

# GOKHALEANA

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**GOKHALE IN ENGLAND 1897.**

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## P R E F A C E

This issue of GOKHALEANA contains a bunch of tributes paid to the qualities of head and heart of Gokhale by his elders, co-workers and friends like Dadabhai Nowroji, Dr Ramakrishna Bhandarkar, Sir Perozeshah Metha, Sir Dinshaw Wacha, Mazhar Ul Hug, Mohamed Ali Jinnah, Sir Surendranath Banerji; his English friends like Sir William Wedderburn, Sir Henry Cotton and Edwin Montagu: Internationally wellknown English journalists like Sir Valentine Chirol, H. W. Nevinson, V. H Rutherford, a Member of Parliament, bureaucrats like Sir. James Meston, Sir Harold Staurt, Lord Crewe, the Imperialist Lord Curzon and the distinguished historian H. A. L. Fisher.

These tributes high light the transcendant qualities of Gokhale which made him, the peerless leader he was in the Public Life in India of his days. Mahatma Gandhi recognising these "rare qualities in Gokhale accepted him as his Raja kishi or Political Guru". Gokhale's ideals and principles are not outmoded. India needs at present many more Gokhale's.

# CONTEMPORARY TRIBUTES

BY GOKHALE'S

Contemporaries : Indian and British.

“Gokhale's saintliness shone with a peculiar lustre”.

In talent and character (Gokhale) was extraordinary, combining in a singular degree the visionary qualities of the Indian life. Even in India, whose saints are not uncommon **Gokhale's saintliness shone with a peculiar lustre**, for not only was he utterly disinterested in his pursuits of patriotic ends, caring nothing for wealth and station, but his rare spiritual intensity was united to subtlety of mind, a quiet grasp of details and a gift for action—qualities that are not usually associated with the devotional temperament of the East. That he was a great orator, I can well believe, for his use of English was exact and brilliant and entirely free from redundancy and magniloquence which is sometimes imputed to Indian eloquence. Though his training was mathematical, he was well read in modern historical and political literature. Yet neither in learning, nor in the conduct of affairs had he any touch of pedantry.

—H. A. L. Fisher

“We give out the sore, bitter and the pathetic cry as we miss him”

For many and many a long day, some of us will only be able to **give out the sore, the bitter and the**

**pathetic cry as we miss him day by day—Oh, for the touch of a vanished hand, for the sound of a voice that is still.**

—*Sir Pherozeshah Mehta*

**“Gokhale achieved the enviable height by assiduous and long apprenticeship”**

(Gokhale) was pre-eminently a man of peace and compromise, not the peace which is secured at any price and the compromise which entails sacrifice of principles. He was never aggressive and would not fight willingly; but when the occasion arose and he had no other course left to him, there was no better fighter than Mr. Gokhale. It was a sight for the gods to see as he dealt blow after blow straight from the shoulder and discomfited opponents, officials and non officials alike. His incisive criticisms of those official measures which did not command his assent were of such a severe and crushing nature that the officials could hardly meet his arguments. His life is an object lesson for those of us who think that politics are a game at which any one who could read and write can play. Nothing can be further from the truth than this popular, utterly misconceived notion. **Mr. Gokhale achieved the enviable height by assiduous and long apprenticeship.**

—*Mazhar-ul-Haq*

**Gokhale “possessed the qualities ascribed to statesmanship without ever losing the fire of its enthusiasm or its warm human interests”**

That a man should interest himself in the complexities of Indian economics and finance is in itself a tribute to his powers of mind; that he would master them and should display his mastery at an age at which few people would even care to study them cursorily, was a sign of a ripening intellect and a serious endeavour which served to lay the sure foundations of Gokhale's work. And with all

his comprehensiveness of judgment and mental clarity, he never dropped into the academic fallacy of contempt. He impressed one as being among the most candid and unassuming of men and he was equally ready to give or to take advice where it seemed most serviceable. His mind possessed the qualities ascribed to statesmanship without ever losing the fire of its enthusiasms or its warm human interests.

—*E. S. Montagu.*

Gokhale was a Goliath of popular interests—a great Gamaliel of public affairs, and a good Samaritan and a Gabriel in his domestic and social life.

To compress in one sentence all that Gokhale was—he was a Goliath of popular interests in the Council of the Empire, a great Gamaliel of public affairs, a good Samaritan and a Gabriel in his domestic and social life.

—*Sir Dinsha E. Wacha*

“It was as though the first person singular did not exist in his vocabulary”

(Gokhale) had no rhetoric. He cared nothing for impassioned language and magnificent periods. I have never heard a calmer or more self-restrained speaker. His was the eloquence of perfect knowledge, of entire devotion to his cause and utter regardlessness of self or any other consideration. What he said of Ranade was true of himself: ‘It was as though the first person singular did not exist in his vocabulary.’ But, however quiet his speech the courage of unyielding conviction and that regardlessness of self or fortune or applause was always felt behind it. Courage underlying a sweet reasonableness

was the characteristic of the man and of his speaking. It made him a speaker of singular attraction and lucidity.

