

Psychoanalysis of Hind Swaraj

Shreya M. Ghosh

Gujarat University

Abstract: In Hind Swaraj Gandhi does not have a systematic social study that could objectively draw its political conclusions from. His was a spiritual answer to the horrors of modern society which he regarded as the biggest omen of 20th century- slavery. A fresh look at Hind Swaraj can then frustrate a pure theoretical approach that either seeks to reveal the foundation of Gandhian philosophy as a way of reducing Gandhi to a formulae or to sharpen one's understanding of the processes which in their present form have produced or sustained modern civilization. Hind Swaraj's vital sensibility has its origins not in the rational but in the spiritual. As such, through theoretical effort alone, what is basically a spiritual sensibility cannot be completely grasped. There's no doubt that intellectual effort is needed; but that intellectual effort will bear fruit only after it has been touched with the transforming illumination. We get an excogitation of the embryonic stage of a Mahatma in making through the psychoanalysis of the verbiage used by him. His inclination towards the importance of provincial language over universal language was shouted at the peak. Its seizure in India is astounding, for there is in this book not a trace of approval of violence in any form. We could understand for him, non- violence was like telling his beads.

INTRODUCTION –

Gandhi wrote Hind Swaraj in 1909 notwithstanding his tendency to put the year as 1908. How should one read a book that was written a hundred years ago? Should one read it as the first of the seven books that Gandhi would write? Should one read it as a key text of Gandhi? A book that he dedicated himself to? Should one read it as a critique of the Empire? As a denouement of modern civilization? As a Luddite text? Or as a harbinger of post-colonial, post-modern concerns that occupy much of our culture of academics? Gandhi spoke of Hind Swaraj as his seed text. As the seed comes to Life, it is extinguished. Life within the seed may still and silent for long. But its beginning marks the end of that from which began, and in that it is inscribed the profound and intensely fluid distance between beginning and end Seed. As the metaphor for beginning speaks of beginning as silent and presence is and known and yet, it abides unseen. Hind Swaraj was written between 13 and 22 November 1909 on the way to South Africa England, aboard the steamer Kildonan Castle around its writing are suggestive of finality beyond the moment and context. Ten days of continuous writing on the stationary were marked by restless intensity of a kind that Gandhi had perhaps never known before He wrote when he could no longer restrain himself. The handwritten manuscript

comprises eighty- eight questions posed by the Reader and eighty-eight responses by the Editor in twenty chapter spread over two hundred seventy-one pages, and an introduction in five When the right hand urged, Gandhi wrote thirty-eight pages with his left hand. Those pages bear a hand more firm and clear. (Suhurd)The manuscript was first published under the name Hind Swarajya in the Gujarati columns of Indian Opinion in two instalments (11 and 18 December 1909) In January 1910 it was issued as an independent publication Copies of it along with three other Gujarat writings of Gandhi were intercepted in Bombay on 10 March 1910. On 24 March they were all proscribed' for 'seditious content and their circulation and publication in India became a penal offence.

Hind Swaraj weaved in two strands of the meaning "Text"
Gandhi in speaking of Hind Swaraj as 'mine' and 'not mine' seeks to clarify a relationship to the text that is at a distinct remove from the modern conception of text and authorship as something new and original. In the pre-modern Indic universe such a clarification would have been unnecessary. It is a relationship premised on the belief that the utmost given to a writer-composer is to be able to say in and for one's time and context, that which has been known and recognised to be true. Authorship and text therein are a journey and a quest to discover the authentic and true. They are not meant to intrinsically embody and signify the invention or creation of something 'new'. Text itself is seen as a weave—a sense implicit in the word 'text—of known strands woven afresh. One could speak of the weave in Hind Swaraj as comprising two distinct strands: self-sense and the sense of the world in the India untouched by modern civilisation, and books-discourses in Europe which sought to voice deep unease

Shreya Ghosh is currently pursuing PhD degree in Department of Diaspora and Migration Studies Gujarat University PH: 9426184712Emailshreyaghosh25@gmail.com

and anguish against modern civilisation. Perhaps the telling absence in the context concerns India touched and recast by the Modern. Gandhi owned fully the authorship of Hind Swaraj, but was meticulous and insistent in renouncing claim to the text as a thing entirely his own and original. (Suhurd 13)

