

**JUSTICE CHANDRASHEKHAR DHARMADHIKARI** was born on 20th November 1927. His parents were Dada Dharmadhikari and Damayanti Dharmadhikari. He comes from an illustrious Maharashtrian family settled in Multai in the Betul District of Madhya Pradesh. His father, Dada Dharmadhikari was a front-ranking freedom fighter and a seminal Gandhian thinker. His mother was a freedom fighter in her own right and a symbol of life togetherness. Chandrashekhar Dharmadhikari was married to Tara Dharmadhikari—a highly educated and cultured person and true picture of life togetherness. His daughter is a medical doctor. His son Satyaranjan Dharmadhikari is a judge at Bombay High Court. His other son Shri Ashutosh Dharmadhikari is a practising lawyer at Nagpur Bench of Bombay High Court. Chandrashekhar Dharmadhikari as a mere lad of fourteen participated in the Quit India Movement. As a part of his family inheritance, he has devoted the major part of his life in interpreting and propagating Gandhian ideas in the context of our times. He made a sincere effort to imbibe Gandhian ideals in his own life. He has his own contributions to the public life by participating in the major intellectual discourses, particularly in respect of women empowerment. He has been a source of inspiration to the youth of our country.

He practiced law at Nagpur for many years and was elevated to the Bench, as a judge of the Bombay High Court. He worked as senior judge and acting chief justice of the Bombay High Court from 1972 till his retirement in 1989. He also worked as the first Chairman of the Maharashtra Administrative Tribunal. As a judge he delivered historic judgements in respect of the right of women, *adivasi*, children, mentally handicapped persons and other weaker sections of the society. He has been associated with a number of cultural institutions. He has been heading a number of Gandhian institutions including the Institute of Gandhian Studies, Wardha. For his contribution in the field of education and literary work, he has been the recipient of Gopal Krishna Gokhale Award, Government of Maharashtra Literary Awards and Karandikar

Trust Dharwad Literary Award. He has a number of books to his credit in Marathi, Hindi and English.

He has received the Padma Bhushan Award from the President of India in 2003. Besides, he has also received a Doctor of Laws (Honorary) from Rani Durgavati University, Jabalpur. Other awards which he received include the Distinguished Citizens Award from Rotary Club of Bombay, Michael John Memorial Award, Gandhi Jan Puruskar, Ramashastri Prabhune Social Justice Award, Justice Ranade Award for social service, Rashtra Gaurav Puruskar, Go Seva Ratna Puruskar, Hindi Seva Puruskar and a number of other awards. He is one of the few living Gandhians who had the privilege to be personally associated with Gandhiji from his very childhood.

Prof. M.G.K. Menon, one of the most eminent scientists of the country rightly observes: 'Justice Chandrashekhar Dharmadhikari has remained unbowed for the whole of his life, always true to his principles, and always listening to the small inner voice of his conscience. At the same time, he is the most affectionate, generous, courteous, gentle and mild human being that one could ever come across.'

# Contemplating Gandhi

Essays on Mahatma's life and thought

## THUS SPAKE BAPU

- What I am concerned with is my readiness to obey the call of Truth, my God, from moment to moment, and, therefore, when anybody finds any inconsistency between any two writings of mine... he would do well to choose the later of the two on the same subject.
- I have no desire for the perishable kingdom of earth. I am striving for the kingdom of Heaven which is *moksha*. To attain my end, it is not necessary for me to seek the shelter of a cave. I carry one about me, if I would but know it.
- I may not aching for martyrdom, but if it comes in my way in the prosecution of what I consider to be the supreme duty in defence of the faith I hold... I shall have earned it.
- My mission is to teach by example and precept under severe restraint the use of the matchless weapon of *satyagraha*, which is a direct corollary of non-violence and truth.
- I have no desire to found a sect. I am really too ambitious to be satisfied with a sect for a following.
- I know the path. It is straight and narrow. It is like the edge of a sword. I rejoice to walk on it. I weep when I slip.
- The world knows so little of how much my so-called greatness depends upon the incessant toil and drudgery of silent, devoted, able and pure workers, men as well as women.

