



A THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

by
M.K. GANDHI

Editor :
Gangga Dewi

Ashram Gandhi "Çanti Dasa"

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**Ashram Gandhi "Çanti Dasa"
Candi Dasa, Karangasem 80851
Bali - Indonesia
phone: (0363) 41108**

Setting and layout by
I Nyoman Sudarsana

Foreword

In memory of Gandhiji's Nirwan -30 January 1948- it is our privilege to produce in print this modest booklet on Gandhian Thought.

It originally appeared only in photocopied form in 1978 to serve a threefold purpose :

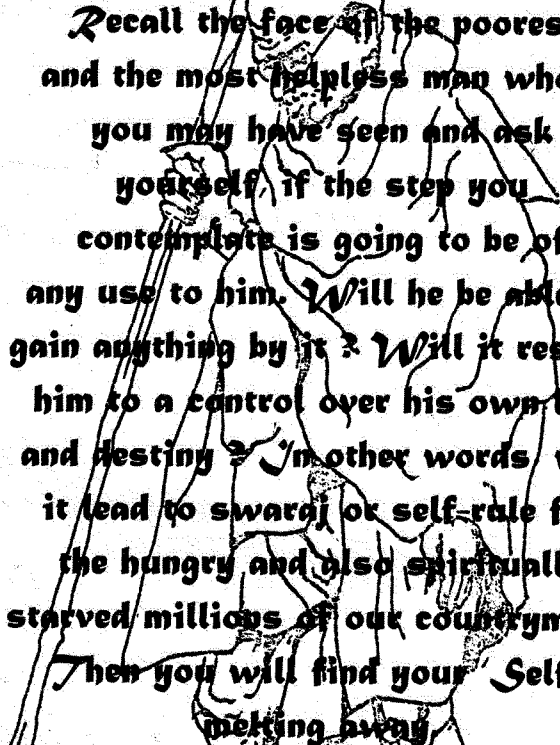
- a. To help our Ashram members imbibe Gandhian Thought that come to surface as a result of his passionately and indomitably endeavouring to live and act truthfully for an unbroken period of over seventy years.
- b. To have uplifting material of practical worth for improving their command of English.
- c. To benefit our foreign guests who like to sit in our class of Gandhian Thought.

As such may this little booklet serve its purpose well !!!

The Editor

Çanti Dasa Ashram
30 January 1996.

GANDHIJI'S TALISMAN



Recall the face of the poorest and the most helpless man whom you may have seen and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he be able to gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj or self-rule for the hungry and also spiritually starved millions of our countrymen? Then you will find your 'Self' melting away.

M. K. Gandhi

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1. Prayer changes things.
 2. One perfect man can dispel untruth even though the untruthful be legion.
 3. Confession of error works like a broom, sweeps away filth. Confession does no less.
 4. Prayer is like a spiritual bath.
 5. Purity asks for no external protection.
 6. Physical weakness is not the real weakness. Weakness of the mind alone is the real weakness.
 7. One ounce of practice is worth tons of learning.
 8. Man can move mountains by faith.
 9. He who concentrates on any one thing with singleness of purpose, will ultimately acquire the capacity to do everything.
 10. Man is where his mind is, and not where his body is.
 11. A man without an ideal is like a ship without a rudder.

12. God is omnipresent, hence it is that He speaks to us through hills, stones, trees, insects, birds, beasts, the sea, the sky, and so on.
13. We seek the company of the good, for that is food for our soul.
14. Only he who is prepared to suffer can pray to God.
15. He who does not labour and yet eats, eats stolen food.
16. To be guilty of a lapse small or big is certainly bad, but to hide it is even worse.
17. A good thought is like fragrance.
18. An egotistical utterance should always be regarded as false.
19. When the ego dies, the soul awakes.
20. How wrong it is to ask others to be clean when we ourselves remain unclean.
21. He who has not in him the quality of infinite patience cannot observe nonviolence.

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22. Don't listen to rumour, but if you do, don't believe it.
 23. He who remembers God can afford to forget everything else.
 24. He who remembers everything else, but forgets God, really remembers nothing.
 25. Life spent in service is the only fruitful life.
 26. Just as drop by drop the lake fills up, so also every minute of sincere prayer nourishes the soul.
 27. No joy can compare with the joy of doing one's duty quietly.
 28. To make an allegation is one thing, to prove it is quite another.
 29. He who is not upset by bad news will not be elated over good news.
 30. He who is the dust of every body's feet is near to God.
 31. He who denies the existence of God denies his own.

