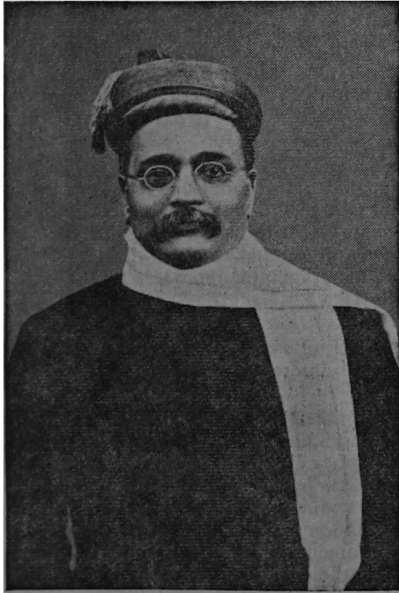


# **GOKHALEANA**

**No. 15**

**19th February 1978**



**Servants of India Society,  
Royapettah, Madras-600 014.**

**19th February 1978.**

## FORWORD

One of the high lights in Gokhale's life was his visit to South Africa in 1912 at the invitation of Mahatma Gandhi to study the conditions of Indians settled in that country.

Mr. H. S. L. Polak, Gandhiji's coadjutor in South Africa has recorded fully every event connected with Gokhale's visit in the Souvenir he had brought out dealing with Gokhale's visit to South Africa which is now not procurable.

Part one in this Gokhaleana contains extracts from the Souvenir about Gokhale's visit to South Africa his pronouncements on the Indian problem, tributes paid by the South African Boer and English leaders to Gokhale's integrity and his pragmatic approach to the Indian problem in South Africa.

Gandhiji's tribute to Gokhale and his work in India will be read with interest.

Part II is an article contributed to the 'OPINION' of Bombay by Patricinio, De Souza, on Gokhale, in February 1969. He describes Gokhale as an ardent nationalist, who, beleived in the destiny of India. In his paper on 'East and West In India' submitted to the Universal Race Congress in London in 1911, Gokhale declared that "when the men and women of India begin again to grow to the full height of their stature and proclaim to the word the mission that shall be theirs—a great stream of moral and spiritual energy, long lost to view will have returned to its channel, and East and West, white and dark, and Yellow and brown, all have cause to rejoice".

## **PART I**

### *Extracts from the "Indian Opinion" Souvenir of the*

**Hon. Mr. GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE'S TOUR IN  
SOUTH AFRICA.**

(October 22nd November 18th, 1912.)

*Edited by H. S. L. POLAK*

#### **A SACRED NAME**

(page 6)

Mr. M. K. Gandhi said the name of Mr. Gokhale was sacred to him; Mr. Gokhale was his political teacher, and whatever he had been able to do in the service of his fellow-countrymen in South-Africa of which he claimed to be a citizen was due to Mr Gokhale (Cheers). This South African question was not a new one to him; but they loved him not only for his interest in that question, but because of his life's work. Although he was a candid critic of the Indian Government, he was also a friend to it. (Applause).

## THE FUNDAMENTAL POSITION (page 7)

"I will", said, Mr. Gokhale "go through South Africa in the three weeks at my disposal with every real desire to understand the European standpoint, and whatever conclusions I arrive at, I will endeavour to state them with due restraint, and with such regard as may be expected from one in my position in India, to the interests of the Empire of which we are all members. I have not come here to light a flame; flames have often a knack of burning those who light them."

## Mr. GANDHI on GOKHALE (page 8)

Mr Gandhi declared with a show of pride that had Mr. Gokhale been an Englishman he would have been occupying the position now held by Mr. Asquith, and possibly had he been born in France he would have been President of the French Republic.

## MISTS OF IGNORANCE (page 10)

Mr. Gandhi knew that he deeply wounded Mr. Gokhale's susceptibilities whenever he made mention of what he had done, but he (Mr. Gandhi) had to perform a duty, though painful to him. There was no one who could tell them so much of Mr. Gokhale as he could about his life in the political arena of India. He it was who gave twenty years of his life to the cause of education for a mere pittance. Even to-day Mr. Gokhale lived in poverty, although he could command riches. Hundreds of pounds were always at his disposal whenever he wanted them for public institutions. A Viceroy of India carried the burden of Empire on his shoulders for five years (unless he was a Lord Curzon, who held office for seven), and even then had a train of workers to assist him, but here was a distinguished countryman of his carrying the burden of Empire on his shoulders unaided and unassisted and undecorated.

