

## HUMANITY ITSELF WAS A RELIGION

October 2 is called Gandhi Jayanti. This is the day when the great Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi was born. Gandhiji, as he was popularly known, is still remembered for the wonderful things he taught, not just to Indians, but to the entire world.

Gandhiji was the architect of our freedom struggle. But while we may have got freedom from the British Raj, we are today not free of corruption, crimes, killings, man-made drought situations, malnutrition, etc. which are far more bigger evils than the English rule. Humanity itself was a religion for Gandhiji who used to worship honesty. But today, we are divided on the basis of religion, caste, inequality, apart from dishonesty all around. Even the currency notes of higher value which has Gandhiji's picture embossed on them has shrunk in value terms as you can hardly get anything from them.

Mahatma Gandhi's teachings have more significance in today's world. Hence, let us follow on his path to get true 'swaraj' (freedom) for our nation in real terms.

"Work is worship" which was Gandhiji's motto in life. Let us therefore cancel the holiday of October 2nd and work more vigorously, which would please the soul of this great leader. Also, let us not talk about Gandhiji but try to become one like him. That would be a real tribute to our dear Father of the nation.

One more thing to mention is that Gandhiji always maintained his originality. As a barrister, he travelled to the United Kingdom and South Africa. He would always wear his traditional Indian dress -- the dhoti and would respect the culture of his country and its customs. He would do that even though foreign nationals did not understand, like or respect it.

For many decades, a large number of Indian youngsters have been following the Western culture. Indians have lost respect for their culture, customs and their mother-tongue. What is the point of having a national holiday or celebrating a great soul's birthday when Indians don't want to follow what this great leader has taught us? Give it a thought!

## Population growth posing challenges to environmental sustainability

India became the world's most populous country this year, overtaking China. Not surprisingly, India's population growth is posing significant challenges to its environmental sustainability, resource management and social development. The increasing population of cities without foresight or proper planning leads to land degradation, water scarcity, air pollution, waste management and great loss to biodiversity.

Population growth, urbanization and environment are interrelated. effective Or sound urban planning is one that takes into account the social fabric and accommodates the needs of the growing population while minimizing its impact on the environment.

This is the need of the hour: In today's times, when large population growth can cause environmental stress, it is important to consider the broader context of this problem. For example, the per capita resource consumption and carbon footprint of developed countries is much higher than that of India. India should already learn the virtue of low consumption, so that it does not consume indiscriminately like developed countries can be avoided.

With its increasing population, India should not proceed on the path of excessive exploitation of resources. For a true and sustainable future in the world, the architecture of cities will have to adopt a two-pronged approach. The first approach is conservation, under which conservation of resources is necessary. This also includes reducing waste, repurposing and repurposing existing structures to help preserve the cultural identity of cities. Second, to collaborate with scientists and engineers. For example, cities need to collaborate with experts to develop new and more efficient construction technologies. India's population needs only 10 percent of the land area to settle and expand.

Keeping this in mind, urban designers and architects can contribute to sustainable urban planning by designing sustainable, accessible and mixed-use structures. This will enable the development of public transport, pedestrian-friendly infrastructure and green spaces to reduce urban sprawl and promote efficient use of land. There is a need to give priority. Cities should focus on developing infrastructure, such as pedestrian and cycling, to promote non-motorized transportation in cities. Carbon emissions can be reduced. Our architects in the country already have a well-crafted agenda of sustainable design. This includes facilitating the movement of natural light and air in houses and buildings. It has now become necessary to construct such buildings, where energy consumption is low or energy is saved. Now buildings are renewable, will have to be adapted to energy sources. In a country like India, the use of mechanical air conditioning can be reduced by up to 85 percent. Architects can also play an important role in preserving and creating green spaces in urban areas. Parks, gardens and urban forests provide respite, helping to regulate temperatures and clean the air. In urban construction, greenery on rooftops and agriculture can also be included in the building plan. The development of such facilities will also help in reducing the increasing heat and pollution in cities.

This can be curbed. In view of the increasing population, it is necessary to be economical. If saved, just one-third of India's rainfall could provide more than 2,000 liters of water per person per day. Now 'Engineers working for humanity' have become very relevant. Social by connecting all urban plans Organizations and citizens will also have to be taken along.

