

Mahatma Gandhi: Some Quotations

Mindset of an Indian:

“It is a very strange thing that almost all the professors of great religions of the world claim me as their own. The Jains mistake me for a Jain. Scores of Buddhist friends have taken me for a Buddhist. Hundreds of Christian friends still consider that I am a Christian ... Many of my Mussalman friends consider that, although I do not call myself a Mussalman, to all intents and purposes, I am one of them ... still something within me tells me that, for all that deep veneration I show to these several religions, I am all the more a Hindu, none the less for it.”

From the speech at Buddha Birth Anniversary
published in Amrit Bazar Patrika, May 9, 1925
Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi,
vol. xxvii, no. 23, pages 61-62.

The following quotes are from the book ‘Gandhi’s Significance for Today’, edited by John Hick and Lamont C. Hempel, St. Martin’s Press, New York, 1989

Natural resources of the world:

“Gandhi contended that the earth has enough resources to provide for human need, but not human greed. He held, therefore, that every man, woman and child would eat adequately, clothe and shelter themselves comfortable, if there were a greater sharing of wealth in all parts of the world. Spurning equally the insatiable acquisitiveness of capitalism and the mechanistic materialism of communism, Gandhi condemned the very basis of modern civilization.”

From the article ‘Gandhi on Civilization and Religion’
by Raghavan Iyer, page 126

Importance of ethics in all spheres of society:

“In his conception of authentic civility, a sense of spiritual and social obligation is fused with a spontaneous sense of natural reciprocity. He further upheld the belief, steadily undermined since the eighteenth century, that social institutions and political actions are by no means exempt from ethics.”

From the article ‘Gandhi on Civilization and Religion’
by Raghavan Iyer, page 126

Dignity of all versus political power:

“He (Gandhi) never tired of reiterating that his program was constructive, that it was directed towards curing the ills of Hindu society, bringing Hindus and Muslims together, and building spiritual strength among both communities.”

Paul Mundschenk in ‘The Heart of Satyagraha: A Quest for Inner Dignity, not Political Power’, page 30

Industrial growth versus human needs:

“To the beneficiaries of industrial growth, Gandhi’s views must seem utterly out of step with reality. But ... the industrialized world’s understanding of Gandhi is severely hampered by an inability – both moral and cultural – to identify with the human tragedies and privations in which Gandhi immersed himself.

Lamont C. Hempel in ‘Part III. Introduction’, page 187

Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King:

A comparison of goals and programs advocated by Gandhi and King:*

Gandhi

- Self-purification as a condition for achieving political independence (e.g. fasts)
- Development of village industries and sanitation
- Adult education and health programs
- Elimination of liquor
- Use of spinning wheel in every home
- Organization of Labor satyagrahas (e.g. Ahmedabad in 1918)

King

- Federal grants for housing, employment, and education
- 1963 Bill of rights for the disadvantaged
- Government-guaranteed income
- Development of black co-ops
- Breadbasket programs
- Organization of unions

* From ‘The Influence of Gandhi on Martin Luther King Jr.’ by Thomas Kilgore Jr., page 241