32. When 'seva' (service) wags its tongue it loses all its value.
33. The greatness of a person lies in his heart, not in his head, that is intellect.
34. In faith there is no room for despair.
35. He who in his distress turns to God is not troubled by any fear.
36. Living with God, there are no difficulties.
37. God is our Helm as well as our Helmsman.
38. He who finds faults with others cannot see his own.
39. Deeds, like seeds, take their own time to fructify.
40. He who forgets God forgets himself.
41. Faith is tested when the situation is most difficult.
42. With whom will you be angry? With yourself? Do that everyday. With others? Why need there be any reason for that.

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43. Let us not think of big things, but of good ones.
 44. Give all, gain all.
 45. Keep all, lose all.
 46. If God resides in every heart, then who dares hate whom?
 47. If we obey the law of God, we need no man-made laws.
 48. Prayer needs a heart, not a voice. Without the heart, words have no meaning.
 49. Pure love removes all weariness.
 50. When reason and faith are in conflict, it is better to prefer faith.
 51. Nothing turns out right so long as there is no harmony between body, mind, and soul.
 52. Violence is the weapon of the weak, non-violence is that of the strong.
 53. He who treads only the path of truth never stumbles.

54. When the soul awakes, all sorrow vanishes.
55. He who knows no rules and follows none, just can not be a servant of the people.
56. How shall we please God, how praise Him? By serving His creature: man.
57. The first service is latrine cleaning.
58. No body progresses without opposition.
59. Inner strength grows by prayer.
60. There is not a single moment in life when man can not serve.
61. Opposition makes the man.
62. To a starving person, God will appear in the form of bread alone.
63. Nothing is impossible for a true devotee.
64. When a man indulges in pleasure, the indulgence consumes the man.

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65. Faith transcends reason but is not opposed to it.
 66. Our greatest enemy is not the foreigner, nor anyone else. Our enemies are we ourselves, that is our desires.
 67. Man is truly known by the humility of his heart.
 68. The joy of life lies in divesting oneself of life cares.
 69. Do not crave to know the views of others, nor base your intent thereon; to think independently for oneself is a sign of fearlessness.
 70. True happiness does not come from obtaining what one likes. It comes from cultivating a liking for what one dislikes.
 71. The soul dries up without the company of the good.
 72. Vice flourishes in darkness, vanishes in the light of day.
 73. Just as I have the right to eat and drink, so also have I the right to do my work in my own way.

- This is Swaraj.
74. The right that accrues from the performance of duty endures.
75. He alone who truly serves is a good householder. He goes on giving without expectation of return.
76. Beauty lies not in complexion, but in Truth alone.
77. Neither do nor read anything without understanding it.
78. Man is the embodiment of his thought.
79. Sweet are the fruits of patience.
80. Illness should not beset one whose body and mind are wholly sound.
81. Evil thoughts are also a sign of illness; let us therefore avoid evil thought.
82. Humility is the key to quick success.

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83. Where the mind wanders, the body must follow sooner or later.
84. True rights come as a result of duty done.
85. Where there is absolute purity illness becomes impossible.
86. Let service be your sole joy and you will need no other enjoyments.
87. A leader must have complete mastery over him/herself.
88. The only certificate I need is a certificate from the inner voice.
89. The real ornament of woman is her character, her purity.
90. Woman is the incarnation of Ahimsa.
91. Mind is like a restless bird; the more it gets the more it wants, and is still never satisfied.
92. The greatest men of the world have always stood alone.

93. In honest labour lay our salvation.
94. Religion is good conduct; the essence of religion is morality.
95. If capital is power so is work.
96. Character is any day more eloquent than speech.
97. People, who do not fight for their rights, are like slaves.
98. I do not fight shy of capital, I fight capitalism.
99. What is impossible with man is child's play with God.
100. Prayer is the most potent instrument of action.
101. Violence is preferable to impotence.
102. Good travels at a snail's pace, but evil has wings.
103. Fearlessness is the first requisite of spirituality.
104. A man is but the product of his thoughts.