—*H. W. Nevinson*

Gokhale's "name will be honourably mentioned in the history of Indian Nationalism.

Mr. Gokhale was not a Mazzini nor a William Tell nor a William Wallace and yet his name will be honourably mentioned in the history of Indian Nationalism. A diplomatist to his finger tips, he knew how to play on the national lyre without offending the official ear. His advocacy of freedom and his country's rights never brought him into violent conflict with the British hierarchy and the honour conferred upon some of his compatriots of banishment without charge or trial never fell to his lot ; nor did he ever languish, like the Irish leaders, in British gaols as a political suspect. In sharp contradiction to the programme of physical force paraded in Ulster and approved by one political party in Great Britain, Mr. Gokhale's policy for India, was one of peaceful penetration.

—*V. H. Rutherford, M. P*

"It was always a matter of pride and pleasure to listen to him and often to follow his lead."

Gokhale was a fearless critic and opponent of the measures of Government and the administration of the country but in all his actions and utterances, he was guided by reason and true moderation. Thus he was a help to Government and source of great strength and support to the cause of the people. One of the greatest lessons that his life and work teach me is the example of what one single individual can achieve, how powerfully and materially he can help and guide the destinies of his country and his people and from whom how millions can derive true lead and inspiration. Personally, I have had the honour of

being one of the colleagues of Mr. Gokhale in the Imperial Council for some years and to me, **it was always a matter of pride and pleasure to listen to him and often follow his lead.** The whole Council, officials and non-officials, had the greatest respect and regard for him. His loss is difficult to make up. It is almost irreparable.

—*M. A. Jinnah*

“The breath of the life of his Mother India was his own breath of life.”

In him [Gokhale] India had a faithful and devoted son. He belonged to that race of Indians who retained that calm dignity of mind and spirit which comes from unassailable belief in their own race and its destiny. He knew the West, its Powers and its Kingdoms. No one paid a more whole-hearted homage to its attainments, but he knew the East too. **The breath of the life of his Mother India was his own breath of life.** Jealously he guarded her reputation, faithfully he strove to remove her defects. Where she had fallen, he sought to uplift her; were she had triumphed, he sought to praise her. I have sat for many days with him on the Royal Commission and of the many interests of that Commission, his personality and methods have been in the forefront. His knowledge, his resource, his nimbleness, his persistence, his authority, have been a source of endless wonder to me.

—*J. Ramsay Mac Donold*

He knew how to take occasion by the hand and make the bounds of freedom wider yet.”

In the good sense of the word Mr. Gokhale was an opportunist. No doubt he dreamed dreams and saw visions as public men with high hopes and broad views did, but he certainly was one of those who **knew how to take occasion by the hand and make the bounds of freedom wider yet.** It was on those lines that he

framed his political career and hoped for the future of India.

—*Lord Crew*

“A sincere pleasure to listen to the skill with which he marshalled his figures and infused life into the dry bones of our statistical returns”.

If he will permit me, I should like to begin by offering my congratulations to the Hon. Mover [Gokhale] upon the lucidity and extreme fairness with which he has placed this complicated case before the Council. Like the late Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Gokhale has the rare and happy knack of making figures interesting, and it has been a sincere pleasure to listen to the skill with which he marshalled his figures and infused life into the dry bones of our statistical returns

—*Sir James Meston*

“Gokhale reminded of the Indian Juggler.”

Whenever Mr. Gokhale advocates a policy to which he attaches great importance I am irresistibly reminded of the Indian juggler who sows a mango seed in a flower pot and covers it over with a cloth. In an extraordinarily brief space of time, he removes the cloth and behold, there is a goodly mango tree in full bearing. So it is with Mr Gokhale. He advocates certain reform. We give him the mild answer which turneth away wrath, and we think we have before us an appreciable breathing time. But Mr Gokhale has sown his little seed in his little flower pot, he has covered it over with his little cloth and within an incredibly short space of time, he removes his little cloth and presents to our astonished vision a



tree bearing not only leaves, not only buds and flowers, but a goodly crop of wholesome fruit.

—*Sri James Meston*

Gokhale was not only the master mind, but the dominant personality.