Certain compositional details of Hind Swaraj are unusual and suggestive could one say that Gandhi felt his way to the text of Hind Swaraj along the salience of its compositional details? Consider for instance the choice of language and form for the text. He knew as he sat down to write that it could only be the loneliest walk. It was the kind of attempt for which there were no firm markers to follow or keep away from. The attempt was to take measure of the meaning and worth of the modern impulse from a ground of cognition clear beyond its ambit. Already, the entire world had been substantially recast according to requirements of the modern transformation set in motion in Europe a little more than hundred years earlier. The pace and scale of this change was unlike anything known or imagined as possible prior to the advent of the modern Everything and everyone had been swept into submission and belief in the power of modern civilisation to reshape as it were, the human condition for its ultimate good. The few voices in Europe of caution and warning against the modern were confined to the lonely margins. In the world beyond Europe, critique of the modern focused entirely on the details of Europe manipulating the stupendous gifts of modern civilisation for their narrow selfish purposes. And yet, Gandhi chose to write Hind Swaraj in the form of a dialogue in Gujarati. (Suhurd 13)

THE VERNACULAR PSYCHOANALYSIS OF THE WORD "SUDHARO"

It is only when we read the text bilingually that we begin to understand the multiple meanings that Gandhi imbued the term with. In English rendition the word Sudharo has been conceived as civilization, modern civilization, European civilization, ancient civilization, Indian civilization, reform, progress and even ephemeral civilization. The term thus has been conceived and rendered in eight distinct senses. It is clear that Gandhi thought through these distinct terms in English and rendered them into Gujarati through the generic word Sudharo. Gandhi could have chosen *sabhyata* and *sanskriti* instead of *sudhar* to talk about civilization but he deterred to do it. Gandhi truly invoked *Sudhar* in two senses in the English version which was found latent in Gujarati. *Sudhar* is not only a good path but also the root, which is called *Dhri* in Sanskrit, which holds the civilization. *Sudhar* unlike *sabhyata* and *sanskriti* has a sense of movement. It is the choice enabling, virtue-enhancing possibility of *sudhar* that Gandhi desired from civilisation.

Play with the semantics of the word "Swarajya"

Apart from the title, in the original, the word "Swarajya" is used in fifty-eight places to mark a varied range of meanings variously translated as : Self-rule or Self-control, home rule,

true honour, true home rule, home rule of my conception, etc. In the English rendering the word *swaraj* is retained in fifteen places to the word *swaraj* became standard and authentic with the publication of the Gujarati edition of 1914. Only in two instances in chapter twenty, is the word *swarajya* retained to mark the contrast to *Para Rajya* (foreign rule). The curious fact that this subtle and significant shift was first announced as an explanatory notation to the Gujarati original. Gandhi is known for his sensitive care for words and language And yet, there is not a word to explain or even mark this shift in English, Hindi or Gujarati from Gandhi, or from the numerous readers of Hind Swaraj. This silence underscores another deeper silence: the quiet definitive shift in the textual locus of Hind Swaraj from the original Gujarati to Gandhi's English rendering. Certain details of this shift merit a close look. (With the consent of Gandhi the first edition of the English rendering was revised under the supervision of Mahadev Desai, his trusted disciple and secretary. Sophia Wadia, the editor of theosophical journal *Aryan path* in Bombay, sent copies of it to several leading writers and thinkers (Suhurd 16)

Hind Swaraj and its deep roots in history

I propose to read Hind Swaraj as a text that is deeply embedded in its time. This embedding or rootedness does not deny the universality of the text or its capacity to go beyond its specific context. When we claim that a text is embedded in its times, one is not alluding exclusively to the specific historicity of events but to the philosophical ground from which a dialogue like Hind Swaraj can emerge. This is not to deny the salience of the dialogues that Gandhi had with votaries of armed resistance to the Empire, or the impetus that reading of Ruskin, Thoreau, Carpenter, Anna Kingsford, and Tolstoy had on his thinking and practice. This is also not to deny the significance of the struggle of the Indian community South Africa as also in India. (Tridip)

What is the philosophical ground within which this text is rooted? This ground can best be characterized as a moment of transition. The image before me is that of dusk. The Gujarati and Hindi word *Godhuli* is very evocative. It is the moment when cows come home and the dust raised by their feet that cover the sky and blur the vision. Dusk is a fleeting, transient moment. It is a moment between day and night, between sunlight and moonlight. It is a moment between day and night, between sunlight and moonlight. However, dusk signifies the presence of both and denial of neither. Dusk is evocative because of this simultaneity.

