

BOOK REVIEW
HIND SWARAJ
ANAND MATH
NATIONALSIM
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HIND SWARAJ

Hind swaraj, a book written by gandhiji, is in the form of a dialogue between an editor of a newspaper(gandhiji) and reporter(reader). A very effective way of writing, since it depicts the questions in the minds of readers in terms of the reporter instead of letting them make assumptions. The book is primarily known for its trenchant critique of modern civilization. In the book, gandhiji argues primarily about the difference between the independence that everyone right now needs and the independence they are fighting for. The form of independence people need to live a complete life would be to go to villages live there and not in towns. Live by themselves. No one is rich nor poor. Every one needs to earn their living. The sort of independence against the British rule that was going on, he says is something like the “Englistan”, English rule without the Englishmen ie, We ruling ourselves.

The true sense of independence according to him will be achieved when people have self control over their mind, not getting lured or succumb to the pleasures shown by the British. In present generation, if we observe, most of the human race is not independent. We can clearly say that we are not self sufficient, depend on others. Gandhiji's idea was to make sure everyone works and earns their bread. Which is morally correct, but he could not explain the natural desires of humans. In the conversation, the reporter asks about the moral values of the British and their treacherous ruling in India. Gandhiji says that the reason of them taking over us is not just their moral fault, but also our own fault that we were not stable as a nation and gave them a benefit out of it.

People with different religious backgrounds would continue to constitute one nation so long as they maintain the principle of non-interference in one another's religion.

He explains that the railways, education and other improvements were done not to improve the Indian conditions but to make Indians useful for them. Many question whether the independence fight should have been more aggressive?. Gandhiji gives two reasons for this. If we resorted to violent rebellion it would have resulted in the death of thousands of soldiers, initially in the freedom struggle before the masses were involved, it would have been just a war against the soldiers and could cut it off easily. Secondly it would lead us to get freedom in a path we don't want to achieve that is against passive resistance. Thus he says satyagraha(passive resistance) is the best way to fight against the British. There is a flaw in the way he looks at the society. According to the formulated theory, he expects everyone to be sincere and hardworking. He doesn't consider the personal desires and fear of a human which are responsible for every happening in the world. He also hastens to add that a true passive resistor will have to observe 'perfect chastity' adopt 'voluntary poverty' 'follow truth' and 'cultivate fearlessness' which seem impossible for a simple human being. Thus ,as we can see it is Gandhiji who has suffered mentally and gave up all his life for people. He became a

common man, mingled with the general public and this attracted every Indian. This made the whole country stand by the word of Gandhiji. He led many anti colonial protests in a peaceful manner such as the salt march, civil disobedience movements. Even after independence he declared Nehru as the political heir without himself being in power. Morally what Gandhiji said was true. In the present world as we can see there are many people in the world who are not capable of living on their own. They have no skills but are able to survive doing some odd jobs. Such a life is futile. There are as little as 5% of the whole population which is the intelligent or innovative. The rest of them are not living their life on their own. They are existing in the world which is created by those small proportion. This itself is a symbol of no independence. Life has been made easier now. But, according to Gandhiji, we also need to be peaceful. This is a contradiction. Now there are lesser wars, with the development in medicine, technology and in educational fields, the life expectancy has increased various diseases have been cured (though many have been created) and along with this dangerous weapons have also been invented.

Many critique this idea of his. Very close friends of his including Jawaharlal Nehru who was considered as a political leader of India and a good friend of Gandhi, said that India should progress along with other nations, advancing in Science, technology, and to make sure that it does not succumb to some other nation again like it did to the British.

If the whole world together follows the theories explained by Gandhiji, it would be a very peaceful, simple World.

ANANDMATH

Anandmath is a novel written by Bankim chandra chatterjee. He is a renowned writer and nationalist. In this book he explains various elements of the hindu religion. The novel is the story of sanyasans in India who fight against the muslim rulers and the British to gain independence in the state of Bengal.

The character of kalyani shows how in the Hindu religion, we consider women equal to a goddess and as the pride of our nation. Satyananda is the head of the sanyasans. He is a man with a great vision, but he attempts inexact means such as looting, robbery etc.

Bhuvananda, jeevananda and Mohendra are the three characters that portray three types of people. Mohendra a common man who obeys his leader. Jeevananda a leader and also a true disciple who gave up his family for the sake of God. Bhuvananda a sincere disciple who gets deviated but pays the price for it in terms of sacrificing his life.