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105. The secret of life lies in renunciation.
 106. The only way love punishes is by suffering.
 107. Real beauty is in doing good against evil.
 108. Woman is sacrifice personified.
 109. He who serves the poor is great in the eyes of God.
 110. For a fighter the fight itself is victory.
 111. God alone can take life, because He alone gives it.
 112. Necessity is not only the mother of invention, it is the mother of art also.
 113. Even differences prove helpful, where there is tolerance.
 114. When a man works for an ideal he becomes irresistible.
 115. The highest wisdom is never to worry about the future.

116. Self-indulgence leads to destruction, renunciation leads to immortality.
117. The heart's earnest and pure desire is always fulfilled.
118. You cannot lead a true life without suffering.
119. It is character that counts in the end.
120. Power comes from sincere service.
121. A trustee has no heir but the public.
122. A life without vows is like a ship without an anchor.
123. Not a blade of grass moves but by His will.
124. Action is bound to bear fruit in the end.
125. If we take care of today, God will take care of tomorrow.
126. Nature cure implies an ideal mode of life.
127. Suffering opens the eye of understanding.

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128. I want freedom for the full expression of my personality.
 129. The highest form of freedom carries with it the greatest measure of discipline.
 130. Virtue lies in discovering the best in your opponent.
 131. Life is greater than all art.
 132. Religion is not really what is grasped by the brain, but by the heart.
 133. Where means and end are pure, there God is present.
 134. To observe His law is the best form of worship.
 135. The end of all knowledge must be the building up of character.
 136. Heartfelt prayer and corresponding action is the way to learn about God's work.
 137. Violence is preferable to impotence.
 138. Truth is most economical of words.

139. Happiness depends on what you can give, not on what you can get.
140. Where there is no strength of mind, there can be no strength of soul.
141. Evil by itself has no legs to stand upon.
142. Conquest of passion is bound up with the conquest of the palate.
143. If a man was in distress, the key to his happiness lay in labour.
144. Freedom is not for the faint-hearted.
145. Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment.
146. You can not lead a true life without suffering.
147. Be your own judge and you will be truly happy.
148. Almost anything you do will seem insignificant, but it is very important that you do it.
149. Dirt is misplaced matter.

150. The highest wisdom is never to worry about the future.

Discussion Class

Pyarelal's mother asked how we may see God. Bapu replied:

"We cannot see God with these eyes. God is spirit without body and is therefore visible only to the eye of faith. If there are no evil thoughts troubling our mind and no fears but constant cheerfulness in our heart, that is an indication of God's presence in ourselves. Indeed He is there at all times, but we fail to notice His presence as we have no faith, and thus undergo much suffering. When once we have cultivated real faith, calamities cease to upset us."

from: The Diary of Mahadev Desai page 114.

Then again she asked what is the purpose of life. On this point Bapu wrote:

"The purpose of life is, undoubtedly, to know oneself. We cannot do it unless we learn to identify ourselves with all that lives. The sum-total of that life is God. Hence the necessity of realizing God living within everyone of us. The instrument of this knowledge is boundless, selfless service."

from: The Diary of Mahadev Desai page 184.

"Service of humanity is an essential element in the character of a wise man. There can be no exception to this rule."

"I cannot say how long I can keep my mind free from all thoughts. But I do know that useless thoughts can never enter my mind. And if they do enter it, they must flee like thieves pursued by the police."

from: The Diary of Mahadev Desai page 298.

I feel that the thing that has made Bapu what he is is his constant devotion to truth. This made him fearless and paved the way for him to experiment with truth with a profound faith in God. Continuous worship of truth and perfect readiness to practise it enable a man to scale tremendous heights of spirituality. I wondered how Bapu had ever wanted to secure a job with a salary of 75 rupees. Bapu said, "I had no ambition at all. The only idea was to maintain myself some-how or other and to render service to the public wherever I was."

from: The Diary of Mahadev Desai page 65.

Bapu leans on a patlo (wooden board) kept at the back. Very often he keeps it close to the wall and not at an angle. I remarked that if it was kept at an angle, it would not fall down from time to time and would be more comfortable. "Perhaps", Bapu replied. "But the proper thing to do is to keep it straight, so that the backbone and waist remain straight in their turn and do not bend. It is a general principle that if you keep one thing straight, it will tend to straighten everything else, and crookedness at one point will make for crookedness at many other points."

from: The Diary of Mahadev Desai page 142.

