



SESHADRIPURAM EDUCATIONAL TRUST
SESHADRIPURAM EVENING DEGREE COLLEGE
#27, NAGAPPA STREET, SESHADRIPURAM, BENGALURU – 560 020
Affiliated to Bengaluru Central University
PHONE: 080 – 22955356 Website: www.sedc.ac.in
In association with
Gandhi Information Center, Germany and Energy Swaraj Foundation, India
International Webinar

on
RELEVANCE OF GANDHIAN ENVIRONMENTALISM

Date: 9th July 2020, Thursday

Keynote Address (Christian Bartolf, Gandhi Information Center)

First of all my heartfelt thanks to the Seshadripuram Educational Trust, the Seshadripuram Evening Degree College, affiliated to Bengaluru Central University, Dr. Krishna, Prof. Satish, Prof. Konnur, Mr. Kumar, Mr. Ashok, Mr. Sagar. It has been particular joy for me to know that you invited Professor Solanki from Energy Swaraj Foundation in Mumbai, India, according to my recommendation, he kindly visited me on his global padyatra to gain support for his concept of decentralized solar energy production and supply which has become a role model for our necessary pathway to the solar age.

I

Last year, October 2019, 150 years after Gandhi's birthday, I was asked by "Kerala Calling" by the Information & Public Relations Department on behalf of the Government of Kerala ["Gandhi's vision for the future (published by U.V Jose, Director, Information & Public Relations Department on behalf of Government of Kerala, in: Kerala Calling (Vol. 39, No. 12, pp. 24-25, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India, October 2019) to write my outline of the "Gandhian Vision for the Future" with the following summary: "The Gandhian way guarantees the uplift of everyone, the welfare of all - for the human dignity and the human rights as well as the ecology and the future of mankind."

"Run come and look out; look out and see. Run come see the sun! If you love to sing harmony, rehearse this song for your next solar energy demonstration."

This is the message the famous songwriter Pete Seeger has left for us, an authentic pioneer of ecology whose efforts to clean the Hudson River succeeded. Pete Seeger included Mahatma Gandhi's favorite bhajan (devotional song) Raghupati Raghava Raja Ram (sometimes called Ram Dhun) on his album "Strangers and Cousins" (1964) and performed it in Episode 10 of his television series "Rainbow Quest" and during his world tours:

"All names of God refer to the same Supreme Being, including Ishvara and Allah. O Lord, please give peace and brotherhood to everyone, as we are all your children. We all request that this eternal wisdom of humankind prevail."

In these critical times of man-made climate change and the rise of renewable energy technologies such as solar energy, wind energy, biofuels, geothermal energy, wave power, tidal power and others, we gradually come to terms with our responsibility to care for energy efficiency and 17 Sustainable Development Goals according to the United Nations General Assembly's "universal, integrated and transformative" 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The broad based and interdependent Sustainable Development Goals are: - **Zero Hunger - Good Health and Well-being - Quality Education - Gender Equality - Clean Water and Sanitation - Affordable and Clean Energy - Decent Work and Economic Growth - Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure - Reducing Inequality - Sustainable Cities and Communities - Responsible Consumption and Production - Climate Action - Life Below Water - Life On Land - Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions - Partnerships for the Goals.**

150 years after the birth of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (on 2nd October, 1869), we should face the truth of his core principles: *sarvodaya - satyagraha- swaraj – swadeshi*. These elements of nonviolent emancipation from colonialism, imperialism, militarism and racism are essential to guarantee the uplift of everyone, the welfare of all - for the human dignity and the human rights as well as the ecology and the future of mankind. That is why we should apply the ethical religion of the golden rule (“Do not treat others in ways that you would not like to be treated.”) with respect to all species. Animal Rights, the respect for life in general, as the moral basis of Vegetarianism become the universal program for a decent way of life, in the spheres of production and consumption. While Gandhi learned from his friend Henry Stephens Salt (acclaimed as “an English writer and campaigner for social reform in the fields of prisons, schools, economic institutions, and the treatment of animals”, “a noted ethical vegetarian, anti-vivisectionist, socialist, and pacifist, well known as a literary critic, biographer, classical scholar and naturalist”), we should learn from the history of Gandhi as a renowned member of the London Vegetarian Society (since 1847). The International Vegetarian Union (IVU) was founded in 1908 in Dresden, Germany and is an international non-profit organization whose purpose is to promote vegetarianism. Let us listen to Mahatma Gandhi in his own words (India’s Case for Swaraj, Edition 1932, pp. 402, in: M. K. Gandhi: The Moral Basis of Vegetarianism):