# **Contemplating Gandhi**

Essays on Mahatma's life and thought

**Chandrashekhar Dharmadhikari**

*Translated from Hindi by*  
Ramchandra Pradhan

**INSTITUTE OF GANDHIAN STUDIES, WARDHA**

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## **Dedication**

*This book is dedicated to the sacred memory of Ramkrishna Bajaj, a man of rare faith, trust and self-effacement and who in the words of Dada Dharmadhikari could be rightly described as 'Maryada Purushottam Ramkrishna.'*



Ramkrishna Bajaj  
(1924-1994)

## FROM THE PUBLISHER

Life, thought and work of Mahatma Gandhi are increasingly becoming the major subjects of studies from different viewpoints and perspectives. Gandhi is taken to be the ripen fruit of thousands of years of Indian *Sadhana* as well as the seed for the future evolution of its spiritual and worldly seeking. His life, thoughts and philosophy hold an exceptional significance for the coming generations. They have all the potential to create and uphold a schema for a new and humane civilisational order. That is why the world community has begun to make sincere efforts towards building a new world order based on Gandhian philosophy.

In the present seminal work, Justice Chandrashekhar Dharmadhikari has made a similar attempt based on his life long engagement with Gandhian ideas. We are very happy to publish such a scholarly work by Justice Dharmadhikari—a Gandhian scholar, and an activist in his own right. But his range of interest goes much beyond mere scholastic concerns.

We are sure that like his earlier works, this book will also be well received by the academia and general readers.

**Bharat Mahodaya**

*Director*

Institute of Gandhian Studies, Wardha

# INSTITUTE OF GANDHIAN STUDIES, WARDHA

## Publications

1. Essays on Gandhian Thought Ravindra Varma et al. (2004)
2. Explorations in Culture of Peace Siby K. Joseph (ed.) (2006)
3. Essays on Conflict Resolution Siby K. Joseph,  
Bharat Mahodaya (eds.) (2007)
4. Khoj Gandhi Ki C.S. Dharmadhikari (2008)
5. Non-violent Struggles of the  
Twentieth Century:  
Retrospect and Prospect Siby K. Joseph  
John Moolakkattu  
Bharat Mahodaya (eds.) (2009)
6. Contemporary Perspectives  
on Peace and Non-violence Siby K. Joseph, Bharat  
Mahodaya (eds.) (2010)
7. Reflections on Hind Swaraj Siby K. Joseph, Bharat  
Mahodaya (eds.) (2011)
8. Gandhi, Environment and  
Sustainable Future Siby K. Joseph, Bharat  
Mahodaya (eds.) (2011)
9. Gandhi Meri Nazar Mein C.S. Dharmadhikari (2011)
10. Contextualising Gandhian  
Thought Siby K. Joseph (ed.) (2012)
11. Continuing Relevance  
of Swadeshi Siby K. Joseph, Bharat  
Mahodaya (eds.) (2012)

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## PREFACE

I am reminded of an incident and conversation which my father, Dada Dharmadhikari had with Bapu on the eve of independence and partition days. Many angry refugees had asked Bapu to go to the Himalayas for his saintly *sadhana*, instead of meddling with the politics of the country. Bapu had refused to go to the Himalayas as he said that he carried a cave inside his inner being for such *sadhana*. Those were hectic days for Bapu. He apparently looked sad and tired amidst the holocaust of partition. Dada told him that he appeared to be overworked and tired. Bapu responded by saying that it was not so. He further added that it is not the work that tires a man and makes him listless. It is worry that really kills his spirit and enthusiasm. But he had offered his worries and problems at the feet of Lord Krishna. Later on, Dada commented that it is the real *anasakti yoga*—‘the *yoga* of desirelessness and detachment.’ That is also true *karmayoga*—the *yoga* of action. That is also the true art of living. One should live amidst people, live for others: One should live like a true human being and should never avoid the company of other people. This is a new *yoga* of humanism. This is also the true spiritualism of our age. This is also the real background of the present work.