## Mahatma Gandhi 'The Great National Hero'

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

Mohandas Karam Chand Gandhi popularly known as Mahatma Gandhi was born on 2nd October 1869 at Porbander located in Gujarat. His father's name was Karam Chand Uttam Chand Gandhi who served as Deewan (Prime Minister).

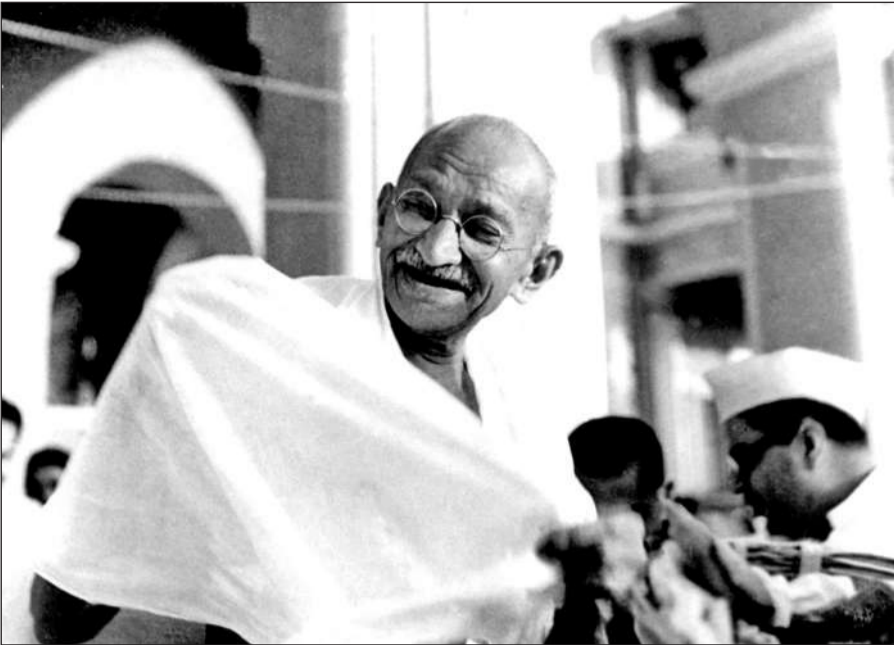
Mahatma Gandhi was one of the greatest men the world ever produced. Mahatma Gandhi is also known as Babu and was held in high esteem not only in India but was respected and revered in the whole world. Gandhi is the greatest man in the Indian history unarguably. The way he shaped and gave direction to Indian freedom struggle is worthy of standing ovation.

He sacrificed his life for the freedom and secularism of the country. Mahatma Gandhi is popularly called the father of the nation-Rashtra Pita. The respect that he earned for himself despite leading a simple life is appreciable. His non-violent ways and peaceful methods & means were the foundation for gaining freedom from the British. Gandhi was a multifaceted personality.

Bapu was a leader, politician, saint, philosopher, thinker, writer, social reformer, advocate, educationist, the true follower of Bhagwad Gita and what not. It is very difficult to pen down his personality in few words. Gandhi was the educationist par excellence and his scheme of basic education is the corner stone of Indian education system.

His was a divine personality. His simple living and high thinking has inspired of people in India and abroad. Gandhi was a political and spiritual leader of India and his novel technique of non-violent agitation which he called Satyagraha or moral domination was the basic characteristic of his personality and functioning. United Nations international day of non-violence is also held on October 2nd each year to coincide with the Mahatma Gandhi's birthday.

Gandhi is also called the father of the Indian independence movement. He was the man who preached and practiced non-violence and inspired millions around the world and even the Americas own apostle of peace Martin Luther



King was inspired by Gandhi. Though one may not typically think of Gandhi as a philosopher, he was in fact a profound philosophical thinker. He was not an academic philosopher. But he wrote a lot and so he can be called a philosopher.