The addresses presented to the Honourable  
**GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE, C.I.E., Johannesburg.**  
 (page 13)

Dear Sir—On behalf of the British Indian Association, we beg to extend to you a very hearty welcome to the Union in general and to the Transvaal in particular. The estimation in which you are held by our countrymen in the Motherland would suffice to ensure for you a warm welcome from us here. But you have a special claim to our gratitude.

When passive resistance was at its height, and when hundreds of our countrymen were undergoing imprisonment in this Province for conscience sake, we knew that we had your most active support and co-operation. We are aware that it was because you threw the whole weight of your influence in our favour that passive resistance fund was swelled by munificent contributions from India. Mr. Polak has told us how invaluable your advice and guidance were to him whilst he was our delegate in India. It was due mainly to your efforts that the supply of indentured Indian labour to South Africa was stopped. For this, not only are your countrymen most grateful to you, but we believe that the European residents of South Africa also have warmly welcomed your work in this direction.

You have crowned this special South African work of yours by now paying us a visit for the purpose of making a local study of the situation. We know what this visit has meant to you. We shall never forget the sacrifice made by you in coming to us. We thank you for it, and hope that you will carry with you pleasant recollections of your visit to South Africa; and we pray God that He may spare you for many a year to continue your service of the Motherland, which you have so patriotically made the work of your life—We remain,  
 yours faithfully,

**A. M. CACHALIA, Chairman,**  
**M. K. GANDHI, Hon. Secretary.**

Mr. PATRICK DUNCAN (page 17)

Mr. Ritch said that Mr. Gokhale was to those who knew anything of his history, who knew anything of his reputation that that was essentially an Imperial reputation—a statement of the first order. He held a reputation in India that was higher than most of them there could appreciate, and he held a reputation among Imperialists in London as a statesman of the highest order.

CHINESE AND INDIANS BOND OF BROTHER HOOD,  
IMPERIAL INTERVENTION. Page 21  
Guest Toasted.

Mr. Quin, President of the Cantonese Club, in proposing the toast of "The Guest", said that there had been so much in common between the Indians and his own countrymen living in South Africa that in rising to propose the toast of the Hon. Mr. Gokhale he felt as if he were speaking to one of his own people. In Mr. Gokhale they had one who has championed not only the Indian cause, but the cause of the Chinese in South Africa, and when Mr. Gokhale pleaded for a removal of the disabilities of his own countrymen he did so not so much because they were his own countrymen as in the interests of righteousness and justice, and righteousness and justice had universal application, and rulers owe a justice to all peoples, whether they were Chinese or Indian. Therefore in pleading the cause of justice for his own people Mr. Gokhale had pleaded the Chinese cause too.

The Passive Resistance movement. Page 23

The Indian woman, he had always felt, was one of the finest types of womanhood to be seen anywhere in the world; and he was certain that with a little of that self-assertion which Western education always gave,

the women of India could hold their own, and more than hold their own, with the women of other lands. In any case, whatever faults they might have, nobody had ever contended that they were lacking in a spirit of self denial.

The following are the verses sung by the school-children at the Indian Women's Reception, Johannesburg:-

Ye sons of noble India, with heart and soul unite  
And sing aloud her praises, extol her boundless might !  
There is no land like India, no mount like hers so high,  
For none but great Himmagre can touch the lofty sky.  
O Holy Land of Ganga, the fields are ever green.

With priceless jewels resplendent,  
Thou rul'st the world, O Queen !

We hail thee dear old India, we hail thee Motherland.  
And, singing forth thy praises, we all united stand,  
O land of mighty heroes, oh mother of mighty men,  
The darksome night that clouds thee shall turn to light  
again;

For this our world is fleeting, no darkness long can stay,  
Look up, the shining Surya proclaims the dawn of day.

**BANDE MATARM.**

After the vote of thanks to Mr. Boustred for presiding, the proceedings terminated with the singing of the National Anthem. As those present dispersed, they were presented with a portrait of Mr. Gokhale.