"Learning should be acquired only with a view to service. But service is full of inexhaustible joy. Therefore we may say that learning is an aid to blessedness. Mere learning without service has never been known to lead to eternal bliss."

from the same, page 276.

To X: "It won't do for any one to say: "I am only what I am. "That is a cry of despair. A seeker of Truth will say: "I

will be what I ought to be. "My appeal for you is to come out of your shell and see yourself in every face about you. How can you be lonely in the midst of so much life? All our philosophy is vain, if it does not enable us to rejoice in the company of fellow-beings and their service."

from the same page 286

I would surely like to read literature. At school I could not go beyond the school lessons. After that I have been so busy with one thing or another that there was little time to read outside prison. In prison only was I able to read something. But I do not find that I have lost much on this account. For if I could not read, I could think a great deal and the school of life is any day superior to the school of books.

from the same, page 160.

From a letter of Gandhiji's to the Ashram children :

There is no need of a teacher,
if we know how to think for ourselves.
A teacher may guide us,
but he can never give the power of thinking.
That is latent in us.
Those who are wise, get wise thoughts.

M.K. Gandhi
from Mira Behn
Gandhiji's Daughter Disciple.

The Secret of his Power

What was the secret of Gandhiji's Power? He himself answered once:

"The Secret?

A clear heart,

A clear conscience,

A cool head,

Regular communion with God,

Abstention from carnal food and pleasure,

No alcohol, smoking and condiments,

A strict vegetarian diet,

And love for all my fellow-man."

The earth produces enough for everybody's need.

But never enough for anybody's greed.

"I am still a student"

"Mahatma Gandhi, you are here to address a unique gathering representing a variety of races and nationalities-people representing 57 countries.....; a gathering of 200 individuals with 200 opinions full of reactions and incalculable absurdity," said the chairman of the meeting at the International Student's Movement House while introducing Gandhiji to a thoroughly international gathering of men and women students of London on 16th October, 1931.

Mahatmaji was cheered in respectful adoration as he addressed the gathering in an affectionate manner as "Fellow Students". He requested them to forgive him for his desire to pass time that evening in answering questions instead of inflicting upon them a set speech. He said:

"I have addressed you as "Fellow Student". It is not a formula. I regard myself essentially as a student and if you are wise, as I am, (laughter) in afterlife you regard yourselves as student".

"Throughout my varied experiences of life, "continued Gandhiji," I have come to the conclusion that our student life commences after we leave our Colleges and Universities and Law Chambers where we are supposed to be studying tied down to studies with the key to our knowledge and when we leave these premises we practically forget all that we have learnt.

"It is really in afterlife that we have to unlearn many things. The so-called student life is merely a preparation for

the real life of a student. When you are in college or anywhere else you have got set subjects. Even in the optional subjects you have to learn them in a particular fashion because you are definitely hidebound. But after that stage is over you are free like a bird with wings to soar high and the higher you soar the stronger you become. So I am still a student who has not graduated in the world (cheers).

“When you are buffeted about and thrown on your own resources it becomes a tough job. If you give yourself to study, if you dedicate yourselves to study, to eternal research, *there is no limit to joy, there is no limit to pleasure* that you derive from that study. My study consistently has been the search after Truth. During the early days of my study and search I could not consistently find Truth unless I invited injury against myself and not against others. I could find Truth only when I eschewed all feeling of causing injury to others, but when necessary, inflicting it on myself. Because, as you must be knowing, Truth and Violence are opposed to each other. Violence hides Truth and if you try to find Truth by Violence you will betray the horrible ignorance in the search of Truth and, therefore, Non-violence without any exception whatever, I have come to realize, is the essence of life, that is ‘Ahimsa.’”

Man and the Machine

The Bishop of Birmingham, who met Gandhiji during the latter's visit to Birmingham in 1931, was loud in his praise for science and machinery, which, he said, were made to free man from manual toil so that he might have all his time or the bulk of it for intellectual work.

Gandhiji reminded the Bishop that he could not trust the average man to use all his spare time profitably on the strength of the old adage. "Satan always finds some work for idle hands to do." But the Bishop demurred. "Look here," said he, "I do not do manual work for more than an hour a day. The rest of my time I give to intellectual pursuits."

"I know," said Gandhiji laughing, "but if all became Bishops, the Bishop would find their occupation gone."

from R.K. Prabhu: This was Bapu
page and 101&102
