

GOKHALEANA

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Gokhale's 108th Birthday
9th May 1974

Edited by

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FOREWORD

Tributes paid by Gokhale's political opponent, Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and Gokhale's life-long friend and colleague, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, are included in this the Eleventh issue of Gokhaleana.

Both are short ones but full of warm sentiments and high appreciation of the life and work of the founder of the Servants of India Society, the great patriot parliamentarian, statesman and educationist, the late Hon. Mr. Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

This issue also contains a short factual statement of the welfare work done by the Madras Branch of the Society, to advance the interests of the backward classes, and the tribes, in the three southern states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala, besides the usual Notes.

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S. R. VENKATARAMAN,
Secretary,
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“A DEDICATED LIFE IN THE SERVICE OF THE COUNTRY”

BY

LOKAMANYA BAL GANGADHAR TILAK

The news that Namdar (The Hon'ble) Gopal Krishna Gokhale passed away at 11 o'clock last Friday night must deeply sadden everyone, move all to dismay as well as sorrow, and induce despair and a realization of the ephemeral nature of the life on earth. The people knew that when Namdar Gokhale returned from abroad about three months ago, he was not keeping well. But they did not know the nature of the illness, nor was it advisable to disclose it. Though he looked robust, actually his health was being undermined by diabetes during the last fifteen years, with particularly serious effects on his heart. Sometimes his pulse would fail, and at times in the night his breathing would become so difficult as to suffocate him. Whatever the illness, these symptoms were plainly serious. In fact doctors in England had pronounced them grave enough to presage the end of Gopalraoji's life. If he did hold out even so long, it was on account of medical treatment and dieting, and by that strength of will which is seen in men of dedication and self-confidence not to yield even before death till some set task is done. He was only

49 at the time of his death, and in a normal span of life could have looked forward to achieving still greater objectives. But here too what the Dhammapada has said, that 'Death claims those who are busy gathering the fairest flowers of life,' has come literally true. Gopalraoji very much wished to complete the Report of the Public Service Commission, to give an unshakable foundation and structure to his creation, the Servants of India Society, to attend and do his wonted work in the forthcoming meeting of the Legislative Council; and he had in mind many other projects besides. He had at least hoped to pull through till after the Report of the Public Service Commission was prepared and published. But all has remained unfulfilled; he has had to put aside all his work and end his pilgrimage on earth at the call of One greater than even the Viceroy.

However, the same sad occasion is bound to come over every one of us one day or the other. If we count the number of those who now remain with us out of the group among whom Gopalrao grew up, our grief at his death is allayed and we are rather thankful that the Lord spared him even thus far to let him achieve what he actually did. It is ours to work, but not always ours to see our work done, to see for ourselves the sapling we plant bear flowers and fruits. That needs the collective merit (*punya*) of all of us, and where that was wanting, one's lone grief is quite useless. But useless or useful, it

is only natural to give oneself over to it in times of sorrow, and if the same thing happens on the present occasion, there is nothing to find fault with.

Almost everyone knows Gopalraoji's achievements, and no one will fail to recall them today. For the son of a poor Brahmin to educate himself by his own efforts, and within a few years of passing his examinations have his name on the lips of young and old alike in this country even before reaching the age of fifty that too with no aid of pelf or power is no small achievement; and the *heart* of the lesson from Gopalraoji's life is that anyone can achieve as much, and all by himself, if he had noble ideals and devotes to their pursuit an unceasing effort of every one of his intellectual and other capabilities. Some have described his life in terms of the work he did first as teacher in the New School and the Fergusson College, then in the Sarvajanik Sabha, then again before the Welby Commission, later in the Legislative Council of Bombay and afterwards of India, as well as in the Provincial Conference and the Indian National Congress. Others praise the power of his intellect. Still others extol his capacity for sustained work. Some commend his gentleness, others sing praises of his modesty. But in our view, all these are extraneous qualities and many might think differently. We for ourselves are convinced that there can be no two opinions about the one fundamental quality which makes these other qualities and these achievements possible.

That quality is dedication to the service of the country at an early age and with a heart untainted by self-seeking. No one thinks much of those who devote their residual energy and time to public work in their retired life, when all physical and mental powers have ebbed out. But when one comes across an extraordinary person who is endowed with the best of health and intelligence, sees all the charms of worldly pleasures extending before him and knows moreover that he has a better chance than many others to have them all if he went that way, but still turns his back deliberately on that alluring prospect and resolves to devote himself to the service of the Motherland and is never weakened in his determination and perseverance, such a man must be considered thrice blessed. Gopalrao had taken this very pledge and had kept it till he breathed his last. He had many colleagues in the Public Service Commission both Indian and foreign, and they were doing the same work as he. If then we praise Gopalrao but not the others, that is because the labours of this one and the fruits thereof were products of selfless devotion to the service of the country, while those of the others were only products in course of their duty in service of the Government. Thus even if the fruits be the same, it is by the spirit informing the man who sets out to achieve them that we judge him. From this point of view it will be clear to everyone that Gopalraoji's work and achievements are extremely important in their moral aspect, in their contribution to the country's welfare, and as worthy ends in a man's life