**A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GREAT FREEMASONARY  
OF CULTURE (Page 62)**

Mr. R. D. Clark said he had no wish to touch on the political aspect, but as a representative of the great

freemasonry of culture which knew no limitations of creed or nationality or colour, he wished to welcome their visitor, who was himself a distinguished member of the brotherhood. Juvenal had said that the orientes had overflowed into the Tiber, and that the Easterns were swamping Rome. Looking round that gathering he felt that he might with equal justice say that the Ganges had overflowed in to the Umsindusi. (Laughter).

**A GREAT REFLECTION** (Page 30)

Mr. Laughton, K. C. Joined the Mayor in a few words of welcome. He did so, because, Mr Gokhale's merits as a public servant in a great centre of the Empire, and also because he had undertaken a great difficult task which if he accomplished it would deserve, not only the gratitude of South Africa, but of the Empire at large. In this everyone must admit that every member should be able to say in very truth—"I am a citizen of the Empire".

Mr. Gandhi pointed out that Mr. Gokhale was recognised to be a great statesman, not only by the millions of Indians but also by the people of England. Viceroys had called upon him to give them advice, because he had been able to keep his fingers on the pulse of India. He had guided the deliberations of the National Congress of India, and was one of the greatest educationalists of the country. Had he been born in England he would to-day be occupying the position Mr. Asquith occupied. Had he been born in America he probably would be occupying the position to which Dr. Woodrow Wilson had been elected, and if he had been born in the Transvaal he would be occupying General Botha's position.

(Page 34)

A little before the close of the sports, the Hon. Gokhale rode on to the ground in a motor, being pre-



ceded by a sergeant of police on horseback. After being accorded a hearty welcome by the Committee, he rode round the track, and was received all along with vociferous and continued cheering.

**INTERVIEW WITH MINISTERS,  
Mr. GANDHI'S STATEMENT (Page 41)**

“ General Smuts told me that the Government had promised Mr. Gokhale they would favourably consider the matters he had laid before them. Mr. Gokhale's attitude had been perfectly reasonable.”—Rand Daily Main, 15th November.

**Mr. GOKHALE (Page 55)**

The visit of the Hon. Gopal K. Gokhale to South Africa has been noted in no mean way by our capitalist press. Surprising as it may seem to those who expect some little consistency from our rulers, this Indian visitor has been received with open arms and heralded in terms of equality and brotherhood by our Mayors and leading citizens; all of which gives us food for serious thought.

When Keir Hardie arrived in Johannesburg he was received with brickbats and rotten garbage and was in danger of his life—this, because he was a known sympathiser with the oppressed coloured races, and particularly for the manifestations of this, expressed in the cabled reports of his utterances during his Indian tour.

It seems to us quite clear that there is no “ colour ” line drawn by our rulers and masters. When the sympathisers of the Indian—as in the case of Keir

Hardie—represented the world's workers his white skin was no protection to him. When, however, one of the ruling few of India, a champion of his compatriot law-resisters arrives, the colour of his skin is no obstacle to a Mayoral reception at Park Station and a drive elbow rubbing elbow with the Mayoress and knee rubbing knee with our Mayor.

### A TRIUMPHAL PROGRESS (Page 57)

The Honourable Mr. Gokhale has, as was expected, proved himself to be a King of Hearts. Wherever he has gone, so far in his tour, his dignified and benevolent personality has drawn to him the leading men of all races, who have united to do him honour. At Capetown, Kimberley, Klerksdorp, Potcherfstrom, Krugersdorp, and Johannesburg, the leading European citizens have graced the various functions with their presence, and it is certain that, from the standpoint of personal and social amenities, Mr. Gokhale's visit will be a complete success. Upon the political aspects of his mission we do not propose to dwell, for the moment. These will be examined at a later date, when the tour can be observed in retrospect. Meanwhile, we sincerely trust that the tax made upon Mr. Gokhale's health by the constant travelling and frequent ceremonial, will not prove too great for his strength, and that members of the community will exercise the utmost forbearance in their demands upon his energies.—Indian Opinion, November 2.

### THE GOKHALE BANQUET (Page 63)

Mr. Gokhale said: "Nothing was further from his mind than to indulge in threats either veiled or unveiled. He was no so vain, or so simple, or so inexperienced as to imagine that he could appeal to Englishman in that way.

