in konsistentnost.

V orisanem pojmovanju Boga, Resnice, Enega, Unije pa je Gandhi med drugim izhajal iz dveh džainističnih nauk, *anekantavada* in *sjadvada*. *Anekantavada* (»ne-nostranskost«, »mnogovrstnost«) temelji na ontološki predpostavki, da je celotna realnost zaznamovana z mnogovrstnim značajem in nenehno spremembo, pri čemer pa jo prežema tudi moment enotnosti in stalnosti. Ontologija razlike v enosti in spremembe v stalnosti pa je bistveno povezana tudi z epistemskim vidikom nauka *sjadvada* (iz skrt. *syāt*, tj. »mogoče«, »lahko je«, »v določenem oziru«), srž katerega korenini v ideji, da lahko o dinamični, mnogovrstni realnosti privzemamo raznolika stališča, ki so enakovredna, zavoljo česar nobeno ne more postati absolutno oziroma obče veljavno. S tem so džainisti in Gandhi premostili navidezne nekonsistentnosti med različnimi perspektivami in se tako približali povezujočemu temelju te raznolikosti, uniji mnogovrstnega in trajnosti v spremembi – Resnici. Cilj filozofske preiskave realnosti tako ni formulacija kategoričnih propozicij, saj nobeno stališče ne more povsem adekvatno

9 *Ibid.*, 175.

10 *Ibid.*

opisati kompleksnega značaja realnosti. Idejo, da o realnosti oblikujemo številne nasprotujoče si trditve, saj nanjo gledamo z različnih perspektiv, pa slikovito upoveduje parabola o slonu in slepcih iz palijskega korpusa najzgodnejših budističnih besedil *Tipitaka*;<sup>11</sup> namreč ko se je vsak od slepcev dotaknil katerega od telesnih delov slona, je na osnovi slednjega oblikoval svoje stališče o nepoznanem objektu pred sabo. Tako tudi ljudje, ki poznajo le en vidik določenega segmenta realnosti, o njem oblikujejo stališče, pri katerem vztrajajo kot edinem pravilnem, ostajajo kot slepci, brez posluha za večplasten značaj bivajočega. Zavaljo takšne narave sveta je vsaka trditev relativna, veljavna zgolj v določenem kontekstu in partikularnih življenjskih in zgodovinskih okoliščinah, hkrati pa predstavlja pomemben drobec v večplastnem mozaiku Resnice. Resnica kot torišče raznolikosti in s tem navideznih nekonsistentnosti pa je kot taka neekskluzivna kreativna sila, ki zajame vse vidike realnosti in v svoji neizčrpani polnosti ne more biti nikoli povsem dokončno dojeta niti izčrpno opisana. Gandhi se je v ideji, da niti tisoč imen Boga ne more izčrpati njegove narave in oblik, saj ima nešteto imen in nešteto oblik,<sup>12</sup> često posluževal retoričnega zatekanja v posebne načine izrekanja neizrekljivega. Pri tem se je med drugim opiral tudi na metodo, sorodno upanišadski dvojni negaciji *neti neti* (»niti to niti ono«), ki odslkava idejo, da nikoli ne moremo povsem adekvatno opisati Poslednje Realnosti, niti, tako Gandhi, spreminajoče se pojavnosti, ki to Poslednje bistveno konstituita. Moč, ki jo imenuje bodisi Bog bodisi Resnica, je onkraj sleherne dokončne definicije, izreka se skozi številne partikularnosti, na najrazličnejše načine, a se nikoli ne more do konca izreči.

Tako se je Gandhi opredelil za iskalca Resnice, ki jo neutrudno išče in od časa do časa dobi vpogled v katerega od njenih vidikov, a je v celoti ne more uvideti. S to držo je presegel iluzorno prepričanje o možnosti dosege totalnega spoznanja; vrhovni spoznavni dosežek je, nasprotno, v zavedanju, da obstaja mnogo drugih, še nepoznanih perspektiv, kar pa je ključno za razumevanje narave absolutne Resnice, ki transcendirata konkretno, hkrati ko ga družiti v sebi.<sup>13</sup> Pri tem je poudarjal, da lahko le razumevanje relativnih, zgodovinskih in kulturno pogojenih resnic pojasnjuje univerzalne, absolutne ideale, kot so Resnica, Bog, Religija, sicer le-ti ostanejo mrtve dogme.

Vpoglede v drobce absolutne Resnice je tkal prek niza uvidov v relativne resnice, ki so zaznamovale čas, v katerem je živel in ustvarjal, in sicer prek svoje aktivne udeležnosti v različnih plasteh družbenega; le na tak način namreč absolutni ideali postanejo del dinamične dialektike segmentov posvetnega, na obličju katerega dobivajo svojo resnično podobo. Z razmerjem med absolutnim in relativnim je Gandhi podprl tudi svoje razumevanje religije; poudarjal je, da obstaja ena vrhovna Religija, izenačena z Resnico in

11 *Tittha sutta, Udāna 6.4, Khuddakanikāya.*

12 Richards, *The Philosophy of Gandhi*, 4.

13 *Ibid.*, 17.

Bogom, ki sestoji iz partikularnih izrazov posameznih religij, in tudi v kontekstu religije, v katero je bili rojen, je prepoznal, da večna hindujska *dharma* (skrt. *sanātanadharma*) dobiva svoje obraze prek raznolikih manifestacij v območju relativnega, spreminjajočega se sveta. Religija, Resnica in Bog so zanj veljali kot neomajne in nespremenljive večnosti, hkrati ko vselej postajajo. Tako je Gandhi ločeval tudi med Bogom zgodovine in živečim Bogom sedanjosti; nekoč je dejal misijonarjem: »Ne oznanjajte Boga zgodovine, temveč ga pokazžite takšnega, kot živi danes, v vas.«<sup>14</sup>

Heterogenost izrazov, ki zaznamuje že en sam religijski sistem, pa seveda obstaja tudi med različnimi religijami, pri čemer je Gandhi poudarjal idejo, da so vse posamične religije konstrukt človeštva, ki pa kot take v svojem sržu posedujejo eno Resnico, kar pomeni, da so si v temelju enake med sabo. Ta enotna osnova, ki druží diverzitetu religijskih izrazov in harmonizira različnosti, pa kot taka ostaja nespremenljiva in neizrekljiva. Religije je razumel kot različne poti, ki vodijo do enega in istega cilja, vsaka posamična religija pa je zgolj en vidik, konkretna podoba ene univerzalne Religije. V skladu s tem je zavračal idejo, da je hinduizem politeističen; namreč ko hindujci pravijo, da obstaja mnogo bogov, je slednje samo skupek dimenzij enega, univerzalnega, enotnega počela, ki druží ne le hindujske religijske izraze, ampak tudi vidike vseh drugih religij.

Četudi Gandhi za Vrhovno Poslednje ni uporabljal imen konkretnih bogov, ampak se je, kot rečeno, posluževal neosebni terminov, pa je ostro zavračal predvsem s strani *advajta vedante* uveljavljena stališča, da ideje o osebnem bogu pritičejo zgolj intelektualno podhranjenim množicam, ki niso sposobne višjih duhovnih uvidov. Pri tem se je, pod vplivom filozofsko-religijske pesnitve *Bhagavadgita*, drobca obsesnega epa *Mahabharata*, ki je zanj veljala za knjigo vseh knjig, njegovo mati in večno sopotnico, oddaljil od *advajta vedante* in kontemplacije oddaljenega, neosebnega absoluta ter izpostavljal ključnost ideje o neposredni prisotnosti Vrhovnega v svetu in *bhakti*, tj. ljubečo, pristno naklonjenost med Bogom in človekom. Pri tem je zanikal superiornost enega ali drugega vidika in poudarjal enakovrednost tako kontemplacije brezobličnega kot tudi čaščenja osebnega Boga. Zavoljo ideje o obstoju brezobličnega Boga ni zanikal Boga, ki se uteleša v raznih oblikah in človeku nudi bližino; kar se mu je zdelo pri čaščenju Boga v svetu v konkretni, otipljivi podobi še zlasti pomembno, pa je premostitev ideje o Vrhovnem kot intelektualnem konceptu. Boga je Gandhi namreč razumel kot inherentno silo v srcih vseh, najtesnejšega prijatelja, ki z enako mero ljubi vse: »Zame je Bog Resnica in Ljubezen; Bog je etika in morala; Bog je neustrašnost. Bog je vir Svetlobe in Življenja, vendar je nad in onkraj vsega tega. Bog je zavest. Je celo ateistov ateizem. [...] Presega govor in razum. [...] Za tiste, ki potrebujejo Njegovo osebno navzočnost, je osebni Bog. Utelesen je v tistih, ki potrebujejo Njegov dotik. Je najčistejše bistvo. Za tiste, ki verujejo,

14 *Young India*, 11. avgust 1927; v: Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers*, 151.

preprosto *je*. On je vse za vse ljudi. V nas je, a vendar nad nami in onkraj nas.«<sup>15</sup> Prek vpliva *Bhagavadgite* in vizije Boga, Resnice, Religije kot vseprežemajoče totalitete, svetu imanentne in hkrati transcendentne, je poudarjal enakopravnost vseh dimenzij razumevanja Vrhovnega, v čemer je prepoznal tudi možnost napredovanja Indije in sveta v smeri večje humanosti.

