
Mahatma Gandhi's Contribution To India

Mahatma Gandhi lived and died for India. He has been rightly called the Father of the Nation, because under his leadership India achieved freedom. His name is respected all over the world. We should never let his memory die. But reverence and respect for Mahatma Gandhi ought not to mean acceptance of all his views. That good and honest people can differ with some of Gandhi's views is understandable. His greatest co-worker and successor Jawaharlal Nehru disagreed with Mahatma Gandhi on many points.

Gandhiji opposed the idea of birth control or population control by scientific or medical methods. He advocated self-control or abstinence. The ideal is lofty, but it is asking too much of human nature. Sex is not meant only for procreation. Sex has blossomed into the finest poetry and prose, dance and music, architecture, painting, sculpture and other fine arts. Sex has been no doubt in some cases responsible for crimes. But the right response to sex has an ennobling effect on character and it gives sweetness and light to life.

Mahatma Gandhi renounced all property but he would not allow the Government to acquire in public interest the excessive wealth and property of the richest men whom he called the trustees of the poor. Here one may be permitted to differ with the Mahatma. Black money must be confiscated.

Mahatma Gandhi thought that school and university education bred a slave mentality, whereas the truth is that the builders of modern India, foremost among them being Gandhiji himself, were products of modern education. Gandhiji did not also realise or recognize the great services rendered to India by the study of English literature and modern science. His views on such matters are open to question.

Mahatma Gandhi considered village life as the ideal life. He considered city life an evil. Gandhiji was opposed to machinery. But the world cannot, in the present age with its teeming population, dispense with machines. We cannot break up cities into villages.

Gandhiji believed in and preached the theory of village self-sufficiency. This theory is impractical and utopian. Indian villagers need salt, sugar, pepper and many other spices. They need cotton and woolen cloth, metal utensils and agricultural tools, pens, pencils, ink, paper, books and newspaper. They desire to go in for transistors and radios. Gunny bags, medicines, cycles, kerosene oil, soap, lanterns and many other articles which villages generally cannot and do not produce can be supplied to them from the cities only. No one will insist that Indian villagers should not supplement their incomes through cottage industries. But it is only when many isolated and scattered and economically non-self-sufficient villages unite to form themselves into agro-industrial townships that we can have near self-sufficiency in every locality and population-unit throughout India. On all these points Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and many other enlightened Indians strongly differed with Gandhiji.

All the same, Mahatma Gandhi's services to India and the world are unforgettable. His teaching that means should be as fair and above board as the end deserves to be inscribed in letters of gold. Equally valuable is his message that all disputes should be settled by negotiation and war

should be abolished. The doctrine of Satyagraha is one of Gandhiji's greatest gifts to India and to mankind. His services in the cause of communal harmony and the abolition of untouchability will ever be remembered by a grateful nation.