These characters depict citizens of a true nation. A leader, A follower and a half hearted person such as Bhuvananda who breaks the vow.

The character of Santi(wife of Jeevananda) also shows how strong the women of Hindu religion are and that they look upto their husbands as their other half without whom they are incomplete.

There are various references to the paintings in the book that describe the various forms of Lord Durga. She is portrayed as a very calm and simple Goddess in one case and as

Kali mata where she holds 10 different weapons in her hands and is very terrifying. The concept of “hail mother” itself created the image of nation mother who is the supreme goddess and mother of all irrespective of caste and religion.

Even the character of Kalyani shows how an Indian women bears all pains and follows traditions without neglecting them. It actually has a similar understanding of Independence as Gandhiji said. All the sanyasans are not allowed to meet their family give up their desires and most importantly, they are trained and qualified for living their life on their own. But here it is a religion based war, where they treat British not their enemy but the muslims as true enemies. There exists a strong devotion from all the characters in the novel towards their religion. They treat their motherland as their mother and they are all her sons. Anyone who disobeys the rules must pay penance.

Even after defeating the Begal king, all the sanyasans loot the muslims and british there which the leader Satyananda dwells upon. But the author gives a message that truth prevails and it is due to unethical means that they have achieved success, it will not stay for too long. Thus he concludes that it is the British that will take over and not the muslims who pollute the country, and Satyananda, the leader of the sanyasans leave to Himalayas to know the exact reason for their existence. This also resembles to gandhiji’s ideals that true win is when we achieve through passive resistance and patience. Truly speaking, all these nations and governments will be of no use when our natural resources are exhausted, and when there is no food left for us. Then the money and power for which all this is done would be of no use for future. We have made our lives complex by advancing in all fields. This is good if we use it for benefit of everyone. But that is not practically possible and there have been world wars in history which clearly show that if power is not distributed among all the people it will cause irreparable damages. Thus the novel is an extension to Gandhiji’s ideals but in terms of religion.

NATIONALISM

Nationalism by Rabindranath Tagore is a critique of the concepts of nation and nationalism. He writes about nationalism in West, India and Japan.

In India, He explains the consequences and adversities that will occur by implementing the western concepts in the East. Asia and especially India is not very homogeneous like Europe. He describes India as an outcome of rebellion against colonialism and not a nation of it’s own. He actively participated in Swadeshi movement by writing patriotic songs against injustice & irrationality of British act of Partitioning of Bengal. He even returned his Knighthood in Opposition to Jalianwala massacre. But when all the movements turned violent, he stopped supporting the nationalist movements.

His ideals were that the British never wanted India to develop. India, for them is just a manufacturing market for specific purposes. The reason that they have risen into a nation colonising others is because they do not have sufficient natural resources and they need to compete with one another for living. Such is not a case in India where we are self sustainable. So, such an idea of nationalism will not work according to

Rabindranath Tagore. But we need to fight them in a peaceful manner. It is also true that Indians had to learn a lot in terms of knowledge from the British. It is wrong to say that we Indians are needed to be separated from the British on only grounds that they are a different nation, because there are many sub divisions such as religion and caste among ourselves. This is a valid point. No nation is perfect in its ideals and as we can see, even after 60 years of independence the lower cast fight for their rights, reservations etc. Thus simply going against the British is futile and also letting them rule us would be degrading ourselves. Thus, he says we need to imbibe qualities from them and fight to treat us equally. Here, he takes the example of Japan, a nation which was also under the British rule but miraculously turned into a powerful nation by gaining skills and knowledge from the British.

All the three books describe that the word nationality is itself a non intuitive un-natural term for countries like India and in Asia, where we are all bounded not based on our needs but because we are religiously bonded to one another. God has created the World ,with the natural aim of 'survival of the fittest'. God who has given venom as a weapon to a snake, claws for an eagle, thorns for plants has also given the humans, the brain. It is true that we have progressed with it and made wonders. But as specified above, it is only a minor portion of the population who have truly achieved success. And others who are not the best, have made communities, companions and as they are more in number, and feel they are superior. These are the nations right now. Thus even our leaders preached a similar thing that we need to be self dependent. Not