Hkrati pa je to, da nekdo misli drugače, bodisi v religijskem ali katerem koli drugem kontekstu, bistveno za ohranjanje konstruktivnega mišljenja in refleksije,<sup>16</sup> ali kot je zapisal Foucault: »So trenutki v življenju, ko je, da bi lahko še naprej gledali ali razmišljali, treba vedeti, ali lahko mislimo drugače, kot mislimo, ali lahko zaznavamo drugače, kot vidimo.«<sup>17</sup> Ključnost obstoja raznoterih perspektiv in sprejetje različnosti sta centralna elementa Gandhijeve ideje o dialogu kot plodni obliki konceptualne in izkustvene izmenjave. Za enega od pomembnejših predpogojev snovanja konstruktivnega dialoga med raznolikostmi pa je Gandhi opredelil premoščanje ega – v filozofiji *joge* definiranega kot sidrišča vseh človekovih tegob –, eliminacijo njegovih sebičnih stremeljenj, kar je tudi bistvena osnova za spokojno notranje življenje in težnjo po prizadevanju za blaginjo sveta prek delovanja, osnovanega na nenasilju. Idejo o nenasilju kot vrhovnem etičnem in religijskem idealu, ki se začne »na temeljni ravni ob krčenju 'jaza' v naših mislih«,<sup>18</sup> je podprl tudi z naukom *śadvada*, ki ga je vodil do uvida v nujnost razumevanja stališč drugih, nasprotnim njegovim lastnim. Iz tega je gradil svojo naklonjenost do vsega, tudi njemu drugačnega, in tako gandhijevska ljubezen ni le ljubezen do soseda, ampak tudi do sovražnika. Ideal vsezajemajoče in neizključujoče ljubezni pa je osnova za kakršnokoli spremembo in postopno uresničevanje *sarvodaje*, blaginje celotnega sveta in služenja vsemu, kar pa je tudi najzgovornejši izraz razumevanja narave Resnice. Gandhi je kot »integralni pluralist«,<sup>19</sup> kot se je nekajkrat opredelil tudi sam, izhajal iz ideje o odsotnosti absolutne gotovosti glede tega, kaj je Resnica, prek ideje o raznolikih vidikih resnice pa je utemeljeval tudi svojo filozofijo nenasilja, *ahimse*, s katero je hkrati postavil most med lastnim duhovnim razvojem in prizadevanjem za obče dobro. Svoje razumevanje nenasilja je preobrazil v moralno prakso, afirmativno in svetu naklonjeno politično držo, pri čemer je izpostavljal, da če sleherni posameznik, politika in religije sledijo načelu spoštovanja in nenasilja, se s tem bližajo absolutnemu idealu same Resnice. Kot smo osvetlili že v uvodu tega razdelka, sta ljubezen in nenasilje manifestacija Resnice v svetu *par excellence*.

15 Young India, 5. marec 1925; v: Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers*, 145, 146.

16 Puri, *The Tagore-Gandhi Debate on Matters of Truth and Untruth*, 1.

17 Foucault, *Zgodovina seksualnosti 2, Uporaba ugodij*, 8.

18 Puri, *The Tagore-Gandhi Debate on Matters of Truth and Untruth*, 4.

19 Jahanbegloo, *The Global Gandhi*, 38.

## Strategije delovanja v svetu

Svoj nenehen, nikoli dokončen način približevanja Resnici skozi prakso je Mahatma podprl z naukom o *karmajogi* iz *Bhagavadgite*, ki poziva k odmiku od upanišadske askeze in oznanja idejo o nujnosti aktivnega delovanja v območju posvetnega, kar je predpogoj za doseg vrhovnega duhovnega ideala, *mokše*, tj. končne osvoboditve iz krogotoka ponovnih rojstev in smrti, *sansare*, hkrati pa je, kar je bilo za Gandhija bistvenega pomena, temelj ohranjanja blaginje celotnega sveta, *lokasangrahe*. Aktivno delovanje v posvetnem, kot uči pesnitev, pa mora izhajati iz predhodne osebne preobrazbe, ki vodi do izničenja stremljenjega in s tem k drži nesebičnega ravnanja, t. i. *niškamakarmi*, brez kakršnihkoli partikularnih interesov. Človek s takšnim odnosom postaja preprost, iz preprostosti vznikne dušni mir,<sup>20</sup> ki omogoča jasneje videti pravi značaj Resnice.

Gandhi je *karmajogo* torej razumel kot način delovanja v svetu, ki je posvečeno iskanju Resnice in omogoča vpogled vanjo, hkrati pa tudi kot način, kako se približati idealu nenasilnega bivanja. A glede na to, da je *Bhagavadgita*, grajena kot dialog med bogom Kršno in vojščakom Ardžuno, vpeta v širši kontekst vojnega dogajanja v *Mahabharati*, so skozi zgodovino raziskovanja obeh del vznikale številne razprave, ali sploh zagovarjata možnost nenasilnega delovanja. Najtrdovratnejši vprašaj vznikne predvsem na obličju nauka o *varnadharmi*, dolžnostih družbenih razredov, ki človeku niso dodeljene od zunaj, bodisi s strani družine bodisi družbenih institucij, ampak so v pesnitvi in epu opredeljene kot lastnosti njegove materialne eksistence, s katerimi je rojen in jih mora zavoljo tega brezpogojno upoštevati, v nasprotnem primeru se namreč zgodi nerazumen in brezploden upor proti svoji lastni identiteti. Na osnovi slednjega tudi bog Kršna zapoveduje vojščaku Ardžuni, da je bojevanje njegova dolžnost, ki ji mora brezpogojno slediti, ta dolžnost pa neogibno vključuje nasilje, pri čemer se, predvsem v kontekstu Gandhijeve interpretacije, pod vprašaj postavlja smiselnost njegove pozicije vztrajanja pri ideji o možnostih delovanja brez slehernega nenasilja. Pri tem velja poudariti, da se je številnih dilem, ki vznikajo iz tega kompleksnega vprašanja, a ne zgolj v primeru družbenega razreda vojščakov, ampak v kontekstu kateregakoli delovanja v svetu, zavedal tudi Mahatma sam: »Popolno nenasilje ni mogoče, dokler fizično bivamo, saj si želimo zasedeti vsaj nekaj prostora. Popolno nenasilje, dokler prebivamo v telesu, je le teorija, tako kot Evklidova točka ali premica, vendar si moramo sleherni trenutek življenja prizadevati zanj.«<sup>21</sup> Zanikal je torej možnost popolne odsotnosti nenasilja, pri čemer je izhajal iz džainistične ideje, da človek že denimo s primarnimi fiziološkimi procesi povzroča konec bitnostim – seveda nehote, a po zakonitostih svoje narave –, ko denimo z dihanjem vase vsrkava množico mikroskopsko majhnih bitnosti, hkrati pa je izpostavljaj možnost

20 Petek, *Bhagavadgita. Onstran vezi, tostran svobode*, 207.

21 Harijan, 21. julij 1940; v: Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers*, 223, 224.

zavestnega negovanja nenasilja, ki ga je moč doseči prek predanega truda in postopnega duhovnega napredovanja. Verjel je, da je človekov večni duh, *atman*, neznanska moč, ki vodi do uresničevanja nenasilja, in vztrajal pri ideji, da je človekovo temeljno poslanstvo, da oznanja *ahimso* v svetu, pri čemer je dodal, da to poslanstvo izhaja iz same človekove narave, ki ji je nenasilje inherentno: »Nenasilje je zakon naše vrste«. <sup>22</sup> Slednje seveda ne pomeni, da je ideal tovrstnega delovanja z lahkoto uresničljiv, <sup>23</sup> ampak zahteva izjemno disciplino, predano psihofizično urjenje in odpovedovanje svojim egocentričnim stremljenjem, t. i. *anasaktijogo*.

Sicer pa so na Gandhijevo razumevanje *Bhagavadgite* vplivale teozofske interpretacije dela, ki so poudarjale njegov alegorični značaj, in tako je v skladu z razumevanjem teozofov, v krogu katerih se je Mahatma v letih 1888/1889 sploh prvič seznanil s pesnitvijo, <sup>24</sup> poudarjal, da vojne ne velja razumeti kot konkretnega bojevanja, ampak kot nekakšno duhovno alegorijo. <sup>25</sup> Polje Kuru, na katerem se soočita sprti družini Kurujci in Pandujci, je simbol za nenehen notranji boj med dobrim in slabim v človeku, za premaganje želja prek kulture nenavezanosti, ki ne more biti uresničeno prek intelektualnega dosežka, ampak zgolj prek »burkanja«, »pretresa« srca, <sup>26</sup> kar vodi v brezinteresno delovanje, ki eliminira egocentrično postopanje v svetu, usmerjeno zgolj k uresničevanju lastnih ciljev. Slednje je Gandhi razumel kot elementarno osnovo človečnosti in služenja drugim, v tem kontekstu pa je tudi *karmajogo* opredelil kot način delovanja v svetu, ki vodi do *ahimse* in hkrati do približevanja Resnici.

Tako bi lahko tudi znamenito zgodbo o penjenju mlečnega oceana iz *Bhagavatapurane*, ki upoveduje boj med bogovi in demoni, hkrati pa simbolizira spopad med dobrim in zlim ter naravo ustvarjenega sveta, v katerem se neprestano bijeta pravično in nepravično, red in kaos, <sup>27</sup> po Gandhijevem razumevanju opredelili kot alegorijo notranje bitke v človeku, konstantno »penjenje«, »pretresanje« oziroma »burkanje srca«, hkrati pa tudi podobo konkretnih spopadov v svetu, ki pa so lahko premoščeni z nenasilnim delovanjem prek poprejšnje zmage dobrega v človeku samem. Osebna, človekova preobrazba, notranja »revolucija« je tudi Gandhijev temeljni argument za možnost nenasilne preobrazbe, zunanje »revolucije« sveta v smeri najvišjega možnega dobrega. V luči slednjega je Mahatma, kljub številnim ugovorom, da so vojne velikokrat pač neobhodno potrebne, saj da eliminirajo zlo v svetu, vztrajal pri ideji, da je nasilni boj vselej napačen

22 »Introduction«; v: Gandhi: *All Men Are Brothers*, 12.

