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Abstract: Socialism is a beautiful word and so far, as we are aware in socialism all the members of society are equal - none low, none high. In the individual body the head is not high because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as members of the individual body are equal, so are the members of society. This is socialism. In it the prince and the peasant, the wealthy and the poor, the employer and the employee are all on the same level. In terms of religion there is no duality in socialism.

Keywords: Socialism, truth, non-violence

Gandhian Concept of Socialism

Socialism is all unity. Looking at society all the world over there is nothing but duality or plurality. Unity is conspicuous by its absence. This man is high, that one is low, that is a Hindu, that a Muslim, third a Christian, fourth a Parsi, fifth a Sikh, sixth a Jew. Even among these there are sub-divisions. In the unity of Gandhi's conception there is perfect unity in the plurality of designs. In order to reach this state, we may not look on things philosophically and say that we need not make a move until all are converted to socialism. Without changing our lives, we may go on giving addresses, forming parties and hawklike seize the game when it comes our way. This is no socialism. The more we treat it as game to be seized, the farther it must recede from us.¹ Socialism begins with the first convert. If there is one such, you can add zeros to the one and the first zero will account for ten and every addition will account for ten times the previous number. If, however, the beginner is a zero, in other words, no one makes the beginning, multiplicity of zeroes will also produce zero value. Time and paper occupied in writing zeros will be so much waste. This socialism is as pure as crystal. It, therefore, requires crystal-like means to achieve it. Impure means result an impure end. Hence the prince and the peasant will not be equalized by cutting off the prince's head, nor can the process of cutting off equalize the employer and the employed. One cannot reach truth by untruthfulness. Truthful conduct alone can reach truth. Are not non-violence and truth twins? The answer is an emphatic 'no'. Non-violence is embedded in truth and vice versa. Hence has it been said that they are faces of the same coin. Either is inseparable from the other. Read the coin either way. The spelling of words will be different. The value is the same. This blessed

state is unattainable without perfect purity. Harbour impurity of mind or body and you have untruth and violence in you. Therefore, only truthful non - violent and pure - hearted socialists will be able to establish a socialistic society in India and the world. To my knowledge there is no country in the world which is purely socialistic. Without the means described above the existence of such a society is impossible. ²

Truth and ahimsa must incarnate in socialism. In order that they can, the votary must have a living faith in God. Mere mechanical adherence to truth and ahimsa is likely to break down at the critical moment. Hence Gandhi had said that truth is God. This God is a living Force. Our life is of that Force. That Force resides in, but is not the body. He who denies the existence of that great Force, denies to himself the use of that inexhaustible Power and thus remains impotent. He is like a rudderless ship, which tossed about here and there, perishes without making any headway. The socialism of such takes them nowhere, what to say of the society in which they live. If such be the case, does it mean that no socialist believes in God? If there be any, why have they not made any visible progress? Then again, many Godly persons have lived before now; why have they not succeeded in founding a socialistic State? It is difficult completely to silence these two doubts. Nevertheless, it is possible to say that it has perhaps never occurred to a believing socialist that there is any connection between his socialism and belief in God. It is equally safe to say that godly men as a rule never commended socialism to the masses. Superstitions have flourished in the world in spite of godly men and women. In Hinduism itself untouchability has, till of late, held undoubted sway. The fact is that it has always been a matter of strenuous research to know this great Force and its hidden possibilities.³ Gandhi's claim is that in the pursuit of that search lies the discovery of satyagraha. It is not, however, claimed that all the laws of satyagraha have been laid down or found. This he had said, fearlessly and firmly, that every worthy object can be achieved by the use of satyagraha. It is the highest and in by any other means, fallible means, the greatest force. Socialism will not be reached political, economic and moral. Satyagraha can rid society of all evils, political, economic and moral.⁴

Jaiprakash's Model of Socialism

The Congress and the country are on the eve of a great national upheaval. The final battle for freedom is soon to be fought. This will happen when the whole world is being shaken by mighty forces of change. Out of the catastrophe of the European War, thoughtful minds everywhere are anxious to create a new world a world based on the co-operative goodwill of nations and men. At such a time the Congress considers it necessary to state definitely the ideals of freedom for which it stands and for which it is soon to invite the Indian people to undergo the uttermost sufferings. The free Indian nation shall work for peace between nations and total rejection of armaments and for the method of peaceful settlement of national disputes through some international authority freely established. It will endeavour particularly to live on the friendliest terms with its neighbours whether they be great powers or small nations, and shall covet no foreign territory. The law of the land will be based on the will of the people freely expressed by them. The ultimate basis of maintenance of order shall be the sanction and concurrence of the people. The free Indian State shall guarantee full individual and civil liberty and cultural and religious freedom, provided that there shall be no freedom to overthrow by violence the constitution framed by the Indian people through a Constituent Assembly. The State shall not discriminate in any manner between citizens of the nation. Every citizen shall

be guaranteed equal rights. All distinctions of birth and privilege shall be abolished. There shall be no titles emanating either from inherited social status or the State.⁵

The political and economic organization of the State shall be based on principles of social justice and economic freedom. While this organization shall conduce to the satisfaction of the national requirements of every member of society, material satisfaction shall not be its sole objective. It shall aim at healthy living and the moral and intellectual development of the individual. To this end to secure social justice, the State shall endeavour to promote small scale production carried on by individual or co-operative effort for the equal benefit of all concerned. All large-scale collective production shall be eventually brought under collective ownership and control, and in this behalf the State shall begin by nationalizing heavy transport, shipping, mining and the heavy industries. The textile industry shall be progressively decentralized.⁶

