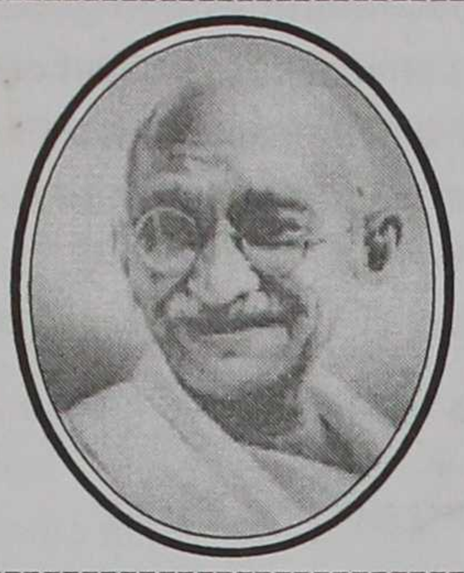

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GANDHIJI'S SATYAGRAHA

Satyagraha and hunger strike have become not only the most bandied about terms in political discourse but also the most frequently adopted techniques of protest by parties, groups and individuals to convey their disapproval of governmental decisions or organizational lapses. Bandhs, hartals and protest rallies paralyze normal life almost everyday in some part or the other of the country.. Even essential services come to a grinding halt. The worst affected are, of course, the poor and lower middle classes. There are some, especially those born in free India who wrongly assume that all this hardship is the result of Gandhian legacy.

In South Africa in 1907 the term 'Satyagaraha' was coined. His grandson Rajmohan Gandhi writes how Gandhiji did not approve of the term 'passive resistance' and how he gave a prize for an alternative word 'sadagraha' meaning 'firmness for the good' which eventually was changed to 'satyagraha' meaning 'firmness for the truth' By then Gandhi had already come under the influence of the concept of aparigraha preached by the Gita and imbibed the essence of the Ramayana. " Nothing elates me so much as the music of the Gita or the Ramayana by Tulsidas. Only in Rama can the weak find strength." he left convinced. The Bible and the writings of Thoreau and Ruskin also influenced Gandhi. . "Truth and ahmisa are as old as the hills he used to say" always disclaiming credit for discovering anything new or original. In the laboratory of mind he tested their power and capacity to fight battles big and small, personal and political, for the realization of Truth(God)and fulfillment of his goal of liberating the people, the poor and the downtrodden in particular from bondage of all types. Gandhi accepted the English translation of Satyagraha as 'truth-force', or 'love-force' or 'soul-force'.

The inner voice of the Mahatma evoked the curiosity and admiration of the seer and the scholar. "The inner voice" explained the Mahatma in "1906 is something that cannot be described in words. The time I learnt to recognize the voice was, I may say,the time when I started praying regularly. That is, it was about 1906". Psychologist Erik H. Erikson who made an-in-depth study of it in his book Gandhi's Truth explained how Gandhi tried to link the 'inner voice' of the frail, simple man to the 'outer voice' the voice of humanity. Gandhi was 'determined to spread truth and non violence among mankind in the place of violence and falsehood in all walks of life'.

Satyagraha's progress from then on till his exit from the world passed through many stages. The Mahatma himself wrote that his satyagraha passed through five stages, — indifference, ridicule, abuse, repression and respect. In 1933, distressed by misuse and misunderstanding of Satyagraha Gandhiji wrote:

"I should also remind that the word 'satyagraha' is often loosely used and is made to cover veiled violence. But as the author of the word I may be allowed to say that it excludes every form of violence, direct or indirect, veiled or unveiled, and whether in thought, word or need. It is breach of satyagraha to wish ill to an opponent or to say a harsh word to him or of him with the intention of harming him. And often the evil thought or the evil word may, in terms of satyagraha, be more dangerous than actual violence used in the heat of the moment and perhaps repented and forgotten the next moment. Satyagraha is gentle, it never wounds. It must not be the result of anger or malice. It is never fussy, never impatient, never vociferous. It is the direct opposite of compulsion. It was conceived as a complete substitute for violence". (Collected Works Vol 55) He warned against misusing it for selfish ends. Satyagraha is inconsistent with the slightest violence said the Mahatma.