**“He knew enough of English history and the traditions of the English race to realise that if anything were to be got from Englishmen it would not be got in these ways. but by appealing to their sense of fair play and justice.”** Mr. Gokhale announced that the three outstanding grievances which his countrymen in South Africa were suffering under were in connection with the harsh manner in which immigration laws were enforced, the £3 tax and the trading licences, and we do sincerely join with him in hoping that when he meets the Union Ministers in Pretoria he will be able to convince them as to the unfairness of at least certain aspects of these three specific grievances, and get them to promise to modify them in such a manner as will satisfy our British sense of justice and fair play—Natal Mercury, November 13.

## PART II

### GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE (1866-1915)

J. PATROCINIO DE SOUZA

**G**OKHALE, who died in this month 54 years ago, was an Elphinstonian. In his days, Elphinstone College stood for something enlightened and noble, for certain liberal ideas of social and political reform. It was the College of Western India then, it is only a college now, in spite of the brilliant results which its alumni still obtain in the University examinations. Although Gokhale was a student at this college for only a year the final of the B.A. course he seems to have thoroughly imbibed the Elphinstone spirit and, whether consciously or not, he expressed in his thought and public life, the Elphinstone tradition which, in his days, implied a liberal, moderate, national, humanist, secular, modernist approach to the social and political problems of India, the advocacy of gradual development of self-governing institutions largely of the English type a belief in the Providential character of British Rule over India, a vision of India as eventually an equal partner with Britain in the British Empire.

As a national leader, it was Gokhale's function in history to help to keep the Indian National Congress a moderate body wedded to constitutional methods of attaining political objectives. It is significant that when

Gokhale was living, it was the Extremists who had to quit the Congress. Whereas within less than four years of his death a group of Moderates left the Congress to form a new political party, the All-India Moderate Party, later called the National Liberal Federation. In fact, the spiritual heirs of Gokhale were the Liberals, whom Nehru unfairly classed with the Pharisees, denouncing them as "blind guides who strain at a gnat but swallow a camel".

Though an ardent patriot, Gokhale did not mouth empty nationalist slogans, but devoted his attention to nation-building activities. To Gokhale, India must be not just a nation but a great nation. Said he, "when the men and women of India begin to grow to the full height of their stature and proclaim to the world the mission that shall be theirs, a great stream of moral and spiritual energy, long lost to view, will have returned to its channel".

Harmony, not conflict, in social and political life was what Gokhale aimed at as a thinker and a man of affairs. To be the reconciler of differences was a role dear to his heart. It has been aptly observed that he stood for a 'triple conciliation', between the two races, British and Indian; between the two communities, Hindu and Muslim; between the two wings of the Indian National Congress, Moderate and Extremist. His statemanship consisted in his political realism, in his method of gradualness, and in his readiness and capacity for compromise if a compromise could be worked out without entirely sacrificing any of his cherished principles. But the peace and harmony that Gokhale desired were to be the fruit of justice. He would fight every manifestation of social injustice with all the legitimate weapons at his disposal.

Gokhale's place in Indian History is as a maker of modern India and he ranks, in this respect with Tilak, Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. They are the Big Four of modern Indian history, for they represent the main, though contradictory, trends in modern Indian politics.

The similarities between them are as striking as differences. All the four were karma yogis, all the four had a sense of mission in life; they possessed great moral courage, and a burning sense of patriotism characterised them all. All of them made great sacrifices for their country. Tilak, Gandhi and Nehru even by, time and again, going to goal, Gokhale without ever being a guest of His Majesty. And this fact is characteristic of Gokhale, of the strictly constitutional methods of agitation that he adopted, though Tilak quipped that in a country where there was no constitution there could be no constitutional methods of agitation. This was greatly to misunderstand Gokhale's position, which he clarified thus: "Constitutional agitation is agitation by methods which we are entitled to adopt to bring about the changes we desire through the action of constituted authorities." Gokhale's method of seeking redress of grievances and acceptance of political demands by the British Government through petition and address, argument and representation, was dubbed as 'political mendicancy' by his opponents, but Gokhale himself was no political mendicant. According to him, "privileges could not be had for the mere asking... they had cost other people prolonged struggles", and "whatever you may ask for, that is not the same thing as what you will get or will be qualified to get or in practice maintain if you get".