The essays compiled in this book were written on different occasions. They were penned at the behest of my friends, well-wishers and others. On those occasions, it did not occur to me that one day these essays would be put within the two covers of a book. I am aware of the fact that I am not one of those writers who put their ideas in a very concise and precise way. No one has accused me of being such an adept writer! I speak on different themes on different occasions and many themes and thoughts keep on coming in the course of my lectures. In such situations, it is quite natural for different streams of thoughts and themes to get intermingled. Some of these essays are based on my lectures.

Hence, some repetition of my thoughts and themes are bound to be there in these essays. I have not been much bothered about such repetitions. After all, what is repetition? It is not so easy to decide about its nature. Once I even sought the opinion of Dada on this issue. He responded to my query in his own characteristic style. He said: 'There is nothing like repetition as things always come as new and real in changing contexts.' Besides, even for a full explanation of a subject, repetition is necessary. For it is not necessary that every reader would go through the entire book—from the beginning to the end. He might choose to read one or two essays in the book. If he is to get an overview of the major themes discussed in the book, repetition becomes unavoidable. Thus what apparently looks like repetition could very well be a creative act. Hence, I have not felt any inner urge to make any drastic changes in the body of these essays to get rid of my so-called repetitiveness.

My readers could very well take my repetitiveness of my thoughts and themes as the reiteration of my positions on different issues and problems confronting the people of our own country as well as of the world. In any case, I leave it to the judgements of my scholarly readers and enlightened critics. That seems both appropriate and convenient for me at this stage.

I spent my childhood in the environment influenced by Gandhi's life and thoughts. Gandhi and his fundamental ideas are more of a matter of faith for me. Hence, I lay no claim on objectivity and neutrality about them in my writings. Once Gandhiji took me for a morning walk and put his hands on my shoulders. Today, I feel energised by recalling the memory of those unforgettable moments. I had so much love and respect for him that on his assassination I felt that some one who was closer to me more than even my own father had gone forever from my life. I have never wept so bitterly and copiously as I did on that occasion. It is not taken as a part of a civilised behaviour to cry openly as the children often do in their innocence and open heartedness. The moment I came to such realizations my pains were infected by the artificiality of civilization. But that copious and open cry on Bapu's

assassination is my greatest emotional treasure which I will keep till the last breath of my life.

My life and thoughts bear high imprint of my father, Dada Dharmadhikari. In fact, I started my journey towards Gandhian ideas under his initiation and inspiration. Dada was of the opinion that instead of taking an individual or any book as a proof for the validation of our own ideas, we should proceed in the matter keeping our inquisitiveness and objectivity intact. Moving beyond the bookish approach, we should seriously ruminate about their relevance in the present context. That was his basic intellectual position. He further averred that ideas are always dynamic and the moment they become static, they start losing their value and relevance and even their authenticity in the new context. Dada always insisted that we should start our thought processes about Gandhian ideas precisely from the point where Gandhiji had left. With such an approach and mindset alone, we could extend and bring Gandhian ideas in tune with our times. Whenever a great man passes away, we invariably say that a vacuum created by his loss could never be filled up. But that is not the right thing to say, as its only obvious inference would be that great men end up by creating only vacuum at the end of their life and their successors are always forced to live in some kind of a vacuum all the time. If that is so, then the life of every great man would be taken to be a failure! Unfortunately, that seems to be the obvious and logical conclusion! Admittedly, such a conclusion sounds too logical to be true. In any case, we have to ponder over the Gandhian ideas only in the context of new times.

We should not look for solutions in Gandhian ideas for all our pressing problems. In other words, we should not look for formulae solutions from Gandhian lexicon as we look for meaning of words from a dictionary. There is no readymade solution for any of our problems. We have to look for their solutions through our own independent thinking. That was Dada's approach to the entire gamut of Gandhian ideas.