What is the dusk like moment in which Hind Swaraj is written? This is a moment of historical time, something that is no longer available to many of us in any substantial measure, except either as longing or memory. In this moment, two modes of life and thought are present simultaneously. A mode of life that we call a-modern. A modern is not anti-modern. It is not non-modern in the sense that it signifies absence of modernity. It is something that lies

outside the modern realm and has to be conceptualized without a necessary and inevitable referent to the modern. The other mode of life and thought that is present is modern civilization. It is my Plea that the Hind Swaraj should be read as a text that was written at a moment in history where both the a modern and modern universe existed simultaneously as large facts, however fleeting that moment might have been

Let us examine this more carefully with evidence from the text of Hind Swaraj. In chapter XII, 'What is True Civilisation?' Gandhi draws a picture of India untouched and unsullied by modern civilization and its emblems, the railway, doctors and the lawyers. It is this India that Gandhi often characterized as 'ancient civilizations' and even as 'real civilisation.' Ancient Greece, Rome, Egypt, China, and Japan provide referents to this Indian civilization. This India that lies outside modern Western civilization is real. It does not reside either in memory or in imagination

Modern civilization, however ephemeral, transitory, self-destructive for Gandhi, it is what necessitates Hind Swaraj. In fact, Hind Swaraj cannot be conceived outside the modern universe. It is not only present as the Empire or its emblems, the railways, doctors and lawyers but it is present as the Kildonan Castle that took him from England to South Africa, from the seat of the Empire to a colony. The forty-year-old author of the Hind Swaraj is also a modern migrant, a girmitiya. The fact of modern civilization forms the basic ground of Hind Swaraj. It is thus possible to read Hind Swaraj as a dialogue anchored in this transition where a-modern civilization though recessive, is

"Its true test lies in the fact that people living in it make bodily welfare the object of life." (Gandhi) This is an inadequate rendering of the original Gujarati, which could be rendered as "Its true identity is in the fact that people seek to find in engagement with the material world and bodily comfort meaning and human worth."⁴⁰ When the principal Purushartha becomes search for meaning and fulfilment in the material world and bodily comfort, it shifts the ground of judgement about human worth. The locus of judgement shifts fundamentally. It shifts from the human person to the body and the material world. It is for this reason that Gandhi characterised modern civilisation as 'irreligion', a 'Satanic Civilisation' and the black age.

The crucial difference between Home Rule and Swaraj is not only of a political kind, or a question of method, but a question of civilisation. Those seeking Home Rule argued that the British and their arms and ammunition subjugated Indians. Hence, their goal was to throw out the British but retain their laws, railways, and knowledge systems. As Gandhi said, they wanted the tiger's nature but not the tiger. Swaraj lays emphasis on the civilisation question. India was not taken; we gave ourselves to British

present; and where modern civilization though dominant is not a universal, permanent fact. It is in fact seen as both ephemeral and self-destructive. Hind Swaraj read like this does not remain only a dialogue between a reader and an editor. It represents multiple between a-modern and modern civilization, between India and the Empire, between ancient civilizations of India, Greece, Rome and Egypt; between subjugated India and modern Europe, as also between those seeking Home Rule and those striving for Swaraj, between those who saw means and ends as distinct and those who saw means and ends as inviolably related. Hind Swaraj is thus polyphony, not a dialogue, and certainly not a monologue. (Tridip 39)

For Gandhi, the essential character of modern civilization is not represented by either the Empire, or the speed of railways, the contractual nature of society brought about by western law, nor by the vivisection of modern western medicine. It is also not represented by the use of violence as a legitimate means of expressing political dissent-and obtaining political goals. Albeit, all these are significant markers of this modern civilization. The essential character of modern civilization is represented by western law, nor by the vivisection of modern western medicine. It is also not represented by the use of violence as a legitimate means of expressing political dissent-and obtaining political goals. Albeit, all these are significant markers of this modern civilization. The essential character of modern civilization is represented by the denial of a fundamental possibility. This denial is the possibility of knowing oneself. In Chapter VI "Civilisation', Gandhi describing modern civilization says

subjugation and were lured by their modern civilisation. (Tridip 41)

Satyagraha- Conceptions and misconceptions through words.

Satyagraha is not only a theory and practice of means and ends. Means and ends are mediate through the practitioner. Thus, if we were to ask a question as to what are pure means the answer would have to be that pure means are those, which are employed by a pure person. Satyagraha thus requires the practitioner to be cleansed through a constant process of self-examination and self-purification. Gandhi alludes to this by suggesting that a Satyagrahi would have to observe brahmacharya, be fearless, and adopt poverty.

Satyagrah is not an action but a way of reaction to atrocity through subtlety. It is about the trust in oneself and not the strength. Even a man, weak in body, is capable of offering this resistance. One man can offer it just as well as millions. Both men and women can indulge in it. It does not require the training of an army; it needs no Jiu-jitsu. Control over the mind is alone necessary, and, when that is attained, man is free like the king of the forest, and his very glance withers the enemy.