It would be unfair not to give to Mr. Gokhale his full share of credit for this happy result. Though often an unrelenting critic of the administration, he struck from the first a note of studied moderation and restraint to which most of his political friends attuned their utterances. He naturally assumed the functions of the Leader of His Majesty's Opposition, and he discharged them, not only with the ability which everyone expected of him, but with the urbanity and self-restraint of a man conscious of his responsibilities as well as his powers. He was amongst the Indian members **not only the Master-mind, but the dominant personality.**

—*Sir Valentine Chirol.*

I have never met a man of any nationality more gifted with Parliamentary capacities.

For five or six years, Mr. Gokhale was a member of Imperial Legislative Council over which I presided when he was in constant opposition to my policy. In fact he was the Leader of the Opposition and in that capacity I had often to suffer from the weight of Mr. Gokhale's blows. **I have never met a man of any nationality more gifted with Parliamentary capacities.** Mr. Gokhale would have obtained a position of distinction in any Parliament in the world, even in the British House of Commons. Widely as we differed, I never failed to recognize either his abilities or his high character. It is a satisfaction to me to recall that when we last conferred

about a year and half ago on the question of Indians in South Africa, the subject which engaged our attention was one upon which we were both agreed.

—*Lord Curzon*

As specimens of persuasive eloquences of close reasoning and of comprehensive and accurate knowledge of the subject under discussion they have never been surpassed in India.”

Mr. Gokhale was not an orator in the sense of the word which we are accustomed to associate with such famous speakers as Surendranath Banerji and Lal Mohan Ghose. There was nothing in his speeches of the grand manner which has always been the gift of the greatest orators of every age. But AS SPECIMENS OF PERSUASIVE ELOQUENCE OF CLOSE REASONING AND OF COMPREHENSIVE AND ACCURATE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUBJECT UNDER DISCUSSION, THEY HAVE NEVER BEEN SURPASSED IN INDIA as specimens of persuasive eloquence of close reasoning and of comprehensive and accurate knowledge of the subject under discussion, they have never been surpassed in India and least of all in the Council Chamber where Mr. Gokhale's greatest triumphs were won ... It was in Gokhale that the Finance Ministers of his time always acknowledged a foreman worthy of their steel and one Viceroy after another has handsomely recognized the value of his contributions to the debate. .

—*Sir Henry Cotton.*

## A PRINCE AND A GREAT MAN HAS FALLEN

The whole country has been thrust into the jaws of a great agony. A PRINCE AND A GREAT MAN HAS FALLEN, one of the stoutest champion of India's rights and liberties has been cut off in the prime of his life. He was a political Rishi in the true sense of the term. I had the fortune of knowing him for upwards of 25 years and I never came across a truer, nobler and gentler nature. ... So true, so devoted, so self-sacrificing a figure is difficult to find among our publicmen.

When appointed a member of the Public Services Commission, he was to get £ 1000 a year, but it involved the resignation of his seat in the Legislative Council. He refused to do so and made the heavy pecuniary sacrifice and continued to work as member of the Legislative Council.

—*Sir Surendranath Banerjee.*

HIS GREAT DESIRE WAS THAT PEOPLE OF ALL CASTES AND CREEDS SHOULD COME TOGETHER AND WORK IN HARMONY FOR BRINGING THE COUNTRY TO A PROSPEROUS CONDITION :

His love for of his country was equalled only by his humble and modest behaviour. His respect for elderly people was something unique. I once told him not to take the trouble of coming to my house as he was not quite well, but that I would go to his house to meet him. He would not listen to me, but came to my house still. This little incident amply testifies to his great innate qualities.

—*Sir Ramakrishna Bhandarkar.*

WHAT A CALAMITY, WHAT A LOSS TO INDIA ?

What hopes of mine for much good at Gokhale's hands have been broken up ?

—*Dadabhai Nowroji.*

**PERSONAL AMBITION PLAYED NO PART IN STIMULATING HIM AND IN INSPIRING him in his work for the country.**

He knew not how to win people by flattery, nor would he stoop to gain applause by prejudice or to any base sentiment. I would bring out in the forefront his transparent sincerity, his purity of motives his disinterested singleness of purpose. One felt that personal ambition played no part in stimulating him and in inspiring him in his work for the country.

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In a general knowledge of public affairs and on such subjects as finance he could challenge with confidence our best experts.

—*Sir Harold Stuart.*

**A MESSAGE LIES BEFORE ME WHICH MAY TRULY BE SAID TO WRITE SORROW ON THE BOSOM OF THE EARTH.**

He was endeared to all who knew him for his saintly character, and he was revered for the power of his intellect; standing before the world as the finest type of the Indian Rishi.

But perhaps the undertaking which more than any other will perpetuate his work and influence, was the foundation laid ten years ago of the Servants of India Society. Believing in the nobility of human endeavour.....he gathered around him a band of youngmen who lived the simple life under his tutelage in the Society's home near Poona and whom he trained to devote themselves whole heartedly to the service of Mother India.

—*Sir William Wedderburn.*