23 Richards, *The Philosophy of Gandhi*, 35.

24 »Introduction«; v: *Bhagavad Gita According to Gandhi*, xv. Mahatma je *Bhagavadgito* prvič prebral v prevodu Sira Edwina Arnolda z naslovom *The Song Celestial* iz leta 1885, ki je tudi prvi prevod pesnitve v angleščino.

25 Petek, *Bhagavadgita. Onstran vezi, tostran svobode*, 67.

26 »Introduction«; v: *Bhagavad Gita According to Gandhi*, xix.

27 Petek, »Iz purán«; v: *Razgledi po staroindijski književnosti*, 418.

in v nobenem primeru ni upravičen. Pri tem bi lahko njegovo pozicijo primerjali z neuklonljivim stališčem Judhisthire, vojščaka iz rodbine Pandujcev, ki bi po dolžnostih svojega razreda in s tem zakonitostih svoje lastne materialne eksistence moral sodelovati v boju, a je tako rekoč do zadnjega diha vztrajal pri ideji, da so doložnosti vojščakov, tj. *kšatrijadharma*, ki vključujejo nasilno delovanje, neodpušljivi greh. Judhisthira je brezpogojno stavil na vselejšnjo možnost nenasilnega delovanja v svetu in nikoli ni dopustil, da bi njegova identiteta *kšatrije* prevladala nad *ahimsa*.<sup>28</sup> Sorodno Judhisthiri je tudi Gandhi korenito preinterpretiral uveljavljeno pojmovanje *kšatrijadharne*, pri čemer pa ni zanikal dolžnosti družbenih razredov, v omenjenem primeru dolžnosti vojščakov, ampak je vztrajal pri ideji, da morajo *kšatrije* imeti pred očmi še drugo, alternativno pot nenasilja, ki jo imajo vselej možnost izbrati.<sup>29</sup> Tako je Gandhi eksistencialno stisko in dilemo vojščaka Ardžune, s katero se začne *Bhagavadgita*, namreč ali slediti svoji dolžnosti vojščaka in sodelovati v pobojih ali jo opustiti, preobrazil v napor izbire med nasiljem ali nenasiljem.

Vztrajanje pri veri v moč nenasilja je Gandhi torej razumel tudi kot približevanje Resnici, hkrati s tem pa tudi kot izbiro, ki vodi do individualne in kolektivne svobode.<sup>30</sup> Menil je, da k odločitvi za nasilno delovanje v največji meri botrujeta človekov strah in moralna šibkost, ki vodita v še večjo izgubo svobode, v slednjem pa je prepoznaval tudi glavni razlog podrejanja Indijcev kolonizatorju. Šibkost volje, ki je nemoč posluževanja nenasilja, je sorodna Aristotelovi *akrasiji* (gr. *ákrasia*), pomanjkanju samoobvladovanja, ki človeka odvrča od tega, da opravi tisto, za kar sicer dobro ve, da bi moral storiti. To nemoč pa je po Gandhiju mogoče premostiti prek postopne kulture nenavezanosti in osebne preobrazbe.<sup>31</sup>

Za podrobnejšo osvetlitev orisanega Gandhijevega pristopa pa je ključno razlikovanje med aktivno in pasivno močjo. Aktivna sila se nanaša na fizično moč in je po Mahatmi tista, ki človeka oddaljuje od njegove prave narave in hkrati od drugih entitet v svetu, pasivna moč pa z vrlino zaobjame vse in s tem tudi zblizuje.<sup>32</sup> Pasivna moč nenasilja je namreč moč ljubezni, *satjagrahe*; pasivni odpor je metoda moči duha, ki je »neskončno močnejši od moči telesa. Če se bodo ljudje zavoljo poprave krivic zatekli k moči duha, se bodo izognili večini sedanjega trpljenja.«<sup>33</sup> Nenasilje je tako opredelil kot najsilnejšo moč v svetu; »znanost« pasivne moči, hipofizika<sup>34</sup> ima moč kohezije, ob izčrpanosti slednje in prevladi aktivne sile pa se dogodijo vsi civilizacijski kolapsi.

28 Petek, *Bhagavadgita. Onstran vezi, tostran svobode*, 99.

29 Richards, *The Philosophy of Gandhi*, 40.

30 Puri, *The Tagore-Gandhi Debate on Matters of Truth and Untruth*, 144.

31 *Ibid.*

32 Mohan, Dwivedi, *Gandhi and Philosophy*, 99, 100.

33 *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, 1933; v: Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers*, 240.

34 *Ibid.*, 109.



Na Gandhijevo prizadevanje k uresničevanju nenasilja v svetu na vseh ravneh je vplival tudi budistični in džainistični ideal nenasilja, izhajajoč iz vsezajemajoče ljubezni do vsega živečega, ki vključuje tudi najmanjše, neznatne bitnosti, poleg indijskih filozofsko-religijskih tokov pa so na njegovo razumevanje *ahimsa* vplivali denimo tudi Thoreau, Tolstoj, Ruskin in Emerson. Svoje pojmovanje razmerja med resnico in nenasiljem je poglobil zlasti ob Tolstojevem romanu *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, ki ga je prebiral ravno v obdobju, ko je bil povsem izgubljen v dvomih in prežet s skepsjo glede smiselnosti svojih prizadevanj. Tolstoj ga je naposled »ozdravil«<sup>35</sup> skepticizma in mu povrnil vero v moč nenasilja, zavoljo tega pa je za Gandhija predstavljal eno od temeljnih inspiracij; opredelil ga je za vélikega apostola nenasilja, ki le-tega ni le oznanjal, ampak ga je tudi živel.<sup>36</sup> Od Tolstoja je prevzel tudi idejo o dvojni naravi nenasilja; poleg »negativne«<sup>37</sup> opredelitve nenasilja v smislu izogibanja škodljivim dejanjem je pomembna tudi »pozitivna«<sup>37</sup> dimenzija, ki se kaže v krepitevi ljubezni in sočutja.

Prizadevanje živeti nenasilno, v mislih, besedah in dejanjih, je za Gandhija torej pomenilo približevanje Resnici in njeno uresničevanje, uvid vanjo, medtem ko, obratno, nasilje vodi daleč od nje, hkrati pa je približevanje Resnici razumel kot uresničevanje nenasilja: »*Ahimsa* je moj Bog in Resnica je moj Bog. Ko iščem *ahimsa*, Resnica reče: 'Poišči jo prek mene.' Ko iščem Resnico, *ahimsa* pravi: 'Poišči jo prek mene'.«<sup>37</sup> Resnica in nenasilje se torej medsebojno pogojujeta, uresničevanje enega vzajemno podpira poglobljeno uresničevanje drugega; nenasilno delovanje vodi do uvida v Resnico, obenem pa uvideti večplastni značaj Resnice vodi do še bolj neomajnega prakticiranja nenasilja. Na osnovi slednjega bi lahko sklenili, da sta Resnica in nenasilje dve plati enega in istega kovanca. Nenasilje, uresničeno v praksi, je za Gandhija Resnica sama.

## Gandhijeva uporniška in nekonformistična filozofija kot umetnost bivanja

V filozofiji Mahatme Gandhija se torej prepletajo nauki hindujske, budistične, džainistične tradicije in segmenti zahodne filozofske misli, ideje o Enem in Mnoštvu, stalnosti in spremembi, univerzalnem in partikularnem, transcendenci in imanenci, duhovnem in materialnem, neosebni absolutu in ljubečem bogu bližine, filozofski kontemplaciji in aktivnem delovanju v svetu. Na osnovi heterogenega prepleta najrazličnejših idejnih obzorij je skoval unikatno vizijo o svojem poslanstvu in svetu, pri čemer pa je izhajal predvsem iz ideje, da mora biti filozofija v prvi vrsti način življenja. Gandhijevo držo bi lahko osvetlili tudi s premisleki Pierra Hadota, namreč da je resnična filozofija umetnost bivanja, metoda

35 *Mahatma, II, Message on Tolstoy Centenary*, 1928; v: Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers*, 410.

36 *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, 1933; v: Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers*, 240.

37 *Young India*, 4. junij 1925; v: Gandhi, *My God*, 18.

duhovnega napredka, ki zahteva radikalno preobrazbo poprejšnjega načina življenja; je vaja v doseganju modrosti, podprta z neprestanim trudom, ki pa ne pomeni le tega, da nekaj vem, ampak da *sem* – na drugačen način. Zgled filozofije, ki ni zgolj teoretska in conceptualizirajoča dejavnost, ampak odgovarja tudi na vprašanje »Kako živeti?«,<sup>38</sup> za Hadota sicer predstavlja Sokrat, ki pa je bil tudi eden od Gandhijevih herojev – tako v življenju kot tudi v smrti. Mahatma je začel sokratsko držo v sebi prepoznavati v času bivanja v Južni Afriki, najintenzivneje leta 1908, ko je prestajal zaporno kazen. Takrat je prebiral Platonovo *Apologijo* v angleščini, nakar je napisal tudi svojo *Apologijo* v gudžaratščini z naslovom *Ek satyavirni katha* (*Story of a True Soldier* ali *Story of a Soldier of Truth*), v kateri je zapisal, da se moramo naučiti živeti in umreti kot Sokrat. Označil ga je kot vélikega *satjagrahi-ja*, ki neomajno kljubuje sovraštvu in zlobi ter je pripravljen kadarkoli, v vseh okoličinah, žrtvovati sebe, brezpogojno zagovarjati svojo filozofijo in pri tem ostati neomajen, tudi pred samo smrtjo. V enem od zapisov v *Young India* ga je opredelil kot nekoga, ki stremlji k resnici,<sup>39</sup> poleg Jezusa Kristusa in biblijskega preroka Danijela pa je zanj predstavljal »najčistejšo obliko pasivnega odpora oziroma moč duha«,<sup>40</sup> nekoga, ki je še kako dobro vedel, da je vsaka fizična sila povsem neprimerljiva z njeno silnostjo.