Gandhi was a great and prolific writer and had written many books and articles. He had written his autobiography entitled, 'My experiments with truth'. Truthfulness were the corner stone of his thinking, philosophy and personality. He has said, "There is no good higher than truth". Though Gandhi was not a typical philosopher but his philosophy and thinking changed history in a dramatic way. He was a strong and staunch Hindu and believed in equal respect to all religions. Bapu was a great freedom fighter who fought through non-violence.

He was married to Kasturba Gandhi. Gandhi went to South Africa after marriage and worked there for twenty long years. There he had his first feel of the apartheid. He vowed to erase the apartheid from the face of the globe. His contribution to freedom struggle of India cannot be exaggerated. He started his non-cooperation movement which

officially began Gandhian era in India. It was one of the series of the non violent protests nationwide.

It made Indians aware that British can be opposed and it works as a check on them. Civil disobedience movement was another non-violent movement spearheaded by Gandhi. It was more active than the non cooperation movement. It brought a revolution in the country. It was agitation against land revenue, abolition of salt tax, cutting down of military expenditure, leaving duty on the foreign clothes etc. Salt satyagraha was important part of this movement. Gandhi took to Dandi March as a protest against the salt tax. He started Quite India movement in 1942. Its aim was to bring the British government to a negotiating table. A call for immediate independence was given.

The slogan of do or die was adopted. Gandhi went to fast for twenty one days to secure release of those jailed and got them released. Entire India was united in the movement for freedom. Besides a freedom fighter Gandhi the slogan of complete freedom was given.

India got freedom on 15th august 1947 after making much sacrifices and

efforts. Besides a freedom fighter Gandhi was against the practice of untouchability. He revered the weak, down trodden, and the people belonging the lower castes. He gave the lower castes the name of Harijan. He was a true Hindu and Bhagwad Gita was his guru. He was believer of Hindu-Muslim unity and was the true secularist that India ever produced. Gandhi was the believer in Sanatan Dharma. He was an economist as well and believed that small scale and rural and handicraft industries can bring great revolution in rural economy. He was the advocate of cottage and small scale and tiny industry.

Gandhi Ji did not believe in religious education but believed in the imparting of education about religions. He was of the view that there should be religious and righteous minded people in politics. He had asked for disbanding of Indian National congress soon after freedom. Gandhi had penned down many books. His was a practical and pragmatic personality.

His love and crusade for cleanliness and sanitation is famous throughout India. He believed in the principle of work is worship and also emphasized the principle of the service of mankind and believed that service to man is service to God. Bapu was a staunch supporter of Khadi and village industry and used to spun cotton himself with charkha-wooden wheel. Gandhi ji was a multi-dimensional personality. He was a politician, leader, statesman, philosopher, thinker, educationist, saint, social reformer and above all a freedom fighter.

Albert Eienten has rightly remarked that future generation will wonder if ever such a man has walked on the earth. Alas, this man of peace was assassinated by a fanatic Nathuram Godse on January 30, 1948 and the whole nation wept and wailed and mourned his death so the day is remembered as Martyr Day. Let us imbibe the life and teachings of Gandhi and make India of his dreams. That will be a befitting tribute to this great man on his birthday.

(The author is retired education officer).

## PM Modi's inspirational cleanliness drive: Leading by example

■ ABHIJEET JASROTIA



Prime Minister Narendra Modi has once again shown his dedication to the cause of cleanliness by actively participating in a nationwide cleanliness drive.

On Sunday, October 1, the Prime Minister took to the streets armed with a broom, demonstrating the importance of hands-on involvement in the 'Swachh Bharat' (Clean India) initiative.

In a powerful video that quickly went viral, PM Modi was seen cleaning alongside wrestler Ankit Baiyanpuriya. This hands-on approach sends a powerful message to the nation about the significance of active participation in the cleanliness drive.

The nationwide cleanliness drive, known as 'Ek Tareekh Ek Ghanta Ek Saath' (One date, one hour, together), witnessed people from all walks of life, including top leaders and students, coming together for an hour-long 'Shramdaan' (voluntary labor). The response to PM Modi's call for this initiative was overwhelming, highlighting the unity and commitment of the nation towards a cleaner and healthier India.