Gokhale was pre-eminently a Servant of India. To him no sacrifice was too great for the good of the country. His was, indeed, a dedicated life. He served the Deccan Education Society for over eighteen years on a paltry salary, and then became the founder of the Servants of India Society. Among the seven vows which every member of the Society had to take was "that he would be content with such provision for himself and his family, if he has any, as the Society may be able to make. He will devote no part of his energies to earning money for himself". Gokhale also refused the offer of a seat on the Secretary of State's Council of India and the honour of being a Knight Commander of the British Empire, because

he believed he would be able to serve his country better without them.

The social and political creeds of Gokhale and Tilak were diametrically opposed to each other: Gokhale clearly and consistently represented the moderate liberal trend in modern Indian politics: Tilak as clearly and consistently the extremist, conservative trend. On the other hand Gandhi was a syncretist, while Nehru was an eclectic, flirting, with man an 'ism' without being wedded to any. Yet their several destinies were strangely inter-linked. Gandhi acknowledged Gokhale as his political guru and hailed him as the Mahatma. The guru and the chela resembled each other in nothing so much as in their shared belief that the end does not justify the means, that an end worth realising must be realised through pure means. And Nehru was the political heir of Gandhi. True Gandhi said, "I cannot claim the honour of being the follower of the late Lokamanya", but, strangely enough Gandhi was also a disciple of Tilak. As Stanley Wolpert puts it "Gandhi's was the unique capacity of combining Tilak's mass appeal to nationalist sentiment with Gokhale's ethical purity".

All the four were great political leaders, but Gokhale's leadership lacked the charismatic quality which distinguished the leadership of the other three. Gandhi and Nehru, like Tilak, were Lokamanys, while Gokhale's appeal was to the intelligentsia. He was never a rabble-rouser, he never played to the gallery, he never hankered after cheap popularity. He wrote: "Thanks to the teaching and example of Mr. Justice Ranade, I have long learnt to make my conscience and not popular applause the spring of my action". The masses had no place in Gokhale's conception of government by discussion based on a through study of political and economic problems. Unlike Tilak and Gandhi who could occasionally become 'gimmicky' politicians, Gokhale did not go in for stunts to create a political consciousness among the masses. In fact, the cause of one of Gokhale's grouses against Tilak

was the latter's exploitation of the ignorant masses for his political purposes.

It would, however, be wrong to conclude that Gokhale despised the common people; he was too much of a humanist for that. Far from ignoring the masses, Gokhale had their welfare and progress very much at heart and he missed no opportunity to ameliorate their lot. Firmly convinced that the spread of education among the people was the most potent instrument of mass uplift, he made heroic, though vain, efforts to get the Government to make a beginning in implementing the principle of free and compulsory elementary education. "He considered Indian economic problems," writes one of his admirers, "from the standpoint of the toiling millions, and not from that of the rich few, even though the Servants of India Society found some of its chief supporters among the Indian millionaires". Thus, for instance, in 1911, when a bill to amend the law relating to labour in Indian factories came up for consideration in the Imperial Legislative Council, Gokhale moved an amendment imposing on the factory owners the duty of giving free and compulsory education to the children employed in factories. Again, in 1912, Gokhale would not support the proposal, though made by a fellow Indian member of the Imperial Legislative Council, to raise the minimum limit for income-tax from one thousand to fifteen hundred rupees, because such a measure, Gokhale thought, would give relief to the middle class, Whereas it was the poorer classes who deserved more immediate relief. These are only two out of many instances, but they are enough to indicate that Gokhale did care for the masses as much as, if not more than, Tilak, Gandhi and Nehru.

All the Big Four, each in his own way, had great hopes for their country, but all of them died disappointed men. Gokhale died in 1915, dejected by the rift in the nationalist ranks with the Moderates and Extremists still unreconciled. What is more, Gokhale saw with dismay the Extremists bidding fair to prevail over the Moderates.



Five years later Tilak died his dream of swarajya unrealised. Although Gandhi lived to see India free from bondage to the foreigner, he also lived to see two nations warring within the bosom of a single country. And Nehru died amidst the ruins of his foreign policy. Yet, each of them left us a rich legacy. Has Gokhale's public life any useful lesson to teach us? Is it an example to be emulated by the present generation?

