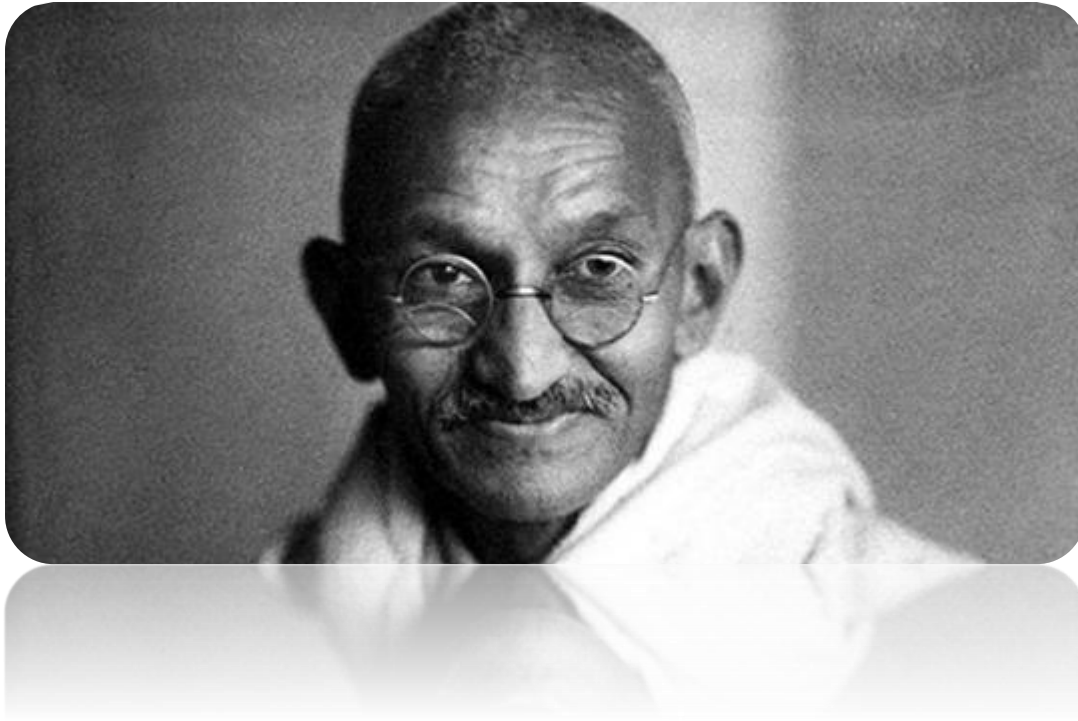




Warts in Mahatma's Atma

By BS Murthy

"Won't it remind one of Gandhi's experiments with truth?"

"I have no quarrel with Gandhi the man but I have problem with the Mahatma of his," he said and as if to remonstrate his apathy for the Gandhian values, he had an extended sip of that Laphroaic.

"I'm no Gandhian and I don't intend to be one," he continued from where he had left. "But as is being done, I see it's a disservice to his legacy to deify him; it's when I approach him as man that I value him as a human being, but in his picture of mahatma, I see many a wart in his atma. Credit him for cleaning up the public toilets but why not condemn him for having forced his spouse to do the same; why laud him for his quixotic abstinence unmindful of his wife's conjugal plight; was he not an inveterate autocrat in the democratic garb; what about his falling afoul of Prakasam, and how he played favorites with Nehru. Why bother about him as he'd been reduced for long as a political mascot of the slavish-minded of the self-serving Nehru family that hijacked his name to grind its dynastic axe! What an irony it is that his party that sundered the British yoke should have rendered the political reins into Italian hands? Bemoan the congress party."

The above is excerpted from the author's Glaring Shadow – A stream of consciousness novel and the following quote is from his prayer meeting on April 6, 1947, New Delhi, cited in the Collective Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. 94, Sl. 243, pages 248/249.

"We should dispassionately think where we are drifting. Hindus should not harbour anger in their hearts against Muslims even if the latter wanted to destroy them. Even if the Muslims want to kill us all we should face death bravely. If they established

their rule after killing Hindus we would be ushering in a new world by sacrificing our lives. None should fear death. Birth and death are inevitable for every human being. Why should we then rejoice or grieve? If we die with a smile we shall enter into a new life, we shall be ushering in a new India. The Concluding verses of the second chapter of the Gita describe how a godfearing man should live. I would exhort you to read and understand those verses and ponder over their meaning. You will then realize what our ideal is and how far short of it we are today. Our independence is at our threshold and it is our duty to ask ourselves whether we are fit to have it and sustain it."

One may reflect the above silliness in Ambedkar's intellectual light underneath:

"Hinduism is said to divide people and in contrast, Islam is said to bind people together. This is only a half truth. For Islam divides as inexorably as it binds. Islam is a close corporation and the distinction that it makes between Muslims and non-Muslims is a very real, very positive and very alienating distinction. The brotherhood of Islam is not the universal brotherhood of man. It is the brotherhood of Muslims for Muslims only. There is a fraternity, but its benefit is confined to those within that corporation. For those who are outside the corporation, there is nothing but contempt and enmity. The second defect of Islam is that it is a system of social self-government and is incompatible with local self-government because the allegiance of a Muslim does not rest on his domicile in the country which is his but on the faith to which he belongs. To the Muslim *ibi bene ibi patria* is unthinkable. Wherever there is the rule of Islam, there is his own country. In other words, Islam can never allow a true Muslim to adopt India as his motherland and regard a Hindu as his kith and kin. That is probably the reason why Maulana Mahomed Ali, a great Indian but a true Muslim, preferred to be buried in Jerusalem rather than in India."