In a tweet, PM Modi emphasized the holistic approach to this endeavor, stating, "Today, as the nation focuses on Swachhata, Ankit Baiyanpuriya and I did the same! Beyond just cleanliness, we blended fitness and well-being also into the mix. It is all about that Swachh and Swasth Bharat vibe."



This holistic approach is significant, as it underlines the importance of cleanliness not only for a cleaner environment but also for the well-being and fitness of individuals. A clean and healthy India is the vision that PM Modi has been tirelessly working towards.

Prominent leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), including BJP chief JP Nadda and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, also actively participated in the voluntary labor of 'shramdaan.' Union ministers and BJP leaders from various parts of the country enthusiastically grabbed brooms, contributing to the 'Swachhata hi Seva' (Service

through Cleanliness) campaign.

This collective effort by leaders and citizens alike showcases the spirit of teamwork and shared responsibility. It sends a clear message that cleanliness is not the responsibility of the government alone but of every citizen.

In a recent episode of 'Mann Ki Baat,' Prime Minister Modi called upon all citizens to dedicate "one hour of shramdaan for swachhata" on Sunday as a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on the eve of his birth anniversary. This gesture is a fitting tribute to the Father of the Nation, who championed cleanliness as an essential aspect of a free and pros-

perous India.

The 'Swachh Bharat' initiative, launched by PM Modi in 2014, has made significant strides in improving sanitation and cleanliness across the country. What started as a mission in 2014 has now transformed into a Jan Andolan (People's Movement) in 2023. It has not only transformed the physical landscape but has also contributed to a shift in mindset regarding cleanliness and hygiene.

PM Modi's active participation in the cleanliness drive serves as an inspiration to the entire nation. It reminds us that leadership is not just about making policies but also about leading by example. His dedication to this cause sets a high standard for all of us to follow.

As we reflect on this remarkable event, let us also remember the words of Mahatma Gandhi, who said, "Sanitation is more important than independence." Cleanliness is not just a civic duty; it is a path to a healthier and more prosperous India. PM Modi's commitment to this cause is a testament to his vision for a cleaner, fitter, and Swasth Bharat (Healthy India).

In conclusion, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's active participation in the cleanliness drive sends a powerful message of unity, responsibility, and commitment. It reinforces the idea that every citizen has a role to play in building a cleaner and healthier India. As we continue to strive for a Swachh Bharat, let us draw inspiration from our leaders and work together towards a brighter and cleaner future.

(The author is spokesperson of BJP J&K).

## Lal Bahadur Shastri a Man of wisdom and Values

■ G.L KHAJURIA

Men may come and men may go, but gems like Sh. Lal Bahadur Shastri stay forever in the history. Rightfully has as thus Oscar wilde remarked, "It is not selfish to think for one self. A man who does not think for himself does not think at all". Born on October 2nd, 1904 at Mughalsaria (UP) in a below the mediocre family, Shastri ji was really to be a gem second Prime Minister of India after Pt. J.L. Nehru. His father, who was a school teacher died when Shastri ji was barely two years old and as such he was being brought up by his maternal grandfather. Though his earlier days of childhood were poverty-ridden and as a corollary, he had to encompass many odds and he faced, all these valiantly with due devotion and dedication never ever afraid of multilimed obstacles those came in his way. A simple man with multi faced cultural and religious affiliations attached to his magnanimity, was Shastri ji who compromised in the crucial and challenging intricate squabbles. When Shastri ji was barely 17, he was attracted towards freedom movements and as such plunged into the freedom arena most boldly keeping body and soul in togetherness and unambiguously took part in various movement started by the father of Nation, "Bapu Gandhi", and on most of occasions he was arrested along with other freedom fighters. Amidst the fiery freedom struggle movements, he occasioned to join "Kashi Vidyapith", where he stud-