Gandhi in Sokrat se odlikujeta po svoji nekonformistični drži, podkovani z željo načeti slonokoščene stolpe rigidnih nedotakljivih prepričanj in iztrgati se konvencionalnemu; uporniška modrost in metoda spraševanja »odpadnikov«, »samotnih jezdecev« in »marginalnost« njunih miroljubnih disidentskih umov so bile sposobne prevrednotiti oholost idealov časa, v katerem sta živela.<sup>41</sup> Sokrat je brez dvoma dobil svojega veličastnega indijskega naslednika oziroma lahko brez pomislekov zatrdim, da ko mu je Mahatma sledil v svojih prizadevanjih, je svojega grškega vzornika hkrati tudi presegel. Gandhi je namreč dokazal moč filozofije, ki samo sebe preizkusi v praksi; filozofije, izhajajoče iz uvida, da je svet, v svojem sržu zaznamovan z nenehno spremembo, na široko odprta poljana možnosti za vsako novo spremembo – sprembo odznotraj navzen.

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38 Hadot, *Kaj je antična filozofija?*, 286, 287.

39 *Young India*, 13. november 1925; v: Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers*, 184, 185.

40 *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, 1933; v: Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers*, 240.

41 Jahanbegloo, *The Global Gandhi*, 129.

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Dr. Nina Petek je docentka na Oddelku za filozofijo Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani, kjer poučuje predmete s področja azijskih filozofsko-religijskih tradicij, s posebnim poudarkom na filozofskih tradicijah in religijah Indije. Doktorirala je na istem oddelku leta 2016 z disertacijo, naslovljeno *Odnos med dharmo in mokšo v Bhagavadgīti*. Raziskovalno se ukvarja z ontologijo in epistemologijo v filozofskih šolah Indije in budizmu. Je vodja raziskave »Budizem v himalajskih puščavah: tradicija jogijev v Ladakhu«, ki se posveča budistični puščavniški tradiciji in izvorom meditacijskih praks v predelu indijske Himalaje na območju dveh zveznih teritorijev Ladakh in Džamu-Kašmir. Prevaja iz sanskrta v slovenščino, poleg tega pa je avtorica dveh znanstvenih monografij: *Bhagavadgita. Onstran vezi, tostran svobode* (Založba Pivec, 2021) in *Na pragu prebujenja. Svetovi sanj v budizmu* (Založba Beletrina, 2022). Je direktorica Inštituta za študije meništva in kontemplativne znanosti.

## Gandhi's Philosophy as Truth Lived Experientially

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### Abstract

The focus of the present paper is to discuss some segments of Mahatma Gandhi's philosophical path. It begins by shedding light on what the phrase "Gandhi's philosophy" denotes; Mahatma was not a philosopher in the classical meaning of the word; however, in his quest and endeavour for internal and external fulfilment in attaining the Truth, he did conceive of a unique philosophy, for which he drew from a variety of ideas and doctrines within the rich Indian philosophical and religious tradition and often made use of dialogue with Western philosophical thought. Therefore, it is impossible to reduce Gandhi's philosophy to a system of coherent and consistent teachings; this is not a weakness of his philosophising, but rather the result of a world view that, among other things, was based on Jaina doctrines of *anekantavada* (doctrine of the many-sidedness of the world) and *syadvada* (doctrine of the relative nature of knowledge), according to which the entities and attitudes of the world are not based on ontologically or epistemically privileged ideas. The latter reveals Gandhi's attempt to understand all multifaceted aspects of reality and views on the Truth, *satya* and nonviolence, *ahimsa*. But harmonious congruity flows through the inconsistencies in his thought, as highlighted by Mahatma himself – the same way that unity flows through infinite multiplicity – which gives vitality and dynamics to his philosophy. The following section shows Gandhi's understanding of Truth, God and nonviolence, which stems from his unique association of ideas serving as inspiration and motivation for his inner and outer social transformation. It shows how they are situated in the unpredictable field of his constant testing in practice, where Gandhi's philosophy attains its most authentic expression. Gandhi's ideals of knowledge and behaviour, which he supported with the doctrine of *karmayoga* from the *Bhagavad-Gita* went beyond the margins of the discourse and lead Mahatma on one path of intimate, inner-outer revolution, and another of application of this experience on outer, complex social reality.

Although Gandhi's philosophy is not static, but rather evolutionary, dynamic, creative, experiential, experimental and lived, it is characterised by universality, timelessness and constant relevance that go beyond the borders of India.

**Keywords:** Gandhi's philosophy, Truth, experience, inner-outer revolution

### Introduction: Gandhi, a Philosopher "without a Portfolio"

The phrase "Gandhi's philosophy" would be contested by many, since he was not an academically-educated philosopher and did not create a coherent philosophical system, but rather built a dynamic, multifaceted thought that was firmly rooted in practice. The label of "philosopher" was often refuted by Mahatma himself:

Well, all my philosophy, if it may be called by that pretentious name, is contained in what I have said. But, you will not call it “Gandhism”; there is no “ism” about it. And no elaborate literature or propaganda is needed about it. The scriptures have been quoted against my position, but I have held faster than ever to the position that truth may not be sacrificed for anything whatsoever. Those who believe in the simple truths I have laid down can propagate them only by living them. [...] My life alone can demonstrate it.<sup>1</sup>

He defined his life as an “experiment with truth”, which could also be said of his philosophical path, paved with elements of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism; however, he did not focus solely on multiple expressions of his own culture, but rather contemplated all other traditions from within, including ideas from numerous Western thinkers. Each exploration of various doctrines in changing circumstances defined the fundamental character of his philosophy as constant revelation, which required breaking away from all dogmas, ideologies and authorities. Namely, “the Ocean of Truth” is characterised by constant becoming, it is beyond the strategies of reason, as it embraces the totality and the diverse multiplicity of being, which cannot be caught in any single rigid proposition. Thus, Gandhi exposed the gaps in sophisticated and elaborate argumentative approaches, since the spiritual experience that provides the framework of his social and political action cannot be captured and is not constrained by any doctrine. Outside theoretical philosophical speculation, life is constantly changing and, thus, evades ultimate conclusions; for this reason, Mahatma never declared any doctrine to be absolutely valid, but rather held that no one can get to absolute certainty.

He conceived his dynamic, flexible philosophising, characterised by change, becoming and openness to the unknown and managed to build upon it during his life with new experiences gained in practice and through inner “revolution”, i.e. spiritual endeavours and self-exploration, without which, he claimed, life was not worth living. In discovering the Truth, the process of constant self-exploration and self-purification, Mahatma directly confronted his faults and fears, and with each failed attempt, he was closer to the goal that he tirelessly sought – the Truth. However, it is worth highlighting that he did not see his goal as an end point, but rather as a journey with many paths that brought him closer to, but never fully reaching, his goal. This is because his ultimate goal, i.e. the Truth, is beyond us, and the very effort involved in getting closer to it is, according to Gandhi, the realisation of the goal itself, or the goal itself.

Through a different understanding of universal philosophical concepts, which, in their multifaceted nature, cannot be fully grasped in theory, but only in their

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1 *Mahatma, Vol. IV, Meeting of the Gandhi Seva Sangh*, February 29<sup>th</sup> to March 6<sup>th</sup> 1936; in: Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers*, 120, 121.

implementation in practice, he stirred rigidly entrenched social structures and political ideologies. This made him, among other things, the first non-Western thinker of the modern era to base his political theories on living experience. In doing so, he constantly asked questions of himself, of society and of politics that still resonate now, not only in the socio-political climate of his own country, but in the world at large. And yet, due to the everlasting relevance of his insights, which stem from his dynamic, practical process of philosophising and to the rebellious thought that evades all certainty and conformity, Gandhi remains an irreplaceable example of goodness and humanity.

### The Dynamic Character of Gandhi's Philosophy

*But where is the need for books?*  
Mahatma Gandhi<sup>2</sup>

Although *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, which comprise thousands of pages of treatise, including a wide range of philosophical topics, such as metaphysics and ethics, suggest a prolific production of diverse texts, Mahatma's seemingly provocative thought written at the very beginning of this section, reflects the nature of his real life. It reflects his philosophical and socio-political attitude, particularly in relation to India's exceptionally rich and multifaceted philosophical-religious and literary heritage, which dates back to the Vedic period of 1500 BC. Namely, Gandhi proclaimed himself a practical thinker who lacked time to write any substantial and coherent philosophical work, as is manifested, for instance, in the highly appraised work *Contemporary Indian Philosophy* (ed. Radhakrishnan and Muirhead, 1936), for which a range of eminent Indian thinkers contributed a "hefty" twenty to thirty pages, while Mahatma contributed less than one page. The real Gandhi, therefore, is first and foremost a dynamic practical thinker who reinterpreted ideas from various streams of philosophy, his own and Western traditions, in compliance with his own beliefs and immortalised them on paper in the form of short essays; yet, and this is the very core of his attitude, he managed to successfully rip them from the grip of the book covers and place them in the unpredictable sphere of the turbulent circumstances of his own life and larger social realities. Thus, Gandhi's path overlaps with two dimensions of philosophy, the textual and the experiential, the latter being essential for his personal and social progress. Namely, Gandhi's philosophy encompassed his personal struggle, which, for him didn't mean wrestling with difficult philosophical texts from his armchair, but

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2 CWMG:62:225.

rather, involved his inner struggles in the context of socio-political developments. Many other Indian thinkers argued that if philosophy lacks the dimension of effort of practical examination, it is not true philosophy, but rather hypocrisy, to say the least. However, it is worth highlighting that Gandhi did not deny the enormous value and relevance of philosophy that came forth in various spiritual and cultural environments, but harshly criticised the theoretical debate on philosophical ideas without testing how they manifested in the unpredictable circumstances of everyday human life and the wider social reality. In fact, Gandhi's opening thought calls for the application of complex philosophical doctrines into practice, which he himself did for a good part of his life, and which gives his thought a particular inner dynamism and everlasting relevance. Many segments of his ideas still provide indispensable inspiration and give examples on how to resolve the pressing problems of humanity that are embedded in a series of perplexities of the contemporary world.