“I do feel that spiritual progress demand at some stage that we should cease to kill our fellow creatures for the satisfaction of our bodily wants. The beautiful lines of Goldsmith occurs to me as I tell you of my vegetarian fad:

No flocks that range the valley free
To slaughter I condemn;
Taught by the Power that pities me
I learn to pity them.”

We should now join efforts to transform our societies according to the three principles of the “deep ecology”, i.e. wilderness and biodiversity preservation, population planning (by abstinence and contraceptives and family planning), simple living.”

II

Today, on 9th of July, 2020, I would like to remind us that in the past century the challenge of universal pacifism and vegetarianism were represented by Tolstoy, Gandhi, but also Dr. Albert Schweitzer whose ethics of reverence for life was a translation of active nonviolence into the daily life of an Alsatian, German and later French medical doctor, also theologian and philosopher, whose hospital in Lambaréné, Gabon, became a model for Christian charity (caritas) care for the sick and wounded, for the old and young, poor and weak suffering from tropical diseases until today. Schweitzer expressed his desire to visit Gandhi and Tagore who he held in high esteem, and their common friend Charles Freer Andrews met Schweitzer, supported Tagore at Santiniketan and Gandhi throughout his life.

Dr. Albert Schweitzer, Nobel Peace Laureate 1952, wrote a 1935 book about “Indian Thought and Its Development” (New York: H. Holt and Co., 1936; quote from: London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, pp. 225-238), one chapter about Gandhi. At the end of this chapter Schweitzer highlights Gandhi’s plea for celibacy, following Leo Tolstoy’s words on chastity in his epilogue to his 1889 “Kreutzer-Sonata” – Schweitzer wrote:

“His world and life negation comes to full expression when he not only demands the taming of the desires but sets up the ideal of celibacy. He knows from experience the misery of child-marriage. His family brought about his marriage when he was thirteen years of age. His wife has proved a faithful and patient life-companion. Four sons were born of the marriage.

Gandhi supports celibacy on two grounds. The first is his view that only the man who has renounced all desires possesses the spirituality necessary for true activity. He wrote once, “Whoever wishes to dedicate himself to the service of his country or to perceive something of the glory of the truly religious life, must lead a life of chastity, whether he be married or unmarried”. The second reason lies in his belief in reincarnation. To a question as to

his attitude to marriage, he replied, "The goal of life is redemption. As a Hindu I believe that this redemption – we call it Moksa – consists in deliverance from rebirth; it is then that we burst the fetters of the flesh, it is then that we become one with God. Now marriage is a hindrance on the way to the highest goal in so far namely as it draws the bonds of the flesh still tighter. Celibacy on the other hand is a powerful aid, for it makes it possible for us to lead a life of complete devotion to God."

Leo Tolstoy's epilogue to his 1889 novella "Kreutzer-Sonata" had been the blueprint for celibacy (Epilogue to the Kreutzer-Sonata by Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy, 1890, in the translation by Professor Leo Wiener 1904) – Tolstoy wrote:

"Chastity is not a rule or a precept, but an ideal, or, more correctly, one of its conditions. An ideal is only then an ideal when its realization is possible in the idea only, in thought, when it presents itself as attainable only at infinity, and when, therefore, the approach to it is infinite. If an ideal were not only attainable, but we could imagine its realization, it would cease to be an ideal. Such is Christ's ideal, the establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth, -- an ideal which had been foretold even by the prophets when they said that the time would come when the people would be instructed by God, when the swords would be forged into ploughshares and the spears into sickles, when the lion would lie with the lamb, when all the creatures would be united in love. The whole meaning of human life consists in a motion toward this ideal, and therefore the striving after the Christian ideal, in all its entirety, and after chastity, as one of the conditions of this ideal, not only does not exclude the possibility of life, but, on the contrary, the absence of this Christian ideal would destroy all movement forward and, consequently, all possibility of life.

