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THE KING OF TRUTH

GHANDI'S MISSION IN LIFE

BY
K. M. PILLAI



"TRUTH IS LIKE A TORCH,
THE MORE IT IS SHOOK ; THE BRIGHTER IT SHINES."

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"KING OF TRUTH"
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(By K. M. PILLAI.)

*"Truth is like a torch,
The more it is shook, the brighter it shines"*

TO have an end, a purpose pursued through all the vicissitudes of fortune, through anguish and shame, through humiliation, disaster and defeat, that is the great distinction, the Supreme Justification of Life. Every nation and every individual have had some purpose in life, some end in view. Alexander the Great's purpose and end in life was to be the supreme monarch of the world; Napoleon the Great had a likewise end; and in the person of the Ex-Kaiser there was a latent ambition of a double Bonnaparte and Alexander. We have been reading and hearing a great deal about the great exploits in the air. Some want to explore the Polar regions; some to sound the depths of the Pacific; some to scale the snowy heights of the Himalayas; some there are whose end is to distinguish themselves

in the domain of science. We have read about the great experiment that is going on in the West to revive the dead and bring them back to life. If this were to succeed, let us hope it will, our existence in the world for ever shall be secured and the universal maxim "Men are mortal" must needs be reversed to "Men are immortal." Christ's mission in life was to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. Buddha had a mission of Ahimsa Dharma to impart. Lord Krishna had a divine mission of impressing oneness and duty. Mohamad had a mission of establishing brotherhood in a caste and class-ridden world. It is needless to mention the names of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Ramatheertha and others in the field of religion whose mission was to expound Hinduism and to build an Empire based on truth and love. A great man has said that man is a *bundle of ideas*. We have to add that woman is no exception to this maxim and theory. In the modern work-a-day world, women have fairly run the gamut of social and political emancipation. They have their vote; are admitted to the Bar; allowed to serve on Honorary Benches; have places on the Municipal Councils and Legislatures and to crown all their sphere of activity has extended from *Kitchen to Country* through the efforts of our great social reformers. Indeed it is pleasing to

see women serving "Mother India." So every man, woman, including the Prophets, Kings, Heroines, Statesmen, Philosophers and Saints, both ancients and moderns have or have had some idea of their mission and purpose in life which they were anxious to see assume a material shape. The effort used in the materialisation of their ideas is the pursuing of their ideal in view. There is a difference in the ideas of each individual and Nation; there is a diversity of purpose, a diversity of mission. Each has tried in its own way to dignify and elevate the country in various fields. These great men and Prophets, like Christ, Buddha, Mohamed and Lord Krishna appeared in great ages and threw some guiding hints to humanity governing the laws of life. In spite of this, the world has not changed a whit better. There is the same pain, suffering and trouble. The cause for this is not far to seek. Contrary to the established laws of life, we have developed an unwanted complex social organisation which is the root cause of our Economic, Social, Educational and Industrial backwardness. India has been hurled down from the pinnacle of her ancient glory from the time her children began to taste of the tree of distinction and difference. It is not too late to regain what we have lost if only we follow the counsel of a great man engaged in the

struggle for freedom and whose mission in life and his retirement from the Congress has given room for speculation. Different parties and politicians view the cause from different angles of vision. But whatever may be the labels and denominations of the parties, we can divide the nation into two (2) groups or sections—the pessimistic section of the public which apprehend the weakening of the great national organisation—The Congress—the optimistic section which maintain that Mahatmaji's vigour of effort and zeal for the mission on which he has embarked will all the more be redoubled and will not in the least endanger the foundations of the Congress. Amidst these conflicting views, manifold questions are irresistably prompted. Why has he retired? Has he lost confidence in his comrades? Does not Bharata Bhumi require his services any more? In short what is his purpose of his mission and what is the supreme justification of his life? These are big and puzzling questions which land us in difficulties to devise possible answers. In our effort to answer these questions, we have to be guided by four landmarks: (1) The Past (2) The Future (3) The Individual and (4) His actions.