The life of the villages shall be reorganized and the villages shall be made self-governing units, self-sufficient in as large a measure as possible. The land laws of the country shall be drastically reformed on the principle that land shall belong to the actual cultivator alone, and that no cultivator shall have more land than is necessary to support his family on a fair standard of living. This will end the various systems of landlordism on the one hand and farm bondage on the other. The State shall protect the interests of the classes, but when these impinge upon the interests of those who have been poor and down-trodden, it shall defend the latter and thus restore the balance of social justice. In all State-owned and State-managed enterprises the workers shall be represented in the management through their elected representatives and shall have an equal share in it with the representatives of the Government. In the Indian States, there shall be complete democratic government established and in accordance with the principles of abolition of social distinction and equality between citizens, there shall not be any titular heads of the States in the persons of Rajas and Nawabs.⁷

This is the order which the Congress envisages and which it shall work to establish. The Congress firmly believes that this order shall bring happiness, prosperity and freedom to the people of all races and religions in India who together shall build on these foundations a great and glorious nation. Gandhi liked it and read his letter and the draft to the Working Committee. The Committee, however, thought that the idea of having only one resolution for the Ramgarh Congress should be strictly adhered to, and that the original, as framed at Patna, should not be tampered with. The reasoning of the Committee was unexceptionable, and the draft resolution was dropped without any discussion on merits. Gandhi had informed Shri Jaiprakash of the result of my effort. Jaiprakash had written back suggesting that he would be satisfied if Gandhi could do the next best thing, namely publish it with full concurrence or such as he could give it. Gandhi had no difficulty in complying with Shri Jaiprakash's wishes. As an ideal to be reduced to practice as soon as possible after India comes into her own, he endorsed in general all except one of the propositions enunciated by Shri Jaiprakash.⁸ Gandhi's socialism came out of his unshakable belief in non-violence. No man could be actively non-violent and not rise against social injustice, no matter where it occurred. Unfortunately, Western socialists have, so far as Gandhi had known, believed in the necessity of violence for enforcing socialistic doctrines. Gandhi had always held that social justice, even unto the least and the lowliest, is impossible of attainment by force. He had further believed that it is possible by proper training of the lowliest by non-violent means to secure redress of the wrongs suffered by them. That means is non-violent non-co-operation. At times non-co-operation becomes as

much a duty as co-operation. No one is bound to co-operate in one's own undoing or slavery. Freedom received through the efforts of others, however benevolent, cannot be retained when such effort is withdrawn. In other words, such freedom is not real freedom. But the lowliest can feel its glow as soon as they learn the art of attaining it through non-violent non-co-operation.⁹

It therefore gladdens Gandhi to find Shri Jaiprakash accepting as he read his draft, non-violence for the purpose of establishing the order envisaged by him. Gandhi was quite sure that non-violent non-co-operation can secure what violence never can, and this by ultimate conversion of the wrong-doers. We in India have never given non-violence the trial it has deserved. The marvel is that we have attained so much even with our mixed non-violence.¹⁰ Shri Jaiprakash's propositions about land may appear frightful. In reality they are not. No man should have more land than he needs for dignified sustenance. Who can dispute the fact that the grinding poverty of the masses is due to their having no land that they can call their own? But it must be realized that the reform cannot be rushed. If it is to be brought about by non-violent means, it can only be done by education both of the haves and have-nots. The former should be assured that there never will be force used against them. The have-nots must be educated to know that no one can really compel them to do anything against their will, and that they can secure their freedom by learning the art of non-violence, i.e., self-suffering. If the end in view is to be achieved, the education he had adumbrated has to be commenced now. An atmosphere of mutual respect and trust has to be established as the preliminary step. There can then be no violent conflict between the classes and the masses.¹¹

Therefore, Gandhi had no difficulty in generally endorsing Shri Jaiprakash's proposition in terms of non-violence, he could not endorse his proposition about the princes. In law they are independent. It is true that their independence is not worth much, for it is guaranteed by a stronger party. But as against us they are able to assert their independence. If we come into our own by non-violent means, as is implied in Shri Jaiprakash's draft proposals, Gandhi did not imagine a settlement in which the princes will have effaced themselves. Whatever settlement is arrived at, the nation will have to carry out in full. He could therefore only conceive a settlement in which the big States will retain their status. In one way this will be far superior to what it is today; but in another it will be limited so as to give the people of the States the same right of self-government within their States as the people of the other parts of India will enjoy. They will have freedom of speech, a free press and pure justice guaranteed to them. Perhaps Shri Jaiprakash has no faith in the princes automatically surrendering their autocracy. First because they are just as good human beings and secondly because of his belief in the potency of genuine non-violence. Gandhi concluded, therefore, by saying that the Princess and all others will be true and amenable when we have become true to ourselves, to our faith, if we have it, and to the nation. At present we are half-hearted. The way to freedom will never be found through half-heartedness. Non-violence begins and ends by turning the searchlight inward.¹²

Socialism to become a permanent way of Life

Gandhi said that he felt that a socialistic State was bound to come into being in India. He hoped that Indian socialism would not be an arm-chair, but a practical, socialism. The goal must be clear and perfect or else they would be sailing on an unchartered sea and might

founder. He himself naturally clung to the hope that future society in India would be built on non-violence. And only in that case would socialism become a permanent way of life.¹³ Real socialism has been handed down to us by our ancestors who taught: All land belongs to Gopal, where then is the boundary line? Man is the maker of that line and he can therefore unmake it. Gopal literally means shepherd; it also means God. In modern language it means the State, i.e., the people.¹⁴ That the land today does not belong to the people is too true. But the fault is not in the teaching. It is in us who have not lived up to it. Gandhi had no doubt that they can make as good an approach to it as is possible for any nation, not excluding Russia, and that without violence.

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