The reflection that the human race would come to an end if people should with all their power tend toward chastity resembles that other reflection which might be made (and it is made), that the human race will perish if people, instead of struggling for existence, should with all their power tend to the realization of love for their neighbour, for their enemies, for all living beings. Such reflections spring from the inability to distinguish between two rules of moral guidance.

Just as there are two ways for indicating the road to a traveller, even thus there are two ways for moral guidance in the case of a man who is seeking the truth. One way consists in indicating to the man the objects which he will come across, and then he is guided by these objects.

The other way consists in giving the man the direction by the compass, which he is carrying with him, and on which he observes the one immutable direction, and, consequently, every deflection from it.

The first way of moral guidance is the way of external definitions, of rules: man is given definite tokens of acts which he must perform and which not. [...]

The other way is to indicate to man unattainable perfection, the striving after which man is cognizant of: man has pointed out to him the ideal, in relation to which he is at any time able to see the degree of his divergence from it.

"Love God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself. -- Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect."

Such is the teaching of Christ."

III

The day after tomorrow, each 11th of July, the United Nations World Population Day seeks to focus attention on the urgency and importance of population issues, this World Population Day established by the then-Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme in 1989, an outgrowth of the interest generated by the Day of Five Billion, which was observed on 11 July 1987.

This year's World Population Day calls for global attention to the unfinished business of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. Twenty-five years have passed since that landmark conference, where 179 governments recognized that reproductive health and gender equality are essential for achieving sustainable development.

In November, United Nations Fund for Popular Activities (since 1987 United Nations Population Fund) together with the governments of Kenya and Denmark, will be convening a high-level conference in Nairobi to accelerate efforts to achieve these unmet goals. On World Population Day, advocates from around the world are calling on leaders, policymakers, grassroots organizers, institutions and others to help make reproductive health and rights a reality for all.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), formerly the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, is a UN organization. The UNFPA says it "is the lead UN agency for delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled". Their work involves the improvement of reproductive health; including creation of national strategies and protocols, and birth control by providing supplies and services. The organization has recently been known for its worldwide campaign against child marriage, obstetric fistula and female genital mutilation.

This is this year's message of UN Secretary-General António Guterres -
<https://www.un.org/en/events/populationday/messages.shtml>:

"The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the world's blueprint for a better future for all on a healthy planet. On World Population Day, we recognize that this mission is closely interrelated with demographic trends including population growth, ageing, migration and urbanization.

While the world's population overall continues to increase, this growth is uneven. For many of the world's least developed countries, the challenges to sustainable development are compounded by rapid population growth as well as vulnerability to climate change. Other countries are facing the challenge of ageing populations, including the need to promote healthy active ageing and to provide adequate social protection. As the world continues to urbanize, with 68% of the world population projected to live in urban areas by 2050, sustainable development and climate change will increasingly depend on the successful management of urban growth.

While managing these population trends, we must also recognize the relationship between population, development and individual well-being. Twenty-five years ago, at the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), world leaders first spelt out the links between population, development and human rights, including reproductive rights. They also recognized that promoting gender equality is both the right thing to do and one of the most reliable pathways to sustainable development and improved well-being for all. ..."

The Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services is a report by the United Nations' Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, on the global state of biodiversity. A summary for policymakers was released on 6 May 2019. The report states that, due to human impact on the environment in the past half-century, the Earth's biodiversity has suffered a catastrophic decline unprecedented in human history. An estimated 82 percent of wild mammal biomass has been lost, while 40 percent of amphibians, almost a third of reef-building corals, more than a third of marine mammals, and 10 percent of all insects are threatened with extinction.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_Assessment_Report_on_Biodiversity_and_Ecosystem_Services)

"Current estimates indicate that roughly 83 million people are being added to the world's population every year. Even assuming that fertility levels will continue to decline, the global population is expected to reach 8.6 billion in 2030, 9.8 billion in 2050 and 11.2 billion in 2100, according to the medium-variant projection."

(<https://www.un.org/en/events/populationday/background.shtml>)

This was the United Nations Population Fund 's Executive Director Dr. Natalia Kanem on World Population Day, 11th of July, 2019:

“More than 200 million women and girls want to delay or prevent pregnancy but don't have the means. And it is the poorest women and girls, members of indigenous, rural and marginalized communities, and those living with disabilities, who face the greatest gaps in services.

