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AND YET ANOTHER UN-GANDHIAN FAST – MODI'S CLEVER BHAVANA

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Narendra Modi undertook three days fast from 17th to 19th September ostensibly for communal harmony and peace in Gujarat and suddenly he tried to become from a militant Hindu as he was in 2002 to a Gandhian promoting *Sadbhavana* (good feelings between communities). This is yet another instance of misuse of Gandhian concept of *Satyagraha* (insistence on truth) after fast against corruption by Shri Anna Hazare. The way media began to project Anna as a Gandhian shows how much illiteracy is there in the country about Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of whose heritage we pretend to be proud.

Anna, though not Gandhian in any sense of the word, at least had an element or two of Gandhian philosophy but if Narendra Modi – a dedicated militant Hindu – can pretend to be Gandhian, it seems Gandhian philosophy is being grossly misused in this country. And, I think, Gandhians must take all the blame. They have done nothing to promote Gandhian philosophy with dedication, commitment and sacrifices as they ought to do. They are not even protesting when Mahatma's philosophy is so grossly being misused.

The very concept of *Satyagraha* means that this technique should be used only and only to promote unadulterated truth or truth-based ideal. Simply undertaking fast is not *Satyagraha* as team Anna or Narendra Modi and his political followers think. Even sitting on peaceful *dharna* without undertaking any fast could be *Satyagraha* (if motive is pure and truthful) and fast unto death, if motive is not pure, cannot be accepted as *Satyagraha*.

Mere non-use of violence does not make it a *Satyagraha* and part of Mahatma's philosophy. If motive is political (i.e. to gain political power, or toppling elected government or weakening it etc.) it can be anything but *Satyagraha*. It should also be noted that *Satyagraha* is not for or against any government or institution or for fulfilling any demand but either for self purification, for silent deeper reflection about one self or to promote an ideal and for that the person using *Satyagraha* has to be known for his honesty, integrity, commitment and idealism.

Gandhi's genuine commitment to non-violence was most fundamental, not merely his undertaking fasts. Fast was only a means, not an end or a clever trick to gain a political end. Gandhi gave great importance to fairness of means if end was fair and ethical and hence his peaceful fast (not for coercion and holding a threat and if means become a threat, the end loses its fairness).

Gandhi's commitment to non-violence was such that he even considered anger and use of violent words as violence. To be perfectly non-violent, one's language should also be non-violent and there should not be any feeling of revenge and anger. Though Gandhi fought for freedom of India but never hated the British. Hatred is very much part of violence. Narendra Modi's very political existence depends on hatred of Muslims and Christians. Gandhi's politics was for higher end and not for power and never excluded the other. Narendra Modi and his Party's very politics is for power and is based on excluding the other and considers non-Hindus as outsiders and others.

Narendra Modi's whole politics, on the other hand, depends on discrimination and excluding others, especially Muslims and Christians whom BJP and Narendra Modi consider as outsiders. Also, everyone knows that Narendra Modi sat on the fast so as to acquire proper credentials for becoming Prime Minister. He has no intentions whatsoever to promote *Sadbhavana* but to try to wash off the blood of innocent people killed in communal riots in 2002 when he was chief minister.

Thus the fast had no pure motive or any moral or ethical end. It was a political act. If he really had pure motive and had he been innocent as he claims and had pain in heart for those killed as he stated when he sat on fast, he would have undertaken it then i.e. in 2002 itself or any time thereafter in last 9 years and not now when public discussion was taking place whether he is prime ministerial material or not and whether there will be contest for prime minister ship between Rahul Gandhi and Narendra Modi through leakage of Wikileaks documents.

Gandhiji used to undertake fast to stop communal violence in the thick of it not years after communal riots had taken place. And Gandhiji did so with pure intention without any motive to gain political power, much less become president or prime minister. Gandhiji led one of the biggest political struggles in 20th century for freedom from British yoke successfully and yet he never aspired for any political office.

Narendra Modi, on the other hand, headed massacre of more than 2000 Muslims in 2002 and when he saw prospects for becoming prime minister on leakage of Wikileaks documents he immediately announced his *Sadbhavana* fast for three days and reduced this to a big tamasha expending crores of rupees from state treasury and inviting lakhs of people to support him. Such spectacular show itself is totally un-Gandhian Anna

Gandhiji, unlike Hazare and Narendra Modi undertook fast for *Sadbhavana* quietly and never felt any need for gathering people. It used to be very solemn affair and conducted with great dignity and candour. Modi, undertook this fast for political purpose and hence his supporters were asked to bring people in thousands and also to show off that minorities were with him Muslims were asked to wear cap and Muslim women were asked to wear burqa. RSS otherwise would ridicule Muslims for keeping their women in veil and not allow them to acquire education. See the hypocrisy involved?

But the real venom against minorities is very much there inside Mr. Narendra Modi and hence when one Muslim Imam presented Modi with a cap to wear as Modi was accepting *pagdis* (turbans) from various Hindu communities, he refused and when asked why he refused he said I do not believe in appeasement of minorities. It is nothing but the BJP slogan appeasement of none and justice for all which is used against Muslims. Why then Modi was accepting turbans from different Hindu communities? Did it not amount to appeasement of those communities?

This shows how deep hatred for Muslims have gone in him and since he cannot become prime minister of India without RSS support and this whole exercise is for projecting himself as prime ministerial candidate, how can he defy RSS and its political philosophy which is based on Hindutva? Shri Narendra Modi, unlike Shri Anna Hazare, does not even have any elements of Gandhian approach.

One can argue what if Shri Modi tries to repent for his past sins and become true Gandhian. Yes, why not? But again one will have to judge from concrete facts and the whole context of his fast. Was he really repenting? If so the act of repentance has to be a quiet affair without any fanfare and need of publicity. Repentance is an individual act and requires quiet reflection and prayers that God give him courage to repent and not to repeat what he did in 2002. Even Modis best friend cannot produce any trace of such act on the part of Modi.

Also, one who repents first admits his/her sins. Here Modi refuses to admit even his mistake, let alone his acts of commission. On the contrary he undertook his fast on the occasion of Supreme Court's judgment sending the SIT Report to the trial court if it deems it fit as his victory and he was in celebratory mood. Thus whatever angle we see Modis fast from it appears to be vitiated with political motives.

Gandhiji's whole life was devoted to peace and communal harmony and here a person who is known for his hard Hindutva all his life (he began attending RSS camps from his childhood is pretending to be Gandhi. Can there be any greater insult to Mahatma Gandhi and his philosophy? Our politics has degenerated so much that instead of carrying forward Gandhiji's tradition further ahead and enriching it, some Indians are misusing it in such gross manner.

Gandhiji had very well understood that without carrying all communities together India cannot become a great nation and to win over Muslims of India during freedom struggle he readily accepted Indian Muslims request to launch Khilafat movement and here we have Narendra Modi who could not even accept a cap from a Muslim and he saw 'appeasement of Muslims' even in accepting a cap. Can there be any comparison?

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