However, what essentially characterises Gandhi's system of thought and action is the idea of constant becoming as a fundamental feature of reality; the latter does not result in certainty and is not realised in a rigid and final propositional truth, but rather constantly transforms itself and questions the established conceptual horizons, while aiming for new solutions beyond the integrity and entrenchment of individual concepts. His approach thus shook up the old consolidated structures and thwarted the ladder leading to the untouchable One or God, and questioned the Supreme in the order of immanence and constant process of becoming. Namely, Gandhi's system is not metaphysical, but rather hypophysical. In some segments it is similar to Bergson's *élan vital*;<sup>3</sup> it is a system characterised by speed<sup>4</sup> as an elementary characteristic of unbridled change that places each firmly established piece of knowledge in continuous movement, and criss-crosses, undermines and rebuilds its various segments. Namely, the real knowledge is formed only at the level of immanence, circumscribed by a horizon of events of each particular sociohistorical situation. The ideas of speed, change and thought that claim their true place only in the order of constant becoming, have become topical also in contemporary Western philosophy, for instance in Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of immanence. Immanence as a plane where ideas become new and different for everyone again and again, a place that is the intersection of events and standpoints in each concrete situation only makes the concrete application of thought possible, and challenges one to find a way in one's thinking and to test one's own knowledge in the area of inevitable, constant change. However, in the world of becoming, as Gandhi himself experienced many times, no solution is finite – often, when he was convinced that he had found the solution, suddenly a new, unknown,

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3 Mohan, Dwivedi, *Gandhi and Philosophy*, 3.

4 *Ibid.*



previously unnoticed horizon opened up before him, “a new curve of the plane, which [...] starts it all off again, posing new problems, a new batch of problems, advancing by successive surges and seeking concepts to come, concepts yet to be created”.<sup>5</sup> Gandhi's insight, however, most successfully contributed to the immense flexibility of his system, which is why he did not bother much with theoretical or sophisticated argumentation or with the aporias of his own thinking and the inconsistencies of his own ideas, for which many, mainly academic philosophers, often reproached him. The mapping of philosophical ideas onto the unpredictable world of becoming always requires at least a partial “sacrifice” of the laws of coherent philosophical discourse, which constitutes, as Gandhi showed with his vital, dynamic philosophising, a supreme challenge to any philosophy. In fact, the inconsistency of his ideas is not due to a flaw in his approach, but rather to the ambivalences in theory that are inevitable and basically the only possible outcome of the application of complex concepts on a more complex reality, which is the fundamental characteristic of the process of practical philosophy. Gandhi understood his endeavour, i.e. placing universal concepts into layers of the changing world, and the dynamic context of lived Hinduism, imbued with boundless diversity, in terms of a never ending process, a constant journey to get closer to the truth, the continuous creation of a better future and a new history, with the aim of overcoming the repetition of the old history: “I have never made a fetish of consistency. I am a votary of Truth, and I must say I feel and think at a given moment on the question, without regard to what I may have said before on it. [...] As my vision gets clearer, my views must grow clearer with daily practice.”<sup>6</sup> With his method of constantly getting closer, that is, in fact, a method beyond any definitely refined and airtight method, he often highlighted that he was not the author of any new concept, but merely attempted to apply the eternal truths to everyday life; in this sense, Gandhian knowledge has no real authorship, since it is impossible to define it as such, because of the very way in which it is researched. His knowledge is knowledge that is constantly in motion, constantly opening and resisting, and undermining itself. He was constantly learning along the way and saw his past positions as mistaken: “My aim is not to be consistent with my previous statements on a given question, but to be consistent with truth as it may present itself to me at a given moment. The result has been that I have grown from truth to truth.”<sup>7</sup>

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5 Deleuze, Guattari, *What is philosophy?*, 82. Deleuze and Guattari also based their idea of political activism on the fact that it had to be rooted in becoming, considering the multiplicities beyond firmly fixed concepts and preconceived knowledge.

6 *Harijan*, 28<sup>th</sup> September 1934; in: Gandhi, *All Men are Brothers*, 398.

7 *Mabatma*, V, 25<sup>th</sup> September 1939; in: Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers*, 399.

## The Many Facets of Truth

In his understanding of Truth, Gandhi drew on the idea of the Supreme One, *Brahman* that forms the bulk of the treatise of the Vedic philosophical scriptures, the *Upanishads* and constitutes the central field of interest of the Hindu school of *Advaita Vedanta*. Influenced by these systems of thought, Gandhi equated the Truth with the concept of One or God, and gave two eminent formulations in his works, namely “Truth is God” and “God is Truth”.<sup>8</sup> As far as the last proposition is concerned, Gandhi highlighted that Truth is not an attribute of God, since the verb *is* is to be understood as absolute identity, for “God alone is, and nothing else exists. In fact, the Sanskrit word for truth is a word which literally means *that which exists, sat*.”<sup>9</sup> The identity established at the level of theoretical discourse was enhanced in his own manner with a concrete aspect, namely, “you want to find Truth as God, the only inevitable means is love, that is, nonviolence”.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, he understood Truth or God manifested as love and nonviolence in terms of an all-encompassing force that pervades all things. At the level of linguistic expression, he mainly made use of impersonal names of the Supreme, which points at the influence of *Advaita Vedanta*, but still, in spite of being favourable to this school, he radically moved away from its monistic idealism in some segments. For Gandhi did not conceive of the One, the unified Union as something accomplished from within, with no trace of particularity, but rather as a set of multiplicities that do not dissolve in the One but are essentially constituted by it. Reducing the existing multiplicity to the self-sufficient One and the simultaneous definition of this plurality as an illusion, *maya*, which is one of the fundamental principles of the system of *Advaita Vedanta*, according to Gandhi, eliminates the core of Truth, and thus being itself. The Truth is not a rigid, static reality, but a dynamic whole of many particularities; with this idea, Mahatma transformed the monistic plane of *Advaita Vedanta* into a place of utterance of all possible and ever-changing segments of life. Many have pointed to Gandhi’s inconsistencies, saying that on the one hand he argues for pluralism, and on the other for the idea of a formless One. The inconsistencies that stem from Gandhi’s “rehabilitation” of difference are only apparent because he overcame them through the idea of harmonious congruity, the Union, a tremendous force that is immanent in the world and flows through its infinite diversity, while at the same time encompassing it in all its totality. Thus, for Gandhi, the union of the One and the Many represents coherence and consistency.

However, in the conception of God, Truth, One and Union that are outlined above, Gandhi drew on two Jain doctrines, *anekantavada* and *syadvada*. *Anekantavada*

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8 *Mahatma, III, Speech*, 1931; in: Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers*, 174.

9 *Ibid.*, 175.

10 *Ibid.*

("non-one-sidedness", "many-sidedness") is based on the ontological assumption that the whole reality has multiple characters and constant change, while it is pervaded by a moment of unity and constancy. The ontology of the difference in one and change in constancy is essentially associated with the epistemic aspect of the doctrine of *syadvada* (from Skrt. *syāt*, e.g. "perhaps", "may be", "per chance", "in some ways"), the core of which is rooted in the idea that the dynamic, plural reality can take on various standpoints that are equal, which means that none of them can become absolute or universally valid. Thus, the Jainists and Gandhi overcame the apparent inconsistencies among various perspectives and moved closer to the linking foundation of this diversity – the union of many-sidedness and constancy in change – the Truth. The aim of the philosophical exploration of reality, thus, is not a formulation of categorical propositions, since no standpoint can entirely adequately describe the complex character of reality. The idea that many contradicting statements can be formed on reality, since one sees it from various perspectives, is vividly portrayed in the parable of the blind man and the elephant from the Pali canon of the earliest Buddhist texts collection in the *Tiṭṭhaka*;<sup>11</sup> namely, when each of the blind men touched any of elephant's body parts, he formulated his standpoint based on the unknown object before him. Similarly, people who are only acquainted with a single aspect of a particular segment of reality, formulate a standpoint on it and abide by it in terms of the only truth, and remain blind men, with no appreciation for the multifaceted character of being. Hence, the nature of each proposition is relative, valid only in a particular context and in particular life and historical circumstances, but it is also a relevant instance in a multi-layered mosaic of Truth. Truth as a domain of diversity and thus apparent inconsistencies is a non-exclusive creative force that covers all aspects of reality and in its limitless fullness cannot ever be neither fully grasped nor fully uttered. Gandhi, with his idea that even a thousand names of God cannot exhaust His nature and forms, since He has countless names and countless forms,<sup>12</sup> often resorted to the rhetorical recourse of particular ways of uttering the unutterable. In doing so, he relied, among other things, on the method akin to the Upanishadic double negation *neti neti* ("not this, not this"), which reflects the idea that one can never fully adequately describe the Ultimate Reality, nor, as Gandhi points out, the changing phenomenon that essentially constitutes the Ultimate. The power he calls either God or Truth is beyond any finite definition; it is uttered through numerous particularities in most various ways, but can never be fully uttered.