I. Past :—Mahatmaji by necessity is a Politician. He is a level-headed politician who looks both backward and forward. When he was confronted with a

higher call—the call of Truth—he faced it like a brave soldier and has been following it through the vestibule of politics. Hence his political principles are based on a spiritual foundation. He has well-nigh weighed the past and is now laying the road for the future. By practical experience he has found that freedom for India is not being loaded in the mighty steamships that guard the English Channel but being loaded in plenty in wagons drawn by human bullocks in India and in the roofless huts of the impecunious peasant and the impoverished labourer and the jobless craftsman and in the torn pockets of the educated unemployed. Relieve their weight of Poverty, Ignorance and Superstition, we can load the big “Wagon of India” with freedom full to the brim. With a clear vision, Mahatmaji sees that materialism and civilisation have trampled the glories of India’s great past. Western civilisation may be a blessing to India in so far as division of labour and quick means of transport are concerned. But where is the plenty that reigned during the golden days of our Hindu Kings? Where is the bond of union and love that existed between the Hindus and Muslims during the Halcyon days of the Muslim Emperors like Akbar and Shajahan? Where are the Dacca silks and muslins which were much coveted even by the West? Where are the Engineers that planned and the crafts-

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men that constructed the mighty 'Taj', the symbol of love, honour and eternity. When shall another Taj be built? Where is the glass that held the spiritual liquor of "Love and Truth" from which the sages of the past drank? Where are they? Find them out—bring them back—that is the road he lays for the future.

II. The Future:—The future is pregnant with possibilities and trouble. The bedrock in Gandhi's political principle is the developing of a spiritual strength and cohesion of our great population composed of diversity of castes and creeds and divided into innumerable sects. To vindicate the legitimate destiny of India, he wants that the nation must be spiritually strong, cohesive, confident of high expectations, honesty and capacity to endure the struggle and fight the battle of freedom with the weapon of Reason and Truth. India with its queer social conventions which make distinction between man and man, the meaningless customs and prejudices of her people forbidding the so-called low caste to enter into temples even in spite of the conception of philosophical equality in the Vedas, the imaginary obstacles that is preventing India to take her due share in the commerce of the world, the sect-strife that has buried her ancient industries, in short, the restoration of the pristine glories of India are the selected fields on which Mahatmaji is

focussing his attention. In this stupendous task of rousing the slumbering energies of the nation, Mahatma has still an arduous task ahead in bringing to the nation such knowledge which will convert it into infinite power of action. The "Untouchability Campaign" the new wave that he has set motion in his political ideal has caused great consternation to the ignorant, prejudice-ridden and to the *pseudo*-religious-section of the public who apprehend that *Hinduism* is in danger. There are not wanting men who think that Gandhi is a public calamity and his miraculous escape from the bomb incident is an eloquent proof of the country's ignorance to respond to his message of social co-operation and national stability. With a prophetic vision he sees the premonitory signs of a storm of the nation drifting towards war and internecine warfare when he rightly observes "If untouchability is not eradicated Hinduism will be wiped out." The struggle of the labourer striving to turn out a penny in the scorching heat of the blazing sun, the disheartened peasant with an overburdened tax, the unwanted social element struggling for self-expression, the obstacles that are lying on the way of the other sex to take its due share in the Government of the country, the jobless craftsman of the village, the educated unemployed and the famishing slums exposed to the

biting cold of the winter months—these are the things which are demanding his attention and regarding which he is carrying on a propaganda in a new light. The scene of his labours has been changed from the Congress to the vast expanse of Rural India, where his presence is immediately necessary. He hopes to carry on this gigantic experiment of emancipating the masses from ignorance and slavery, with his weapon of Reason and Truth with more brilliant result than what he has achieved for the Congress. When mankind stand baffled before new situations and problems, unmindful of past failures and unapprehensive of the future, working optimistically in the living spirit, Mahatma has hailed with his universal message of truth and non-violence as the only possible cures for economic and social evils. In his mission to win the freedom of India by uniting all classes in one bond and holy creed of love—to God and Brotherhood—by his passive weapons, Ghandi has lit the torch of a divine knowledge which will serve as a beacon light to humanity and posterity.

III. The Individual :—The movement he has initiated is organic, full of life and grit. He may be an idealist in politics but is a real leader of the nation to be counted upon. He is not worried by the difficulty of his mission. The faithlessness of his fellow workers

instead of damping his enthusiasm has stimulated him to greater endurance for them. Disappointments for him have been only the stepping stones to achieve the success of his mission. Forlorn, undaunted by failures, facing treachery, humiliation and disaster, all the vicissitudes of circumstances of fortune; he is seen marching serenely forward to the goal of his mission, though many have retired from the field wearied of the journey, dubious of his capacity to endure the strain of the travel on the zigzag road of freedom. All who know the Mahatma will reverently acknowledge his profundity as a teacher, bringing home the lesson to the nation that what God is and what part religion and service should play in our lives to achieve the freedom which is so sweet, so desirable and so lovely; his insight as a leader making us feel what real courage is and on what success depended; his wisdom as a guide taking us to a wonderful new region—the region of spirits—with whom he is already communing and where there burns for him a bright light even the rays of which we cannot hope to see. None can dispute the transparent purity of his character and the moral purpose of his life. A saint-like-soul, whose life has been dedicated to the service of the people, cannot be a humble politician growing jubilant over the sweeping victories at the polls, offering obstruction to the Bureaucracy within the

Council. Such tactics can little solve the problem of liberty as the disease lies in the nation itself than in the Bureaucracy.

