



TALKS  
ON VARIOUS  
OCCASSIONS.

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S.No	CONTENTS	Page
1.	Address During Public Session ( World Conference of Religions, Kochi - 1991 )	01
2.	Address During Gandhi Martyr's Day ( 1992 )	04
3.	Talk During Symposium ( Quran Week - 1992 )	06
4.	Rekindling the Light of Saddharma ( Bhoudha Dhamma Conference - 1992 )	11
5.	Interfaith Pilgrimage in Hope ( Declaration of the World Conference of Religions - 1991 )	15
6.	Buddhist Contribution in the Quest for Peace (International Buddhist Convention - Bangalore 1990).	17
7.	Religion and Religious Experience and the struggle for Justice, Freedom and Peace (World Conference of Religions - 1991)	20

ADDRESS DURING GANDHI MARTYR'S DAY, GANDHI PARK, M G ROAD,

BANGALORE : 1992.

In the place, among people, in a time which reminds us of the great modern saint Mahatma Gandhi, it is a great privilege for me to get this opportunity to remember him and speak a little about him and also about Buddha as a representative from the Buddhist community. We will be in a few years' time reaching the completion of the present 20th century, most materially advanced but at the same time the most disastrous time ever endured in the whole history of mankind. If we look back into the past nine decades, Mahatma Gandhi is the only unparalleled master, a source of solace and peace for us to recall and rejoice.

If we go further back into history and observe, in the process of man's never ending quest to find out the cause of sorrow and his continued endeavour to bring solace to aching souls, this land of Aryas, India has produced great men of high spiritual calibre. Amongst the galaxy of saints and scholars, India gave birth to: Buddha and Gandhi shone like the sun and the moon illuminating the whole world. It is indeed a great blessing that I am to speak about both of these two divine personalities today.

It was more than two thousand and five hundred years ago, that lord Buddha introduced a new way of life aimed at moral regeneration and social and spiritual emancipation of all beings through strict adherence to truth and non-violence ( Buddha proclaimed his message of love and compassion, taught people how to live a virtuous way of life in harmony and peace and showed the path out of this worldly predicament to the perfect enlightenment and Nirvana ). He became the first protagonist of human liberty, equality and fraternity and with weapons of his egalitarian and altruistic principles, he refuted and undermined casteism, alcoholism, adultery and all such social evils. His rational and compassionate teachings solaced untold millions and brought drastic transformations to countless lives. ( His legacies soon after him formed into a new creed of combined religio-philosophy which we today call as Buddhism. It was then that this nation was at the climax of her prosperity with her social, economic and spiritual heritage flourishing. It was the golden age of India.)

Unfortunately, this great social and spiritual movement received a set-back in the interim till in our times (century) when enlightened characters like Mahatma Gandhiji and Baba Saheb Ambedkar revived it substantially. Through Gandhiji, the entire rich Indian spiritual heritage found a renewed expression in the land of its origin. The Buddha's teachings, " Hatred cannot be overcome by hatred, but by love alone" and

" Hurt not those who hurt you,  
Abuse not those who abuse you,  
Rebuke not those who rebuke you,  
Spite not those who spite you." and such other

teachings apparently manifested in Gandhi's lifestyles as a part of his magnanimous personality.

Gandhi restructured and reinforced the egalitarian social outlook of Buddha and started a much more massive struggle against casteism, imperialism, fanaticism, racism and other evils. ( Likewise, Gandhiji in many ways, inspite of being an austere practitioner of Hinduism was still an ideal Buddhist, a sincere follower of lord Buddha ) He could therefore be regarded as the second " Light of Asia ".

Above all Gandhiji was a universalist, an internationalist, an ardent propagator and supporter of inter-religious harmony. For him all religions were equal, and worthy of respect and reverence. He did not confine himself to man-made religious barriers but instead relished the panacea that every religion so sacredly treasured. Thus he founded the new concept of " Sarva Dharma Sambhava ", a new approach to inter-religious dialogue and understanding. So great a saint; we are indeed very fortunate to have an enlightened saint like Mahatma Gandhi in a corrupt era like ours when the world is hovering over the brink of moral annihilation and spiritual bankruptcy. Perhaps Albert Einstein's words would describe him best - " Generations to come, it may be, will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth."

Let's on this sad occassion, Mahatma's Death Anniversary, when a noble cause lost its champion; remember him and fill our heartfelt gratitude although gratitude and non-gratitude would mean the same to him who loves his foe as much as his friend.

Let's also at the same time resolve to contribute whatever we can to the fulfilment of his earnest wish, his great wish that he cherished in the core of his heart, his famous wish to wipe every tear from every eye.