(*purushartha*). As he was by nature a man of moderation, he was inclined to use moderate means to achieve the goal he had set for himself. Many like us considered his mild ways and means quite misplaced. But even though regarding our country's malaise, doctors might differ as to whether mild treatment and dieting were enough, or drastic remedies had become necessary, we would fully acknowledge Gopalraoji's entire competence as a doctor. Gopalraoji's diagnosis that the country is at present in an extremely degraded condition and that if it is to make improvements in all directions, the people have to develop in themselves a number of great qualities is correct to the letter. Most people fail even to make this diagnosis, and among a thousand who do make it correctly, hardly more than one may be found who is prepared to devote enough time to apply the remedies. Gopalrao had done much more than this, and the importance of his achievements is brought home to us when we realize that there are very few like him in this country today. In fact we may even say that if the Brahmins of today have any duty, it verily is this one. Real Brahminhood consists in refusing to fall a prey to pomp and ceremony, in turning one's back on earthly happiness in the knowledge that a man departs this life as penniless and alone as he comes into it, and accordingly making service of the country for its uplift is verily his religious duty. We are convinced that he who observes this 'Dharma' is by that alone joined into the rank of the makers of the nation and attains absolution whether or not

he does anything else or whether his ways and means are mild or radical. There are indeed people who run down this axiom or deny it altogether, but far from detracting from its truth they only strengthen it, like an exception proving the rule.

Gopalraoji's life is an object lesson in how much a capable man can accomplish if right from his student days he holds a noble ideal before his mind. We urge this lesson upon our younger generation and we are confident they will take it to heart. Nobody in this world is born for himself alone. When the nation is prospering, there are always many who keep this principle in mind. But when the nation falls on evil days, even men of understanding fail to recognize this truth. In fact it may be said that their negligence of this truth leads to evil days for the country. So we urge upon today's youth not to be behind hand or lose time to learn the great lesson of Namdar Gokhale's life. What has to be done for the country is not only most important but also tremendously difficult. It cannot be achieved by just one endeavour, or at one time, or at the hands of one man. To achieve it, an unbroken chain of endeavour at all times and by many hands has to be created, and this depends entirely on the coming generation. Gopalrao Gokhale has passed away having done what he deemed his duty. From the religious (spiritual) point of view his actions will no doubt serve him well in hereafter. But the duty of those left behind

does not end with saying that he did his duty or that he has attained to the higher world. His death is a great loss to the country and a calamity for his friends and relatives and to all his followers. On this day of bereavement, we can only say this final word of condolence that even under such circumstances we have to possess ourselves in peace and consolation, bringing to mind that rescript of Manu which says that our greatest good lies in keeping to the path that has been trodden by our forefathers and preceptors and by their elders and preceptors too; that we all must shed our grief and press on with energy and zeal, courage and determination, on the way shown by our ancient seers for the good of the country. When those in front have fallen, those behind must seek assuagement not in tears but in taking up the duty that has devolved on them.

From the Kesart

“ A GREAT MORAL AND SPIRITUAL POWER ”

BY

SIR PHEROZESHAH MEHTA

A Public Meeting at which H. E. Lord Willingdon, the Governor of Bombay presided, was held at the Town Hall, Bombay, on 5th March 1915, to express regret at the untimely death of the Hon'ble Mr. Gopal Krishna Gokhale and to take steps to perpetuate his memory. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta who spoke very pathetically was loudly cheered when he rose to make the following speech :

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, All thoughts of making a great speech about this great man and his great work have been driven out of my mind. I could have taken up hours and hours recounting all that I knew of Gopal Krishna Gokhale, his noble life and his brilliant career. But I feel the example which His Excellency with his unerring judgment has set us of being very brief, is the wisest one. Even if all thoughts of making a great speech had not vanished from my mind, on seeing this vast gathering they would have vanished, in consequence of my own inability to do justice to that eminent Servant of India in the manner I should have liked to have done. No speeches are required about him, no words are necessary to recount his manifold activities. This gathering and the gatherings all over the country are eloquent speeches to speak of him as he

deserves to be spoken of. Even if I attempted to make a long speech I feel I could not have spoken connectedly and coherently for the reason that I feel so sad, so depressed, so forsaken, advancing as I am in years, on seeing valued and beloved colleague after colleague dropping away from my side. Telang has been gathered to his fathers, Ranade is no more amongst us, Badruddin has passed away, our beloved Gokhale alas ! has now closed his eyes for ever and for ever; and many others, whom I could name, are leaving me one after another, forsaken and desolate. I feel almost alone in the stupendous work for the country which is still pending before us. But memories and associations that come up before my mind's eye would scarcely leave me any power to dilate on details. Within the last few days of his death, I had numerous opportunities of conference and communion with him in Bombay and in Poona whither I went to pass my Christmas holidays this time, for the purpose of meeting him and speaking to him on many and many an important subject. We were together on several occasions and who could have thought then that we were no more to meet ! Who could have dreamed that his end would come so soon ! I cannot but recall with a keen sense of regret what plans he laid down for the present year, what hopes he had for making himself useful to his countrymen, what work he chalked out for himself for the development and advancement of the country which he loved so dearly ! For many and many a long day some of us would only be able to give out

the sore, the bitter and the pathetic cry, as we miss him day after day—

*But oh for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still !*

Ladies and Gentlemen, Gokhale is dead. How dearly we loved each other, how genuinely we trusted each other, what regard he had for me and I had for him, words fail me at the present moment to convey to you. In an attempt to speak of him, all that comes back to my mind is,