The Mahatma's message is that those who resort to satyagraha, and hunger strike should ensure that there is no place for violence in thought, word and deed and no inconvenience to the public and that self-restraint and discipline are vital for peace and progress.

- The Editor

Power resides in the people and it is entrusted for the time being to those whom they choose as representatives. Parliaments have no power or even existence independently of the people. - Mahatma Gandhi

areas of specialisation. Figuratively, long years in government reduce even a Tansen 15 into a Kansen, a music maestro to a connoisseur. However, being a Kansen, having critical discernment is good enough, provided he does not sing solo but instead assembles a good orchestra which is what policymaking and effective participation in multilateral conferences require. The author's personal experience with 1996 WIPO Diplomatic Conference vividly illustrates this point. *(to be continued...)*

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Death After The Loveliest Sunset

- Prof. Manoj Das

(A seer among scholars the venerable Prof Manoj Das who lives in Aurobindo Ashram, Auroville and teaches at Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education has graciously permitted the publication of this essay from his book My Little India.)

Thus spoke 'Sir' John Mandeville, probably a self-styled knight, of the Andamanians, in the 14th century.

"In those isles are many manners of folk... one of them is of great stature, like giants, horrible and foul to the sight and they have but one eye, in the midst of the forehead.... In another isle are men without heads: their eyes in their shoulders and their mouths are round shaped like a horseshoe, amidst their breasts... in another isle is a manner of folk that has a flat face, without nose or eyes, but have two small holes instead of eyes and have a flat mouth, lipless. In another isle are foul men who have so huge over lips that when they sleep in the sun, they cover the whole face with the lip..."

But Mandeville was not alone in scripting spectres to surpass the of extraterrestrial beings in contemporary fiction. A 7th century Chinese work of 'history' refers to the archipelago as the domain of demons. Marco Polo in the 13th century had hardly any different opinion about the place. A 16th century traveller, Caesar Frederich, described the Andamanians as people who ate one another!

For long fear and mystery surrounded the islands inhabited by different tribes (their population dwindling): the Andamanese concentrated on Strait Island, the Nicobarese and Shampens in the Nocobars, Onges at Dugong Creek in the little Andamans, Jarawas in the South Andamans and Sentinels on the North Sentinel Island. The one man who was very keen to cleanse the atmosphere of fear and make the islands hospitable was Lord Mayo, the Viceroy and Governor-General of India who visited the archipelago in 1872.

'See that green outline? That is Mount Harriet', a companion aboard boat told me.

Among half a dozen rare books relevant to my Andaman trip I had carried with me was the biography of Lord Mayo (1892) by W.W.Hunter. The mention of Mount Harriet was enough to drive me into its pages.

Lord Mayo had finished inspecting the Viper island to which most of the dangerous convicts were confined. Precautions to pretect the most important visitor from any possible danger had been judged foolproof. The local administration was relaxed.

But the dynamic Lord Mayo was restless. He was looking for an ideal spot for building an ideal sanatorium. Mount Harriet, a hill rising to a height of 1116 feet, was almost beckoning him. 'Let us do Mount Harriet,' he said, 'We have still an hour of daylight.'

It was a stiff climb through thick jungles. 'His own party were dead tired, they had been on their feet for six blazing hours, and Lord Mayo, as usual the freshest after a hard day, begged some of them to rest till he returned. Of course no one liked to give in and the cortege dived into the Jungle.

Alas, 'cortege' is the word Hunter chooses.

Atop the hill the Viceroy was almost in a trance. He surveyed the site for his project all right, but he was growing more and more withdrawn. He sat down, gazed across the sea at the setting sun and murmured, 'How beautiful!' he drank some water and, after a long look westward, exclaimed in a subdued voice, 'It's the loveliest thing I think I ever saw!

It was growing dark. The party began its descent. Torch bearers from the jetty met them midway. They were not far from their launch which, with steam up, was whizzing at the jetty stairs.