ied under the renowned scholar Dr. Bhagwan Dass, which ultimately made him to secure his "Shastri Degree" and in later stages it became a part and parcel of his name and fame. "Jai Jawan' Jai Kisan" was the slogan of Shastri ji and he enshrined 'Jawan' and 'Kisan' are the fountainheads of a nation upon when rests the foundation of the nation. In the words of A.S. Raman. "There is no doubt that Shastri ji has all essentials if not externals of man of destiny; however, shy and self-pitying, he may appear to be. Physically he has obvious handicaps, intellectually, he is modest, politically he is almost passive. But he has certain qualities which distinguish with his statesmanship and its mellow-west! Shastri ji continued to take part in freedom movement very actively with his contemporaries of the time et.al. Lala Lajpath, Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru and many of their ilk and the ensuing period spanning 1952-1964, Shastri ji had remained a member of India's Council of Ministers. He left an indelible print in the Indian history when in 1952, he had been the Railway Minister and voluntarily resigned because of a 'Rail-accident' taking the onus of responsibility on his shoulders. Such were the rarer of rarest qualities bestowed upon him. In May 1964, on the sad demise of Mr. Nehru, Shastri ji was unanimously chosen to succeed Mr. Nehru as the second Prime Minister of India and during his shorter-spell of prime minister ship, he lead India on the path of progress. Work, for him was



worship and rest, the rust. He worked indefatigably without and fear or favour, with due dedication and devotion. Shastri ji was a silent worker and he tackled multifarious off-shooting problems skillfully and in the most meticulous design of things. He was ever been a genius of integrity and cohesiveness and his expounding diabolical courage camouflaged incipently by his silken smile. His main aim was to look far ahead for the generation and generation to come and his edifying humility, pragmatism and humanism were in amalgamation. He maintained during his Prime Minister ship an equilibrium between his thoughts and open mindedness and this goes true with saying of Emerson "Man is a piece universe made alive". Shastri ji has had utmost regards for

'Jawan' & 'Kisan' and on one occasion, called 'Manoj' and 'Shashi ji,' duo film maker as to whether they can produce a film of twin forces of the nation-Jawan' & 'Kisan'. With utter emotion that appeared on their faces, they assured, it is quite possible and that is how 'upkaar' was produced and directed by Manoji.

And, of course, in another occasion his son Sunil who was all along watching Shastri ji of his late coming from office....one night lie kept waiting till late night and asked I father, 'you are always over-burdened in the office matters and you have least regards for the family members'. Smilingly, Shastri ji replied, "My dear boy...don't ever think so ... i whole India is my family...and perhaps you are luckiest that I sleep with you...? Upon this Sunil ji had to apologize. Such is the rarer of rarest qualities imbibed in Shastri ji which perhaps none of his contemporaries ever possessed. In mid seventies, the writer amongst other fellow colleagues have had an occasion visit Shastri ji's residence, congested rooms and though of course, I can say a national heritage A small home with all traditional 'Dhooties' & caps the old traditional pens and holders and the ink-pots which really touched my inner voice vehemently In 1965 Pak invaded India and in dealing with uprising situation, Shastri ji did not make hurry but very meticulously dealt with Pakistan to come to negotiable settlement and offered him a chance to talk in terms of peace but when she could not understand t language of peace,

he hit hard and the entire nation stood as a one man to meet the challenge and the enemy had to bear the retreat bootlessly with humiliation. This was the sort of courage and boldness shown by hint under his dynamic politburo. After the cease fire was drawn and in its aftermath followed "Tashkent agreement" in Jan 1966, then President of Pakistan proceeded Russia. After great deal of deliberations, Shastriji was to sign agreement to the effect that the Indian forces who had occupied Pak territory were withdraw To his utmost zeal and disappointed degree of emotion, Shastri could not bear the burden of signing the agreement. And ill luck had it that left soon Shastri ji was jolted to the cruel hands of death. The sudden and untimely demise of Shastriji shook and utterly shocked the nation a whole and a holocaustic scenario pervaded over Indian horizon. It was perhaps the m unfaithful and deadening day for all Indians. Shastriji was truly the real son of India. I was a greater gem amongst gems who never ever yielded to power or pelf. He possessed t qualities of head and heart. His name shall remain in the History of India till the sun shines, Moon soothes and stars remain glittering in cosmos. And with this is added "Down with your pride of birth, and your golden Gods of trade, a man is worth his mother Earth, all that a man has made." (J.G. Neilardt-ery of people).

(The author is former Deputy conservator of Forest).