Thus, Gandhi defines himself as the seeker of the Truth, which he tirelessly seeks and occasionally gains insights into, but cannot grasp it in all its totality. With this attitude, he overcame the illusionary belief of the possibility of reaching total knowledge; the supreme

11 *Tiṭṭha sutta, Udāna 6.4, Khuddakanikāya.*

12 Richards, *The Philosophy of Gandhi*, 4.

achievement of knowledge lies, contrarily, in the awareness that there are many other, unknown aspects, which is of key relevance in understanding the nature of absolute Truth that transcends the concrete while being one.<sup>13</sup> He highlighted that only understanding the relevant, historical and culturally conditioned truths can explain the universal, absolute ideals, such as Truth, God and Religion. Otherwise they remain dead dogmas.

Gandhi put his insights together into instances of absolute Truth through a series of insights into relative truth that characterised the times in which he lived and created, through his active participation in various layers of the social; only in this manner did the absolute ideals become a part of dynamic dialectics of the segments of the worldly, where they gain their true form. The relationship between the absolute and the relative also underpinned Gandhi's understanding of religion; he highlighted that there is one supreme Religion equal to Truth and God that consists of particular expressions of each individual religion. In addition, in the context of the religion he was born into, he recognised that the eternal Hindu *dharmā* (Skr. *sanātanadharmā*) acquires its facets through diverse manifestations in the area of the relative, changing world. According to him, Religion, Truth and God were seen as fixed and unalterable eternities, while at the same time they are constantly evolving. Thus, Gandhi also distinguished between the God of history and the living God of the present; once he said to the missionaries: "Do not preach the God of history, but show Him as He lives today through you."<sup>14</sup>

The heterogeneity of expression that characterises a single religious system, exists, of course, among various religions, while Gandhi highlighted the idea that all individual religions are a construct of humanity, but that as such contain one Truth at their core, which means that they are fundamentally alike. However, this uniform ground that unites the diversity of religious expressions and balances diversity, remains unaltered and unuttered as such. He understood religions in terms of various paths leading to one and the same goal, each individual religion being only one aspect, a concrete image of one universal Truth. Hence, he rejected the idea that Hinduism is polytheistic; namely, when the Hindu say that there are many gods, this is only a set of the dimensions of one, universal, uniform origin that unites not only the Hindu religious expressions, but also the aspects of all other religions.

Although Gandhi did not use the names of concrete gods to name the Supreme Ultimate, but, as mentioned above, made use of impersonal terms, he strongly rejected mainly the established positions of *Advaita Vedānta*, i.e. that ideas of a personal god only belong to the intellectually poor masses that are not capable of deeper spiritual insights. In doing so, influenced by the philosophical-religious poem the *Bhagavad-Gīta*, a fragment of the voluminous epic poem the *Mahābhārata*, which he considered the book of all books, his

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13 *Ibid.*, 17.

14 *Young India*, 11<sup>th</sup> August 1927; in: Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers*, 151.

mother and eternal companion, he moved away from *Advaita Vedanta* and the contemplation of the remote, impersonal absolute, and exposed the key relevance of the idea of the direct presence of the Supreme in the world and in *bhakti*, i.e. devoted, genuine affinity between God and man. He denied the superiority of one or the other aspect and highlighted the equality of contemplation of the formless and worship of a personal God. For the sake of the idea of existence of the formless God, he did not deny God who incarnates in various forms and provides closeness to man; what he found particularly relevant in worldly worshipping of God in a concrete, tangible image, is the overcoming of the idea of the Supreme in terms of an intellectual concept. Namely, Gandhi understood God as an inherent force in the hearts of everyone, as the closest friend who loves everyone equally: "To me, God is Truth and Love; God is ethics and morality; God is fearlessness. God is the source of Light and Life and yet He is above and beyond all these. God is conscience. He is even the atheism of the atheist. [...] He transcends speech and reason. [...] He is a personal God to those who need His personal presence. He is embodied to those who need His touch. He is the purest essence. He simply is to those who have faith. He is all things to all men. He is in us and yet above and beyond us."<sup>15</sup> Through the influence of the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the vision of God, Truth, Religion as the all-pervading totality, immanent to the world and at the same time transcendental, he highlighted the equality of all dimensions of understanding the Supreme, while recognising the possibility of India and the world progressing towards greater humanity.

That one can think differently, either in the religious or any other context is, at the same time, essential to preserve constructive thinking and reflection,<sup>16</sup> or as Foucault put it: "There are times in life when the question of knowing one can think differently than one thinks, and perceive differently than one sees, is absolutely necessary if one is to go on looking and reflecting all."<sup>17</sup> The key to the existence of a variety of perspectives and accepting diversity are central elements of Gandhi's idea of dialogue as a fruitful form of conceptual and experiential exchange. As one of the relevant prerequisites for constructive dialogue between diversities, Gandhi, however, identified the bridging of ego – in yogic philosophy, defined as the anchor of all human hardship –, the elimination of his selfish endeavours which is also a necessary foundation of a peaceful inner life and aspiration for the welfare of the world through action, based on nonviolence. He relied his idea of nonviolence as the supreme ethical and religious ideal that begins "at a fundamental level with the diminution of the 'I' in the mind".<sup>18</sup> He also based it on the doctrine of *syadvada*, which brought him insight into the necessary understanding

15 *Young India*, 5<sup>th</sup> March 1925; in: Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers*, 145, 146.

16 Puri, *The Tagore-Gandhi Debate on Matters of Truth and Untruth*, 1.

17 Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol. II: The Use of Pleasure*, 8.

18 Puri, *The Tagore-Gandhi Debate on Matters of Truth and Untruth*, 4.

of other positions that were contrary to his own. From this, he built his affinity with everything, including everything that was alien to him, and thus the Gandhian love is not only love of one's neighbour, but also of one's enemy. The ideal of all-pervading and non-exclusive love is the basis of any change and gradual realisation of *sarvodaya* the welfare of the whole world and service to everything, which is, nevertheless, also the most telling expression of understanding of the nature of Truth. Gandhi as an "integral pluralist",<sup>19</sup> as he sometimes referred to himself, drew from the idea of the absence of absolute certainty regarding what Truth is, while through various aspects of truth, he grounded his philosophy of nonviolence or *ahimsa* that bridged the gap between his own spiritual development and the pursuit of the common good. He transformed his understanding of nonviolence into moral practice, into an affirmative political attitude that was favourable to the world, while highlighting that if any individual, politics and religion follow the principle of respect and nonviolence, they move closer to the absolute ideal of Truth itself. As it has already been highlighted at the beginning of this section, love and nonviolence are the manifestations of Truth in the world *par excellence*.

### Strategies for Global Action

Mahatma based his constant, never ending method of getting closer to the Truth through practice, with the doctrine of *karmayoga* from the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which calls for a departure from Upanishadic asceticism and preaches necessary active engagement in the area of the worldly, which is a prerequisite for attaining the supreme spiritual ideal of *moksha*, i.e. the final liberation from the cycle of rebirth and death, *sansara*. At the same time, and this was essential for Gandhi, *moksha* is the foundation that preserves the welfare of the whole world, *lokasangraha*. However, active engagement in the worldly, as taught by the poem, must result from preliminary personal transformation that leads to the annihilation of the endeavours of the ego and thus the attitude of acting unselfishly, *nishkamakarma*, without any particular motives. A human with such an attitude becomes simple, and out of simplicity arises a peace of mind<sup>20</sup> that enables one to see the true character of Truth more clearly.

Gandhi, therefore, understood *karmayoga* as a way of global action, devoted to seeking Truth and to enable seeing it, but also as a way of getting closer to the ideal of non-violent being. Nevertheless, since the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which is structured as a dialogue between god Krishna and warrior Arjuna, is integrated into a broader context of warfare

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19 Jahanbegloo, *The Global Gandhi*, 38.

20 Petek, *Bhagavadgita. Onstran vezi, tostran svobode (The Bhagavad-Gita. On the Farther Side of Ties, on the Inside of Freedom)*, 207.

in the *Mahabharata*, numerous debates have arisen throughout history on the issue of whether it holds the possibility of nonviolent action at all. The most pressing issue is raised on the surface of the doctrine of *varnadharma*, the duties of social classes that are not attributed to a human from the outside, either on behalf of a family or of social institutions, but are in the epic poem attributed as characteristics of the material existence one was born with and thus should be respected unconditionally; otherwise there is an unreasonable and fruitless resistance against one's own identity. On the basis of this premise, god Krishna commands warrior Arjuna to fight, as this is his unconditional duty and needs to be fulfilled; however, this duty inevitably involves violence, which, particularly in the context of Gandhi's interpretation, questions the reasonableness of his insisting on the idea of the possibility of action without violence. Here, it has to be highlighted that Mahatma himself was aware of numerous dilemmas stemming from this complex issue, not only in the case of the warrior's social class, but also in the context of any global action: "Perfect nonviolence is impossible so long as we exist physically, for we would want some space at least to occupy. Perfect nonviolence whilst you are inhabiting the body is only a theory like Euclid's point or straight line, but we have to endeavour every moment of our lives."<sup>21</sup> He therefore denied the possibility of total absence of violence by drawing from the Jaina idea that a human with primal physiological processes puts an end to beings – unintentionally, of course, but according to the laws of their nature. For instance, by breathing, we absorb a multitude of microscopically small beings. At the same time, he highlighted the possibility of consciously cultivating nonviolence that may be attained through dedicated effort and gradual spiritual progress. He believed that a human's eternal spirit, *atman*, holds incredible power that leads to putting nonviolence into action and insisted on the idea that a human's fundamental mission is to preach *ahimsa* to the world, while adding that this mission stems from human nature, to which nonviolence is inherent: "Nonviolence is the law of our species."<sup>22</sup> Of course, this does not mean that the ideal of such action is easily put into practice,<sup>23</sup> but rather requires incredible discipline, dedicated psycho-physical training and giving up one's egocentric aspirations, *anasaktiyoga*.