I, in my own modest way, have tried to live through such an approach. How successfully and how far I have imbibed such an

intellectual approach, I have my own doubts about it. Therefore, I have a desire just to take a dip in Gandhian ideas. It is not necessary that the ideas expressed in the present work should be acceptable to one and all of its readers. After all, dissent and difference of opinions are the life-blood of democracy. In fact, it is quite natural that we differ from each other in respect of our ideas. This is for the simple reason that we as individuals have a different mindset, different temperament, different heads and different proclivities. But it is my humble submission that despite our differences in opinion, let there be no mental antagonism and animosity in our dealings with each other. We must always bear in mind that there is nothing like Gandhism. Hence, there is no question of any kind of indoctrination or imposition in the field of Gandhian ideas.

I have been using Dada's writings and ideas to my heart's content. As his son, I take it as my birth right. I am his son, that is my original position, the rest comes to me as *ex-officio*. Hence I consider myself nothing more than a coolie/cARRIER for the thoughts of Gandhi and Dada. I am aware that the readers are of scholarly and inquisitive temperament. I am just wondering about their interest in the present work. But I keep on moving around in the country particularly among our youths. Some of them are acutely aware of the problems confronting our people. Besides, they do not want to stand aside rather they want to actively participate in the struggle for change. They are quite keen to have a basic understanding of Gandhian ideas and relate them to the present context. My earnest desire is that the present book should provide some intellectual food to the youth on their march towards a better society. I will be more than happy if it also proves useful to those who think that Gandhian ideas are out of tune with our times. I am also happy to bring to the notice of the readers that the present work has already gone through Marathi and Hindi editions. It has been well received by the readers in both the languages.

The Institute of Gandhian Studies, Wardha is our own institute. It is not just an institution rather it is a centre of Gandhian ideology. It has received international acclaim and recognition.

I am happy that Bharat Mahodaya, the Director of the Institute and Siby Joseph, the Dean of Studies, have taken upon themselves the onerous task of its publication. Ramchandra Pradhan, a senior faculty member of the Institute, has translated most of the material presented in the book from Hindi to English.

I am sad to note that today physical elimination (murder) by resorting to all kinds of stratagem is considered to be the surest way to put an end to someone's thoughts. It is such a way of devilish thinking which has led to the murder of a number of leaders including Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan. And faith in violence is ever on the increase. At such a critical moment of our history, the publication of the present work is quite timely and appropriate.

My dear friend, Shri Ramkrishna Bajaj, was the main source of inspiration behind the Institute of Gandhian Studies. Shri Jammalal Bajaj was taken to be the fifth son of Mahatma Gandhi. Thus Ramkrishna could very well be taken as the grandson of Gandhiji. It was in the environment saturated with the life and thoughts of Gandhiji that Ramkrishna was brought up. He grew up and was educated in a spiritually surcharged atmosphere. Thus Gandhian ideas became an integral part of his life and living and indeed his *sadhana*. He tried to live them through in the given circumstances to the best of his abilities.

When Gandhiji launched his Individual Satyagraha in 1940, he picked up Vinoba Bhave as the first individual *satyagrahi*. Gandhiji himself used to select individuals as *satyagrahi* for that movement. He used to consider the pros and cons before picking up someone as individual *satyagrahi*. Ramkrishnaji was selected by Gandhiji as the youngest individual *satyagrahi*. At that time, he was less than eighteen years of age. He was imprisoned during the movement. Subsequently, he was also active during the Quit India Movement.

Ramkrishnaji was a leading light of the Indian business world. But essentially he looked at himself as a 'servant of industry'. He has imbibed Gandhian idea of trusteeship as a part of his family inheritance. He used to call himself as 'Gandhi's coolie'. He carried Gandhian ideas on his broad and strong shoulders throughout his life. Faith, trust and self-effacement were the foundation of his

life and living. He stood for the principle of fair play in business. People took it to be an impractical idea; as if he was selling mirrors amidst the blind people. His primary interest was social work. For him *Jamnala Marg* was not made of cement and concrete. It was a kind of an ideology. Hence, Dada used to call him '*Maryada Purushottam Ramkrishna*'. It is with such a feeling that I am dedicating this book to his sacred memory.