To my mind, the greatest significance of Gokhale's public life is as a model parliamentarian a parliamentarian who did his homework and did it well. The most glowing tribute in this respect was paid to him by no less a man than that "very superior person", George Nathaniel Curzon, who, speaking of Gokhale in the House of Lords after the latter's death said that he had "never met a man of any nationality more gifted with Parliamentary capacity". What was the secret of Gokhale's greatness as a parliamentarian? His remarkable debating ability was certainly a factor, but by no means the only one. Far more important is the fact that Gokhale was a student all his life. He thoroughly studied a subject before he spoke on it and carefully polished his speeches before he delivered them. "There was never an economic argument by Gokhale" observes R. P. Patwardhan, one of the editors of his speeches and writings, "which was not supported by the relevant facts and figures. But it was not merely careful study that distinguished Gokhale's speeches in the Bombay and Imperial Legislative Councils. It was also the spirit of sweet reasonableness in which he viewed public questions. The perfect combination of these two qualities—careful study and due appreciation of the opponent's point of view—gave its characteristic quality to Gokhale's speeches, secured for him an easy predominance in the Legislature and earned for him the esteem of his official opponents". In 1913 when Gokhale could not attend the Budget debate of the year, the then Finance member, Sir Gy. Fleetwood Wilson, remarked that to discuss the budget without Gokhale was like staging Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark.

It is commonly believed that the most eloquent tribute to Gokhale was paid by Mahatma Gandhi when he described him as "pure as crystal, gentle as a lamb, brave as a lion, chivalrous to a fault and the most perfect man in the political field". But the most striking compliment came from the lips of Jinnah, who, at one stage of his erratic career, is reported to have said that it was his "one ambition to become the Muslim Gokhale". Had Jinnah indeed become that, and had Gokhale lived longer—there was no reason why he should not have, considering the fact that he died when he was only fortyeight years old—perhaps the history of India might not have taken the tragic turn that it actually did. History, it would seem, is only a *pis aller*. (*last expedient*.)

From : OPINION—BOMBAY.  
February 1969.

## **THE ELEVATION OF THE DEPRESSED CLASSES.**

This is a question of national self-interest. How can we possibly realize our national aspirations, how can our country ever hope to take her place among the nations of the world, if we allow large numbers of our countrymen to remain sunk in ignorance, barbarism, and degradation? Unless these men are gradually raised to a higher level, morally and intellectually, how can they possibly understand our thoughts or share our hopes or co-operate with us in our efforts? Can you not realize that so far as the work of national elevation is concerned, the energy which these classes might be expected to represent is simply unavailable to us? I understand that that great thinker and observer—Swami Vivekananda—held this view very strongly. I think that there is not much hope for us as a nation unless the help of all classes, including those that are known as low castes, is forthcoming for the work that lies before us. Moreover, is it, I may ask, consistent with our own self-respect that these men should be kept out of our houses and shut out from all social intercourse as long as they remain within the pale of Hinduism, whereas the moment they put on a coat and a hat and a pair of trousers and call themselves Christians, we are prepared to shake hands with them and look upon them as quite respectable? No sensible man will say that this is a satisfactory state of things.

**G. K. GOKHALE.**

## **THE SELECT GOKHALE**

My Lord, an American legislator, addressing his countrymen, more than half a century ago, once said that if he had the Archangel's trumpet, the blast of which could startle the living of all nations, he would sound it in their ears and say: 'Educate your children, educate all your children, educate every one of your children'. The deep wisdom and passionate humanity of this aspiration is now generally recognised, and in almost every civilized country, the State today accepts the education of the children as a primary duty resting upon it. Even if the advantages of an elementary education be put no higher than a capacity to read and write, its universal diffusion is a matter of prime importance, for literacy is better than illiteracy any day, and the banishment of a whole people's illiteracy is no mean achievement. But elementary education for the mass of the people means something more than a mere capacity to read and write. It means for them a keener enjoyment of life and a more refined standard of living. It means the greater moral and economic efficiency of the individual. It means a higher level of intelligence for the whole community generally.

— G. K. GOKHALE