Passive resistance is an all-sided sword; it can be used anyhow; it blesses him who uses it and him against whom it is used. Without drawing a drop of blood, it produces far-reaching results.

In fact, the debate about means and ends, the practice of Satyagraha, become clear when placed within the context of the Ashram. It was through the life of an ashramite that this might be understood. In a sense the Swa, the self of Swaraj was conceptualized and lived at Gandhi's Ashrams in Ahmedabad and Wardha. What remained unsaid in Hind Swaraj was thought about and lived in the ashram. In the absence of the Ashram and the ashramites, the life that Gandhi led, his constant striving to be a Satyagrahi and a Sthitpragnya, and Gandhi's claim in the Hind Swaraj that "my conscience testifies that my life henceforth is dedicated to its (Swaraj) attainment would have remained a statement of intent if not a rhetorical device. Therefore, one way of reading Hind Swaraj is to read it along with Ashram observances. (M. Gandhi)

The Hind Swaraj should also to be read along with Gandhi's autobiography. It is through the autobiography we learn Gandhi's striving and pining to attain self realization. It tells us what it is to live, move, and have one's entire being in pursuit of that goal.

Justice and its manifestation in Hind Swaraj

Hind Swaraj is also a major intervention in the theory of justice. Gandhi argues that it is just to disobey a law that is repugnant to one's conscience. Injustice thus lies not only in the structure, purpose, and intent of law but also on the act of obedience to an unjust law. It is by abiding to an unjust law that we perpetuate it. Gandhi says that no law, however unjust, says that we must abide by it. It can only say that an act of disobedience would invite punishment. The space for resistance is available in the structure of law itself. Those who are willing to undergo punishment as an act of conscientious disobedience have a right to resist unjust law. Gandhi, thus, makes justice an act of individual action. He also argues that it is a folly to consider that a 'third party' because he/she is uninvolved could do justice. Justice and truth are recognized by the two involved parties as well and they must acquire the capacity and fitness to act on basis of this judgment. (Bhargava)

Words comparing Italy and India

Sudhara bhed, Je sudhara arthe , te sudhara, Europe no sudharo, adham sudhara rupi are few semantics that we find while he talks about Italy and indirectly compare it with India.

Gujarati proverbs used in Hind Swaraj and its English rendition

Utavale Amba Na Pake - Tree does not grow in one day

Jya Suraj hoy tya andharu raheluj j che- Where there is light, there is also shadow. Nathi raheta din na ke nathi raheta duniya na- derive little advantage from the world. Sangh Dwarika e jashe nahi. -We are not likely to agree at all. Jenu man changa che ene gher bethe ganga che- those whose hearts were aglow with righteousness, hand the ganges in their own home. Miyane ne Mahadev ne na bane. - Two contradictory things won't align, Paradhin Sapne sukh nahi.- slaves cannot even dream of happiness. Jeva dev tevi puja.- As is the God, so is the votery. Ek nanno chatris rog ne hane.- one negation cures thirty- six diseases. Jeo Talwar chalave che tenu mot talwar thi thay che- Professional swimmers will find a watery grave.

CONCLUSION

Clearly it is not a coincidence that Hind Swaraj is his only work that Gandhi chose to translate. He was careful to mark his English rendering as a "faithful rendering of the original" but " not a literal translation. On another occasion he told of it as free translation. The prominent detail of the English rendering is the title. The first edition holds the title Indian home rule with the brief "Translation of Hind Swaraj" in Gujarati. The pronouncement "Indian Home Rule" is a fair translation of Hind Swaraj as it was quite twinning to the contemporary political strata of India which sorely needed a self- rule, dominion status as it was there in Canada and Australia. The words used in vernacular beats the meta physics of not only the reader but also the author hence the interview style of rendition. It is a metamorphic change of a thought process from an unformed, unframed embryonic prescience of "Free India under self-rule" to the craft practice of the immortal life force that made India a home-rule, the novice yet most unstrung Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi to the "Mahatma Gandhi"

REFERENCES

- [1] Bhargava, Rajeev. TheHindu. 2 oct 2019. aug 2020.
- [2] Gandhi, M.K. Satyagraha in South Africa. n.d.
- [3] Gandhi, M.K. collegecen cage.n.d.
https://college.cengage.com/history/primary_sources/world/indian_home_rule.htm.
- [4] Suhurd, Sharma and. M.K. Gandhi's Hind Swaraj. Orient Blackswan, 2010.
- [5] Tridip. Reading Gandhi in two tongues. Shimla: Indian Institute of advanced studies, n.d.

Note: There are words in regional language Gujarati, India. The mother tongue of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

IJSER