It is time to act now, urgently, to ensure that every woman and girl is able to exercise her rights. With greater contraceptive options, they can prosper as equal partners in sustainable development.

The cost of inaction is simply too high: more women and girls dying, more unintended pregnancies, more unsafe abortions, more pregnant girls shamed out of school, the potential of individuals and societies squandered.

There is no time to waste. Our future depends on it.

At UNFPA, we are working with countries and partners to deliver on the world we imagined 25 years ago. Our sights are firmly set on achieving three zeros by 2030:

zero unmet need for family planning;

zero preventable maternal deaths; and

zero gender-based violence and harmful practices, such as child marriage and female genital mutilation.”

There will be nine standards to uphold the human right to family planning:

Non-discrimination: Family planning information and services cannot be restricted on the basis of race, sex, language, religion, political affiliation, national origin, age, economic status, place of residence, disability status, marital status, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Available: Countries must ensure that family planning commodities and services are accessible to everyone.

Accessible: Countries must ensure that family planning commodities and services are accessible to everyone.

Acceptable: Contraceptive services and information must be provided in a dignified manner, respecting both modern medical ethics and the cultures of those being accommodated.

Good quality: Family planning information must be clearly communicated and scientifically accurate.

Informed decision-making: Every person must be empowered to make reproductive choices with full autonomy, free of pressure, coercion or misrepresentation.

Privacy and confidentiality: All individuals must enjoy the right to privacy when seeking family planning information and services.

Participation: Countries have an obligation to ensure the active and informed participation of individuals in decisions that affect them, including health issues.

Accountability: Health systems, education systems, leaders and policymakers must be accountable to the people they serve in all efforts to realize the human right to family planning.

IV

Let us have a look at today's Worldometer's current world population data - Worldometer is a reference website that provides counters and real-time statistics for diverse topics. It is owned and operated by data company Dadax which generates revenue through online advertising. It is part of the Real Time Statistics Project, and is managed by "an international team of developers, researchers, and volunteers". It is available in many languages and covers subjects such as world population, government, economics, society, media, environment, food, water,

energy, and health. In 2020, the website attained greater popularity due to hosting statistics relating to the Covid-19 pandemic, but its accuracy and methodology have been questioned.

Current statistics say approximately:

7.8 billion people, around 60 per cent in Asia, 17 per cent in Africa, 10 per cent in Europe – for example: Germany 84 million people - China 1.43 billion people – India 1.38 billion people.

“A tremendous change occurred with the industrial revolution: whereas it had taken all of human history until around 1800 for world population to reach one billion, the second billion was achieved in only 130 years (1930), the third billion in 30 years (1960), the fourth billion in 15 years (1974), and the fifth billion in only 13 years (1987).

During the 20th century alone, the population in the world has grown from 1.65 billion to 6 billion.

In 1970, there were roughly half as many people in the world as there are now.

Population in the world is currently (2020) growing at a rate of around 1.05% per year (down from 1.08% in 2019, 1.10% in 2018, and 1.12% in 2017). The current average population increase is estimated at 81 million people per year.

Annual growth rate reached its peak in the late 1960s, when it was at around 2%. The rate of increase has nearly halved since then and will continue to decline in the coming years.

World population will therefore continue to grow in the 21st century, but at a much slower rate compared to the recent past.

The current world population is 7.8 billion as of July 2020 according to the most recent United Nations estimates ...

World population is expected to reach 8 billion people in 2023 according to the United Nations (in 2026 according to the U.S. Census Bureau).

World population is expected to reach 9 billion in the year 2037. The United Nations projects world population to reach 10 billion in the year 2057.”

(quote from: <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/#region>)

V

What are our complementary alternative concepts to contraceptives and the human right to family planning - will we finally start to counter homophobia and praise fearless and open homosexuality in society, will we become celibate monks who enjoy to service ourselves when the free flow of fluids purifies and regenerates body and mind without depriving them of vital energy ?!