Moreover, Gandhi's understanding of the *Bhagavad-Gita* was influenced by theosophic interpretations of the poem that highlighted its allegorical character, in compliance with the understanding of theosophists through whom in 1888/1889 Mahatma first became acquainted with the poem,<sup>24</sup> and who highlighted that wars are not to be

21 *Harijan*, 21<sup>st</sup> July 1940; in: Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers*, 223, 224.

22 "Introduction"; in: Gandhi: *All Men Are Brothers*, 12.

23 Richards, *The Philosophy of Gandhi*, 35.

24 "Introduction"; in: *Bhagavad Gita According to Gandhi*, xv. Mahatma first read *The Bhagavad-Gita* in the translation by Sir Edwin Arnold titled *The Song Celestial* from 1885 that stands as the first English translation of the poem.

seen as concrete fighting, but rather as a spiritual allegory.<sup>25</sup> The field of Kuru, Kurukshetra, where the feuding families of Kuru and Pandu are confronted, represents a symbol of constant inner struggle between the good and the evil within a human, a symbol of overcoming the desires through cultivation of detachment that cannot be attained through “intellectual feat”, but only through “heart-churn”,<sup>26</sup> which leads to disinterested action that eliminates egocentric ways of living in the world, directed only towards attaining one’s own goals. Gandhi understood the latter in terms of an elementary basis of humanity and serving other people, and in this context defined *karmayoga* as a way of global action that leads to *ahimsa* and thus to getting closer to Truth.

Therefore, the famous story of the foaming milky ocean from the *Bhagavata Purana* that recounts the battle between gods and demons, but at the same time symbolises a struggle between good and evil and the nature of the created world where there is a battle between right and wrong, order and chaos,<sup>27</sup> could be defined, according to Gandhi’s understanding, as the allegory of an inner struggle in a human, the constant “foaming” or “heart-churn” and the image of concrete struggles in the world, which are overcome with nonviolent action through prior victory of good within a human.

The personal, human transformation – the inner “revolution” is also Gandhi’s fundamental argument for the possibility of nonviolent transformation – the outer “revolution” in line with the highest possible good. In light of the latter, Mahatma, in spite of many objections that wars are often necessary in order to eliminate evil in the world, insisted that the violent struggle is always wrong and never justified. Hence, his position could be compared to the steadfast position of Yudhishtira, a Pandava warrior who, according to the duties of his class and thus the law of his own material existence, had to be involved in a battle, but up until his last breath, stood by the idea that the duties of warriors, i.e. *kshatriyadharmā*, which involve violent action, are unpardonable sin. Unconditionally, Yudhishtira bet on the possibility of nonviolent action in the world and never let his identity of *kshatriya* overcome *ahimsa*.<sup>28</sup> Similar to Yudhishtira, Gandhi radically re-interpreted the established concept of *kshatriyadharmā*, did not deny the duties of social classes, in this case the warriors, but rather insisted on the idea that *kshatriyas* should think of other, alternative ways of nonviolence that is always an option.<sup>29</sup> Thus Gandhi transformed the warrior Arjuna’s existential crisis and dilemma in the *Bhagavad-Gita* about fulfilling a warrior’s duty to kill or abandon it into an effort to choose between violence or nonviolence.

25 Petek, *Bhagavadgita. Onstran vezi, tostran svobode (The Bhagavad-Gita. On the Farther Side of Ties, on the Inside of Freedom)*, 67.

26 “Introduction”; in: *Bhagavad Gita According to Gandhi*, xix.

27 Petek, “Iz purān”; in: *Razgledi po staroindijski književnosti*, 418.

28 Petek, *Bhagavadgita. Onstran vezi, tostran svobode (The Bhagavad-Gita. On the Farther Side of Ties, on the Inside of freedom)*, 99.

29 Richards, *The Philosophy of Gandhi*, 40.



Therefore, Gandhi understood that abiding in the faith of the power of nonviolence meant getting closer to Truth as well as providing a choice leading to individual and collective freedom.<sup>30</sup> He felt that the decision to act violently is mostly driven by human fear and moral weakness, which leads to even greater loss of freedom; in the latter he saw this as the reason for Indian subjugation to the coloniser. The weakness of will that is the inability to engage in nonviolence is related to Aristotle's *akrasia* (Gr. *âkrasia*), the lack of self-governance that makes one turn away from doing what one knows one ought to do. According to Gandhi, this powerlessness may be overcome through gradual cultivation of detachment and personal transformation.<sup>31</sup>

However, to shed more light on Gandhi's approach, the distinction between active and passive power is of crucial relevance. Active force refers to physical force and is, according to Mahatma, that which alienates one from one's true nature and from other entities in the world, while passive force pervades everything with virtue and thus brings closer.<sup>32</sup> Namely, the passive force of nonviolence in the force of love, *satyagraha*; passive resistance is a method of the soul-force that is "infinitely superior to body-force. If people in order to secure redress of wrongs resort to soul-force, much of the present suffering will be avoided."<sup>33</sup> Thus, he defined nonviolence as the most powerful force in the world; the "science" of passive force, hypophysics<sup>34</sup> has the power of cohesion, but if the latter is exhausted and active force prevails, the collapse of civilisation will take place.

Gandhi's endeavour to put nonviolence into action in the world on all levels was also influenced by Buddhist and Jaina ideals of nonviolence, stemming from the all-pervading love of everything living, including the smallest, insignificant being, while his understanding of *ahimsa* was influenced by the streams of Indian philosophy and religion and, for instance, by Thoreau, Tolstoy, Ruskin and Emerson. His concept of the relationship between truth and nonviolence was elaborated by Tolstoy's novel *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, which he read at a time when he was completely lost in doubt and full of scepticism about the meaningfulness of his endeavours. Ultimately, Tolstoy "cured" him of scepticism<sup>35</sup> and restored his faith in the power of nonviolence; for this reason, he was one of the fundamental inspirations for Gandhi; Gandhi referred to him as the great apostle of nonviolence, who not only preached nonviolence, but lived it.<sup>36</sup> He also took from Tolstoy the idea of the double nature of nonviolence, along with the

30 Puri, *The Tagore-Gandhi Debate on Matters of Truth and Untruth*, 144.

31 *Ibid.*

32 Mohan, Dwivedi, *Gandhi and Philosophy*, 99, 100.

33 *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*; in: Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers*, 240.

34 *Ibid.*, 109.

35 *Mahatma, II, Message on Tolstoy Centenary*, 1928; in: Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers*, 410.

36 *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, 1933; in: Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers*, 240.

“negative” definition in terms of avoiding harmful acts, a “positive” dimension is also relevant and manifests in strengthening love and compassion.

Therefore, according to Gandhi, the endeavour to live nonviolently, in thoughts, words and deeds, meant getting closer to Truth and realising Truth, while violence leads far away from it; at the same time, he understood getting closer to Truth as realisation of nonviolence: “*Ahimsa* is my God, and Truth is my God. When I look for *ahimsa*, Truth says: ‘Find it through me.’ When I look for truth, *ahimsa* says: ‘Find it through me.’”<sup>37</sup> Truth and nonviolence, therefore, are mutually dependent, the realisation of one mutually supports the deepened realisation of the other; nonviolent action leads to an insight into Truth, but at the same time having an insight into multi-layered Truth leads to even more unwavering practice of nonviolence. Based on the latter, one may come to a conclusion that Truth and nonviolence are two sides of the same coin. According to Gandhi, nonviolence realised in practice is Truth itself.

### **Gandhi’s Rebellious and Non-Conformist Philosophy as an Art of Being**

The philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi intertwines the teachings of Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina traditions and segments of Western philosophical thought, the ideas of One and Many, constancy and change, the universal and the particular, transcendence and immanence, the spiritual and the material, the impersonal absolute and the loving circle of closeness, philosophical contemplation and active involvement in the world. With a heterogenous intertwining of most various conceptual horizons, he managed to forge a unique vision of his mission and the world while stemming mostly from the idea that philosophy should first and foremost be a way of life. Gandhi’s attitude can be illuminated by Pierre Hadot’s reflections, i.e. that true philosophy is an art of being, a method of spiritual progress that demands a radical transformation of previous ways of life; it is an exercise in attaining wisdom, supported by constant effort, which does not mean only knowing something, but means *being* – in a different way. For Hadot, the example of philosophy that is not only a theoretical and conceptualising activity, but provides an answer to the question “How to live like a philosopher?”<sup>38</sup>, is represented by Socrates who was also the only hero of Gandhi’s – in life and in death. Mahatma began to recognise Socrates’ attitude in himself when he lived in South Africa, most intensively in 1908 when he was imprisoned. That is when he read Plato’s Apology in English and then wrote his own Apology in Gujarati titled *Ek satyavirni katha* (*Story of a True Soldier* or *Story of a Soldier of Truth*) in which he wrote that one

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37 *Young India*, 4<sup>th</sup> June 1925; in: Gandhi, *My God*, 18.