The Viceroy's party was evidently happy to have arrived at the end of long day. A brief voyage over the dark waters and they would be under the welcome light where

We do not wish to see our own faults but take delight in perceiving the faults of others. - Mahatma Gandhi.

so many waited to receive the august visitor for an elaborate dinner.

'The Viceroy stepped quickly forward before the rest to descend the stairs to the launch. The next moment the people in the rear heard a noise as of 'the push of some animal' from behind the loose stones: one or two saw, in the torch light, a hand and a knife suddenly descend. The Private Secretary heard a thub, and instantly turning round, found a man 'fastened like a tiger' on the back of the Viceroy.

'In a second twelve men were on the assassin; an English officer was pulling them off, and with his sword-hilt keeping back the Native guards, who would have killed the assailant on the spot. The torches had gone out; but the Viceroy, who had staggered over the pier side, was dimly seen rising up in the knee-deep water, and clearing the hair off his brow with his hand as if recovering himself. His Private Secretary was instantly at his side in the surf, helping him up the bank, "Burne," he said quietly, "they've hit me." Then, in a louder voice, which was heard on the pier, "It's all right, I don't think I'm much hurt." Or words to that effect. In another minute he was sitting under the smoky glare of the re-lit torches, on a rude native cart at the side of the jetty, his legs hanging loosely down. Then they lifted him boldly on to the cart, and saw a great dark patch on the back of his light coat. The blood came streaming out, and men tried to stanch it with their handkerchiefs. For a moment or two he sat up on the cart, then he fell heavily backwards. "lift up my head." He said faintly: and said no more.

'They carried him down into the steam launch, some silently believing him dead. Others, angry with themselves for the bare surmise, cut open his coat and vest, and stopped the wound with hastily torn strips of cloth and the palms of their hands. The assassin lay tied and stunned a few yards from him as the launch shot on in the darkness, eight bells rang across the water from the ships. When it came near the frigate, where the guests were waiting for dinner, and jesting about some fish which they had caught for the meal, the lights in the launch were suddenly put out, to hide what was going on in it. They lifted Lord Mayo gently to his cabin: when they laid him down in his cot, everyone saw that he was dead.

'To all on board, that night stands out from among, all other nights in their lives. A silence, which seemed as if it would never again be broken, suddenly fell on the holiday ship with its 600 souls. The doctors held their interview with the dead-two stabs from the same knife on the shoulder had penetrated the cavity of the chest, either of them sufficient to cause death. On the guest steamer there were hysterics and weeping; but in the ship where the Viceroy lay, the grief was too deep for outward expression. Men moved about solitarily through the night, cach saying bitterly to his own heart, "Would that it had been one of us". The anguish of her who received back her head was not, and is not, for words.

'At dawn the sight of the frigate in mourning, the flag at half-mast, the broad white stripe darkened to a leaden grey, all the ropes slackened, and the yards hanging topped in dismal disorder, announced the reality to those on the guest steamer who had persisted through the night in a hysterical disbelief. On the frigate a hushed an solemn industry was going on the chief officers of the Government of Indian on board assembled to adopt steps for the devolution of the Viceroyalty. In a few hours, while the doctors were still engaged on the embalming, one steamer had hurried north with the Member of Council to Bengal, another was ploughing its way with the Foreign Secretary to Madras, to bring up Lord Napier of Ettrick, to Calcutta, as acting Governor-General'.

The assassin was a highlander from the remote North-Western Frontier. He had killed (according to his own confession, he had been only an accomplice) a kinsman. He was to be hanged, but the court had mercifully awarded him transportation for life.

Killing a kinsman who had been nasty with him was his right- he believed- and his philosophy read in the justice done to him an inscrutable injustice. He must avenge, he decided.