“Gokhale is dead leaving me behind. What shall I do to consummate the tremendous work that is lying before me? How should I act to carry out the plans we had chalked out, without his help, without his society, without his guidance and without his co-operation?”

Ladies and Gentlemen, the previous speakers have informed you rightly that everything that could be said about Mr. Gokhale was said by the noble Viceroy in the Imperial Council and by our beloved Governor on more than one occasion. All that now I can do is to associate myself with their Excellencies in paying my last tribute to the memory of a great and a good man and to add

“Gokhale was a great gentleman and that he possessed a great moral and spiritual power which he exercised over all classes of people and which enabled him to carry out the great work which he had undoubtedly performed for the benefit of his countrymen whom he has left weeping behind him.”

NOTES

Gopal Krishna Gokhale: (1866-1915); Life Member of the Deccan Education Society, Professor, Fergusson College, Poona and its builder; gave evidence before the Welby Commission when he was 31. Member, Bombay and Imperial Legislative Councils. Founder, Servants of India Society, (1905). President, Indian National Congress (1905), Benares. Member, Islington Commission on Public Services (1913). Acknowledged by Mahatma Gandhi as his political Guru. A great educationist, patriot, parliamentarian and statesman.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak: (1856-1920); Member, Deccan Education Society, Professor of Mathematics and Sanskrit, Fergusson College, Poona, Founded the *Kesari* and *Maratta*, Imprisoned in Mondalay for sedition. Wrote the *Orion*, *Gitarahasya* and the *Arcotic Home of the Vedas*. A great patriot, scholar and journalist.

Sir Pherozeshah Mehta: (1845 - 1915); Barrister, Member and Chairman thrice, of the Bombay Municipality. One of the Founders of the Indian National Congress (1885); Member, Bombay and Imperial Legislative Councils. Vice-Chancellor, Bombay University. President, Indian National Congress, Calcutta, (1890). A great leader and patriot.

THE SERVANTS OF INDIA SOCIETY, MADRAS BRANCH

Its Tribal and Backward Classes Welfare work in rural areas at a glance for 1973-74.

Kerala, Five Centres: (1) *Gokhale Upper Primary School*, Mudadi P.O. Calicut Dt., eight standards, pupils 358, teachers 14. (2) *Sastriar Upper Primary School*, Chalode, Amarambalam P. O. Nilambur R. S.: eight standards, pupils 1054, teachers 26. (3) *Devdhar Upper Primary School*, Nediyrup P. O. Malappuram Dt., Via Calicut, : eight standards, pupils 316,; teachers 10. (4) *Devadhar Lower Primary School*, Pulliyil, Nallanthanni P.O. Nilambur R. S. : Five standards, pupils 708, teachers 21. (5) *Devadhar Lower Primary School*, Karaulai, P. O. Nilambur R. S. : pupils 584, teachers 13.

The Society had established colonies for Pulayar, Panian, Aranadan and other tribes at Gopalapuram, named after Gopal Krishna Gokhale at Mudadi, the Suryanarayana Colony at Pulliyil, and the Nayanar Colony at Chalode respectively. About 30 progenies of the 25 colonists and old students of our schools are economically and socially well off, the income of these progenies raging from Rs. 400 to Rs. 1500 a month.

Tamilnadu : *Thakkar Baba Gurukulam*, Nirgacimund, Sandynallan P.O. Via, Ooty, Nilgiris: a Tribal residential school for Toda and Kota tribes with 33 tribal boys and 19

tribal girls with 8 standards, 156 pupils and 4 teachers.

Drought relief to 2 Kurumbas and 4 Todas amounting to Rs. 500 was given for purchasing seeds and manure, out of the amount received from Indians settled in America for drought relief in India.

Andhra Pradesh : *Thakkar Baba Gurukulam*, Chilla-kur P.O. Gudur: residential school, with hostel for 45 Yenadhi boys and 15 Yenadhi girls and a school with five standards with 120 pupils and three teachers.

The total number of pupils in the seven schools was 3,296 and of the teachers and the supervisory staff 102.

The Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh centres have Advisory Committees to guide the Gurukulams in all possible ways.

In 1973-74 the total expenditure on these activities amounted to Rs. 1,39,356 including the cost of buildings at Chillakur costing Rs. 43,000 while grants received from the Kerala, Tamilnadu and the Central Governments amounted to Rs. 1,05,526; the deficit of Rs. 33,830 was met from donations and by the Society.

Donations to the Servants of India Society are exempt from Income-Tax.