Congress is too narrow a field to proceed with the work of renovating India and restoring it to its pristine brilliance. His presence is more urgently needed in the vast expanse of rural India where yawning gulfs of social separation clog the progress of Freedom's Wheel. His electric presence before the ignorant masses with his sublime message of oneness, truth and non-violence, is sure to soften, calm, appease and enlighten the nation. With his policy of rural reconstruction, Gandhi is taking bread to the famishing sons of rural India. If truth, oneness and non-violence pervade the Congress atmosphere, it need not be afraid of its fall. But these are things yet to be achieved. The moment that such a spirit is infused, the Congress will be a great bulwark of the nation. It is for the present leaders of the Congress to steer its course correctly in the absence of its leader whose services are more required to dispel darkness and ignorance. Gandhi's very life and his message is itself an education to mankind. To see him is to begin one's life anew, for he is humble, eager to serve, never hasty to condemn, he exposes his own weakness to our sight, he understands human weakness, human errors and human sorrow; ail meanness and

smallness of spirit vanish in his sight, and human consciousness will be lifted up to a new height—a height of the spirit. New thoughts would dawn on us and new feelings would stir within our hearts. He is the man and spirit combined. Like the prophets of old, he is the genius of our race with a unique message of universal peace and brotherhood.

IV. His Actions:—This India's outstanding personality and leader, the hero of the country's most revolutionary changes with all his clear-cut programmes of truth and non-violence is still an enigma to the world. Not even his trusted followers can adequately comprehend the centre of gravity of his life's mission.

He masters the problems of the nation, judges it by his own intellect, examines it by the light of his mature experience, he looks at things in his own light. We cannot see the orbit of his movements—it is so wide. We are seeing that he is moving the nation and from which point we are unable to judge. The man and his actions are still enshrouded in elusive mystery, for Mahatma melts and casts his life and principles again and again into moulds of perfection. This much we can assert. Like Mohamed, Christ and Krishna, the kings of truth, Mahatma is one of the above type who took up the cross for the people and he is one

of the rare souls that are born from time to time to redeem mankind from their sins and failures.

Traditionally a spiritual nation, let us rise above self, forget our petty differences, let us be faithful to his teachings and follow him, let us use the constructive forces which lie dormant within us, let co-operation proceed from our innate love, let us labour along with the leader of the nation without allowing the mist and fog of circumstances to cloud us and with our united efforts let us restore the pristine glories of a nation which has been the birth place of plenty, liberty and love. While so doing we shall be making the task of the Mahatma easy.

If this is done, let us hope that it will, he will live to see that he has not vainly knocked at the door of our hearts, that the purpose of his life has been attained and that we shall be able to say that his labours for the country are the *Supreme Justification* for his life.

Let us therefore appeal to all who may care to hear or who may happen to read this to do what they can to understand aright the principles which Gandhiji has been enunciating for the benefit of mankind and to put into active practice such principles as will eventually contribute to the happiness of the toiling millions of India. Let us also appeal with all the earnestness and emphasis that we can command to the

younger generation to adopt a life of simplicity which their forbears in ancient days adopted and which afforded them a measure of prosperity which has not been the lot of the present generation. In passing through a great Economical crisis unprecedented in the annals of the land. The same Economic problems are affecting other Countries and lands under the Sun. The problem of combating the present Economical crisis has been engaging the attention of the financiers and political Economists. But so far have they come out with any practical suggestions for the difficulty? No—an emphatic No—will be the answer. Governments are finding it difficult to run their huge and top heavy Administrations. The hitherto wealthy landlord finds it difficult to pay the assessment in time; the middle class population is on the verge of poverty and the poor class rests content with one meal a day which is not sufficient to keep body and soul alive. Occupations are so difficult to find, and a very unhealthy discontent prevails everywhere. When this Economic trouble will cease is a problem still in the womb of futurity. But the subject of our sketch—the spiritual and political leader of the day—has thought of the present problems in all sincerity, and rightly holds that the salvation of the world, the material prosperity of civilised Governments, and the moral and material welfare of all classes

lies in bringing about a thorough rural reconstruction— a reconstruction not merely based on the laying out of village roads and the installation of Electric lights— but a reconstruction which will add to the material prosperity of the humblest peasant so that he may live in peace and comfort. All well-wishers of India will easily recognise and appreciate work done towards this end and if the Mahatma achieves this great purpose in life, his name will be treasured for many generations to come. May the Giver of All Good grant unto him and to his fellow workers strength to carry on the noble object which he now has in view.



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