To return to Hunter :

'During three years he waited sullen for some worthy prey. On the morning of the 8th February, when he heard the royal salute, he felt that his time had come, and sharpened a knife. All through the day close surveillance gave him no chance of getting to the islands which Lord Mayo visited. Evening came, and his victim landed unexpectedly at his very door. He slipped into the woods, crept up Mount Harriet through the jungle side by side with the viceroy; then dogged the party down again in the dark;

but still got no chance. At the foot he almost gave up hope, and resolved to wait for the morrow. But as the Viceroy stepped quickly forward on the jetty, his grey-suited shoulders towering conspicuous in the torchlight, an impulse of despair thrilled though the assassin. He gave up all idea of life, rushed round the guards, and in a moment was on his victim's back.

'He was a hillman of great size and strength. When heavily fettered in the condemned cell, he overturned the lamp with his chained ankle, bore down the English sentry by brute strength of body, and wrenched away his bayonet with his manacled hands. He made no pretence of penitence, and was childishly vain of being photographed (for police inquiries in Northern India) as the murderer of a Viceroy. Indeed, some of the above details were only got out of him by a native officer who cunningly begged him for materials for an ode on his deed, to be sung by his countrymen. Neither his name, nor that of his village or tribe, will find record in this book.'

Bits of information about the assassin, nevertheless, are found in some other works. He was a Pathan, Sher Ali by name. According to the memoirs of M.M.Bhowmik, an inmate of the Cellular Jail, he killed two of his armed guards bare-handed a few days prior to climbing the gallows.

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & INDIA AS A GLOBAL ROLE PLAYER IN THE 21ST CENTURY - IV

- A.Prasanna Kumar

Indira Gandhi became the Prime Minister at a critical juncture. The thrust of the super powers into the region was becoming clear with the United States stepping into the 'vacuum' created by the exit of the British from the Indian Ocean. Both Mrs. Gandhi and Mrs. Bandaranaike, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka rejected the 'vacuum theory' and pleaded for a zone of peace.

Indo-American relations touched an all time low during the 1970-71 crisis caused by Pakistan in collusion with the United States and China. Mrs. Gandhi's strategy was two-fold:first to stand up to the pressures brought on India by the strategic combine of the US,China and Pakistan and secondly to make use of the offer of help and advice of the Soviet Union without compromising India's policy of non-alignment.

When Brezhnev mooted the idea of Asian Security she just ignored it. It was typical of Mrs. Gandhi to have remarked. " I am a child of politics . . . my father was a saint who strayed into politics . . . but I am not of the same stuff." The Indo-Soviet treaty was the best example of her sureness of touch. Though there has been criticism that the treaty made a compromise on India's policy of non-alignment and though some even went to the extent of labeling India as 'a satellite' of the Soviet Union, there is evidence enough to show that she did not allow India to slip into a situation of total dependence on the Soviet Union. Mrs. Gandhi displayed immense caution to ensure that Article 9 of the Treaty was carefully worded. The liberation of Bangladesh was the crowning glory of Mrs. Gandhi's leadership. K. Subrahmanyam observed that ' the Indian image and stature regained their losses after the Indian victory in the Bangladesh war'. Pakistan accused India of 'expansionist and hegemonist' designs.

The seventies witnessed the Indian projection to 'a middle power status' which the United States was unwilling to accept. The United States entered into a special relationship with Pakistan, mainly to contain India and also for other reasons. Having gained a strategic edge over its rival the USSR, the American Government showed special and new interest in Pakistan "in view of the geo-strategic location of Pakistan astride the mouth of the gulf".

The Janata interlude provides confirmation of the soundness of India's policy as shaped by Nehru and followed by Indira Gandhi. The Indo-Soviet Treaty was not abrogated; nor did India agree to yield to the US insistence on India signing the NPT. Though the Janata Government preferred to call it 'genuine non-alignment' there were no major policy departures from the past.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi's return to power in 1980 took place when India's neighbourhood was in the thick of cold war politics. Mrs. Gandhi strengthened the non-aligned movement considerably and used her foreign policy options intelligently to ensure India's economic and industrial progress. India emerged as the 13th largest manufacturing

Education does not mean teaching people to know what they do not know but teaching them to behave as they do not behave. - Radhakrishnan