Let us finally understand Mahatma Gandhi when he argued for the virtue of self–restraint to “popularize brahmacharya both for the married and the unmarried”: “ ... the only method handed down from ages past is self-control or brahmacharya. It is an infallible, sovereign remedy doing good to those who practise it ... ”

(Birth Control, in: Young India, Birth Control, 12 March 1925; CWMG, vol. 26, p. 280)

“... And my plea, based on positive experience, is that even as truth and ahimsa are not merely for the chosen few but for the whole of humanity, to be practiced in daily life, so exactly is self –control not merely for a few ‘mahatmas’ but for the whole of humanity. And even as because many people will be untruthful and violent,

humanity may not lower its standard, so also though many, even the majority, may not respond to the message of self-control, we may not lower our standard.”

(Self-Control Again, in: Harijan, 30 May 1936; CWMG, vol. 62, pp. 458f.)

VI

It is my wish – with respect to Gandhi and Ecology and Environment – to highlight the significance of Leo Tolstoy’s inspiration for Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Hermann Kallenbach, his friend in South Africa:

*** non-violent resistance, non-violent non-cooperation, cooperative settlements, trusteeship, vegetarianism, celibacy ***

Tolstoy Farm enabled the families of Indian nonviolent resisters (Satyagrahi) to survive during the struggle:

"The farm measures about 1100 acres, being two miles in length and three quarters of a mile in breadth. It is situated near Lawley Station, 22 miles from Johannesburg. It takes twenty minutes to walk down from the station to the farm. By rail, it generally takes about one and a half hours to reach it from here.

The soil appears to be fertile. The farm has about a thousand fruit-bearing trees growing on it. There are peaches, apricots, figs, almonds, walnuts, etc. In addition, there are eucalyptus and wattle trees.

The farm has two wells and a small spring. The landscape is beautiful. At the head there is a hill, with some more or less level land at the foot. (...)

This is a very important venture. Its roots go deep; it is up to the satyagrahis who settle there to make it bear sweet fruit by the way they live."

(M. K. Gandhi: Satyagraha in South Africa, chapter 44, in: Christian Bartolf, Isa Sarid: Hermann Kallenbach – Mahatma Gandhi’s friend in South Africa. A Concise Biography. Berlin: Gandhi-Informations-Zentrum 1997, p. 21)

"We are having a very busy time with our farm work: the pruning of the fruit-trees, cultivating the soil and manuring of a large vegetable garden, and planting of new fruit-trees. I have had erected a new wind mill which is pumping about 900 gallons of water per hour into the reservoir, 130 feet high. From the reservoir I have laid pipes to three different buildings and also to the vegetable garden. The day could have double as many hours, and I would still be as busy as ever."

(Letter by Hermann Kallenbach to his brother Simon Kallenbach, 14 July 1912, in: Christian Bartolf, Isa Sarid: Hermann Kallenbach – Mahatma Gandhi’s friend in South Africa. A Concise Biography. Berlin: Gandhi-Informations-Zentrum 1997, p. 23)

Kallenbach had studied governmental model gardens, and his experience was the basis for the agricultural planting:

"For there were no servants on the Farm, and all the work, from cooking down to scavenging, was done by the inmates. There were many fruit trees to be looked after, and enough gardening to be done as well. Mr. Kallenbach was fond of gardening and had gained some experience of this work in one of the governmental model gardens. It was obligatory on all, young and old, who were not engaged in the kitchen, to give some time to gardening. The children had the lion's share of this work, which included digging pits, felling timber and lifting loads. This gave them ample exercise. They took delight in the work, and so they did not generally need any other exercise or games."

(M. K. Gandhi: "An Autobiography or: The Story of My Experiments with Truth", chapter 32, in: Christian Bartolf, Isa Sarid: Hermann Kallenbach – Mahatma Gandhi’s friend in South Africa. A Concise Biography. Berlin: Gandhi-Informations-Zentrum 1997, pp. 24)

Kallenbach learned sandal-making from the German Trappist monks in Mariannhill. After completing the course, he taught this art to Gandhi and others at Tolstoy Farm. Carpentry, planting of fruit-trees, gardening - "open air" work and "learning by doing" contributed greatly to the health of all the inmates. They reduced their expenses in order to be able to continue the Satyagraha campaign.

Voluntary Simplicity, Village Life, Basic Education through Vocational Training, Craftsmanship and Agricultural Work, Ethics of Renunciation (Vegetarianism, Chastity), Non-violent Resistance and Non-cooperation with the Evil - these were the principles which Leo Tolstoy had advocated.“