

From the Bhavan's President

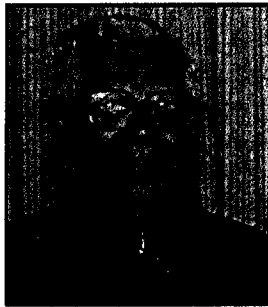
Apostle of non-violence and Angel of Peace

R. Venkataraman

Gandhiji stood for universal brotherhood and for a life of peace and harmony among the nations of the world.

The people of India cherish the memory of Mahatma Gandhi as the Father of the Nation. He was not merely the leader of our struggle for freedom but he was the leader of social changes which transformed India from a medieval society into a modern one. His teachings on the equality of man, religious tolerance, adherence to truth and non-violence and on freedom of thought and expression at once lifted him from a mere mortal to the level of sage and saint. His exhortations for a higher quality of life did not

confine themselves to the narrow limits of his own country, or his own times. He stood for universal brotherhood and for a life of peace and harmony among the nations of the world. He inspired and led three revolutions in our own lifetime—a revolt against racialism, a crusade against colonialism and a campaign against violence. Gandhiji lived to see the success of his first two revolutions, viz. the revolt against racialism and the crusade against colonialism but before he could achieve the third, namely, his campaign against violence, he



became the victim of violence at the hands of a religious fanatic. In his martyrdom, Gandhiji is now regarded as the apostle of non-violence and an angel of Peace. But the movement against violence is still on and nations are trying hard to grapple with the monster of terrorism.

Gandhiji did not claim either originality or infallibility for his ideas. "I represent no new truths," he said, "I do claim to throw a new light on many an old truth." He described himself simply as a man "who claims to be a humble searcher after truth, knows his limitations, makes mistakes, never hesitates to admit them." He was a born radical. He went to the roots of each and every problem, and drew his own conclusions and formulated a unique plan of action. Deeply religious as he was, he rejected the idea of a State religion for India; he regarded religion as a private matter. Against social abuses and iniquities, he waged an unrelenting war. On the position of women, some of his views were remarkably similar to those of leading women reformers and

activists today. As a lawyer, he did not think it was his duty to defend a client, whether he was right or wrong. Usually unorthodox was the code he evolved for himself as a political leader. Politics was not for pursuit of power; he ruled out any personal gain from public service. Gandhiji edited journals without commercialising them, accepted no advertisements; and he held the view that journalism was a vocation rather than a profession.

Though Gandhiji expounded his ideas vigorously and with simple eloquence on almost every conceivable subject over half a century, through thousands of letters and articles and editorials, he never tried to build them up into a 'system'. He was continually developing and outgrowing his own ideas; this was because he was engaged in a ceaseless effort to match his 'deeds' with his thoughts and beliefs. 'Truth', for Gandhiji had to be revealed in action, and not mummified in textbooks. When accused of inconsistency, he replied that he was consistent

with Truth, not with the Past. What he wrote of Tolstoy was equally true of himself: "He often seemed inconsistent because he was continuously outgrowing his own doctrines. His failures were public; his struggles and triumphs private."

Some of Gandhiji's ideas have acquired a new relevance in our own days. He was an apostle of non-violence in a world in which violence prevailed. He was a great national leader, but equally, he was a great internationalist. His warnings against the ruthless exploitation of Nature have been exemplified by the looming ecological disaster that faces the world today. His pleas against the use of liquor, intoxicants and drugs can no longer be laughed at as mere puritanical fads. His denunciations of runaway industrialism and militarism have acquired a fresh validity because of the incalculable hazards of nuclear weaponry. How relevant is Gandhiji today!

Gandhiji devoted the best part of his life to one crucial issue:

how to perfect the technique of *ahimsa* and extend it meaningfully to human relationships. He objected to violence not only because an unarmed people had little chance of success in a situation of armed conflict, but because he considered violence a clumsy weapon which created more problems than it solved, and left as its legacy a trail of hatred and bitterness, because of which harmony and reconciliation became almost impossible. He did not regard non-violence simply as an avoidance of physical injury to animate beings. He knew that daggers and guns and bombs take just as much toll of human life as ill will, malice and hatred, which cramp and kill humanity slowly but surely. Gandhiji's non-violence aimed at liberating men and women from inner as well as outer violence.

Gandhiji's passion for peace and amity between nations inspired his closest colleague and political heir, Jawaharlal Nehru, who sought, through the pursuit

of coexistence and non-alignment in international relations, to reduce tensions and expand areas of peace. Nehruji brought to international relations the vision, fervour and methods of a statesman. He passionately pleaded for a détente and coexistence between the super-powers. He faithfully implemented Gandhiji's ideals of peace and non violence.

Gandhiji, more than anyone else in India is a symbol of the evolving image of our culture, ancient and hoary in time and

tradition, moored to eternal human values, yet not divorced from the realities of modern life and pressures—a culture that is steeped in universal love. Addressing the Universal Spirit, the great Tamil Saint Manikavasagar sang: "To me who strove against obstinate enemies, not knowing the way to emancipation, He taught the way of Love." So did Gandhiji teach us all the path of Love and Brotherhood, Peace and Fraternity—a path which India treads.

100 years Old Mission for Human Well-Being

Vaidyaratnam P. S. Varier's Arya Vaidya Sala at Kottakkal has evolved out of a constant endeavour to preserve, maintain and adapt the ancient art and science of Ayurveda to modern times. A mission started 100 years ago is now a boon to mankind.

Kottakkal Arya Vaidya Sala is today a multifaceted Ayurvedic Institution with hospitals & research centres at Kottakkal & Delhi offering comprehensive Ayurvedic treatments. Over 500 classical formulations, manufactured under stringent quality control measures and adherence to time-tested procedures, are acclaimed all over the world.

BRANCHES

Kozhikode • Palakkad • Tirur • Emakulam • Thiruvananthapuram • Aluva • Chennai
• Kottayam • Kannur • Coimbatore • New Delhi • Kolkata • Secunderabad

And over 900 authorised outlets all over India.

For details please write to: The General Manager



Phone : (0493) 742216 (16 lines) Fax : (0493) 742572, 742210
Website : www.aryavaidyasala.com
e-mail : kottakal@vsnl.com / kottakal@md3.vsnl.net.in

Ayurveda - The Kottakkal Way

BHAVAN'S JOURNAL