I am thankful to all my colleagues and friends for their contributions to the present edition of my book.

**Chandrashekhhar Dharmadhikari**

#### **About the Translator**

**RAM CHANDRA PRADHAN**, a well-known social activist and a Gandhian scholar, taught at Ramjas College, Delhi University for several decades. As one of the conveners of the Lokayan project and as an activist thinker of the Movement for Peace and Alternative Development, he has travelled all over the world and interacted with activists and scholars across the continents. Dr Pradhan has been a recipient of the Senior Fulbright Fellowship (1979-80) and the Indo-Canadian Shastri Fellowship (1993). He is the author of several books including *Raj to Swaraj* (both in English and Hindi); *Reading and Reappraising Gandhi and Colonialism in India* published by Macmillan India. He has another book on Gandhiji, *Integrating Body, Mind and Heart: The Gandhian Way*. He has also books on the Bhagavad Gita and Koran Sharif to his credit. At present, he has taken to whole time writing and is engaged in a multi-volume study of the Indian Socialist Movement. Presently, he is attached to the Institute of Gandhian Studies, Wardha, Maharashtra.

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

The very idea of another study on Gandhi's life and thought sounds presumptuous, if not preposterous. There are genuine reasons for such a feeling. In the first place, Gandhiana is no longer a virgin intellectual field for research and writings. There are books galore on all major Gandhian themes. In fact, it is an intellectually over-cultivated field, giving out numerous scholarly yields. One has also to bear in mind that Gandhi's own voluminous writings covering one hundred volumes, virtually touch upon every human concern ranging from sexuality to spirituality.

Despite the above scenario, surprisingly the books dealing with the Gandhian themes are being published on an uninterrupted pace. The reasons for this puzzling situation are not far to seek. It underlines, on the one hand, the ever growing relevance of Gandhi in the context of the problems confronting the cosmic order. Besides, it also underscores the irrelevance of ruling ideologies like liberalism and Marxism and their variant forms like neo-liberalism and neo-Marxism. Thus there is a fervent search for a new civilizational vision and dream which points a way out of the present human predicament. It is such a felt-need on the part of the sensitive minds all over the world which explains and justifies the plethora of Gandhian literature being published on a break-neck speed.

Another reason for such development is that Gandhi has become a handmaid of specialists and experts. The intellectual gaze of such specialised and in-depth studies is quite narrow. In the process, the holistic vision of Gandhi's life and thought is missed. Even the biographical studies of Gandhi are resulting in projecting different and even diametrically opposite images of the Mahatma. The scholars engaged in different academic disciplines like history, political science, sociology, philosophy, psychology and comparative religion have mostly studied Gandhi from the perspective of their own disciplines. Though these studies are

quite germane to their own discipline, but they do fail to present a holistic vision of Gandhi's life and thought.

On all these counts, the present study undertaken by Justice Chandrashekhar Dharmadhikari offers its own justifications. It gives a holistic view of Gandhi's life, thoughts and relates them to the present times. What is more, his overall presentation is highly judicious and balanced. Besides, as a scholar, thinker and writer, Chandrashekhar Dharmadhikari has all the qualifications for undertaking such a serious study. His interest in Gandhian studies goes much beyond mere intellectual inquisitiveness and academic concerns. He is the son of Dada Dharmadhikari—one of the most seminal thinkers and activists who was not only a front-ranking freedom fighter, but also played a crucial role in evolution of Gandhian thought in the post-independent era. He had participated both as a thinker and as an activist in Sarvodaya-Bhoodan and JP Movement. But that is not the only or even the most important qualification of Chandrashekhar Dharmadhikari for undertaking the present study. He is a thinker, a writer, and an activist and above all a highly concerned citizen of the country.

Besides, having spent the major part of his life in judiciary, he has an innate tendency to take a very judicious and balanced view of things around him. Moreover, today he is among a handful of living Gandhians who has seen Gandhi leading the national movement and even the contexts in which he articulated his major ideas. Besides, Chandrashekhar Dharmadhikari is a freedom fighter in his own right. As such, he had imbibed Gandhian ideas in his own life and living. He displayed these traits when he delivered a number of judgements protecting the rights of the citizens even during the black days of the Emergency. He has also had the privilege of Gandhi putting his hand on his shoulder in the course of his morning walks. All this uniquely qualifies him for undertaking an important study like the present one.