38 Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, 286, 287.

must learn to live and die like Socrates. He named him great *satyagrahi*, who unwaveringly defies hatred and evil and is prepared to sacrifice himself any time, in any circumstances, and unconditionally defend his philosophy and stand firm when facing death. In one of his writings collected in *Young India*, he defined Socrates as someone who strives for Truth,<sup>39</sup> and along with Jesus Christ and Daniel, the prophet of the *Bible*, represented “the purest form of passive or soul-force”,<sup>40</sup> someone who knew all too well that any physical force is completely incomparable to its power.

Gandhi and Socrates distinguish in their non-conformist attitude, forged by their desire to shake the ivory towers of rigid untouchable beliefs and break away from the conventional; the rebellious wisdom and method of raising the issues as was the case of “renegades” or “lone riders”, and “marginality” of their peaceful dissident minds were able to re-evaluate the haughty ideals of the time they lived in.<sup>41</sup> There is no doubt that Socrates had a great Indian successor. One can say without hesitation that when Mahatma followed Socrates in his endeavours, he actually surpassed his Greek role model. Namely, Gandhi proved the power of philosophy tested in practice, drawing from insights that the world, at its core, is marked by constant change. It is a wide-open field of possibilities for change – change taking place from the inside out.

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39 *Young India*, 13<sup>th</sup> November, 1925; in: Gandhi, *All Men Are Brothers*, 184, 185.

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41 Jahanbegloo, *The Global Gandhi*, 129.

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**Slika/Photo 21:** Gandhijevo ležišče; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi / Gandhi's bed; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi

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**Slika/Photo 22:** Ahimsa, načelo nenasilja, ki se ga je Gandhi predano trudil uresničevati vse svoje življenje; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi / Ahimsa, the principle of nonviolence which Gandhi was committed to implement throughout his life; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi

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**Sliki/Photos 23 in/and 24:** Muzej v New Delhiju, posvečen Mahatmi Gandhiju, danes poznan kot Gandhi Smriti (v času Gandhijevega življenja znan tudi kot Birla House ali Birla Bhavan) / The museum in New Delhi dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi, now known as Gandhi Smriti (also known as Birla House or Birla Bhavan during Gandhi's lifetime)

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Slika/Photo 29: Muzej v New Delhiju, posvečen Mahatmi Gandhiju, danes poznan kot Gandhi Smriti (v času Gandhijevega življenja znan tudi kot Birla House ali Birla Bhavan), kjer je Mahatma preživel zadnjih 144 dni svojega življenja / The museum in New Delhi dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi, now known as Gandhi Smriti (also known as Birla House or Birla Bhavan during Gandhi's lifetime), where the Mahatma spent the last 144 days of his life

Foto/Photo by Jan Ciglencečki

Sliki/Photos 30 in/and 31: Muzej v New Delhiju, posvečen Mahatmi Gandhiju, danes poznan kot Gandhi Smriti / The museum in New Delhi dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi, now known as Gandhi Smriti

Foto/Photo by Jan Ciglencečki

Sliki/Photos 32 in/and 33: Muzej v New Delhiju, posvečen Mahatmi Gandhiju, danes poznan kot Gandhi Smriti / The museum in New Delhi dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi, now known as Gandhi Smriti

Foto/Photo by Jan Ciglencečki

Slika/Photo 34: Prizori iz Gandhijevega življenja, stenska poslikava; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi / Scenes from Gandhi's life, a wall painting; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi

Foto/Photo by Jan Ciglencečki

Slika/Photo 35: Gandhijev molitveni prostor; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi / Gandhi's prayer room; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi

Foto/Photo by Jan Ciglencečki

Slika/Photo 36: Gandhijeva poslednja pot k poslednji molitvi; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi / Gandhi's final way to address his last prayer; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi

Foto/Photo by Jan Ciglencečki

Slika/Photo 37: Gandhijeva podoba v drevesni skorji, Vič-Brdo, Ljubljana, Slovenija / Gandhi's figure in a tree bark, Vič-Brdo district, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Foto/Photo by Nina Petek

**Slika/Photo 38: Kip Mahatme Gandhija v Slovenj Gradcu, mestu Glasnik miru, Slovenija / Mahatma Gandhi's Statue in Slovenj Gradec, United Nations Peace Messenger City, Slovenia**

Foto/Photo by Nina Petek

**Slika/Photo 39: 150. obletnica rojstva Mahatme Gandhija; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi / The 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi; Gandhi Smriti, New Delhi**

Foto/Photo by Jan Ciglencečki

**Slika na naslovnici/Front cover: Nasmehan Mahatma Gandhi v kupeju vlaka, Indija, 1939 / Mahatma Gandhi laughing in a train compartment, India, 1939**

Vir/Source: Stock Photo – Alamy

**Slika na zadnji strani naslovnice/Back cover: Občudovanja polna množica ljudi na vzhodnem območju Londona, znanem kot East End, se zbere, da bi videla prihod Mahatme Gandhija, ki nagovarja Charlieja Chaplina, London, 22. september 1931. Gandhi je kot vodja Indijskega nacionalnega kongresa obiskal Anglijo, kjer se je udeležil londonske Konferenčne okrogle mize o indijski ustavni reformi. / An admiring East End crowd gathers to witness the arrival of Mahatma Gandhi, London, 22th September 1931, as he calls upon Charlie Chaplin. Gandhi is in England in his capacity as leader of the Indian National Congress attending the London Round Table Conference on Indian constitutional reform.**

Vir/Source: Wikimedia

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## Seznam sanskrtskih pojmov in pojmov iz hindijščine v izvirnih oblikah / List of Original Sanskrit and Hindi Terms

### A

advajta vedanta, Advaita Vedanta  
(skrt. advaita vedānta)  
ahinsa, also ahimsa  
(skrt. ahimsā – Po celotnem besedilu je sanskrtski izraz ahimsā zapisan v izvirni obliki (z diakritičnimi znamenji). / The original Sanskrit term ahimsā (with diacritical marks) is used throughout the text.)  
anasaktijoga, anasaktiyoga  
(skrt. anasaktiyoga)  
anekantavada (skrt. anekāntavāda)  
Ardžuna, Arjuna (skrt. Arjuna)  
atman (skrt. ātman)

### B

Bhagavadgita, the Bhagavad-Gita  
(skrt. Bhagavadgītā)  
Bhagavatapurana, the Bhagavata Purana (skrt. Bhagavatapurāṇa)  
bhakti (skrt. bhakti)  
bodhisattva (skrt. bodhisattva)  
brahman (skr. brahman)

### D

dharma (skrt. dharma)

### J/Y

joga, yoga (skrt. yoga)  
Judhištira, Yudhishtira  
(skrt. Yudhiṣṭhira)

### K

karma (skrt. karma)  
karmajoga, karmayoga  
(skrt. karmayoga)  
karmajogi, karmayogi  
(skrt. karmayogī)  
Kršna, Kṛshna (also Krishna)  
(skrt. Kṛṣṇa)  
kšatrija, kshatriya (skrt. kṣatriya)  
kšatrijadharma, kshatriyadharma  
(skrt. kṣatriyadharma)  
Kuru (skrt. Kuru)  
Kurukšetra, Kurukshetra  
(skrt. Kurukṣetra)

### L

lokasangraha, lokasangraha  
(skrt. lokasangraha)

### M

Mahabharata, the Mahabharata  
(skrt. Mahābhārata)  
maja, maya (skrt. māyā)  
mokša, moksha (skrt. mokṣa)  
mukta (skrt. mukta)

### N

neti neti (skrt. neti neti)  
niškamakarma, nishkamakarma  
(skrt. niškāmakarma)

### P

pančajat, panchayat  
(hind. pañcāyat)

pandit (skrt. paṇḍita)  
Pandu (skr. Pandu)  
puruṣārtha, puruṣārtha  
(skrt. puruṣārtha)

## R

ramaradžja, Ramarajya  
(skrt. rāmarājya); ramradžja,  
Ramrajya (hind. rāmrajya)

## S

sadhana (skrt. sādhanā)  
sanatanadharmā  
(skrt. sanātanadharmā)  
sansara, also samsara (skrt. saṃsāra)  
sarvodaya, sarvodaya (hind. sarvōdaya)  
satja, satya (skrt. satya)  
satjagraha, satyagraha  
(skrt., hind. satyāgraha)  
śjadvada, syadvada (skrt. śyādvāda)  
svadeši, swadeshi (hind. svadeśī)  
svaradž, swaraj (hind. svarāj)

## T

tapas (skrt. tapas)  
tapasja, tapasya (skrt. tapasya)  
Tipitaka, the Tipitaka  
(pal. Tipiṭaka, skrt. Tripiṭaka)

## V

varnadharma (skrt. varṇadharmā)  
Vede, the Vedas (skrt. Veda)

## U

upanišade, the Upanishads  
(skrt. upaniṣad)



*»Leta minevajo, pa vendar nas vodijo velika načela satje in ahimse, resnice in nenasilja.  
Neme zvezde so, ki bdijo nad utrujenim in nemirnim svetom.  
Bodimo kot Gandhi, neomajni v prepričanju, da nad tavajočimi oblaki sije sonce.«*

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, New Delhi, 15. avgust 1958

\*

*“But years may go their way, yet the great principles of satya and ahimsa,  
truth and non-violence, are there to guide us.  
They are the silent stars keeping holy vigil above a tired and turbulent world.  
Like Gandhi we may be firm in our conviction that the sun shines above the drifting clouds.”*

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, New Delhi, 15<sup>th</sup> August 1958