The present study had several points of strength which need to be underlined. The themes covered in the present study speak volumes for the author's wide range of interests and concerns. Starting with some reminiscences of Gandhi, it covers most of the Gandhian key ideas like truth, non-violence, *swadeshi*, *swaraj*,

trusteeship and other political and social ideas. What is more, he makes a serious attempt to relate them to the challenges of our times, particularly to those of the new phase of globalization and liberalization. Besides, he also deals with some of the most frequently asked questions by the youth of today regarding Gandhi's relationship with some of the stalwarts of national movement like Bhagat Singh, Subhas Chandra Bose, B.R. Ambedkar and others.

Going through the present study, a reader might be struck by the repeated references to similar thoughts and themes. But for several reasons that could not have been avoided. In the first place, truth told even umpteenth time loses neither its lustre nor its luminosity. Secondly as a teacher, I know that at times repetition of thoughts and themes becomes unavoidable for hammering out certain points in the hearts and minds of the audience. Thirdly such repetitions in the present study might help the reader to read any of its chapters in an independent manner, without going back to the previous ones for its contextual understanding.

The present work is basically an English version of Dharmadhikari's earlier Hindi book *Gandhi Meri Nazar Mein*. It has also run through a Marathi edition. As the English translator of the book, I would like to frankly state that I have not gone in for a literal translation. Rather mine is an attempt on trans-creation, unless that sounds too presumptuous on my art. However, I have tried my best to retain the flavour of Dharmadhikari's style of literary presentation and his line of nuanced argumentation. However, I leave it to the discerning eyes of its readers to judge for themselves how far I have succeeded in my attempts.

Translating Dharmadhikari's book from Hindi to English has been a very challenging task for me. I am not a professional translator of either of the languages. But for the active support from a number of my friends it would have been impossible for me to take the work to its logical conclusion. First of all, I am extremely grateful to Chandrashekar Dharmadhikari for his trust and faith in my ability and competence to undertake such an onerous task. Shrikant Kulkarni and Manohar Mahajan of the Institute have helped me in various ways. Bharat Mahodaya, our Director as usual has been supportive of my present work as

well. Siby Joseph, the Dean of the Institute, has been of constant and continuous help to me. Whenever in difficulty, I have always rushed to him for help, particularly for the checking of quotations and references. Siby has also prepared an excellent cover for the present study. I am very appreciative of the excellent effort put in by Rajkumar Khatri, the proprietor of Om Laser Printers and Shri Sanjay Singh, the proprietor of Victorious Publishing Solutions, taking every care towards the production of the book including typesetting

Now in the realm of writings including on social themes, it is being widely believed that it must bear the imprint of the author's personality, his way of life, his thought processes and indeed his entire world view. It should not be a mere presentation of empirical facts/truth in the name of objectivity and neutrality. It must be the result of a deep sense of internalisation and recreation. That is taken to be a necessary qualification for a good writing. Anyone who goes through the present work is likely to be struck by the fact that its every page bears the imprint of Dharmadhikari's personality—his predilection and proclivities. Someone might go to the extent of saying that it bears even his pride and prejudices!

I would like to just add that through his present work, Dharmadhikari tries to give away to the younger generation all that he had learned, all that he has experienced during his life and time. Age has failed to tame and dampen his high spirits, his keen observations and bold intellectual perceptions. At the end, I find it difficult to resist the temptation to quote a few lines from W.B. Yeat's poem, *Sailing to Byzantium* which reads:

'An aged man is but a paltry thing,  
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless  
Soul claps its hands and sings, and louder sing  
For every tatter in its mortal dress.'

In these pages Dharmadhikari's inner soul sings too vigorously and yet sonorously to remain unheard even by its casual readers and passer by.

**Ram Chandra Pradhan**